

「元号」とは何か？／What are Gengo (Era names)

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1. 元号とは何か／What is Gengo?

- ・ 年を単位に特定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

2. 元号の歴史／The history of Gengo

・ 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

・ 日本では、645 年の「大化」が最初／In Japan "Taika" in 645 was the first era name

・ 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.

・ 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

・ これまでの元号の数は 247。最も期間が長かった元号は昭和で 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.

3. 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

4. 元号が決まるまで／Process for deciding the era name

・有識者が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

・「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、ことが条件

／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

③ It must be easy to write and easy to read

④ It must not have been used so far

・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) will be chosen

5. 元号と日本人／Gengo and Japanese People

・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で使われた／It was 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, and Vietnam in 1945

・現在、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.

・デメリット。西暦換算が面倒／Demerits: Conversion to Gregorian calendar is troublesome

・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

・西暦の使用例が増加／The Gregorian calendar is being used more frequently

法的根拠もあるので、今後も元号使用は続くだろう／As there is also a legal basis for it, the use of era names will likely continue in the future.

了／end