

Koransha History

Fukagawa Matashiro (dates unknown) started making porcelain in 1689. As the family business grew, he came to be known as Fukagawa Eizaemon I. His descendant, Fukagawa Eizaemon VIII (1832–1889) created Koransha with four partners in the late 1870s. Eizaemon VIII had made his name in the first half of the decade by successfully manufacturing the first porcelain electrical insulators in Japan. During this period of rapid modernization, the ability to domestically produce industrial insulators was an important goal for the Japanese government. Eizaemon's insulators were used for the entire length of telegraph lines that connected Yokohama in the east to Nagasaki in the west. The company used the profit from the insulators to fund the production of their artistic and creative pieces.

Arita kilns like Fukagawa Eizaemon's were among the participants in the 1873 Vienna World's Fair, the first international exposition in which the modern Japanese government participated. Two years later, as Japan continued to modernize and westernize its domestic industries, Eizaemon VIII and his four partners founded the first Koransha (Gappon Soshiki Kōransha). They were appointed an official purveyor to the Imperial Household later the same year. The next year, they successfully opened an exhibit at the 1876 Philadelphia Exposition. During the 1878 Paris Expo, which Eizaemon VIII attended, the company was awarded a gold medal.

In 1879, the first Koransha was restructured into the Koransha Company (Kōransha Gōmei Gaisha), the predecessor of the current company, Koransha Co., Ltd. It was the first modern corporation in Kyushu. The company's three core production groups are electrical insulators, porcelain art, and fine ceramics.