

HIROHITO
(Phonetic: heeroheetoh)

JAPAN

Emperor

Addressed as:
Your Majesty



The Emperor of Japan, now 79, has reigned since 1926. The Japanese Constitution states that the Emperor is "the symbol of the state and the unity of the people" and limits him to a purely ceremonial and nonpolitical role. In this capacity, he has a busy schedule signing government documents, receiving ambassadors, and attending public functions.

The Emperor heads the world's oldest ruling house. He has renounced the claims of divinity associated with his ancestors, but he is treated with the utmost dignity on all occasions and retains the respect and affection of the Japanese people. In the fall of 1975, the Emperor and Empress visited the United States. Extensive media coverage of their trip humanized the imperial couple in the eyes of the Japanese. The Emperor emerged from his traditional seclusion from the Japanese public when, for the first time in history, he agreed to a televised press interview after his return to Japan.

A noted marine biologist, the Emperor devotes much of his leisure time to research and study about marine biology. He has published several books on his scientific findings. His Majesty neither smokes nor drinks. He has some knowledge of French and is said to read English with the aid of a dictionary.

The Emperor's personal name is never used in conversation. Married in 1924, the Emperor and Empress have five children and 10 grandchildren.

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