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## Commercialization of the Edo Style in the Meiji and Taishō Periods: The Booms of Genroku Patterns and Edo Taste Created by Mitsukoshi Department Store

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Many of the “traditions” that have been “referred to” or “recognized” to form a national identity of members of different social groups since the establishment of Japan as a nation state up until now are based on the fundamental culture shaped in the primitive/ancient times and the culture developed in the City of Edo. An “Edo style” was first “recognized” during the period from the Meiji 20s (1887-1896) to the Great Kantō Earthquake of 1923. It was developed politically and commercially in different time spans. The political development of the style manifested itself in forms of resistance against Europeanization policies and desire for preservation of national characteristics in the Meiji 20s. These phenomena have been analyzed in the studies of Japanese-type nation-state building, which indicate that Edo culture created “Japanese traditions” and thus integrated the country as a nation state. On the other hand, the commercialization has not been fully analyzed. Therefore, this article examines the commercialization of the Edo style promoted by Mitsukoshi from the end of the Meiji period to the Taishō period (at the beginning of the 20th century). More specifically, this paper focuses on the great boom of Genroku patterns after the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905 and the Edo taste widely adopted in daily life and culture during the Taishō period (1912-1926) to analyze the mechanism and impact of the commercialization of the Edo style. The results of the analysis indicate the following two points.

- i. The boom of Genroku patterns was created by Mitsukoshi with support from Genroku-kai, a society spun off from a literary circle to organize tea parties and exhibitions of Genroku culture. The society’s discussions focused on matters relating to the Genroku years from 1688 to 1704, including various phenomena and criticisms of the era and the appropriateness of reinterpretation of Genroku patterns. Genroku-kai was founded, not by Mitsukoshi, but by Zanka Togawa, a former retainer of the Tokugawa Shogunate, by using his private network. Eventually, Zanka and Mitsukoshi were estranged, in part because he was appointed to Senior Advisor of Shirokiya and in part because the Ryūkō-kai, an advisory group of Mitsukoshi, functioned to fulfill its intended purpose. Genroku-kai ended up in merging with Bungei Kyōkai to become Rengō Kenkyū-kai, and the Genroku boom lost its momentum.
- ii. The “Edo style” of the Taishō period was commercialized by Edo Shumi Kenkyū-kai established by Ryūkō-kai as its subcommittee to study Edo taste. They focused their theme on the Tenmei

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years from 1781 to 1789, compiling various data to create a “Tenmei style.” Their study results, however, were given little attention. When an exhibition of Edo taste was held, various Edo styles, including the Genroku style, were combined, irrespective of class or time period. This helped an image of “Edo taste” establish itself among people who had never experienced the Edo period. Thus, a vague but new image of Edo taste was shaped in the process of commercialization before the Great Kantō Earthquake. It was also different from the one depicted by Kafū Nagai as escapism. Later, the research of Edo Shumi Kenkyū-kai was taken over by the studies of Edo culture by Engyo Mitamura and other Japanese literature scholars.

Key words: Edo, representation, commercialization, department store, Edo taste, recognition of traditions