

A photograph of a Japanese castle in winter, covered in snow. The scene features a stone wall on the left, a bridge with a balustrade in the middle, and traditional Japanese buildings on the right. The sky is overcast and snowy.

The History of Japan's Era Name Square Ligatures

Dr Ken Lunde | Chief Type Architect-At-Large | Chez Lunde

Japan's Modern Era Names & Their Square Ligatures

Era Name	Ideographs	Square Ligature	Starting Date
<i>Meiji</i>	明治	明治	1868-10-23
<i>Taishō</i>	大正	大正	1912-07-30
<i>Shōwa</i>	昭和	昭和	1926-12-25
<i>Heisei</i>	平成	平成	1989-01-08
<i>Reiwa</i>	令和	令和	2019-05-01

Era Name Law—元号法—**1979**

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- オ これまでに元号又はおくり名として用いられたものでないこと。
 - ⑤ It must not be something that has been used until now as an era or posthumous name.
- カ 俗用されているものでないこと。
 - ⑥ It must not be something that is commonly used.

A Brief History of Standards

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- Japanese national standards
 - JIS C 6226 (now JIS X 0208)—established in **1978**
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- Japanese glyph set standards
 - Adobe-Japan1-7—established in **1992** as Adobe-Japan1-0

JIS C 6226-1978 (aka JIS78) Rows 2 & 13

Row 2	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
00	◆	□	■	△	▲	▽	▼	※	〒	→	←	↑	↓	＝					
20																			
40																			
60																			
80																			
Row 13	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
00																			
20																			
40																			
60																			
80																			

JIS C 6226-1978 Row 2 & NEC Row 13—1982

Row 2	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	
00	◆	□	■	△	▲	▽	▼	※	〒	→	←	↑	↓	＝						
20																				
40																				
60																				
80																				
Row 13	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	
00	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨	⑩	⑪	⑫	⑬	⑭	⑮	⑯	⑰	⑱	⑲	
20	㉔	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	ミリ	キロ	センチ	メートル	グラム	トン	アル	ヘクタール	
40	リットル	ワット	カロリー	ドル	セント	ミリバル	ページ	mm	cm	km	mg	kg	cc	m ²						
60				”	”	No.	K.K.	TEL	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ	Ⓕ	Ⓖ	Ⓗ	Ⓙ	明治	大正	昭和
80	≡	≡	∫	ℳ	Σ	√	⊥	∠	└	△	∴	∩	∪							

JIS C 6226-1983 (aka JIS83) Row 2 & NEC Row 13

Row 2	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
00	◆	□	■	△	▲	▽	▼	※	〒	→	←	↑	↓	＝					
20						∈	∋	⊆	⊇	⊂	⊃	∪	∩						
40		∧	∨	¬	⇒	⇔	∀	∃											
60	∠	⊥	∩	∂	∇	≡	≐	≪	≫	√	∞	∞	∴	∫	∫∫				
80		Å	%	#	♭	♪	†	‡	¶										○
Row 13	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
00	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨	⑩	⑪	⑫	⑬	⑭	⑮	⑯	⑰	⑱	⑲
20	⑳	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	ミリ	キロ	センチ	メートル	グラム	トン	アル	ヘクタール
40	リットル	ワット	カロリ	ドル	セント	ミリバル	ペーシ	mm	cm	km	mg	kg	cc	m ²					
60				”	”	No.	K.K.	TEL	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ	(株)	(有)	(代)	明治	大正	昭和
80	≐	≡	∫	ℳ	Σ	√	⊥	∠	└	△	∴	∩	∪						

The Heisei Era

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- Began on **1989-01-08**
- The use of NEC Row 13 in Microsoft and Apple OSes set a precedent to encode 平成
- Two unassigned code points were equal-distance from 明治, 大正, and 昭和: 13-63 & 13-93
- Ended on **2019-04-30**

JIS X 0208-1990 (aka JIS90) Row 2 & Microsoft/NEC Row 13—1992

Row 2	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
00	◆	□	■	△	▲	▽	▼	※	〒	→	←	↑	↓	＝					
20						∈	∋	⊆	⊇	⊂	⊃	∪	∩						
40		∧	∨	¬	⇒	⇔	∀	∃											
60	∠	⊥	⌒	∂	∇	≡	≐	≪	≫	√	∞	∞	∴	∫	∫∫				
80		Å	%	#	♭	♪	†	‡	¶					○					

Row 13	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
00	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨	⑩	⑪	⑫	⑬	⑭	⑮	⑯	⑰	⑱	⑲
20	㊿	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	ミリ	キロ	センチ	メートル	グラム	トン	アー	ヘク
40	リットル	ワット	カロリー	ドル	セント	パーセント	ミリバル	ペー	mm	cm	km	mg	kg	cc	m ²				
60			平成	”	”	No.	K.K.	TEL	上	中	下	左	右	(株)	(有)	(代)	明治	大正	昭和
80	≐	≡	∫	∫	Σ	√	⊥	∠	L	△	∴	∩	∪						

Apple KanjiTalk7 Row 14—1992

Row 14	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
00	ミリ	センチ	メートル	キロ	キログラム	インチ	フィート	ヤード	アール	ヘクタール	グラム	キログラム	トン	リットル	ミリバル	ヘルツ	ワット	カロリ	ホン
20	セント	ドル	ペー	パー							アパート	コーポ	ハイ	ビル	マン				
40																			
60																			
80																			

明治	大正	昭和	平成
	株式	有限	財団
	会社	会社	法人

Unicode Version 1.0—**1991** & ISO/IEC 10646—**1993**

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- The first non-corporate character set standards to include Japan's era name square ligatures

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	U+3190	U+3191	U+3192	U+3193
Unicode Preview—1990	明治	大正	昭和	平成

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Unicode Preview—1990	U+3190	U+3191	U+3192	U+3193
	明治	大正	昭和	平成

Unicode Version 1.0 & ISO/IEC 10646-1:1993	U+337B	U+337C	U+337D	U+337E
	平成	昭和	大正	明治

JIS X 0213:**2000** (aka JIS2000)

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 - (Technically, JIS X 0221-**1995**—equivalent to ISO/IEC 10646-1:**1993**—was the first JIS standard to include them)

JIS X 0213:2000 Rows 2 & 13

Row 2	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	
00	◆	□	■	△	▲	▽	▼	※	〒	→	←	↑	↓	＝	'	"	-	~	/	
20	↷	↶	↷	◻	↶	↷	∈	∋	⊆	⊇	⊂	⊃	∪	∩	∄	∅	⊄	⊅	∉	
40	π	≠	∧	∨	¬	⇒	⇔	∀	∃	⊕	⊖	⊗	//	≠	(())	{ }	[]	【 】		
60	∠	⊥	⌒	∂	∇	≡	≐	≪	≫	√	∞	∞	∴	∫	∫	≠	≈	≅	≈	≤
80	≧	↔	Å	%	#	♭	♯	†	‡	♩	♪	♫	♪	○						

Row 13	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19		
00	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨	⑩	⑪	⑫	⑬	⑭	⑮	⑯	⑰	⑱	⑲		
20	㊿	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	ミリ	キロ	センチ	メートル	グラム	トン	アー	ヘク	ター
40	リットル	ワット	カロリ	ドル	セント	パーセント	ミリバル	ペー	mm	cm	km	mg	kg	cc	m ²	XII					
60			平成	ニ	ニ	No.	K.K.	TEL	上	中	下	左	右	(株)	(有)	(代)	明治	大正	昭和		
80	×	×	×	♫	×	×	×	×	┌	△	×	×	×	◆	☞						

Adobe-Japan1-0—**1992**

- Japan's three original era name square ligatures were included in Supplement 0—**1992**
 - CIDs 7621 through 7623—明治, 大正, and 昭和

Adobe-Japan1-1—**1993**

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- The one for *Heisei* was added in Supplement 1—**1993**
 - CID+8323—平成

Adobe-Japan1-4—2000

- Japan’s three original era name square ligatures were included in Supplement 0—**1992**
 - CIDs 7621 through 7623—明治, 大正, and 昭和
- The one for *Heisei* was added in Supplement 1—**1993**
 - CID+8323—平成
- Vertical forms for all four era name square ligatures were added in Supplement 4—**2000**
 - CIDs 12041 through 12044—翌, 杳, 翳, and 叢
 - First implemented by the original Hong Kong-based Fontworks in the **1990s**
 - Referenced in Table 2 of UAX #50 (*Unicode Vertical Text Layout*)
 - Japanese fonts do not universally support the vertical forms—their use in vertical layout is optional

Japan's Era Name Square Ligatures—Horizontal vs Vertical

Era Name	Ideographs	Horizontal	Vertical	Unicode
<i>Meiji</i>	明治	明治 7621	𠄎 12041	U+337E
<i>Taishō</i>	大正	大正 7622	𠄎 12042	U+337D
<i>Shōwa</i>	昭和	昭和 7623	𠄎 12043	U+337C
<i>Heisei</i>	平成	平成 8323	𠄎 12044	U+337B

2019-04-01 Announcement

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- The two kanji, 令 (*rei*) and 和 (*wa*), were selected to represent Japan's new era name



2019-04-01 Announcement

- The two kanji, 令 (*rei*) and 和 (*wa*), were selected to represent Japan's new era name
- And then the work began...

Pre **2019-04-01** Activities

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- The code point U+32FF was reserved at UTC #154 on **2018-01-22**
 - The closest unassigned code point to U+337B 平成 through U+337E 明治

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 - The closest unassigned code point to U+337B 平成 through U+337E 明治
- The Adobe-Japan1-7 CMap resources were released on **2018-07-30**
 - CIDs 23058 and 23059 were reserved
 - U+32FF maps to CID+23058
 - CID+23059 is the vertical glyph

Pre **2019-04-01** Activities

- The code point U+32FF was reserved at UTC #154 on **2018-01-22**
 - The closest unassigned code point to U+337B 平成 through U+337E 明治
- The Adobe-Japan1-7 CMap resources were released on **2018-07-30**
 - CIDs 23058 and 23059 were reserved
 - U+32FF maps to CID+23058
 - CID+23059 is the vertical glyph
- Updated *Adobe-Japan1-UCS2* ToUnicode mapping resource was released on **2018-07-30**

Post **2019-04-01** Activities

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- The Adobe-Japan1-7 specification was published on **2019-04-01**

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フォントの日 = Font Day

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フォン = 4 ト = 10

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フォントの日 = April 10

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ポツキーの日 = Pocky Day

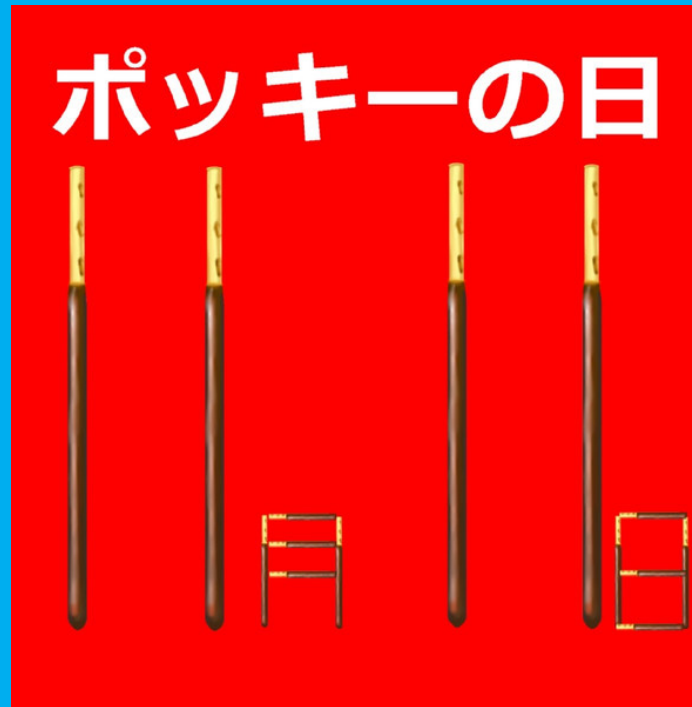
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ポツキーの日 = November 11

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 - Only U+32FF was added
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- Google's Android Q Beta 4 was released in **June of 2019**

JIS X 0213 Revision?

JIS X 0213 Revision?

Row 13	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	
00	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨	⑩	⑪	⑫	⑬	⑭	⑮	⑯	⑰	⑱	⑲	
20	㉔	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	ミリ	キロ	センチ	メートル	グラム	トン	アル	ヘクタール
40	リットル	ワット	カロリ	ドル	セント	パーセント	ミリ	ペー	mm	cm	km	mg	kg	cc	m ²	XII				
60		令和	平成	ニ	ニ	No.	K.K.	TEL	上	中	下	左	右	(株)	(有)	(代)	明治	大正	昭和	
80			♩					└	△				◆◆	☞						

JIS X 0213 Revision?

Row 13	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	
00	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨	⑩	⑪	⑫	⑬	⑭	⑮	⑯	⑰	⑱	⑲	
20	㉔	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	ミリ	キロ	センチ	メートル	グラム	トン	アール	ヘクタール
40	リットル	ワット	カロリ	ドル	セント	パーセント	ミリバル	ペーシ	mm	cm	km	mg	kg	cc	m ²	XII				
60		令和	平成	ニ	ニ	No.	K.K.	TEL	上	中	下	左	右	(株)	(有)	(代)	明治	大正	昭和	
80			♩						└	△			❖	☞						



Summary

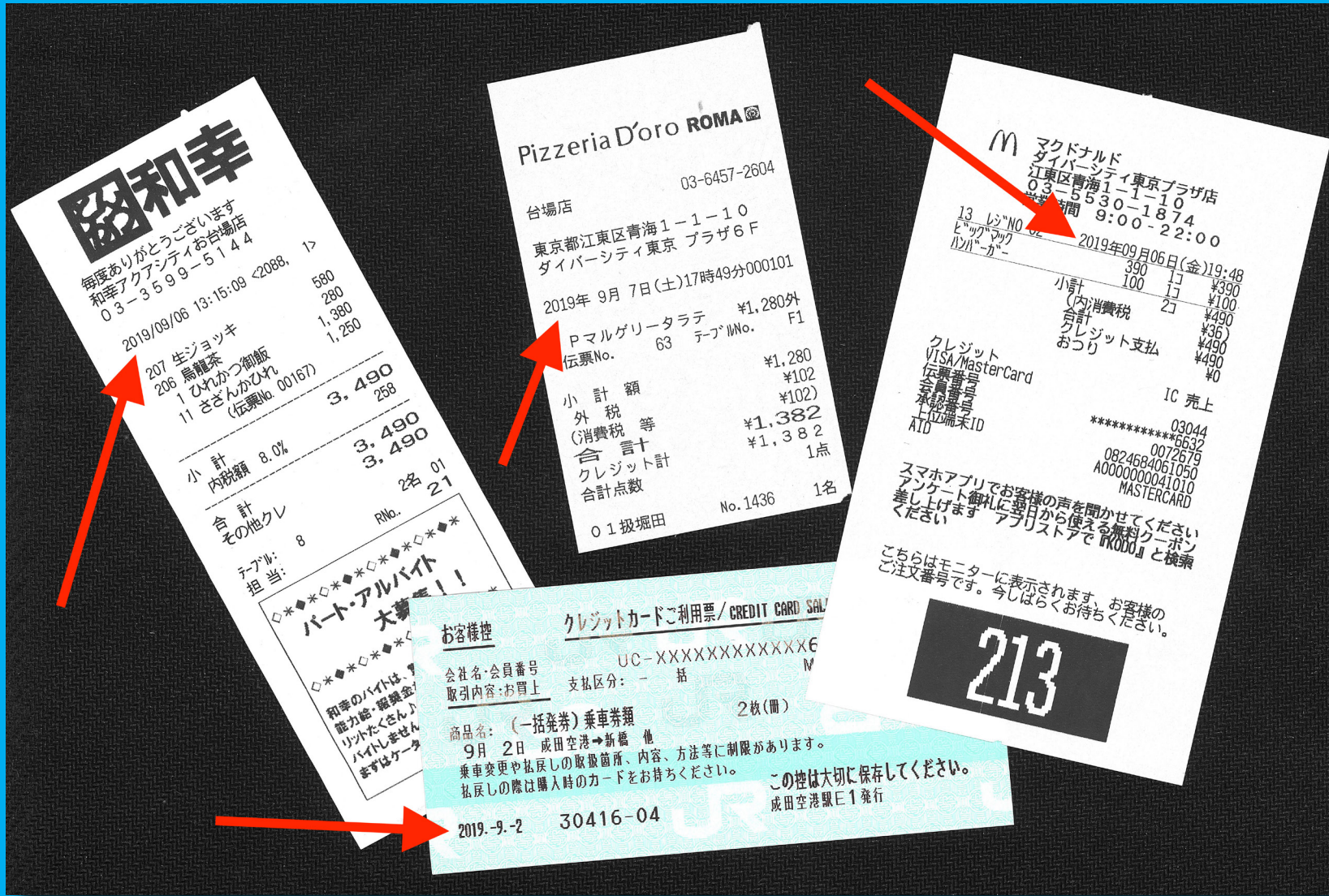
Era Name	Ideographs	Horizontal	Vertical	Unicode
<i>Meiji</i>	明治	明治 7621	𠩺 12041	U+337E (1.0)
<i>Taishō</i>	大正	大正 7622	𠩻 12042	U+337D (1.0)
<i>Shōwa</i>	昭和	昭和 7623	𠩼 12043	U+337C (1.0)
<i>Heisei</i>	平成	平成 8323	𠩽 12044	U+337B (1.0)
<i>Reiwa</i>	令和	令和 23058	𠩾 23059	U+32FF (12.1)

Unicorns...

Unicorns...



Unicorns...



Unicorns...



Unicorns...



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 - [Mapping Resources for PDF](#) (GitHub)
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 - [Preparing for May 1, 2019](#)
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 - [Adobe-Japan1-7 Published!](#)

