

Emperor Akihito Impact on Japanese History

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Mythology states that Jimmu was the first ever emperor in Japan and that he was kin to the Sun Goddess Amaterasu. Due to the fact that it is a myth then it cannot be considered accurate in the historical aspect. However, Japan has had emperors reigning over it for 1500 years now and they are said to have originated from one family. The imperial reign has the symbol of a sixteen petaled chrysanthemum flower (Magil, 2013). After the war a new constitution was formulated stating that an emperor was to have symbolic functions and his role is to attend diplomatic and ceremonial meetings with no political power. This shows that Japan is committed to democracy because they still regard Akihito as their leader although he does not have any political powers (Magil, 2013). Emperor Akihito is the son of the late Emperor Hirohito who happened to be Japan's longest serving emperor. His reign lasted from 1926-1989 a time in which he announced surrender by Japanese military to the Allied Forces in 1945.

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Akihito was the 125th emperor of Japan in 1990 after his father had died because he was the first born son of the Emperor. He was born as the fifth child to his family having four elder sisters. He was born in Tokyo Japan in the year 1933 on the 23rd of December and he was named as the heir to the throne in the year 1952 (Magil, 2013). The imperial family had the tradition of marrying from one of their own, but Akihito was the first in his family to marry a commoner who later became Empress Michiko with whom he later had seven children. He did not grow up with his parents and as it is Japanese history he was raised by tutors and chamberlains. He started schooling the year 140 and in 1952 he joined college but he did not get his degree (Magil, 2013). Akihito's reign was a unique one and it sought to achieve peace like no other reign that had come before him.

It was with great jubilation that his birth was received in Japan due to the fact that the former Princess Nagako had just given birth to four girl's subsequent times. There were people in the court circles who even suggested that the king should get a concubine who could give him a son. The high levels of Japan's militarism both at home and abroad was the sole reason they wanted a male heir to the throne (Ruoff, 2001). It had become tradition that there should be a continuous line of male heirs that could take over reign in Japan's imperial dynasty. Emperor Akihito was shown in to office on 12th November 1990 and he was to communicate with the Sun Goddess hence emerging like a godlike creature. Akihito means a shining pinnacle of virtue and his other name Tsugunomiya means the prince of the august succession and enlightened benevolence. After being named, his birth document was put in the Imperial Shrine so that he could get blessings as the new prince (Magil, 2013). When he was all grown he travelled abroad often on behalf of his father attending various functions which included coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in England in 1953.

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Emperor Akihito is a modern day leader who is renowned for being a perfect leader this is due to the fact that he made efforts to make peace with various nations which included China a short while after he had been crowned Emperor after his father. He is known for his kindness and humility despite the fact that he comes from the imperial royal family (Ruoff, 2001). He qualifies to fit as a decisive leader because the people of Japan listen to him and his opinions are considered in making decisions. He is also informative to the people of his nation. When the Tsunami struck Japan, Akihito set to give a speech that was like a light at the end of the tunnel for the people who had been broken by the calamity (People, 2016). This was also to preach the need for positivity for the people of Japan who were losing hope.

Emperor Akihito made a visit to Netherlands with his wife in the year 2000 in a bid to amend the damaged relationship that existed between the two countries due to the Second World War. Regardless of the fact that the Imperial Couple has gone to commemorate the four-hundredth anniversary of the good relations between the Dutch people and the people of Japan, the people of Dutch still were disturbed by the fact that Japan colonized them during the World War II (Ruoff, 2001). There were a number of people who were asking to be paid for damages by the Government of Japan due to the atrocities they had to endure under the hands of Japan while they were held captive. Emperor Akihito has always felt sorry for the damage that World War II caused to people and nations as a whole. Akihito accepted that Japan cause a lot of suffering for the people of China and other countries during the war (Ruoff, 2001). He hopes that the same thing will never happen again in the world's history and he prays for peace to prevail and that countries continue to establish themselves (Takenaka & Seig, 2015). The heirloom of the war is something that still affects relations between Japan and other countries like Korea and China which languished under Japan during the colonial era before the defeat of 1945. It is the fact that Emperor Akihito is a soft-spoken person and he cares for reconciliation with the Asian countries that makes him so popular. He is not like the political leaders of Japan who believe that it is not worth it to apologize for mistakes of the past.

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Emperor Akihito also made contributions to taxonomy study of the gobiid species of fish which has made him to be regarded as an ichthyologist. This made him to become a honorary member of the reputable Linnean Society of London back in 1980. Emperor Akihito also became an associate researcher with the 'Australian Museum' and the 'Research Institute for Natural Science of Argentina'. This is due to the fact that he had a great enthusiasm for marine biology

and this saw his analysis published in the 'Japanese Journal of Ichthyology' among other scientific journals. He is also a member of the Ichthyologic Society of Japan under which Akihito has contributed twenty-six papers to the society's journal (Magil, 2013). Akihito wrote about gobiid fish and these writings were published in 1984 and he was also selected to be the society's president of honor during the Second International Conference. With all these achievements attributed to him he is considered a very informative leader. Akihito's research findings were used in various publications and therefore this shows that he made great contribution to his field of research.

In conclusion, it is an indisputable fact that Emperor Akihito has been the groundbreaker for many cultures of the Imperial Household. This is due to the fact that he did not do things as his ancestors did but rather strayed a little from the tradition and what people were used to. The most prominent deviation was when he decided to marry a commoner which was not the norm for the people of the Imperial Household of Japan. He also happens to be the first emperor in Japanese history not to be accorded political responsibility and not to be worshiped. This was the norm in the previous reigns of the imperial family. He also took much effort in personally connecting with the people of Japan and sending himself out as their ambassador to the world and asking for forgiveness for the part that Japan played in World War II. He was also the first leader from Japan to make a visit to the Pearl Harbor ever since the start of World War II. It is also important to note that many barriers have been eliminated ever since Emperor Akihito took to office. In the past the ordinary people were not allowed to make visits to the Imperial Home but that is long gone. The Imperial Couple has also made history by visiting the people of Japan especially those with physical challenges and those struck with various calamities. They have adopted the normal life of the Japanese people and they even wait in the traffic lights.

Although all this has opened ways for the emperor to be accessed he is still protected from direct comments and criticism. Emperor Akihito is then seen to have greatly contributed to the history of Japan by his various acts of kindness and through his scholarly works.

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