Names, Dates, Places

A NOTE ON JAPANESE NAMES AND TERMS

Throughout this book, Japanese proper names are noted in Japanese order, with family name first. Where appropriate, I follow the Japanese convention of referring to certain writers, scholars, and artists by their pseudonyms or given names. For example, Toriyama Sekien is called Sekien rather than Toriyama. Japanese words and place-names that appear in standard English-language dictionaries are written in Roman script with no macrons (e.g., Tokyo, Shinto); other Japanese words are written with macrons to indicate long vowels. Japanese words used frequently throughout the text are italicized only in their first appearance.

DATES AND TIME PERIODS

Although I use Western-style dates, I also refer to several of the major Japanese time periods and eras.
Classical
Nara 710–794
Heian c. 794–1185

Medieval
Kamakura 1185–1333
Muromachi 1392–1573

Early Modern
Edo (or Tokugawa) c. 1600–1868

Modern
Meiji 1868–1912
Taishō 1912–1926
Shōwa 1926–1989
Heisei 1989–

Places
Throughout the book, I mention a variety of places by name. Below are some of the most common ones. (Please note, I omit the macrons for these particular place-names.)

Edo The old name for Tokyo (before 1868)
Hokkaido The second-largest and northernmost major island of Japan
Honshu The largest of the four main islands of Japan, and the location of the cities Tokyo, Osaka, and Kyoto and the majority of the prefectures
Kansai  The region of western Japan, including Kyoto, Osaka, Nara, Kobe, and neighboring areas
Kanto  The region of eastern Japan, including Tokyo and nearby prefectures and cities
Kyushu  The third-largest island of Japan, located in the southwest
Okinawa  The southernmost prefecture in Japan, located south of Kyushu and encompassing the main island of Okinawa as well as many of the smaller islands in the Ryukyu Island group
Shikoku  The smallest of the four major islands of Japan, containing four prefectures
Tohoku  The northeast of Japan, including Akita, Aomori, Fukushima, Iwate, Miyagi, and Yamagata Prefectures