





This period saw the formal restoration of imperial rule on 4 January 1868, ending 265 years of rule by the Tokugawa Shogunate. Strictly speaking, this consists of several periods: the Meiji Period (1868-1912), which saw Japan transform into a modern industrial nation; the Taisho and Early Showa Period (1912-1945), which saw Japan extend its power over much of China and the Pacific; and finally the Post-War Period.

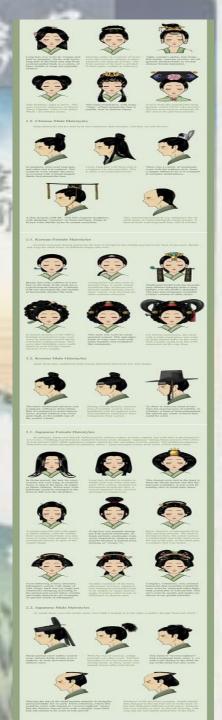
Japanese emperors were more often known by their personal names even after death than those which they were given upon their deaths, so official names are shown here in parenthesis. Inside Japan itself, such a use of personal names would be considered impolite.

(Additional information from A Concise History of Modern Korea: From the Late Nineteenth Century to the Present, Michael J Seth.)

1867 - 1912 Mutsuhito (Meiji)







Kabuki is a style of traditional Japanese theater that includes music, dance, and drama. First performed by females, after 1629 only male actors could take part in Kabuki, and they played both the male and female characters. Kabuki characters are often drawn from Japanese folklore, and a major part of the Kabuki performance is the dramatic makeup worn by the actors. This makeup is applied heavily to create a brightly painted mask that uses colors in symbolic ways to indicate the age, gender, and class of each character, as well as their moods and personalities.

The white face creates a dramatic look onstage, and many historians believe that the white faces were more easily seen in the centuries before stages were lit with electricity. On this white face, red and black lines are used to outline the eyes and mouth, which are also shaped differently for male and female characters. Kumadori is made up of dramatic lines and shapes applied in different colors, each representing different qualities. The most commonly used colors are dark red, which represents anger, passion, or cruelty, and dark blue, which represents sadness or depression. Other common colors are pink, representing youth or cheerfulness; light blue or green, representing calm; purple for nobility; brown for selfishness; and black for fear.

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