

Mitsubishi founded

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The origin of Mitsubishi goes back to 1870 when the founder, Yataro Iwasaki, started a shipping firm with three aging steamships. Yataro's brother, son and nephew expanded the business into various fields during their respective terms as president and set the foundation of the Mitsubishi companies. After WWII, the original Mitsubishi organization was disbanded to become the independent companies they are today.

The name "Mitsubishi" refers to the three-diamond emblem."Mitsubishi" is a combination of the words "mitsu" and "bishi."

A steamship of the Tosa Clan(Library of Kochi City)

"Mitsubishigahara" Marunouchi circa 1890

In his early days, in 1886, Hisaya Iwasaki studied at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania in the U.S. This was the period when great capitalists such as Rockefeller and Carnegie began to emerge in America to build businesses in oil, coal and steel. Hisaya experienced this big wave of American business firsthand. His exposure to American education had a profound impact on the young Iwasaki's life and upon his return to Japan, he built himself a Western-style house designed by a British architect, Josiah Conder, and surrounded it with gardens reminiscent of the American countryside. Today, the Tokyo Metropolitan Government owns the house and gardens, so the public may now enjoy this splendid representation of Western-style living.

Hisaya's former residence (currently Kyu-Iwasaki-tei Teien)

In 1895, Nippon Yusen built one of six passenger-cargo vessels (6,000-ton class) for a European line at the Nagasaki Shipyard. Until this time, only British companies had the shipbuilding capabilities to construct this size of commercial ship. The ship, Hitachi Maru, was the first of its size for the Nagasaki Shipyard, and the experience gained from the construction of this vessel set the stage for a growing number of orders for larger vessels, including an order for the 13,000-ton class luxury liner, TENYO MARU, and many subsequent orders for large-scale battleships.

George Ernest Morrison and the ex libris of his collection. After being purchased by Hisaya Iwasaki, the Morrison Collection provided the foundation for the Toyo Bunko.



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Seizure of zaibatsu families" assets ("Showa History Vol. 13: Ruin and Lack" published by Mainichi Newspaper Company)

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