

Merchant's Museum (Former Nishina Family Residence)

This building is the former home and business of Nishina Gentaro. He was a prominent Tsuru merchant who became wealthy in the early twentieth century by trading in locally-produced silks. These were extremely popular for being both of good quality yet affordable.

After being designated as an Important Tangible Cultural Asset of Tsuru City in 1993, the building was reopened as the Merchant's Museum. Visitors here can view more than 100 objects related to the silk trade and to early twentieth-century daily life. The main entry features a dirt floor and a raised tatami (traditional Japanese mat) floor area, and was once Nishina's silk shop. In this room, visitors can see many samples of the types of silk cloth that were once sold in the shop. Beyond the entryway lies the living quarters, covering both the first and second floors. A variety of items ranging from antique furniture and appliances, intricate hand-carved woodwork and paper shoji window shades, the family's personal shrine, and much more are displayed here. The house also features a Western-style parlor complete in every detail, a testament to the popularity of foreign culture at the time.