

HIROHITO and NAGAKO
(Phonetic: heeroh-heetoh; nahgahko)

JAPAN

Emperor and Empress (since 1926)

Addressed as: Your Majesty(ies)

The Emperor and Empress of Japan will be celebrating the 60th year of their reign on 29 April, the Emperor's 85th birthday. The local press has described their 62-year marriage as one of unusual happiness and harmony. Although the Emperor has cut down on his official schedule in the last year, he continues to receive dignitaries, sign government documents, and attend public functions.

Nevertheless, this shy symbol of Japan prefers working in his laboratory rather than engaging in state ceremonies, according to the press. The Empress, 83, appears less often in public; her health is not as good as her husband's. The couple last visited the United States in 1975.

The Emperor has written at least nine books on marine biology and has discovered a type of Pacific crustacean that was named after him. In 1971 he was elected a full member of the British Royal Society for his scientific accomplishments. He enjoys watching sumo wrestling on television. The Empress, who is honorary president of the Japanese Red Cross, likes playing the piano, painting, and poetry. The couple spends much time hiking together.

The Emperor knows some French and reads some English. He does not drink alcoholic beverages or smoke. Preferring Western to Japanese food, he usually eats bacon and eggs for breakfast; he always wears Western clothing. The couple has five living children, nine grandchildren, and at least five great grandchildren. As a sign of respect, the personal names of the Emperor and Empress are never used in conversation.

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