

JAPAN

**HIROHITO**

**HIROHITO**

(Phonetic: heeroH-heetoh)

*Former Emperor (1926-89)*

The longest reigning monarch (62 years) in the history of the 1,600-year Chrysanthemum throne, Hirohito died of cancer on 7 January 1989. During his reign, officially titled Showa (Enlightened Peace), he witnessed the events of more than half of Japan's modern history. The last of Japan's leading World War II figures, Hirohito was widely viewed as a link between prewar and present-day Japan. After he renounced his divinity in 1946, the monarchy evolved into a remote institution removed from politics. The Emperor served as the symbol of the state and the unity of the people as stipulated in the postwar constitution. Subsequently, Hirohito's duties included receiving ambassadors and other dignitaries, signing government documents, and attending public functions.

Hirohito was the first heir to the throne to travel abroad; he toured England and France in the 1920s. As Emperor, he visited Europe and the United States in the 1970s. According to the press, he enjoyed the Western lifestyle; he lived in a split-level house on the palace grounds and often wore his favorite US souvenir--a Mickey Mouse wristwatch from Disneyland.

Hirohito was born on 29 April 1901. Formally educated at Gakushuin School (a school for nobility) and by tutors, he became Crown Prince in 1916. He ascended to the throne on 25 December 1926. An accomplished marine biologist, he wrote at least nine books on biology and discovered a Pacific crustacean that now bears his name.

Hirohito is survived by the Empress Dowager Nagako and three children--his eldest son Akihito succeeded his father. As a sign of respect, the personal name of the Emperor is never used in conversation.

**NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT**

Declassified and Approved for Release  
by the Central Intelligence Agency  
Date: 2005

LDA M 89-10401  
24 January 1989