

「元号」とは何か？ *What are Gengo (Era names) ?*

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報告の流れ

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元号とは何か

What are Gengo?

- ▶ 年を単位に、特定の年代に付けられる称号のこと

A title attached to a specific period of years

- ▶ 君主の即位や在位中、施政の変更に伴って行われる

Gengo accompany a change of administration, when the monarch takes the throne or during their reign

- ▶ 君主が空間だけでなく、時間をも支配することを示す

They indicate that the monarch rules not only space, but also time

- ▶ ルーツは中国（紀元前2世紀）

Gengo originated in ancient China (2nd century BCE)

元号の歴史

The history of Gengo

➡ ルーツは中国 / Its roots lie in China

➡ 紀元前115年、前漢・武帝が治世の始めに遡り、「建元」（紀元前140年～同135年）を使用

／ In 115 BC, the era name "Jianyuan" was retroactively applied to the beginning of the previous reign (140 BC to 135 BC)

➡ 1911年の辛亥革命で清が倒れると、使用終了

／ When the Qing Dynasty collapsed in the Shiki Revolution in 1911, the use of era names ended

➡ 中国の影響下にある国々では、中国の元号をそのまま用いた

例：朝鮮、琉球（現在の沖縄）など

／ In countries influenced by China, the Chinese era name was used as it was

Ex: Korea, Ryukyu (present-day Okinawa), etc.

日本における元号（1）

Gengo in Japan (1)

- ▶ 645年の「大化」が最初 / In Japan "Taika" in 645 was the first era
- ▶ 701年の「大宝」から使用例増加 / Gengo was used more frequently starting from 'Taiho' in 701
- ▶ 天皇の即位時に制定。天変地異などが続いた場合には、在位中でも随時変更 / Established when the Emperor took the throne. Changed from time to time even during the reign, such as in the event of a natural disaster, etc.
- ▶ 1868年、明治政府が「一世一元の詔」を發布。天皇1人につき1元号という形に / In 1868, the Meiji Government issued "The Unification of One Era" decree. The system of "one era for one emperor" was established.



日本における元号（2）

Gengo in Japan (2)

- ▶ 1872年、西暦採用。元号も併用

／In 1872, the Gregorian calendar was adopted. Era names were also used.

- ▶ 第2次世界大戦後、主権が天皇から国民に。1947年の日本国憲法では元号の記載なし。法律的根拠がないまま、継続

／After World War II, sovereignty shifted from the Emperor to the people. In the Constitution of Japan in 1947 there is no mention of the era name. The system continued without a legal basis.

- ▶ 1979年、元号法制定／In 1979, the Era Name Law was enacted

- ▶ これまでの元号は247。最も長かったのが昭和で64年間、最も短かったのが暦仁の2カ月

／There are 247 eras so far. The longest era was Showa, 64 years long. The shortest was Ryakunin, 2 months long.

なぜ今注目されているのか

Why are people paying attention now?

- ▶ 2019年4月30日の今上陛下退位、翌日の新天皇陛下即位が近づいている
/ On April 30, 2019, the current emperor will abdicate, and the coronation of the new emperor will be the next day
- ▶ 元号法に基づき、新しい元号を定める必要
/ Based on the Era Name Law, a new era must be established
- ▶ 2018年中には新元号が定まる予定
/ The new era name is scheduled to be decided in 2018

元号の原則

Requirements for Gengo

➡ 歴史的に漢字 2 文字ないし 4 文字 / Historically, two or four Kanji

➡ 「元号法」によれば、

① 国民の理想となるよい意味を持つ

② 漢字 2 字 ③ 書きやすく、読みやすい ④ これまでに使われていない

／ According to the Era Name Law:

① It must have a good meaning to be an ideal for citizens

② It must be two Chinese characters (Kanji)

③ It must be easy to write and easy to read

④ It must not have been used so far

元号決定までの過程

Process for the era name decision

- ▶ 内閣総理大臣が有識者に元号案の選出を依頼
/ The Prime Minister requests experts to submit proposals
- ▶ 有識者は2～5の候補を意味・根拠と共に提出
/ Experts submit two to five candidates, along with the meaning of and reasoning for the name
- ▶ 内閣官房長官が検討、総理大臣に結果を報告 / The Chief Cabinet Secretary examines the proposals and reports the results to the Prime Minister



平成の場合

In the case of Heisei

- ▶ 1988年8月、新元号案が3案に / In August 1988, the proposal for the new era name was narrowed down to three
- ▶ 1989年1月7日、昭和天皇崩御 / On January 7, 1989, Emperor Showa collapsed.
- ▶ 同日午後、専門家会議と衆議院・参議院議長らに「平成」「修文」「正化」の3案提示
/ On the afternoon of the same day, three proposals "Heisei", "Shubun", and "Seika" were presented to a committee of experts and the chairmen of the House of Representatives and House of Councilors.
- ▶ 同日14時10分、臨時閣議で「平成」に決定 / At 14:10 the same day, "Heisei" was decided on at an extraordinary Cabinet meeting
- ▶ 同日14時36分、内閣官房長官が発表 / The Chief Cabinet Secretary announced the new era name at 14:36 the same day
- ▶ 1989年1月8日、新元号が施行 / On January 8, 1989, the new era began

意味・出典 Meaning and source of Heisei

- ➡ 中国の歴史書「史記」にある「内平外成」（内平らかに外なる）、同じく「書経」の「地平天成」（地平らかに天なる）から

From two phrases: one in the Chinese history book *Shiki*, one from the Chinese book *Shokyo*

- ➡ 意味：国の内外ともに平和になる

／Meaning: Become peaceful both inside and outside the country

- ➡ 元号案は「神聖なもの」。そのつど提出され、以前に出されていて、採用されなかった候補はすべて廃案

／The era name proposals are "sacred". Former proposals are never used, including ones not adopted before. New proposals are made each time

新元号制定まで

Establishment of the new era name

- ▶ 新元号の発表は2018年中（日時は明言しない）

／An announcement of the new era name will be made during 2018 (date and time not stated)

- ▶ 明治（M）、大正（T）、昭和（S）、平成（H）以外の、アルファベットの頭文字を持つ案が選ばれる可能性

／There is a strong possibility that a proposal with an alphabet initial other than Meiji (M), Taisho (T), Showa (S), or Heisei (H) may be chosen

元号と日本人（1）

Gengo and Japan(1)

- ▶ 世界で元号を使っているのは日本のみ

- ／Japan is the only country that still uses era names

- ▶ 中国文化の影響下の国々でしか使われていない

- ／It is used only in countries affected by Chinese culture

- ▶ 中国は1911年、韓国は1910年、ベトナムは1945年に廃止

- ／China abolished era names in 1911, Korea in 1910, Vietnam in 1945

- ▶ 君主制の廃止とともに使用されなくなる

- ／They are no longer when the monarchy is abolished

元号と日本人（2）

Gengo and Japan(2)

- ▶ 元号法制定時（1979年）は90%の国民が元号を使っていた
/ At the time of establishment of the Era Name Law (1979), 90% of Japanese citizens used era names
- ▶ 政府や自治体の公文書は西暦ではなく元号表記。新聞は併記
/ Official documents for both the national government and local governments use the era instead of the Gregorian calendar. Newspapers use both the era and the Gregorian calendar
- ▶ 今も親しまれてはいる。世代を表す際などにもよく使われる。「昭和生まれ」「平成生まれ」など
/ Even now era names are commonly used. They are often used to represent generations: "Born in Showa," "Born in Heisei," etc.

元号のデメリット

Demerits of era names



- ★西暦換算が面倒 / Conversion to the Gregorian calendar is troublesome
- ★即日に改元が行われるため、改元初年には例えば1989年 = 昭和64年 & 平成元年などと一つの西暦に2元号がつく / Since the era is changed quickly on a single day, the first year the era changes will include two era names, such as 1989 including both Heisei and Showa
- ★改元のたびに印刷物などの表記を修正するため、時間と費用がかかる
/ It takes time and money to revise printed materials every time the era name is changed

元号の今と今後の報道

Current state of and future reporting on Gengo

- ➡ 西暦の使用例が増加 / The Gregorian calendar is being used more frequently
- ➡ 朝日新聞の表記も「2017（平成29）年」と「西暦→元号」の順 / The Asahi Shimbun uses the order of "2017 (Heisei 29) year," giving the era name lower priority
- ➡ 日本共産党機関紙「赤旗」のように、西暦表記だけだったのに新たに元号を付記したケースも（2017年4月から）→法的根拠もあるので、今後も元号使用は続くだろう
 - ／There are also cases such as the Japan Communist Party's newspaper *Red Flag*: only the Gregorian calendar was used, but the era was added (from April 2019)
- As there is also a legal basis, the use of era names will likely continue in the future
- ➡ 今後の報道予測→新元号決定までのスクープ競争、手帳などの印刷業者の困惑、「平成」時代を回顧する特集記事
 - ／Future reporting→ Competition over scoops until the new era name decision, problems for printing companies when it comes to diaries, etc., retrospective articles on the "Heisei" era