

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Resonating with the Philosophy of Kabuki, Japan’s No. 1\*<sup>1</sup> Makeup Brand *KATE* to Kick Off “KABUKE: Break Convention” International Campaign Showcasing Japanese Aesthetics and “Shadow Enhancing Makeup” Across Asia**

Kao Corporation will launch “KABUKE: Break Convention,” an international campaign for its global makeup brand *KATE* which resonates with the philosophy of the traditional Japanese performing art of Kabuki. The campaign will start July 8, 2026 in Japan and other Asian countries and regions. As the brand’s second international campaign for 2026, it will share the value and philosophy of *KATE*’s “shadow enhancing makeup,” a unique approach to makeup inspired by a distinctly Japanese aesthetic, to an international audience.

The word “Kabuki” is derived from the Japanese verb *kabuku*, meaning “to look and act unconventionally.” Through the resonance of this spirit that Kabuki embodies, *KATE*’s brand philosophy of “NO MORE RULES.”, and technique that highlights the interplay of light and shadow, the campaign will share Japan’s aesthetic sensibilities and makeup culture with the world. In addition, two products that embody the themes of this campaign will be launched on July 25, 2026—*KATE Smooth Fit Pressed Powder* and *KATE Real Shading Stick*.

In pursuit of its Global Sharp Top strategy, Kao has positioned *KATE* as one of six focus brands for driving global growth within its cosmetics business, and will continue to invest strategically in the brand while strengthening its focus. Through the “KABUKE: Break Convention” campaign, Kao will further strengthen efforts to promote Japan’s makeup culture and the *KATE* brand value, and accelerate global growth with a focus on Asia.

\* 1 INTAGE SRI+: Cumulative sales amount in the makeup market from January 2021 to December 2025



## About *KATE*'s 2025 international Campaigns

Since *KATE*'s launch in 1997, the brand has championed the slogan “NO MORE RULES.”, delivering makeup that defies convention and fosters creative self-expression. At the heart of this is *KATE*'s signature manipulation of light and shadow through the technique known as “shadow enhancing makeup.”

International campaigns were grandly kicked off in 2025 to share the value and philosophy of “shadow enhancing makeup” to consumers in Asian markets with makeup cultures similar to that of Japan. These campaigns tied *KATE* to highly popular Japanese anime and music, strengthening promotion of the brand as Japanese culture. Conducted simultaneously across multiple Asian countries and regions, including Thailand, Taiwan and Hong Kong, these campaigns aimed to expand global brand awareness. As a result, sales have remained strong not only in Japan but throughout Asia as a whole, contributing to growth.

## Overview of “KABUKE: Break Convention,” *KATE*'s Second International Campaign for 2026

In 2026, *KATE*'s international campaigns are continuing to showcase the appeal of Japanese makeup culture on a global stage. *KATE*'s first international campaign for 2026, launched in March, shared a new form of Japanese culture with the world centered on the themes of beauty, superheroes, and fashion through a collaboration with the sci-fi action franchise *Kamen Rider*.



*KATE*'s second international campaign for 2026, launching in July, is “KABUKE: Break Convention.” This campaign resonates with the philosophy of Kabuki, one of Japan's most celebrated traditional performing arts. Like *KATE*, Kabuki has continued to create new forms of expression and culture while transcending eras and boundaries. The word “Kabuki” is derived from the Japanese verb *kabuku*, meaning “to look and act unconventionally.” Based on this spirit of defying established values, Kabuki has depicted the essence and emotions of its characters through performances that highlight the interplay of light and shadow. This philosophy resonates deeply with *KATE*, a brand whose “shadow enhancing makeup” has long highlighted users' inner strength, accentuated their beauty beyond expectations and boosted their confidence.

Kabuki actor Ukon Onoe has also been enlisted to take part in “KABUKE: Break Convention.” Drawing inspiration from the blue used in the highly-stylized *kumadori* makeup of Kabuki, the campaign will use the phrase “Slip a touch of blue into your shadows” to promote the shadow enhancing makeup approach championed by *KATE* to a global audience. Launching July 8, 2026, the campaign will center on the core message of “KABUKE”—the imperative form of *kabuku*—encouraging audiences to break beauty conventions. Along with releasing visuals and commercials featuring Ukon Onoe, the campaign will be rolled out across social media platforms. In addition, a concept video titled *KATE* × Kabuki Concept Movie: Blue Shadow Enhancing Makeup, which explores the origins and stories behind both Kabuki and *KATE*'s shadow enhancing makeup, as well as a video titled KABUKE: Break Convention, depicting the parallels between the brand and the artform, will be released as part of the campaign.

[KATE × Kabuki Concept Movie: Blue Shadow Enhancing Makeup](#)

**New Products Embodying “KABUKE”**

No suggested retail price

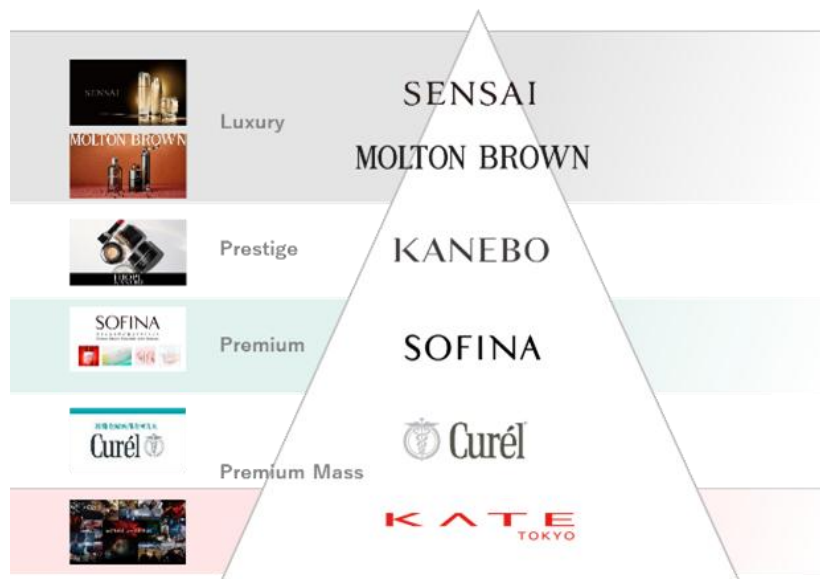
Product Name/Variants	Product Features
<p><i>KATE Smooth Fit Pressed Powder</i> 2 types</p>	<p>For a smooth, translucent finish. An ultra-thin pressed powder that keeps skin shine-free all day with its instant matte finish and pore-minimizing effect.</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● With mirror and puff</li> <li>● Formulated with moisturizing hyaluronic acid</li> <li>● Allergy-tested</li> <li>● Non-comedogenic tested*</li> </ul> <p>* A test to confirm that comedones (the precursors to acne) are less likely to form Please note that some users may still experience allergies or develop comedones (the precursors to acne).</p>
<p><i>KATE Real Shading Stick</i> 1 type</p>	<p>A shade color that creates a sense of transparency and realistic, natural-looking shadows with a hint of blue.</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Stick type for precise application</li> <li>● Glides on smoothly and is easy to blend</li> </ul>

**Availability**

Japan: From July 25, 2026

After Japan, products are scheduled to be released in Taiwan, Hong Kong, Thailand, Malaysia and the Philippines.

Reference: Kao Cosmetics Business: Six Focus Brands for Driving Global Growth



### Related Information

[KATE official brand website](#)

### About Kao

Kao, a Japan-based manufacturer of cosmetics, personal care and household products, as well as specialty chemicals, creates high-value-added products and services that provide care and enrichment for the life of all people and the planet. Through its brands such as *Curél*, *SENSAI*, and *MOLTON BROWN* cosmetics, *Bioré* and *Jergens* skin care products, *Oribe* hair care products, *Attack* laundry detergent, and *Laurier* sanitary products, Kao is part of the everyday lives of people across Asia, the Americas, Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. Combined with its chemical business, which contributes to a wide range of industries, Kao generates about 1,690 billion yen in annual sales. Kao employs about 31,500 people worldwide and has more than 130 years of history in innovation.

Please visit [the Kao Group website](#) for additional information.

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