



*Emperor Meiji, 1872, photograph by Uchida Kuichi, courtesy of Imperial Household Agency*

## The Symbol of Modern Japan

Emperor Meiji – his activities as a monarch of new times

Ewa Pałasz-Rutkowska, Poland

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*The Main Street of Brick Masonry in Ginza, Tokyo (Tokyo Ginza Yoro Renga Ishi-zukuri Shinzu), Meiji period, Utagawa Kuniteru II, courtesy of Tokyo Metropolitan Central Library Special Collections Room*

**Motivation** When I became a student at Japanese Studies, the history of Japan was already especially interesting to me. I wanted to understand how a country that drew from the outside world on numerous occasions, first from the East and later from the West, was able to retain its identity and cultural distinctiveness. By the time I became an academic Japanologist and historian, I was fascinated with the Meiji period (1868-1912) and with its emperor, Mutsuhito (1852-1912). After years of study I came to the conclusion that both the Emperor and the period of his reign was one of the most important in Japanese history. It was then, just after the overthrow of seven hundred years of power of the warrior class in 1868 and the restoration of imperial rule, that the process of modernization supported by Mutsuhito began; a process that despite inevitable mistakes was quick and successful.

I am constantly in awe of the fact, that in only twenty years it was possible to transform Japan from a technologically backward feudal nation isolated for two centuries into the first constitutional monarchy (1889) in Asia and, soon after that, a world power. All while preserving what was its *own* and culturally distinctive.

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*Resignation of the last shogun  
Murata Tanryo, courtesy of the Meiji  
Memorial Picture Gallery*



*Seated Emperor Meiji in  
imperial costume, 1872  
photograph by Uchida  
Kuichi, courtesy of the  
Imperial Household Agency*

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**Objective** Emperor Mutsuhito, posthumously called *Emperor Meiji*, became the symbol of reform and the new Japan. When he ascended to the throne in 1867 Japan was still ruled by the warrior class. He grew up surrounded by the ancient traditions of the Kyoto Palace in the company of ladies-in-waiting. Following the restoration of imperial rule by young *samurai* discontented with the shogunate, the young monarch adapted to a new role. He had a lot to learn in order to fit the new times.

My studies on the subject of the Emperor required many years of research in Japan. The role of the monarch in the modernizing process was not easy to understand. Meeting Japanese specialist and visiting places connected to Mutsuhito were especially valuable.

**Context** Mutsuhito's role in modernization was formative. As a diligent and ambitious ruler, he supported the most important, albeit difficult, reforms, and needed to persuade the Japanese people in their favor. This was achieved because they started to understand that the Emperor is the only rightful ruler, who represents all that is durable and unchanging in Japanese culture. The institution of the Emperor had endured for centuries, legalized in a state ruled by law and order in the 8th century; although for centuries the emperors had no power, it was they who ceded power to military commanders, the *shogun*. The Emperor also made his people realize the importance of continuity and cultural identity, which played a crucial role in ensuring Japan maintained its sovereignty.

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Emperor Meiji, with over 2,500 attendants, makes his entry into Edo in 1868, Tsukioka Yoshitoshi  
courtesy of Edo Tokyo Museum

The originators of the modernizing reforms in all areas of life were new politicians, mostly samurai who toppled the Tokugawa rule. These politicians became close and trusted advisers to Emperor Meiji. With the transfer of Japan's capital to Tokyo – the former capital, Kyoto, being associated with times when the Emperor had no power, the Emperor also moved his seat there. As an independent ruler, Mutsuhito was to govern the country, proclaim the most important reforms and promote progress. He had to change his image to fit the times. He accepted new responsibilities and adopted new norms of behavior: he stopped using white face make-up and dyeing his teeth black, started to wear western-style clothes – mostly military uniforms, ride on horseback, and eat western cuisine. He strove to gain knowledge of his country and the world, which was necessary for a modern leader. He regularly took part in government meetings and signed the most important decisions concerning the state. Without fail, he would appear in person during military maneuvers, and he often visited military units. He became a head of state revered by his people and respected by the West – a constitutional monarch and the supreme commander of the Japanese armed forces.

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*Tomioka Silk Mill, the first model factory established by the government during modernization, Utagawa Kuniteru II courtesy of the [National Diet Library](#)*



*Systematic education was introduced in 1872, Kobayashi Eitaku courtesy of the [National Institute for Educational Policy Research](#)*



*Enhancing military power was a central policy for maintaining sovereignty, Utagawa Kunitoshi, courtesy of [Edo Tokyo Museum](#)*

It was necessary, especially at the beginning of Mutsuhito's reign, for the Japanese people to realize who their ruler was, and why, and to strengthen the Emperor's authority. Therefore in the ideological sphere, the *divinity* of the Emperor as a direct descendant of the most important Shinto deity, Amaterasu goddess of the sun, was underlined. Whereas in the practical sphere, the Emperor needed to be visible, and Mutsuhito undertook numerous journeys around Japan. He familiarized himself with the specifics of different regions and the living conditions of local populaces, he met with local representatives and common folk, he visited municipal offices, schools, garrisons, factories, craftsmen's workshops, museums, exhibitions, and religious sites. The future of Japan as a modern nation was to be based on three pillars: industry, education and the military. Emperor Meiji's journeys made him a public figure, associated with the Empire and revered by his subjects, and there is rich proof of that in the places he visited: museums, halls of memory, commemorative plaques, stone obelisks, and commemorative stones with inscriptions honoring the Emperor, some with his poems. I have visited many such places, including those in Tsuruoka and Sakata in Yamagata Prefecture, and Imajo and Tsuruga in Fukui Prefecture.

I was not aware of the fact that there are so many of them in so many regions of Japan. Some were created when Mutsuhito was still alive, some after his death. Until 1948 there were more than 370 such places, and despite the fact that after World War II they were limited, many of them still exist to this day, and a number of them are marked as Cultural Properties. They were and still are important for the cultural heritage of the country, as they preserve the image of the ruler thanks to whom Japan became a strong and modern monarchy.

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*The stone engraved with a poem commemorating the Emperor's 1878 visit to Tsuruga, ©Ewa Pałasz-Rutkowska*



*The spot where Emperor Meiji stayed to rest in Imajo; site of the Meiji Pavilion, ©Ewa Pałasz-Rutkowska*



*Beach at Kehi Matsubara in Tsuruga, Fukui Prefecture ©Ewa Pałasz-Rutkowska*

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### Imajo and Tsuruga

During his journey around Hokuriku Region in 1878, Emperor Meiji stayed in Imajo Town, in a house belonging to Goto Kakuzaemon. Later, Tanaka Wakichi built the Meiji Pavilion, *Meijiden*, now a Tangible Cultural Property, on the same site. An obelisk and a stone bearing an inscription commemorating the event were placed there.

Another large inscribed stone can be found in Kehi Matsubara, in Tsuruga, where, during the same journey, the Emperor stopped to admire Wakasa Bay and a beautiful pine forest. The stone is engraved with a poem commemorating the visit; its author, Katsu Kaishu, was one of the creators of the modern Japanese navy.

I must add, that for me, just as for the Emperor, the view from that location was breathtaking, and in my opinion it is one of the most beautiful I have yet seen in Japan.



*Chido Museum, Tsuruoka, Yamagata Prefecture, ©Ewa Pałasz-Rutkowska*

### Chido Museum in Tsuruoka

Vast in scale, the former residence of Shonai Domain feudal lords, the Sakai clan, the Chido Museum is home to Meiji period buildings moved to Tsuruoka from neighboring areas. One of these, the earlier Nishitagawa District Office where the Emperor spent the night, *anzaisho*, during his journey around Tohoku Region and Hokkaido in 1881 is a Nationally Designated Important Cultural Property.

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*A stone pedestal in Sakata, Yamagata Prefecture, where the Emperor stayed for a night in 1881*

©Ewa Pałasz-Rutkowska



*Kokyu Library in Sakata, Yamagata Prefecture, former home of the Honma family collection, now displayed at the Sakata City Library, Nakamachi Branch*

©Sakata City Library

### **Sakata – pedestal and Kokyu Library**

In Sakata, the Emperor stayed for the night at the house of a rich farmer, Watanabe Sakuzaemon. Over the next 10 days, the house is said to have been visited by approximately 100,000 people. In 1922, Sakata erected a monument to commemorate the visit, sculpted by Tsuda Shinobu. However, in 1942 the metal part of the monument was recast to aid the war effort. What is left is a stone pedestal, now the city's Designated Cultural Property.

Local authorities and populace alike, just as in other parts of the country, prepared with excitement for the Imperial visit. This is attested to by the numerous materials collected at Kokyu Library of Sakata, *Sakata Shiritsu Kokyu Bunko*, which I was able to carefully examine thanks to the kindness of many people, including the employees of the City Hall.

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*Emperor Meiji and Empress Shoken visit the National Industrial Exhibition, Yoshu Chikanobu  
courtesy of National Diet Library*



*Crowds inside the Art Pavilion at the National Industrial Exhibition, Utagawa Hiroshige III  
courtesy of Edo Tokyo Museum*



*Emperor Meiji and Empress Shoken, courtesy of Meiji Jingu*

Emperor Meiji, together with Empress Shoken (1849-1914), took part in many celebrations connected to modernization. They attended, for example, the openings of many railway lines, starting with the first one, which in 1872 connected Shinbashi in Tokyo and Yokohama. They also visited exhibitions. One important example is the National Industrial Exhibition, *Naikoku Kangyo Hakurankai*. Held several times between 1877 and 1903, it promoted progress – the last one can be considered the first Japanese Expo. Mutsuhito did not forget about the importance of history and traditions in order for Japan to maintain its cultural identity. This is why he visited museums and exhibitions of traditional arts and crafts, and attended noh and kabuki plays and sumo tournaments.

The Emperor's character traits helped him to fulfill his duties as a progressive and knowledgeable monarch. He was conscientious, diligent, and punctual. He did not like to waste time and discussed all national matters briefly but thoroughly. He was meticulous, precise and liked order. He disliked pomp, extravagance, and wastefulness. These preferences stemmed from traditional Confucian values, which the Emperor revered throughout his life. Constantly busy with his duties, he disliked resting but enjoyed relaxing during hare hunting on the outskirts of Tokyo, near today's Tama City for example. Today, this is the site of the Old Seiseki Memorial Hall or *Kyu Tama Seiseki Kinenkan*.



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Obelisk commemorating the Emperor's visits to the Tama district  
©Ewa Pałasz-Rutkowska



The Old Seiseki Memorial Hall, near Tama City, Tokyo metropolis  
©Ewa Pałasz-Rutkowska

### Old Seiseki Memorial Hall in Tama

This small museum devoted to the Emperor and his times was designed by Sekine Yotaro and finished in 1930. It houses collections of old photographs, some exhibits, and a monument of the Emperor on his favorite horse *Kinkazan*, sculpted by Watanabe Osao.

The museum is now part of the vast Municipal Sakuragaoka Park, *Toritsu Sakuragaoka Koen*, which is filled with beautiful trees, shrubs, flowers and birds. Several stones and obelisks commemorating the Emperor's visits can be found there.

I was lucky enough to visit this place in autumn, when maple leaves red- den and tourists flock to admire the changing leaves. They are just as famous as the cherry blossoms that can be viewed here in spring.

Emperor Meiji died on July 30, 1912, and was laid to rest in the Fushimi Momoyama Tomb, which was at that time located near Kyoto but now absorbed by the city. Although the Emperor himself chose the location, saddened Tokyoites wanted to build a proper place to commemorate the ruler, which resulted in the construction of Meiji Jingu.

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*The main gate to the Inner Precinct of Meiji Jingu, ©Ewa Pałasz-Rutkowska*

### **Meiji Jingu**

This shrine in today's Shibuya Ward was opened in 1920 and is dedicated to the deified spirits of Emperor Meiji and his wife Empress Shoken. Yoyogi Imperial Garden, *Yoyogi Gyoen*, a favorite place of the Imperial couple, and the nearby proving grounds where Mutsuhito inspected the army, were chosen as the location of the shrine. Meiji Jingu is composed of the Inner Precinct, *Naien*, the Outer Precinct, *Gaien*, and the memorial hall, *Meiji Kinenkan*.

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The author in the Inner Precinct of Meiji Jingu, ©Ewa Pałasz-Rutkowska



The author with a copper plate, which she contributed to a new roof for Meiji Jingu buildings  
©Ewa Pałasz-Rutkowska



The Treasure Museum of Meiji Jingu, ©Meiji Jingu

### Meiji Jingu Inner Precinct

Also known as Naïen, this most important part of the shrine includes the main holy places and the treasure museum, *Homotsuden*<sup>\*</sup>, which houses a collection of many items connected to Mutsuhito and his wife. Exhibits pertaining to the Imperial Couple and the Imperial Household can be seen on temporary exhibitions in the Treasure Museum Annex, *Homotsu Tenjishitsu*. Whenever I visit, I look in amazement at the precious artifacts of the Emperor, which are quite similar to those that can be found in museums across Japan that belonged, for example to rich warriors. They can only be distinguished by the Imperial Seal, with its sixteen-petal chrysanthemum. These artifacts will surprise a European visitor, who knows what riches kings and emperors surrounded themselves within their castles and palaces, and how elaborately and luxuriously their estates were decorated. This difference, however, does not stem from the financial state of the Japanese Emperor but from a cultural difference – what is and has been perceived as precious in traditional Japanese culture is not ornate and decorated with gold and gemstones. The artistry and ideas that are basic to Japanese aesthetics, e.g. modesty, simplicity, naturalness, and connection to nature, are what constitute and have constituted beauty and value.

<sup>\*</sup> The Homotsuden has been closed since January 2018. The items will be viewable at Meiji Jingu Museum expected to be open in autumn 2019.

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Irises in Meiji Jingu Inner Gardens, ©Ewa Pałasz-Rutkowska

I must add that Naaien is my favorite place connected to Emperor Meiji, and the most beautiful part of Meiji Jingu. I visit this place whenever I am in Tokyo, not only to pay my respects to the Imperial Couple who are enshrined here but also to experience its wonderful tranquility, located among ancient trees. The silence of this forest-park is only broken by songbirds, ravens and, in summer, by cicadas, which are a characteristic of the season across most of Japan. The contrast between the Naaien and its surroundings is striking. Naaien is surrounded by the hustle and bustle of the very center of the Japanese capital, places such as, Harajuku, Omote Sando, and Dogenzaka near Shibuya Station, all favored and frequented mostly by the young.

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*Historic events and the life of the Emperor are depicted in 80 paintings, ©The Meiji Memorial Picture Gallery*



*Porte Cochere of the Meiji Kinenkan main building, ©Meiji Kinenkan*



*The Kinkei Lounge restaurant in Meiji Kinenkan, ©Meiji Kinenkan*



*The Emperor watched military parades in Aoyama from this spot, now in the Outer Precinct of Meiji Jingu, ©Ewa Palasz-Rutkowska*

### Meiji Jingu Outer Precinct

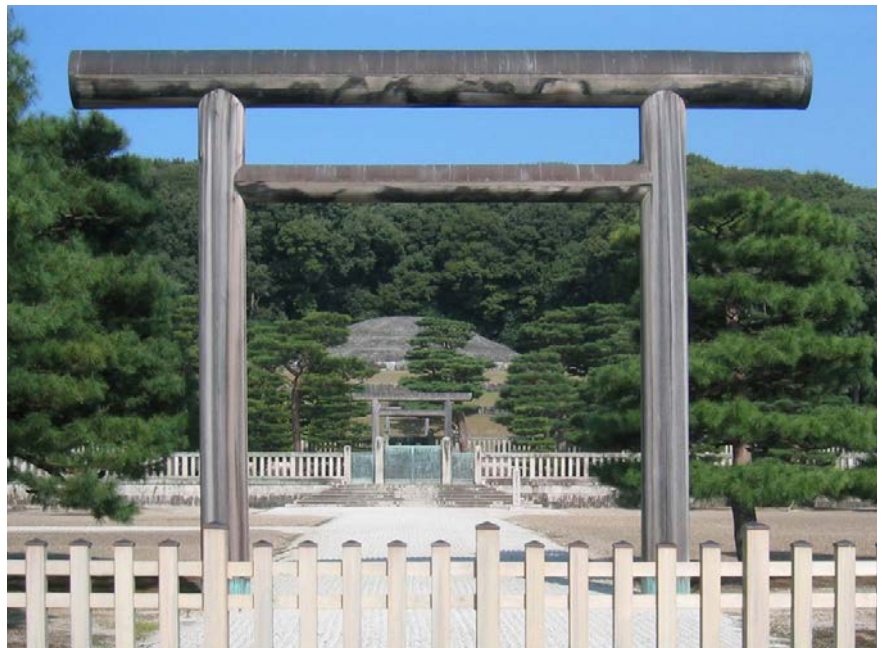
Also known as Gaien, this large park on the site of the former military training grounds in the Aoyama neighborhood includes the Meiji Memorial Picture Gallery, *Seitoku Kinen Kaigakan*, a monumental building housing an exhibit of 80 large paintings showing the entire life of Emperor Meiji from his birth to funeral ceremonies, and documenting his service to the country. Thanks to the kindness of the chief priest of Meiji Jingu, the paintings became ideal illustrations for my book on the Emperor and his image in modernizing Japan.

Meiji Kinenkan is located near Gaien. It was built in 1881 on the grounds of a temporary Imperial residence for the Emperor and the court in Akasaka from 1873 to 1888. In 1888, in the Hall of Golden Pheasant, *Kinkei no Ma*, which is still preserved, Mutsuhito attended all meetings of the Privy Council, *Sumitsuin*, that drafted the final version of the Constitution of the Empire of Japan and Imperial Household Law. Today it houses the Kinkei Lounge restaurant, one of the restaurants located at Meiji Kinenkan.

I am indebted to priests and scholars from Meiji Jingu, who have supported my research with their kindness, expertise, and cordiality from the very beginning.

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The Fushimi Momoyama Tomb, Kyoto, ©Ewa Pałasz-Rutkowska

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**Extensions** When Mutsuhito's life was drawing to a close, crowds gathered in front of the Imperial Palace, one more proof that Japanese people held him in great esteem. The Japanese press described the last days of his life and later the funeral ceremonies in great detail. In honor of his merit to the nation, he was called *Meiji the Great* or *Meiji Taitei*, the only ruler in the history of Japan to receive this honorific.

Foreign journalists also recognized his role in Japan's modernization efforts, including journalists from, at the time, partitioned Poland. On August 1, 1912, one of them wrote in the *Kurier Poranny* newspaper: *Future generations and sometimes even contemporaries, grant monarchs the epithet the Great. However, there are not many rulers who have earned this byname as much as the late Emperor of Japan has. He achieved many things and great things. He was also a witness to the amazing growth and awe-inspiring might of the Japanese nation.*

Emperor Meiji is one of a few Japanese rulers who have not been forgotten and also been presented in popular culture. He is portrayed in motion pictures\*, books and manga devoted to the history of the Meiji period. One of the most popular novels is *Saka no ue no kumo* (Clouds Above the Hill) by Shiba Ryotaro, which was the basis of a highly popular NHK TV series (2009-2011).

\* *Meiji Taitei to Nogi Shogun (Emperor Meiji and General Nogi)*, directed by Komori Kiyoshi  
*Nihyakusan kochi (203 Hill)*, directed by Masuda Toshio  
*The Last Samurai*, directed by Edward Zwick

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I believe that the *spirit* of Emperor Meiji and his time is permanently present in the consciousness of today's Japan. He left behind him both tangible and intangible legacies. I constantly admire him for the effort he put into the creation of modern Japan and his efforts in active participations to the activities that made his personal transformation from a mythical figure, raised in the traditional atmosphere of the *Mikado* court into a modern monarch.

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Dr. Ewa Pałasz-Rutkowska, is a full professor at the University of Warsaw, Poland. She is a graduate in Japanese Studies from the same university, where she also earned her doctorate and post-doctoral degrees (doctor habilitatus) in humanities. She has made numerous visits to Japan in connection with her studies, mainly at the University of Tokyo – also as visiting professor, and at Rikkyo University, Tokyo. Her research interests are the history, mainly modern, and culture of Japan, the history of Polish-Japanese relations, the history of the Imperial Household of Japan, and cross-cultural studies.

[japonistyka.orient.uw.edu.pl](http://japonistyka.orient.uw.edu.pl)

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### Places **Chido Museum**

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A private museum in Tsuruoka, Yamagata Prefecture, founded in 1950 by a descendant of the feudal lords Sakai, of the Shonai domain during the Edo period (1603-1868), who donated his property to promote local culture. The Museum is home to Meiji period western style buildings moved from neighboring districts, including the former Nishitagawa District Office, where Emperor Meiji spent the night during his 1881 journey around Tohoku and Hokkaido.

997-0036 Yamagata ken, Tsuruoka shi, Kachushin machi 10-18

[web-site](#)

### **Kehi Matsubara**

One of Japan's most scenic spots; located in Tsuruga, Fukui Prefecture, a port city on Tsuruga Bay and the Sea of Japan. The contrast between the blue ocean, green pine trees and white sandy beach creates a beautiful scene. Kehi Matsubara – Matsubara means pine grove – is one of the three largest pine forests in Japan, along with Niji Matsubara in Saga Prefecture and Miho Matsubara in Shizuoka Prefecture.

914-0801 Fukui ken, Tsuruga shi, Matsushima cho 33

[web-site](#)

### **Kokyu Library**

Library in Sakata, Yamagata Prefecture, founded in 1925 by Honma Mitsuya, at the suggestion of his great-grand-grandfather Mitsuoka (1758), commemorated in the library's original name, *Hikarigaoka Library*; the kanji *mitsu* 光 also has the reading *hikari*. In 1958 the library was donated to Sakata and its name changed to *Kokyu*, the Sino-Japanese reading of the kanji. Its collection includes numerous materials related to the Emperor and his journey around Tohoku and Hokkaido in 1881. Now the building is closed, and some of the materials have been moved to the Sakata City Library, Nakamachi Branch.

998-0037 Yamagata ken, Sakata shi, Hiyoshi cho 2-7-71

[web-site](#) (Japanese)



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### Places **Meiji Jingu**

One of the most important Shinto shrines in Japan, established in 1920 in Shibuya Ward, Tokyo. The shrine is dedicated to the deified spirits of Emperor Meiji and his consort Empress Shoken. It is the most important repository of learning about the Emperor and the Empress, and one of Japan's most popular shrines. It is often very crowded, especially during the first days of the New Year.

151-8557 Tokyo to, Shibuya ku, Yoyogikamizono cho 1-1

[web-site](#)

### **Meiji Kinenkan**

A memorial hall affiliated with Meiji Jingu, located in Moto Akasaka, Minato Ward. It was built in 1881 on the grounds of a temporary imperial residence for the Emperor and the court (1873-1888). One part of Meiji Kinenkan is the Hall of Golden Pheasant, *Kinkei no Ma*, where in 1888 the drafts of the Meiji Constitution and the Imperial House Act were discussed in the presence of Emperor Meiji. Meiji Kinenkan is Japan's first wedding hall to offer a comprehensive range of services.

107-8507 Tokyo, Minato ku, Moto Akasaka 2-2-23

[web-site](#)

### **Meiji Memorial Picture Gallery**

Situated in the grounds of the Outer Precinct, Gaien, the Meiji Memorial Picture Gallery, *Seitoku Kinen Kaigakan*, is a monumental building housing an exhibit of 80 large paintings showing the entire life of Emperor Meiji.

The gallery is a registered Important Cultural Property.

160-0013 Tokyo, Shinjuku ku, Kasumigaoka machi 1-1

[web-site](#)

### **Meiji Pavilion**

Also known as *Meijiden*, it was built in Imajo Town, Fukui Prefecture, by Tanaka Wakichi, in the grounds of a house owned by Goto Kakuzaemon, where Emperor Meiji stayed during his journey around Hokuriku in 1878.

919-0131 Fukui ken, Nanjo gun, Minami Echizen cho, Imajo 76, Minami Nakamachi 6-1

[web-site](#) (Japanese)

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## Places

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### **Old Seiseki Memorial Hall**

A small museum in Tama, Tokyo metropolis, devoted to Emperor Meiji and his times, built in commemoration of the Emperor's visits to the Tama region. The modernist building was designed by Sekine Yotaro and finished in 1930. It houses collections of old photographs, some exhibits and a monument of the Emperor on his favorite horse *Kinkazan*, sculpted by Watanabe Osao.

206-0021 Tokyo, Tama shi, Renkoji 5-1-1

[web-site](#) (Japanese)

### **Pedestal in Sakata**

Situated in Honcho Park near City Hall, it commemorates the place where the Emperor stayed for the night at the house of a rich farmer, Watanabe Sakuzaemon, during his 1881 journey. A monument, sculpted by Tsuda Shinobu, was erected in 1922. In 1942 the metal part of the monument was recast to aid the war effort and is now the city's Designated Cultural Property.

998-0043 Yamagata ken, Sakata shi, Honcho 3-10-39

### **Sakata City Library, Nakamachi Branch**

A small library located on the 5th floor of the former City Hall building. It stores a part of the collection on Meiji Emperor and his journey around Tohoku and Hokkaido in 1881, which were displayed at Kokyu Library.

998-0044 Yamagata ken, Sakata shi, Nakamachi 1-4-10 5F

### **Sakuragaoka Park**

A park full of beautiful trees, shrubs, flowers and birds, and home to several stones and obelisks commemorating visits by Emperor Meiji. Also the location of the Old Seiseki Memorial Hall.

206-0021 Tokyo, Tama shi, Renkouji 5-15

[web-site](#)

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People **Hara, Takeshi** (1962-)

Specializing in Japanese Political Theory, his particular interests are the Emperor System and the Shinto of modern and contemporary Japan. He suggests looking into the subject through factual source such as locations and spaces.

**Ito, Takashi** (1932-)

Professor Emeritus of the University of Tokyo specializing in pre-World War II political history. Ito took the initiative in numerous publications pertaining to modern Japanese history.

**Kajita, Akihiro**

Director of the Compiling Division, Archives and Mausolea Department at the Imperial Household Agency. His major interest is the modern history of Japan.

**Kawabata, Yoshiaki** (1933-)

Japanologist and Professor Emeritus of Kyoto University

**Komorida, Akio** (1946-)

Distinguished Professor of law at Kanagawa University and Professor Emeritus of the University of Tokyo. He specializes in Russia and East European Laws, particularly on Constitutional Litigation in Poland and its political aspects, and comparative study on judicial system in Russia and Poland.

**Taura, Masanori** (1953-)

Professor of Kogakkan University in Ise City. His major interest is the modern history of Japan, particularly diplomatic history before the Pacific War.

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Publications	<p><b>Cesarz Meiji (1852-1912). Wizerunek władcy w modernizowanej Japonii</b> Pałasz-Rutkowska, Ewa Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, Warszawa, 2012 The result of the author's years of research on Emperor Meiji</p> <p><b>Emperor of Japan – Meiji and His World, 1852-1912</b> Keene, Donald Columbia University Press, New York, 2002 Covers the life and activities of the Emperor. Very relevant</p> <p><b>Meiji Tenno</b> Ito, Yukio Minerva Shobo, Tokyo, 2006 Covers the life and activities of the Emperor. Very relevant</p> <p><b>Seitoku Kinen Kaigakan Hekiga</b> Meiji Jingu Gaien, Tokyo, 2001 A very useful catalogue of the pictures in the Memorial Gallery, with explanatory notes</p>	20127
Organizations	<p><b>Historiographical Institute, The University of Tokyo</b> Leading research institute dedicated to the analysis, compilation, and publication of Japan related historical sources; affiliated with the University of Tokyo <a href="#">web-site</a></p>	

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### Glossary

#### **Akasaka**

A district of Minato Ward, Tokyo; until 1947, with neighboring Aoyama, a ward of Tokyo. From 1873 to 1888, the site of a temporary Imperial Residence for Emperor Meiji and his court

#### **Amaterasu**

Goddess of the sun, the most important Shinto deity

#### **Fukui Prefecture**

In Hokuriku, the northwestern part of Honshu; visited by Emperor Meiji during his journey in 1878

►Hokuriku

#### **Fushimi Momoyama Tomb**

The tomb of Emperor Meiji, where he was interred on September 15, 1912. The Emperor chose the location himself, to be buried near his home, the old capital Kyoto, which he left for Tokyo in 1869. Initially outside Kyoto but now absorbed by the city, it is a place of great natural beauty, located on the Old Castle Mountain, where prominent samurai Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537-1598) built Fushimi Castle at the end of the 16th century.

►Mutsuhito (1852-1912)

[web-site](#)

#### **Goto Kakuzaemon**

A landowner in whose house Emperor Meiji rested during his 1878 journey around Hokuriku

►Hokuriku

►Journeys of Emperor Meiji

#### **Hokuriku**

The northwestern part of Honshu, including Niigata, Toyama, Ishikawa and Fukui Prefectures

►Fukui Prefecture

►Goto Kakuzaemon

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### Glossary

#### **Imajo**

A town in Fukui Prefecture, visited by the Emperor during his journey around Hokuriku in 1878. In 2005 Imajo became a part of Minamiechizen.

- ▶Fukui Prefecture
- ▶Hokuriku

#### **Journeys of Emperor Meiji**

After the restoration of imperial rule in 1868, to strengthen his image among the people as a new type of sovereign, Mutsuhito often left the Palace and visited many places during his tours and journeys. Most important were his long-distance journeys around the country, during which he explored far-off parts of Japan. These are known as the Six Great Imperial Journeys, organized between 1872 and 1885. The most important goals of these journeys were: to impress the people in each place visited with the authority of the Emperor; to examine conditions in various parts of Japan; to educate the Emperor himself.

- ▶Mutsuhito

[web-site](#)

#### **Katsu Kaishu (1823-1899)**

A samurai and naval officer, one of the few high officials of the Edo shogunate to be employed by the Imperial, Meiji government; one of main creators of the modern Japanese navy and one of the most influential officials in the Meiji administration

- ▶Meiji Period (1868-1912)
- ▶Shogunate

#### **Meiji Jingu Inner Precinct**

Also known as Naïen, it is the most important part of Meiji Jingu, comprising the sacred buildings, beautiful garden, and the Treasure Museum, *Homotsuden*, where many important personal belongings of the Emperor and the Empress are displayed

- ▶Meiji Jingu Outer Precinct

[web-site](#)

# The Symbol of Modern Japan

Emperor Meiji – his activities as a monarch of new times

## Glossary **Meiji Jingu Outer Precinct**

Also known as Gaien, this is a large park on the site of the former military training grounds in the Aoyama neighborhood in today's Minato Ward. With its many sports facilities and cultural amenities, it strives to promote culture and sport. It includes the Meiji Memorial Picture Gallery, *Seitoku Kinen Kaigakan*, a monumental building housing an exhibit of 80 large paintings showing the entire life of Emperor Meiji.

► Meiji Jingu Inner Precinct

[web-site](#)

## **Meiji Period (1868-1912)**

The historical Meiji (*enlightened Rule*) era of the reign of Emperor Mutsuhito; it also gave the Emperor his posthumous designation Emperor Meiji. During this period, after the overthrow of the seven-hundred-year governments of the warrior class in 1868 and the restoration of imperial rule, Japan progressed from a semi-feudal, agrarian state to a rapidly industrializing modern, strong power, in the form of a constitutional monarchy.

► Mutsuhito (1852-1912)

## **Mutsuhito (1852-1912)**

The name used by the author to describe the Emperor during his lifetime. Formally and posthumously he is called *Emperor Meiji*. Mutsuhito was a name of the adult prince, given to him in 1860, and not used officially during his reign, except for his signature. He was a son of Emperor Komei (1831-1867) and Nakayama Yoshiko (1835-1907), a lady-in-waiting and daughter of an aristocrat Nakayama Tadayasu (1809-1888). As a child, Mutsuhito was called *Prince Sachi*. As the Emperor, he became a symbol of modernization, a symbol of deep and effective reforms that thoroughly changed all aspects of Japan's politics, economy, society, etc.

► Meiji Period (1868-1912)

## **National Industrial Exhibitions**

Large-scale exhibitions held several times between 1877 and 1903; they promoted progress and Japan's modernization

[web-site](#)

# The Symbol of Modern Japan

## Emperor Meiji – his activities as a monarch of new times

**Glossary**    **Nogi Maresuke (1849-1912)**

A samurai and general in the Japanese Army; a prominent figure in the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905). The Emperor's trusted officer, he committed suicide after his death.

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**Sakata**

A city in Yamagata Prefecture, visited by Emperor Meiji during his 1881 journey around Tohoku and Hokkaido. He stayed there for the night at the house of a rich farmer, Watanabe Sakuzaemon

**Samurai**

Samurai or *bushi* were the warriors of pre-modern Japan. At the end of the 12th century they became the ruling military class and ruled over Japan till 1868. Weapons used by samurai included bows and arrows and spears, but their main weapon and symbol was the sword.

► Katsu Kaishu (1823-1899)

► Nogi Maresuke (1849-1912)

**Sekine Yotaro (1889-1959)**

An architect, whose designs include the Old Seiseki Memorial Hall, a modernist building in Tama City

► Honshu

**Shiba Ryotaro (1923-1996)**

A Japanese writer, particularly known for his novels and essays on Japanese culture and history; also wrote on Japan and its relationship to the rest of the world. Some of his best known novels, such as *Clouds Above the Hill* and *Ryoma Goes His Way*, became the basis of highly popular NHK TV series.

[web-site](#)

**Shinbashi**

Now a district of Minato Ward, Tokyo, the Tokyo terminus of the first railway in Japan, connecting the capital with Yokohama, finished in 1872



# The Symbol of Modern Japan

## Emperor Meiji – his activities as a monarch of new times

### Glossary **Shogunate**

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Also known as the bakufu, the feudal military government by a *shogun*, a general, powerful military ruler, in pre-modern Japan. Legally the shogunate was under the control of the emperors, who nominated all shoguns during the 700-years history of the bakufu, but practically the emperors had no power, and were only a symbol of the country. The last shogunate under Tokugawa was overthrown in 1868, and imperial rule restored.

►Tokugawa

### **Shoken (1849-1914)**

The posthumus name of Empress Haruko, only consort of Emperor Meiji, a daughter of aristocrat Ichijo Tadaka. She often accompanied the Emperor in his activities and thus also became a symbol of the modernization process. She helped to establish the Japanese Red Cross Society, and is also known for her support for charity work and women's education.

►Meiji Period (1868-1912)

►Mutsuhito (1852-1912)

[web-site](#)

### **Tanaka Wakichi**

The founder of Meiji Pavilion in Imajo, built in the grounds of a house belonging to Goto Kakuzaemon, where Emperor Meiji rested during his journey around Hokuriku in 1878

►Goto Kakuzaemon

►Journeys of Emperor Meiji

[web-site](#) (Japanese)

### **Tohoku**

The northeastern part of Honshu, including Akita, Aomori, Fukushima, Iwate, Miyagi, and Yamagata Prefectures

### **Tokugawa**

The family name of a powerful warrior clan that ruled Japan during the Edo period (1603-1867). The most important was Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543-1616), the founder of the Edo shogunate or Edo bakufu military government in Edo, and the first shogun of the period (1603-1605).

►Shogunate

# The Symbol of Modern Japan

Emperor Meiji – his activities as a monarch of new times

**Glossary**    **Tsuda Shinobu (1875-1946)**

A renowned metal craft artist who sculpted the monument commemorating Emperor Meiji's visit to Sakata, Yamagata. He also worked on metal decorations at Hibiya Park and Nihonbashi, central Tokyo.

► Sakata

[web-site](#) (Japanese)

**Tsuruga**

A city in Fukui Prefecture. During his 1878 journey around Hokuriku, Emperor Meiji stopped there to admire Wakasa Bay and the beautiful pine forest in Kehi Matsubara

► Fukui Prefecture

► Hokuriku

**Tsuruoka**

A city in Yamagata Prefecture, where Emperor Meiji spent the night during his 1881 journey around Tohoku and Hokkaido

► Tohoku

► Yamagata Prefecture

**Watanabe Osao (1874-1952)**

A sculptor, creator of the monument, *Emperor Meiji on his favorite horse Kinkazan*, located in the Old Seiseki Memorial Hall in Tama City

[web-site](#) (Japanese)

**Yamagata Prefecture**

Located in Tohoku, the northeast part of Honshu, its capital is Yamagata City. The prefecture was visited by Emperor Meiji during his journey in 1881.

► Tohoku

► Tsuruoka

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## Imprint

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