

## Speeches and Statements by the Prime Minister

### On the New Era Name "Reiwa"

April 1, 2019

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Statement by Prime Minister Abe

April 1, 2019

[Provisional translation]

Today, a Cabinet decision was taken on a Cabinet Order to change the name of the era.

The new era name is "Reiwa."

This was taken from wording appearing in the Manyoshu: "In this auspicious month of early spring, the weather is fine and the wind gentle. The plum blossoms open like powder before a mirror while the orchids give off the sweet scent of a sachet." Moreover, this name "Reiwa" includes the meaning of culture coming into being and flourishing when people bring their hearts and minds together in a beautiful manner.

The Manyoshu is Japan's oldest poetry anthology, compiled more than 1,200 years ago. It is also a Japanese work containing poems composed by people from a wide range of strata in society, including not only Emperors, Imperial Family members, and nobility, but also soldiers and farmers, and symbolizes Japan's rich national culture and long-established traditions.

History from time immemorial, highly respectable culture, and natural beauty unique to each of our four seasons. We will pass down these national characteristics of Japan firmly to the next era. Just as the plum blossoms announce the arrival of spring after the harsh cold of winter and bloom splendidly in all their glory, all Japanese will be able to make their own blossoms come into full bloom, together with their hopes for tomorrow. We decided on "Reiwa" with the hope that Japan will be just such a nation. On peaceful days when we can foster culture and appreciate natural beauty, full of heartfelt gratitude, we will together with the Japanese people carve out a new era that is brimming with hope. In deciding on the new era name, we renewed our determination to do this.

On May 1, His Imperial Highness the Crown Prince will accede to the Imperial throne, and this new era name will be used from that day forward. I ask for the understanding and cooperation of the people on this. The government is taking all possible measures to prepare for this historic succession to the Imperial throne from a living Emperor -- the first such instance in approximately 200 years -- to take place smoothly, and for the Japanese people to celebrate the day with one accord.

Era names have, together with the long-standing tradition of the Imperial Household and a profound wish for the peace and security of the nation and the well-being of the people, woven together the history of our nation that spans almost 1,400 years. Era names are also integrated into the hearts and minds of the Japanese and support the Japanese people's inner sense of unity. It is my sincere wish that this new era name will also be widely accepted by the public and take root deeply within the daily lives of the Japanese people.