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Kanji of the year

The **kanji of the year** (今年の漢字 *Kotoshi no kanji*) is a Japanese character chosen by the Japanese Kanji Proficiency Society (財団法人日本漢字能力検定協会 *Zaidan hōjin Nihon Kanji Nōryoku kentei kyōkai*) through a national ballot in Japan, starting in 1995. The character with the most votes, selected to represent the events of that year, is announced in a ceremony on December 12 (Kanji Day) at Kiyomizu Temple.

Year	Kanji	Readings	Meanings	Events
1995	<u>震</u> ^[1]	shin furu-u	quake	The Great Hanshin–Awaji earthquake and growing feelings of unease caused by the <u>sarin gas attack on the Tokyo subway</u> .
1996	<u>食</u>	shoku ku-u	food, eat	Multiple outbreaks of <u>food poisoning</u> due to <u>E. coli O157</u> occur, affecting school lunch programs.
1997	<u>倒</u>	tou tao-su	collapse, knock down	The <u>1997 Asian financial crisis</u> results in a wave of corporate <u>bankruptcies</u> and <u>bank failures</u> , while the <u>Japanese team</u> beats regional powerhouses in the Asia qualifying tournament to win a berth in the <u>1998 FIFA World Cup</u> .
1998	<u>毒</u>	doku	poison	Sixty-seven people are sickened and four die after eating poisoned curry, for which <u>Masumi Hayashi</u> is arrested. Similar incidents follow amid concerns about <u>dioxins</u> .
1999	<u>末</u>	matsu sue	end	The final year of the century, when the <u>Tokaimura nuclear accident</u> occurs.
2000	<u>金</u>	kin kane	gold	Judo athlete <u>Ryoko Tamura</u> (now <u>Ryoko Tani</u>) and marathon-runner <u>Naoko Takahashi</u> win gold at the <u>Sydney Olympics</u> , <u>Kim Dae Jung</u> and <u>Kim Jong-il</u> hold the first <u>North-South Korean presidential summit</u> , the deaths of centenarian twin sisters <u>Kin-san</u> and <u>Gin-san</u> (whose names sound like "gold" and "silver"), and the introduction of the <u>¥2,000 note</u> .
2001	<u>戦</u>	sen tataka-u	battle	The <u>September 11, 2001 attacks</u> , the <u>U.S. war in Afghanistan</u> , and the <u>global recession</u> .
2002	<u>帰</u>	ki kae-ru	return	Japan and North Korea <u>begin talks</u> and five Japanese citizens <u>kidnapped</u> by <u>North Korea</u> return to Japan.
2003	<u>虎</u>	ko tora	tiger	The <u>Hanshin Tigers</u> win the <u>Central League pennant</u> for the first time in 18 years and the <u>involvement</u> of the <u>Japan Self-Defense Force</u> in the <u>Iraq War</u> , which the people equate to "stepping on a tiger's tail."
2004	<u>災</u>	sai wazawa-i	disaster	The <u>Chūetsu earthquake</u> , <u>Typhoon Tokage</u> wrecks great damages upon landfall, the <u>accident at the Mihama Nuclear Power Plant</u> , and <u>scandal at Mitsubishi Motors</u> involving the <u>cover-up of known defects</u> .
2005	<u>愛</u>	ai ito-shii	love	<u>Expo 2005</u> is held in <u>Aichi</u> , <u>Princess Nori</u> marries <u>Yoshiki Kuroda</u> , and table tennis athlete <u>Ai Fukuhara</u> plays in <u>China</u> , as well as a spate of <u>child-by-parent</u> and <u>parent-by-child</u> murders.
2006	<u>命</u>	mei inochi	life	Prince <u>Hisahito of Akishino</u> is born, while feelings of <u>uncertainty about life</u> arise from <u>hit and run accidents</u> due to <u>driving under the influence</u> , <u>suicide due to bullying</u> , and the notable suicide of a member of the <u>Imperial Guard</u> .
2007	<u>偽</u>	gi nise	deception	A series of <u>food labeling scandals</u> in which expired products were relabeled and sold, problems over <u>political funds</u> and <u>faulty pension records</u> , and <u>allegations of copyright infringement</u> at the <u>Beijing Shijingshan Amusement Park</u> .
2008	<u>変</u>	hen kawa-ru	change	Changing of the <u>Japanese prime minister</u> , <u>Barack Obama</u> winning the <u>American presidency</u> using the slogan " <u>change</u> ", <u>economical and ecological changes</u> around the world.

2009	新	shin atara-shii	new	The <u>Democratic Party of Japan</u> is swept into power by lower house elections to end half a century of LDP dominance, the <u>worldwide outbreak of swine flu</u> (known as <i>Shin-gata influenza</i>), and <u>Ichiro Suzuki</u> sets a new MLB record with nine consecutive seasons with 200 hits. ^[2]
2010	暑	sho atsu-i	hot	Record heatwaves affecting both people's livelihoods and the natural environment and the <u>Chilean mine collapse</u> trapped about 700 meters underground in a hot, humid mine.
2011	絆 ^[3]	han kizuna	bonds	The <u>Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami</u> occurs, with people across Japan rediscovering the importance of their bonds with family and friends and Japan's women's national football team, <i>Nadeshiko Japan</i> , wins the 2011 FIFA Women's World Cup, a result of confidence and teamwork among its members. ^[4]
2012	金	kin kane	gold	Several medals are won at the 2012 <u>London Olympics</u> , <u>Shinya Yamanaka</u> wins a <u>Nobel Prize</u> , and a <u>solar eclipse</u> is observed for the first time in Japan in 932 years, amid concerns such as <u>consumption tax</u> and <u>welfare</u> ("金" is also the first kanji to be selected more than once).
2013	輪	rin wa	wheel, ring	Successful bid to host the <u>2020 Summer Olympics</u> . (the original Japanese word for "Olympics" is 五輪, literally meaning "five rings")
2014	税	zei mitsugi	tax	Social discussion and additional <u>expense tax</u> in Japan. (VAT switching from 5% to 8%)
2015	安 ^[5]	an yasu	safety	Safety (安全) issues concerning <u>explosion in Yasukuni Shrine</u> , <u>terrorist attack on Paris</u> , and the <u>public outcry at the new State Secrecy Law</u> devised by prime minister <u>Shinzo Abe</u> (安倍晋三)
2016	金 ^[6]	kin kane	gold	High number of gold medals won at the 2016 Rio Olympics, the shift to <u>minus interest</u> ("interest rate" is "kinri" in Japanese), <u>Trump's U.S. presidential election victory</u> ("blonde hair" is "kinpatsu"), and <u>Piko Taro</u> , singer of 'PPAP', who's known for wearing a gold-colored animal print outfit. (This is the third time this kanji has taken this honor.)
2017	北 ^[7]	hoku kita	north	<u>North Korea's missile tests and nuclear test</u> , the <u>heavy rain in northern Kyushu</u> , and the <u>poor harvest of potatoes in Hokkaido</u> .
2018	災	sai wazawa-i	disaster	The <u>2018 Osaka earthquake</u> along with the <u>heavy floods in southwestern Japan</u> . This Kanji was also selected in 2004 as Kanji of the Year.

See also

- Word of the year

References

1. "過去の「今年の漢字」一覧" (<http://matome.naver.jp/odai/2135337249054109801>). Matome.Naver.jp. 2015-12-16.

2. "'Shin' Selected as Kanji of the Year New Administration, Record-Breaking Ichiro Suzuki..." (<http://www.kyoto-np.co.jp/kp/topics/eng/2009dec/12-11b.html>) Kyoto Shimbun. 2009-12-11.
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4. "Japanese public chooses 'kizuna' as kanji of 2011" (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-16321999>). *BBC News online*. 24 December 2011. Retrieved 25 December 2011.
5. "今年の漢字、2015年は"安"に決定。とにかく明るい安村も興奮「安心の安！」" (http://www.huffingtonpost.jp/2015/12/15/2015year-kanji_n_8808986.html). HuffingtonPost. 2015-12-15.
6. "'Gold' named 2016 Kanji of the Year" (<http://en.rocketnews24.com/2016/12/12/gold-named-2016-kanji-of-the-year/>).
7. "今年の漢字は「北」 その理由は？" (http://www.huffingtonpost.jp/2017/12/11/kotoshi-no-kanji-2017_a_23304349/).

External links

- [Japanese Kanji Proficiency Society](https://web.archive.org/web/20061208100953/http://www.kanken.or.jp/event/index.html) (<https://web.archive.org/web/20061208100953/http://www.kanken.or.jp/event/index.html>)

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