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On February 7th, a special lecture under the theme, “The Imperial Era Name is Changing! Uncovering Japanese Modern History and Imperialism from *Yase-no-doji* to *Mori Ogai*” took place for the 15th symposium of the Japanese Civilization Institute. A heated discussion took place between journalist and nonfiction writer Satoru Ishido, NewsPicks CCO and NewsPicks Studios CEO Norihiko Sasaki and Naoki Inose, director of the Japanese Civilization Institute. Following the announcement of the new gengo (Imperial era name) on April 1, a new era will start on May 1 followed by an enthronement ceremony of the new Emperor. This symposium took place immediately before these events, providing an opportunity to think about the historical meaning of gengo and about Japan. Here is an extract of the event. (Reprinted from “*Shukan Dokushojin*,” April 5, 2019, No. 8284 & Web Dokushojin)



## A Report on Our 15th Symposium

# “The Imperial Era Name is Changing!”

## Uncovering Japanese Modern History and Imperialism from *Yase-no-doji* to *Mori Ogai*”

**Norihiko Sasaki vs. Satoru Ishido vs. Naoki Inose**

### Abdication of the Emperor and the Olympics

**Inose:** It was in the summer of 2016 that the Heisei Emperor indicated to the public, that he had intentions of abdicating. The main reason was because he was over 80 and was getting old, and having had two surgeries, was finding it difficult to undergo heavy duties and serving as

a symbol. In his comment were the words, “based on the rules of the Imperial family, when an Emperor passes away, heavy mourning services will take place every day over two months followed by events related to funeral rites that lasts over a year.” I think that this is an important factor that is behind the reason as to why the Emperor is abdicating on this occasion. When we look back at when the Showa era ended, we were notified of Showa

Emperor’s sickness in September 1988. The Seoul Olympics were taking place at the time, but many TV stations refrained from broadcasting live.

When the Great East Japan Earthquake happened in 2011, no Hana-mi took place. It wasn’t surprising considering nearly 20,000 people lost their lives in that earthquake. I was vice governor of Tokyo at the time, but after a thorough discussion, we canceled the Sumida-gawa



Naoki Inose

Fireworks Festival. 2011 was a year in which the whole country mourned.

In 2020, Japan will be celebrating an Olympic mood. I think the Emperor thought about the possibilities of public restraint if he were to pass away around this time, thus considered abdication. He wanted to avoid the rituals that were to follow his death, including the change of the era name and the enthronement of the new Emperor, overlapping with the ceremonial mood of the Olympics.

A funeral of the Emperor is called “*go-taiso*.” The Emperors of Meiji, Taisho, and Showa were all covered in vermillion. The color “*shu*” as of “*shuniku* (vermillion ink-pad).” The Meiji Emperor was buried in *Fushimi-Momoyama-no-Misasagi* (mausoleum), while the Emperors of Taisho and Showa were buried in *Musashino-no-Misasagi* (mausoleum). People of Yase village of Sakyo-ku, Kyoto today, were the ones in charge of carrying the Emperor’s coffin to the Imperial mausoleums when a member of the Imperial family passed away.

In 1981, I interviewed Yase village, met the people who were known as “*Yase-no-doji*” and wrote the book “*Tenno-no Kageboshi* (A Silhouette of the Emperor).” Until then, they were known as legendary people, which Yanagida Kunio wrote in his book, “these people were ‘de-

scendants of *oni* (demons),” whom Buddhist monk Saicho —founder of Tendai sect of Buddhism atop Mount Hieizan—used for undertaking odd jobs at Enryakuji Temple.

Over 60 years have passed from Taisho to when the Showa Emperor passed away, and Imperial mourning and *Yase-no-doji* were completely forgotten. However, people learned the presence of these people who had these specialized roles through my book, and traditional rituals took place when the Showa Emperor passed away. On the occasion, the Imperial Guards dressed as *Yase-no-doji* carried the coffin and the chairman of the *Yase-no-doji* group conducted the ritual and walked by its side with the other members.

There is a legend in Yase village that *Yase-no-doji* carried Godaigo Emperor on a *mikoshi* (portable shrine) and carried him across Mount Hieizan when Ashikaga Takauji (first shogun of the Ashikaga Shogunate) cornered him. Due to this favor and service, Yase village has been exempted from taxation for a long period of time.

People of Yase village sold firewood for a living. There was very little land for growing crop in Yase village, so people went inside the mountains near Mount Hieizan and gathered firewood and sold it on the streets of Kyoto. If you walk about 10 kilometers from Yase, you reach Demachi-yanagi located at the end of Sakyo-ku in Kyoto City. If you go further from Yase, there’s Ohara. Women of Yase and Ohara who carried firewood to sell them in Kyoto were called *Ohara-onnna* or *Koharame*. In other words, Yase and Ohara were both bases for fuel. At the same time, people of Yase gained additional profit through carrying the Emperor’s coffin. Plus, they were exempted from taxation for the small amount of land they had to grow rice. This kind of exceptional village truly existed.

The other day, Mr. Ishido was ac-

tually in Yase, so let’s have him give a report on what Yase is like today.

## A report on Yase Village

**Ishido:** I went to Yase on January 28th. There is a bus that takes you there from Demachi-yanagi, but there are only one or two buses running in an hour. It is about 20 minutes by subway from Kyoto Station to Kokusai-Kaikan, the last stop. From there, it’s about 20-30 minutes by taxi.

**Inose:** Yase Station was made in the Taisho Era. Now it’s changed its name to Yase Hieizan-guchi Station. It exists at the far end of Yase Village. Also, a cable car that climbs up Mount Hieizan was built in the Taisho Era. It’s a kind of place where you visit by car.

**Ishido:** The year’s first Buddhism prayers were offered when I visited the village. By chanting prayers, people offer a memorial service to repose the people who have passed away. Who do the people of Yase think of? The Emperors ranging from Godaigo Emperor to Showa Emperor, and other people belonging to the Imperial family whom they have related to. After the war, exemption from taxation was abolished in Yase and the village was integrated into the system of a legislative nation, but customs different from others, still remain.

Recently, the village has become a tourist site with signs that introduce Yase’s *Kama-buro* (steam bath), Yase Tenmangu Shrine and *Shamen Chiodori* (a dance that celebrates the exemption of tax). Since Mr. Inose wrote “*Tenno-no Kageboshi*,” historical research has been pursued and documents that reveal the reality of these legendary *Yase-no-doji* have been created. Today, *Yase-no-doji* have become one of the nation’s im-

portant cultural properties. An archive museum in Kyoto today, takes care of every material about them, including their papers and Buddhism statues of very old times. The story of *Kama-buro* comes from a bath that the people of Yase Village provided to Oamano-Oji (Tenmu Emperor later on) when he was wounded from an arrow during the *Jinshin-no-ran* (War of Jinshin, 672), which healed him.

Shamen Chiodori is a dance that celebrates the exemption of tax put forth by the Emperor. When Empress Michiko saw the dance in August 2004, she read a tanka poem, which has become a monument.

*Okimi-no, Miyuki Iwao-to Yase-no-doji, Odomi-Kurotaki, Tsuki Wakaki-yoni*

(*Yase-no-doji* performs a dance on the night of a young moon, to celebrate the visiting of the Emperor)

The event is such an honor for these people, that they make a monument of the poem.

Yase's main industry is forestry. Their tradition to live with the mountains hasn't changed.

Chairman of the *Yase-no-doji* group, Katsutaro Tamagawa (78) said that the meaning of their existence lies in the fact that they can respect and serve the Imperial family. There's no point in their existence as a group if they forget that gratitude and respect. After the war, the Emperor—who was a God up until then—announced that he was, in fact, a human. The people of Japan recognize the Emperor and the Imperial family differently before and after the war. However, the people of Yase don't seem to have that distinction. They seem to have a vision toward Imperialism that transcends ideology.

**Inose:** Maybe that's the case mental wise, but they didn't have to pay tax before the war whereas after the war

they were obliged to pay tax under the regulation of the modern government, so there's a big difference there. I'm surprised that they got away with not paying tax right up until the war. When they entered Meiji, the fact that they were receiving the exemption for tax became an issue. People stressed that there shouldn't be an exception under a modern nation. Therefore, the Imperial Household paid their tax for them. In return, the people of Yase promised that they would carry the coffin of the Imperial family when they passed away. They made a contract to receive a certain amount of money when they do so. It wasn't only because they had to pass down the tradition that the people of Yase took this very seriously, but also because money was involved in the process too.

## A new tradition caused by the restoration

**Ishido:** When the era changed to Meiji and the Emperor relocated the Imperial Palace to Tokyo, the people of Yase were worried that their position would change. They went to meet government officials like Iwakura Tomomi to request that they receive the same kind of treatment. On the other hand, it was convenient for the nation too, to have people who passed down such tradition.

A recent research shows that the relationship between Yase and the Imperial family changed drastically in the Meiji Era. For although *Yase-no-doji* are known to be people who passed down the tradition, they didn't necessarily carry all of the Emperor's coffins after Godaigo Emperor. It was actually a ritual that was built during the Meiji Era.

**Inose:** The Meiji Era saw the resto-



Norihiko Sasaki

ration of the Imperial rule. Emperors are buried in mausoleums from the Meiji Era. In the Edo Era, they were cremated.

**Ishido:** So, they altered the tradition at that point. The Imperial Household rediscovered *Yase-no-doji* when they were restructuring everything.

**Inose:** If it were a cremation, it's light so they didn't need dozens of people to carry the coffins. They don't need mausoleums either. Emperors of the Edo Era were buried in the Imperial graves of Sennyuji Temple in Kyoto. Momoyama Mausoleum in which Emperor Meiji was buried, copied tumulus of ancient times. With the restoration of the Imperial rule, graves of Emperors went back to ancient times. Other words, *Yase-no-doji* carrying coffins of Emperors soaked in vermilion was a form of the new tradition created in the modern era.

In addition to this, the people of Yase seemed to have done other work inside the Imperial Household. What I heard when I did an interview in 1981, was that they prepared baths for the Emperors. There were 8 pails containing very hot water, 8 pails with fairly hot water, and 8 pails with cold water lined in a row. Before court ladies, they had to put them in the cypress bath to prepare for the Emperor. Also, there was a job for toilets called "*otou*." After the



Satoru Ishido

Emperor relives himself, they pulled the drawers underneath the toilets, which had a key, and took the feces to the court physicians. Both these jobs and the role of carrying the Emperor's coffin are no doubt dirty works. However, at the same time, they are very important jobs that are linked to the Emperor's life. They are not easy jobs you can ask anyone to do. In order to these jobs, it is said that there were about 10 *Yase-no-doji* working at the Imperial Palace constantly. Yase is a village with about 100 to 200 chiefs, so that means 1 out of 10 households work in public services. Plus, there was extra work of carrying the coffin of the Emperor during the Imperial funeral in which case a few hundred people cooperated. I think there still is a certain number of people working inside the Imperial Household.

**Ishido:** Godaigo Emperor died on August 16th according to the lunar calendar, which is around September 16 of the solar calendar. There is still a ritual in which people of Yase dress in official outfits in the morning and afternoon to pray toward gosho-dani, where Godaigo Emperor rested for a while during his flee from Ashikaga Takauji. This shows how much Godaigo Emperor who lived during the Nanboku-cho Period (1336-1392) and Kamakura Period (1185-1333) is real to the people of Yase and how much closer

they have lived with the Imperial family.

**Inose:** Imperialism is now something of the legend. When the Showa Emperor died, they called on the *Yase-no-doji* and put forth the ritual. *Yase-no-doji* will probably be called upon again next time. This is how tradition is continued and passed down to the next generation.

At the time, when I heard that there was a village called Yase in Kyoto, I just went but had no clue as to where to find *Yase-no-doji*. So, I asked a man passing by, "Where can I find *Yase-no-doji*?" And he answered, "I'm one of them." I visited his house, and he showed me a thick, handwritten document called "Yase Village Record." The record was kept from Meiji 5 (1872) until before the war. After graduating from the Higher Normal School, he served as a local headmaster. He carried the coffin of Taisho Emperor when he passed away. Also, he introduced me to another person who had carried both the coffin of Meiji Emperor and Taisho Emperor. I was able to hear several stories, but it seemed that the role of *Yase-no-doji* grew bigger after the Meiji Era.

## Mori Ogai's "A study on Era names"

**Sasaki:** By the way, today's symposium's title is "The Imperial Era Name is Changing!" Let's hear a little more about some of the basic details like the meaning of gengo and why gengo is more important than the Christian Era?

**Ishido:** We talked about the restoration of the Imperial rule, but I think that actually relates to what gengo really means. The issue of Imperialism after Meiji and the role of gengo after Meiji is inseparable.

**Inose:** The two are connected at a

fundamental level, in the following sense; that tradition was restored after the modern era. One gengo for one Emperor was applied from Meiji, see. Emperor Konmei—the Emperor before Emperor Meiji—changed the gengo up to seven times. Before Meiji it was Keio, and before that was Genji, Ansei....etc. Other words, Imperialism of the modern era is not necessarily the same as the tradition that has been continuously passed down.

**Sasaki:** We have to look at the past to know the future. I personally have an interest in what kind of era we're heading from here. How do you think the next era after Heisei will find its position in history?

**Inose:** Before we go on to that, we need to know what kind of era Meiji was. I will repeat again; modernism was not a feudalistic society. It was brought upon by the restoration of the Imperial rule. It was from Emperor Meiji that one era name was applied for one Emperor. Other words, on the outside, the modern nation took a form of absolute sovereignty. Sovereignty dominates time so when an Emperor dies, the time changes. That kind of framework was built when they formed a modern nation.

When we look back today, the nation that was built in Meiji looks like a great nation, but it was, in fact, an unstable empire that was hastily made. The constitution was rushed and established in 1889. They had to deal in the Sino-Japanese War and the Russo-Japanese War in a chaotic state. The era was never stable.

Writer Mori Ogai, who lived during the eras of Meiji and Taisho, tackled the gengo issues 2 or 3 years before he died. He knew they had to come up with a new gengo, but he found out that they rushed to make one in the Meiji Era. Ogai researched all the gengo before Taika (the first gengo, 645-650). It wasn't just Japan



that used gengo, so he researched all the surrounding Asian countries too. He put it in a list, which took up 270 pages of Imperial Household's writing paper. Through this research, he found out that "Taisho" was actually used in Anan, Vietnam and "Meiji" was used in old-time China.

Mori Ogai was furious that they didn't even research era names of the past. From here onwards, he thought they must use era names that haven't been used before.

Two characters are selected from Shinsho Gokyo (Four Books and Five Classics of Confucianism) to make a gengo. It's something very formal so it should be absolute, thought Ogai.

The last work of Ogai was the thesis, "Gengo-ko" (A study on Era names). He leaves the rest to Masuzo Yoshida, his subordinate at the Imperial Household Agency and dies in 1922. The last proposals for the era name were written on the Imperial Household's manuscript paper and were kept in Yoshida's home.

Mori Ogai noted that "formality is the nation's key to success" which I think is important. Because I think today, only the rational sides of gengo are being discussed.

**Sasaki:** There's a lot of opinions that the Christian calendar is more efficient, and there is no longer need of gengo.

**Inose:** I think even for people who think they are rational, I don't think their lives are necessarily rational to every extent. For example, why do people have priests at their weddings? Why do they have monks at funerals site prayers they don't understand at all but feel thankful all the same? And why do people work a whole year to produce a short-term festival like Yamagasa of Fukuoka or Danjiri of Kishiwada, even though they don't receive any income? People depend on things that are irrational in their lives. Similarly,

I think nations have "*keicho*" (celebrations and condolences).

"So, what is keicho for a nation?" questioned Ogai. At the basis of "*Gengo-ko*" lied the theory that mythologies are not necessarily historical. For example, Emperor Jinmu, who is said to be the first Emperor, did not exist. If you actually calculate, you'll realize that he lived until 127, which is impossible. Therefore, Ogai discovers; perhaps the unbroken line of Emperors from Emperor Jinmu is a big, whole lie.

The graves of Emperor Jinmu and his Empress lie in Kashihara Jingu in Nara Prefecture, but it was built after the modern state alike the Nintoku Mausoleum. In order to group together 300 countries into one, they needed a national flag and a national song. The nation just about existed bringing these things together, and Mori Ogai had a sense of crisis that the nation will crumble if they lose one part of it. In fact, he was thinking about gengo from a viewpoint of building a country.

## What is Gengo? The history of the unbroken line of Emperors and the theory of "as if."

**Inose:** We know that the unbroken line of Emperors from Emperor Jinmu is a lie. That being said, how should we understand the unbroken line of Emperors? Emperor Tenji, "*Kojiki*" (oldest extant chronicle in Japan) and "*Nihon Shoki*" (oldest official history of Japan) existed around 600-700. There are historical facts around this time, and we have 1,300 years of history from that time up until now. However, right before WWII, in 1915, they announced an Imperial Era of 2,600 years, which is double the years of historical facts. The Christian calen-

dar counts 1940 years right after Jesus was born, so the number 2,600 can't be right. We're faced with the question of how are we going to position a nation in history of lies?

At this point, Ogai writes an essay entitled "*kano-youmi*" (as if)."

**Ishido:** It's about acting "as if" it's there.

**Inose:** A son who has learned history in Germany argues to his father that Japanese history is not true. His father starts avoiding deep discussions with his son. The son is at loss and continues to struggle when he hears his friends say "Als Ob" and "Comme si," which means "as if." Other words, it may be false, but it's sometimes necessary to act "as if" it is like that.

**Ishido:** Ogai himself studied in Germany and read Western history. He's also a doctor so he has scientific and rational approaches to facts. However, in order to build a modern nation, you have to revive the tradition. Though a fabricated tradition it may seem, there was the need to build an image of Emperor Meiji standing atop the Japanese government structure and restructure a history that links to that. In the end, Ogai understands that it is important to behave "as if it is like that" or else modernism would not move forward.

**Inose:** While intellectuals like Ogai came up with a solution after various sufferings, many people today who take gengo for granted, say that it's not necessary because it's irrational. Isn't this kind of theory extremely shallow?

This is off the subject but, I think the U.S. Presidential Elections is a type of civil war that is fought over a year. The American Civil War lasted 4 years in the past, in which 1 out of 4 grown men lost their lives. Legitimate power was born after the great

Civil War, which is why the Presidential Elections imitated it and made the elections once in every 4 years. It's a war of succession in which a new leader is selected every 4 years. Meanwhile, in Japan, a new Prime Minister is selected from the winning party, but outwardly it is the Emperor who gives him the approval, so legitimacy is established in that way. In the case of Japan, authority and power are divided. Gengo is something that symbolizes Japanese authority. Gengo exists together with the Emperor and authority is brought about by gengo.

**Ishido:** So gengo has the role of controlling space and time in a framework different from the Christian calendar. We ourselves don't care about gengo that much, but once people start telling us that "Heisei is ending" or "Heisei's last~ is approaching" all of a sudden you feel as if you have to do something. Isn't it weird that gengo is actually that much rooted in our lives?

**Inose:** Other words, the Emperor's body and the concept of time is connected. Of course, there's an exception this time because he's abdicating.

Originally, the Emperor's death meant the death of time in Japan. The change is gengo symbolized authority, which was up until now the meaning of "one-era-for-one-Emperor." In the case of Emperor Showa, they broadcasted the condition of his health every day until his death, giving reports on his blood pressure rate and melena. By going through these processes, one disappearance of a human flesh becomes a change of time in Japan.

## Emperor and eras, royalty and fools

**Sasaki:** What do you think will be reset when the era changes this time

around? We would like to know what kind of era is coming after Heisei.

**Inose:** Although we know that it is an image that has been built, the image of an Emperor often overlaps with the impression we get of that Era. Emperor Meiji was referred to as "Emperor the Great" because Japan won in the Sino-Japanese War and the Russo-Japanese War. In fact, Emperor Meiji was terrified of battling against Russia and opposed to the war. However, he got lucky and the country won.

Emperor Taisho was said to be physically and mentally weak. There's a legendary episode that he rolled up parchment into a shape of a telescope during the Diet, but this is also something that was created. There's only a slight difference between a King and a fool and in a way, these leaders are often like sacrifices. For example, there's a tradition for a prince to be sacrificed in order to maintain royal authority. Other words, Emperor Taisho served as a fool for Emperor Meiji. The more he played the fool, the more Emperor Meiji looked mighty. This light and shadow contrast is always associated with royal authority.

Taking this into consideration, I'm sure Empress Michiko suffered a lot of bullying when she joined the Imperial family too. This was presumably a sacrifice for Emperor Showa. In the U.K., Princess Diana was sacrificed and royalty was maintained. If we look back in time, there are people like *Susano-ono-mikoto* and *Yamato-takeruno-mikoto*—turbulent and vagabond princes who played the role of expelling incest and various forms of violence existing in our everyday lives. Vagabond princes carry terrible times on their backs and disappear. Thanks to these people who play the role of carrying the burden of informality, the legitimacy of royalty is protected. I think the royalty of a modern nation is al-

ways existing side by side with this mythology of sacrifices.

By the way, maybe Kei Komuro (Princess Mako's fiancé-to-be) is now becoming a kind of sacrifice now too.

**Ishido:** Reports on Princess Masako might be something close to that too.

**Inose:** You see, his Majesty the Emperor and Empress Michiko are truly very grand people.

See, the present Emperor is carrying a heavy history on his back. On 23rd December 1948, 7 war criminals including Tojo Hideki were executed. The GHQ executed these war criminals on the Crown Prince's 15th birthday. The present Emperor lives with the atonement for having had 3 million of his people killed in the Pacific War. Therefore, he continues to visit various sites including Peleliu Island of the Philippines to offer prayers with Empress Michiko. They are a perfect couple with no faults which is perhaps why "Prince of the Sea" (Kei Komuro) is being attacked so severely by the mass media.

**Ishido:** When the Crown Prince is enthroned, he will probably be compared to the Heisei Emperor. Do you think the next Emperor is expected to continue giving prayers to console the deceased with the history of atonement on his back?

**Inose:** It depends on how he's going to take that role.

**Sasaki:** Do you think in the future, the Emperor will be characterizing the nature of the country and its flow in Japan, despite it being a symbol?

**Inose:** When we summoned the Olympics, the existence of the Emperor was necessary to appeal to our country. In order to battle with oth-



er countries and win in the competition to host the Olympics, we needed to think about the heritage of this country. The fact that we were a modern, mature nation with a traditional Imperial Family, was crucial to appealing this country. So, I went to the Imperial Household Agency and negotiated. It's very hard to explain, but I think the Emperor and the Imperial Family represents the way we are as a country. The new gengo will be announced on April 1. I wonder how we're going to feel?

I talked about how each Emperor has an impression and a role. The next Emperor went and climbed a mountain on his own when Princess Masako fell ill, so the impression of him is "a man of patience."

**Ishido:** Following the greatness of his father, his sincerity may flourish in another direction.

**Inose:** The Heisei Emperor says he wishes to be cremated. That means he will not be soaked in vermilion. He says he doesn't want a mausoleum and wants to be in the same grave as the Empress. The Imperial Family is like the most authentic family to pursue ancestor worship, but today there are various types of burial such as *jumokuso* (burial in which a tree is planted instead of a tomb) and *sankotsu* (scattering ashes of the deceased). The changing of people's thoughts toward the way they regard funeral rites and ancestor worship seems to be affecting the way he feels. I think it is the role of the Emperor to transcend old values of the country, but there are presumably some changes that can't be helped that comes with the flow of time.

**Ishido:** Thinking about *Yase-no-doji* is a way to contemplate about modern Japan. This country was created

through rediscovering tradition and to some extent rebuilding it, and intellectuals like Mori Ogai have thought seriously about these issues. They realized that the tradition of this country was fake, but chose to accept it. Or in the case of Natsume Soseki, he chose to die as an individualist. Intellectuals of Meiji thought very serious about these issues.

Like you said, Mr. Inose, today we are faced with rational, transitory times, in which fictional thoughts are undesired. However, I'm sure people who are advocating rationalism are feeling things that can't be explained simply. That's why the phrase "Heisei's last~" has become so popular. Some are even saying "Heisei's last Christmas" (laugh)! Gengo is included so much in our lives that people make jokes about them. Whatever they say about the Emperor, most people have a common understanding that they can say things up until a certain point without

being imprudent. This is something that is worth mentioning.

Mr. Sasaki has been showing his concern as to what kind of Era will be coming next, but if you think rationally, it doesn't really matter in the realm of world history whether Heisei ends or not. But in this country, when you hear "Heisei," the majority of people think about the passing Era and the coming Era. There are many people who feel something changing upon the shifting of Eras. During that change, how are we to

contemplate the war we experienced and the consoling and reposing of the deceased? Or are we going to see a completely new value emerge? I look forward to what's coming ahead. In any rate, I'm sure there's probably going to be an uplifting feeling and a ceremonial mood with Golden Week, the changing of gengo and of course the Olympics. But the truth is, I think it's important how we're going to deal with things after all the festive events end.

**Inose:** The changing of the Era and the Olympics are going to come as a set, I think. It's going to be a time to flush away many occurrences, including natural disasters and the depression, but I sincerely hope it will provide us with the opportunity to think about the nation and its meaning.

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## The panelists

### Norihiko Sasaki

NewsPicks CCO/NewsPicks Studios CEO

Born in Fukuoka, 1979. After graduating from Keio University, Faculty of Policy Management, he acquired an MA in International Political Economy at Stanford University. He entered Toyo Keizai Inc. where he specialized in automobiles and IT. In November 2012, he became editor-in-chief of Toyokeizai Online. He moved to NewsPicks in July 2014. He has been working on his current job since 2018. His recent book is "Japan 3.0." Other books include, "*Beikoku-sei Erito-wa Hontoni Sugoinoka?*" (Are American Elites Really Great?) and "*Gonengo, Media-wa Kasegeruka?*" (Can the media make a profit 5 years from now?). He is also the co-author of "*Posuto Heisei-no Kyaria Senryaku*" (Career Strategies of Post Heisei).

### Satoru Ishido

Journalist, Non-fiction writer

Born in Tokyo, 1984. Entered Mainichi Newspapers Co. in 2006. He moved to BuzzFeed Japan in 2016 and took part in its launch. In April 2018, he becomes freelance. His first book, "*Risuku to Ikiru, Shisha to Ikiru*" (Living with risks, Living with the dead) was selected as "Best 3 books of 2017" of Yomiuri Newspaper Book Review.

### Naoki Inose

Author. Born in 1946. In 1986, he received the Souichi Ooya Nonfiction Award for his book "*Mikado no Shozo*" (Portrait of the Emperor)." In 1996, he received the Bungeishunju Readers' Award for his book "*Nipponkoku no Kenkyu*" (A Report on Japan)." In June 2002, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi appointed him to the Promotion Committee for the Privatization of the Four Highway-Related Public Corporations. He served as Tokyo Governor from December 2012 to December 2013. In December 2015, he became Special Advisor to Osaka City. His books include "*Showa 16-nen no Haisen*" (The Defeat in Showa 16), "*Persona—Mishima Yukio Den*" (Persona: The Story of Mishima Yukio) and "*Picaresque—Dazai Osamu Den*" (Picaresque: The Story of Dazai Osamu). Upcoming books include "*Kyushutsu*" (Rescue), "*Senso, Tenno, Kokka*" (War, Emperor, State), "*Seigi ni tsuite Kangaeyo*" (Let's Think about Justice), "*Minkei*" (Posse Man), "*Tokyo no Teki*" (Tokyo's Enemy) and in collaboration with Lully Miura, "*Kokumin Kokka no Riarizumu*" (Realism and the Nation-state).

Translation: Ayako Karino