

Hirohito, Emperor of Japan during World War II, was known as "Tenno" to the Japanese people. He had ascended the "Chrysanthemum Throne" in 1926, after the death of his father, the Emperor Yoshihito.

Hirohito, as his grandfather before him, was considered to be a god by his countrymen. After the war—when his subjects heard Hirohito's voice for the first time, announcing Japan's surrender—they realized he was only a man.

How did Hirohito evade responsibility for the war? Other Japanese people were charged with war-crimes, but why was the man at the top—the one who had approved the Pearl Harbor attacks—not charged?

During the spring of 1946, in a series of secret meetings with his advisors, Hirohito gave an explanation (among other things) for the country's decision to go to war in 1941. Terasaki Hidenari, a career diplomat (who was married to an American from Tennessee), recorded Hirohito's *Monologue* (which is known, in Japan, as *Showa tenno no dokuhaku*).

Hidenari's daughter found those notes—after her parents' deaths—but she did not immediately realize their historical significance. Hirohito's *Monologue* was published in 1990.

Although he claimed, in his Monologue, that he was powerless to stop the flow of events—for example, battles at Okinawa, Peleliu, Saipan, Iwo Jima and the inhumane treatment of prisoners of war—not everyone agrees with his position.

Those disagreements, and debates about his level of responsibility, continue seventy years after the war with Japan ended.

See, also, the following additional four parts of this story:

[Hirohito - As a Young Man](#)

[Hirohito - Conduct During the War](#)

[Hirohito - Immediately After the War](#)

[Hirohito - Was He Responsible for the Pacific War?](#)

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<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/Hirohito-Emperor-of-Japan>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

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Media Stream



Attack on Pearl Harbor

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