

Imperial Institution as Japan's Culture Iconic Identity

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This article is new finding and a revision and updating of previous Imperial Empire paper, which includes the latest developments of the Imperial issue after the announcement of Emperor Akihito's intention to resign from the imperial throne in August 2016. Popular and short version of the Emperor Akihito was published in the Pelita Newspaper November 13, 1990 and Kompas Newspaper, November 16, 1990.

Abstract: In August 2016, Emperor Heisei (Akihito) declared his intention to resign from the Imperial Throne. Emperor Akihito was crowned as the 124th emperor in November 1990. The event of Akihito's coronation ceremony on 12 November 1990 was very important because he was the first of a new imperial succession since the late Emperor Hirohito (Showa Emperor) was crowned in 1926, following the Meiji Constitution. The traditional sacral ceremony of Crown Prince Akihito's coronation took place under the 1947 Constitution, a period of Peaceful State of Japan, in which the Emperor's position was "only as a symbol of the unifying nation". The resignation plan of Emperor Akihito from the Chrysanthemum Throne was a new event, especially in dimension of culture and politics which occurred for the first time after 200 years, when Kokaku emperor resigned from the throne in 1817. The study was based on history approach, ideology, political, social and cultural issues related to the existence of current Empire.

Keywords: Imperial Institution, Akihito, Hirohito, Meiji Constitution, 1947 Constitution

1. Introduction

In November 1990, Japan was preoccupied with an important official coronation ceremony of Akihito's crown prince as the 124th Emperor who occupied the throne of the Japanese Empire¹. Emperor Akihito, who had de facto succeeded the late Emperor Showa since his death on January 7, 1989, was raised and educated in a rigorous imperial ritual tradition amidst a democratic modern Japanese society. The coronation ceremony, carried out on 12 November 1990, was very important because it was the first time an Empire succession has taken place since Hirohito died. Stephen S. Large illustrated Emperor Hirohito who reigned during Japan's period of difficulties.

*The man Hirohito was no doubt a sympathetic and courteous gentleman to his family and advisers. But Emperor Hirohito reigned at the summit of atrocious emperor system fascism and continued to direct both aggressive wars and a system which oppressed the people*².

Emperor Akihito inaugurated as crown prince in 1952 and lived in a modern, peaceful and democratic Japan society and at the same time maintained cultural traditions of Japanese History. Emperor Akihito, during his 29 years of throne, did not experience tragic events as experienced by his father Emperor Showa. Japanese people in the era of Emperor Akihito (Emperor Heisei) living in a peaceful and prosperous condition, despite experienced tragic natural disasters such as Hanshin Great Earthquake of 1995³,

Fukushima earthquake and tsunami in March 2011 that claimed large number of human life and property⁴. The presence of Emperor and Empress in the midst of a disaster-stricken society was always accompanied by gentle and sympathetic attitudes, which gave life and spirit. The presence of Emperor and Empress was a vibrant and life-sustaining energy for disaster-stricken communities. Emperor Akihito also ceaselessly called for the necessity of realizing world peace and regretted past wars and the suffering of society due to war and past Japanese mistakes. In 1992, Akihito paid a visit to China and was the first Japanese emperor to visit China, while the Chinese people's memories of past Japanese military atrocities are still left in China.

However, in the midst of love and affection of Japanese people for their Emperor, suddenly in August 2016, Emperor Akihito expressed his desire to resign from his imperial throne by reason of age and the aging physical condition where "he cannot fulfill his duties in a good way"

When I consider that my fitness level is gradually declining, I am worried that it may be difficult for me to carry out my

damage, or about 2.5 percent of Japan's national income, making it one of the most expensive natural disasters in history. Only about \$3 billion was covered by insurance. More than 35,000 people were pulled from collapsed buildings by neighbors or rescue workers. Japanese refer to the disaster as the Great Hansin Earthquake. [Source: T.R. Reid, National Geographic, July 1995] <http://sea.factsanddetails.com/japan/cat26/sub160/item863.html>

⁴ Fukushima earthquake and Tsunami, On 11 March 2011, there were 15,821 deaths, 3,962 missing, and 5,940 injuries in 20 Japanese prefectures. The largest percentage of deaths and missing were in the Miyagi (59%), Iwate (32%), and Fukushima (9%) Prefectures. Some of the deaths were obviously caused by the earthquake since they were located far from the coast. See: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/19475705.2011.632443> Figure

¹ I Ketut Surajaya, "Menyambut Kaisar Akihito dan Era Heisei" (Welcoming Emperor Akihito and Heisei Era), Pelita Newspaper, 13 November 1990, p.4-8.

² Inoue Kiyoshi, (1975) *Tennono sensousekinin*, dalam Stephen S. Large, Emperor Hirohito and Showa Japan A political biography (1992) Routledge, 11 New Fetter Lane, London, p. 3

³ The earthquake in Kobe on January, 17, 1995 left 6,425 dead, injured 25,000, displaced 300,000 people, damaged or destroyed 100,000 buildings and caused at least \$132 billion worth of

*duties as a symbol of the state with my whole being as I have done until now.*⁵

This statement was aired on a television show in 2016. Prime Minister Abe Shinzo responded promptly to the Emperor's wish by meeting in the Cabinet, communicating with Imperial Household Affairs and also meeting with parliament. The question is, does the rapid development in Japanese society and the world have anything to do with Akihito's desire to resign from the throne? Imperial Household Affairs was shocked about 12 years ago after the birth of the son of Prince Fumihito and Princess Kiko, Prince Hisahito (born 2006). Prince Fumihito is Prince Naruhito's younger brother. Prince Naruhito and Princess Masako only have one daughter named Princess Aiko, born in 2001, and she will not be ascended the throne in the future. Similarly, two daughters of Prince Fumihito and Princess Kiko, Princess Mako (born 1991) and Princess Kako (born 1994) are also not likely to ascend the throne as the successor to the throne in the future. The period of the shaking has indeed ended after the birth of Prince Hisahito. Along with the rapid changes and developments in Japanese society, changes in the genealogy and descent of the Emperor's family are likely to be affected by the changes⁶.

On one hand the rules and laws of the Imperial Household Affairs have been prepared by Parliament as the legal basis, which will serve as the guidance of the emperor's resignation from the throne. During the 200 years after the resignation of Emperor Kokaku in 1817, there was no rule governing the fall of an Emperor from the throne based on his own willingness⁷. For three years, after Akihito's declaration in August 2016, Crown Prince Naruhito is confirmed ascending the throne as the successor of Akihito, his father, on July 29 – 30, 2019⁸. The three-year period is a period of socialization to Japanese society and preparation of the revision of the Act of The Imperial Household Affairs that has not set the procedure for the resignation and descends of a Japanese Emperor, although Japan is the oldest Empire in the world.

2. Literature Survey

2.1. Heisei Era and Emperor Idol

The Emperor's position today is different compared to Emperor Meiji, Emperor Taisho, and Emperor Showa (until 1945). The Japanese state constitution, which came into force in 1947, did not grant state political power to the Emperor, but to the people through representation in parliament. The emperor is more functioned as a symbol or unifying icon of the Japanese people, in the context of social

and cultural ideology⁹. It is understandable that social ideology seems to be more functional in preserving the spirit of the Empire and Japanese culture that has been inherent in Japanese society since time immemorial. Political affairs of the state according to the 1947 constitution became the task of the government (executive) under the leadership of Prime Minister (総理大臣, *sori daijin*, Prime Minister) and Parliament (国会 = *kokkai*, National Diet) consisting of the Lower House (衆議院 = *shuugiin*) and the Upper House (参議院 = *sangiin*), which are the people's representatives in the National Parliament. Thus, the Emperor has no political power as set out in the Meiji Constitution, which is no longer in force. In other words the Emperor's political ideology has been uprooted in the context of the structure of state power. It should be noted that the efficacy of social and cultural ideology gave color and brought out the country's political identity based on Japan's parliamentary system. In other words, ideology in the political context was as effective as ideology in the social context. If Japan faces a state crisis, political ideology and social ideology will automatically be a powerful "weapon" mobilization in maintaining the identity of the Japanese state.

Although the emperor's power has changed from power based on political ideology to social ideology as it is today, the emperor's "holiness" as the nation's spiritual leader remained as an invaluable Japanese treasure in an attempt to preserve Japanese cultural and identity values. Modern and democratic institutions of Japanese government can serve as the identity of an advanced democracy, but the Japanese imperial institution remains as the identity and icon of traditional Japanese culture. Existence of Imperial Institution has been also become subject of debates among Japanese people, related to whether or not imperial institution should be maintained? Conservative extreme society wants to restore the function of the Emperor in accordance with the Meiji Constitution. This idea has sparked fears from fascist group who fear the revival of Japanese militarism as experienced in the 1930s. Other groups of people also want the imperial institution to be abolished, on the grounds that the imperial institution needs state funds financed by the public tax.

Heisei era is the era of Idol Emperor¹⁰. There were so little captured information and literature, regarding the popularity and love of the Japanese people to Emperor Akihito and his family. It is no strange that Emperor's speech to resign from the throne sparked pro-cons, although the Emperor's reason for resignation was humanly understood. "The reason on age had worried the Emperor that he would be unable to fulfill the heavy duties for state and society, in addition to the Emperor had experienced severe illness and prostate surgery"¹¹.

⁵<https://www.ft.com/content/d0831034-d643-11e7-8c9a-d9c0a5c8d5c9>

⁶On the crisis of Imperial successor, see: I Ketut Surajaya, Analisis, "Takhta Seruni dan Simbol Budaya" (Chrysanthemum Throne and Cultural Symbol) in Media Indonesia Newspaper, 17 Februari 2006, p.14

⁷Japan's Emperor Akihito plans to step down, according to report <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jul/13/japans-emperor-akihito-plans-step-down-reports>

⁸<https://www.ft.com/content/d0831034-d643-11e7-8c9a-d9c0a5c8d5c9>

⁹ Maruyama Masao, see, I Ketut Surajaya, Demokrat Yoshino Sakuzō Penentang Gigih Anarkisme, Fasisme Dan Komunisme Jepang pada Zamana Taisho, Jakarta, Fakultas Sastra Universitas Indonesia, 1995, pp.106-129.

¹⁰ I Ketut Surajaya, "Lembaga Kekaisaran Jepang", Kompas, 19 November 1990, p.4-5.

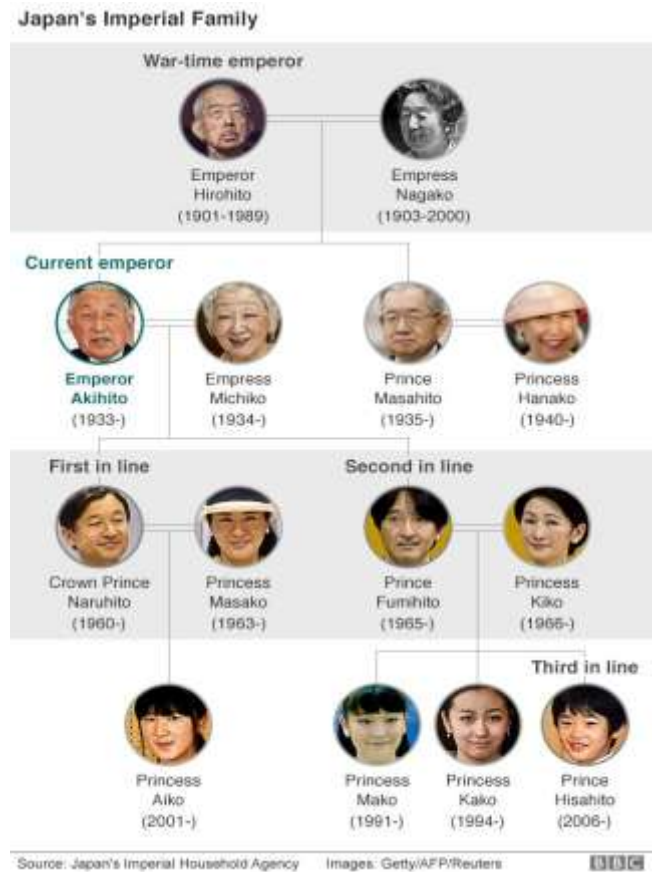
¹¹Linda Siegel, Kaori Kaneko, Japan's Emperor Akihito to abdicate on April 30, 2019 <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-japan-emperor/japans-emperor-akihito-to-abdicate-on-april-30-2019-idUSKBN1DV3AS>

Emperor Akihito, born on December 23, 1933, was graduated from Faculty of Political Science and Economics of Gakushuin University. In 1952, he was crowned as Crown Prince and in 1959 he married Michiko Shōda, daughter of a leading Japanese industrialist. His marriage received a very warm welcome from the Japanese people because they were considered a very ideal partner. The background of their popularity because of their marriage is based on love, opposing "political marriage" or matchmaking as practiced in the past. In other words, their marriage was not based on family relationship of the Emperor, or origins of the aristocratic family, much less for business purposes, because Michiko was indeed the daughter of a prominent Japanese industrialist.

The Emperor's closeness to ordinary people was shown by unusual changes in the Palace, such as among other things Emperor rejected the strict guarding in order to "mingle" with his subjects and said, "The imperial family is united with the people". This statement was issued in February 1989 after the funeral of the late Emperor Showa. His three sons, Prince Naruhito (Hiro-no-Miya), born in February 23, 1960, Prince Fumihito (Aya-no-Miya), born in November 30, 1965 and his daughter Sayako (Nori-no-Miya), born in April 18, 1969, are very popular and became a young Japanese youth idol in the 1980s. Princess Sayako, a student at the Faculty of Letters at Gakushuin University, was very interested in dogs that serve as a guide for the blind. Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko in their youth wastennis player. It was natural then if the Emperor's family was idolized family in which integrated traditional Japanese cultural values were always open to changes of progress without losing the basic values of Japanese culture that had been embedded and as iconic in Imperial Institutions and Emperor family individuals. It is interesting to quote Herbert P. Bix's research statement on Emperor Hirohito, stating that Emperor Akihito was unlikely to return the Imperial Empire of Japan such as the Meiji or Showa period:

As the twentieth century ended, although developments in Japan hinted that the Akihito will ever be brought forward to lead the nation as dramatically as Meiji or as disastrously as Showa. His personality, abilities, education, and interests all appear to rule out such a role. So too many problems still unresolved from World War II inherent in the institution of the Japanese monarchy rather than in the particular occupant of the throne¹².

Here is the Emperor Akihito's Lineage, in the following photo; Sayako's daughter is not visible in the photo.



Source: Japan's Imperial Household Agency Images: Getty/AFP/Reuters

2.2 Cultural icons and Shamanistic Sacred Symbols

In Japanese mythology, there are three icons or sacred symbols that have always kept their sacred significance by the state and society up to now, although Japanese culture is also faced with globalization. The three sacred symbols of the Empire are: swords, precious stones and mirrors, with each Shamanistic magical meaning. As mentioned in the *Nihonshoki* (Japanese "ancient" historical record written in 720), the sword is a weapon used by Yamatotakeru when he subjugated Japan in the Eastern region. The sword becomes symbol of military power in the course of a long history of modern militarist thought, developed very rapidly, especially during the period of the military power of Japanese rule since the 1930s that ended in 1945. In the course of a very long time in Japan, the sword is an icon and an antidote to reinforcements or "evil beings". Stones and mirrors were originally worn on a "bundle" or a crown cap worn in "shamanistic" ceremonies. Each of these objects is a symbol of the sun and the moon. These symbols imply that since ancient Japan emperor functioned as a shaman. The "*Kenjito Shokeinogi*" ceremony, which was held at the time of the throne Emperor Hirohito's submission to Emperor Akihito 29 years ago, is a palace ceremony of the sacred imperial equipment consisting of a sword, *magatama* (precious stone) and mirror. This ceremony marked the imperial succession of the Emperor Hirohito (Deceased Emperor Showa) to Emperor Akihito on January 7, 1989 and the series of ceremonies of the throne such as "*Sokuigo Chokennogi*", the first meeting ceremony between an emperor and the prime minister and a cabinet member was also held on 7 January 1989.

¹² Herbert P. Bix, *Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan*, Harper Collins e-Books, 2005, p. 688.

The mythical Japanese emperor *Amaterasu ōmikami* (Goddess of the Sun), according to the *Kojiki* and *Nihonshoki* books, historically exudes magical icons like other examples of magical mystical ceremonies that are still preserved in the Emperor's Palace. Although Emperor Hirohito (Emperor Showa) declared himself as an ordinary man and not a Goddess of the Sun in 1945, but in the culture of the imperial society and the Emperor's reign, it was still considered sacred. General Douglas MacArthur as Commander of the Supreme Commander of Allied Power (SCAP) General Head Quarter (GHQ) may be presented this Emperor's declaration under pressure during the occupation of the United States in Japan (1945-1952) after the defeat and surrender of Japan in the Pacific War. The question is whether this sacred shamanistic ceremony still be preserved at the crowning of Crown Prince Norihito's son As Emperor - scheduled for 29-30 July 2019? This is one of the parameters to know the extent to which changes in traditional ceremonies can serve as benchmarks or indications of a renewal.

Shriek *TennōHeika Banzai* (the Emperor's life, the longevity of the Emperor) is thrown by every Japanese warrior and warlord in fierce battles in the Japanese-Chinese War, the Japanese-Russian War, World War I and World War II, as evidence that the emperor is descendant of Goddess of Sun, and very effective in implementing the ideology dream of *Hakko Ichiyu* (eight world corners are in one roof of the Yamato race) during the war era. Regardless of whether the ideology is spurred by the military or not, we can still witness the respect of the Japanese people to the emperors who were present in Hibiya Park in front of the palace in honor of each of their Emperor's Birthday who also shrieked *Tennō Heika Banzai*. Shamanistic ritual in form of Shinto ceremonies (*matsuri*) is the main binder of Japanese society in an effort to preserve traditional cultural values. As commonly known, Japan's success in country modernization is because they succeeded in exploiting "traditional values" and synergizing them with "modern values", in this case Western science and technology. The Empire has been instrumental in introducing western science and technology, as well as the legal, political, economic and other systems, since the Meiji Restoration (1868).

2.3 Imperial Institutions and State Structures

Historically, the imperial institutions of Japan can be traced backward, i.e. on institutions based on the *Ritsuryō* system introduced to Japan in the 8th century from the Tang Dynasty in China. Although the system was incorporated from China, Japan made its own institution according to Japanese interests. Finally, *Dajōkan* (Great Council of State) and *Jingikan* (Shinto Religious Affairs Office) located directly under the Emperor. In subsequent developments, due to ambition of Emperor's advisor or aide, which generally consisted of noble families, a "political marriage" happened between noble princesses and the emperor's crown prince. This condition led to the birth of "governmental guardianship system" (*Sekkan Seiji*) since the *Heian* era (794 - 1185). Thus the *Dajōkan* institution functioning to carry out the secular political affairs of the state moved from the hands of the Emperor to the hands of the nobility. *Sekkan Seiji* was valid for about 200 years before the end of the

Heian era. The system began when the 9 years old Korehitoprince was crowned as Emperor. Automatically, political power was exercised by his grandfather (Fujiwara aristocratic family), the condition was the logical consequence of "political marriage". By the collapse of the "political domination" of the nobility and the emergence of "samurai" class at the end of Heian era and *Dajōkan* since the days of Kamakura (1185 - 1333). The military position grew stronger in controlling the bourgeoisie, especially in the Tokugawa period (Edo, 1603 - 1868), the Tokugawa *shōgun* seems to function as the "Second Emperor", because the Tokugawa regime succeeded in "making use of" the Emperor in order to have important political policies "got the blessing" and the legitimacy of the emperor, who is the center and spiritual leader of the Japanese nation. Since the Meiji restoration (1868) especially since the enactment of the Meiji Constitution in 1889, the Emperor's position was "restored" in the perspective of the *Ritsuryō* system but in reality the position was "played around" by politicians and military for their interests. So the Emperor's charisma as a spiritual leader of the nation is like the Tokugawa era.

The Emperor was then shown publicly in a garb of military greatness even though the Palace remained a civilian. The Emperor of Showa - who ascended the throne in 1926, succeeded his father Emperor Taisho, often rode a white horse with military commander's uniform (titular) and the effect was that the Imperial Institution was considered a "patron" of Japanese militarism. Since Japan's defeat in World War II, General Douglas MacArthur who "saw" imperial institutions as a "patron" of Japanese militarism soon acted by embarrassing the Emperor and overturning the emperor's emperor myth as *Amaterasuōmikami*. The emperor was forced to proclaim himself to the people of Japan, that indeed "the Emperor is not an incarnation of gods, but a human being". MacArthur's action was immediately followed by the enactment of the 1947 Constitution of the Japanese State, in lieu of the Meiji Constitution. In my opinion, consciously or unconsciously, MacArthur's actions were actually favorable to the Imperial institution, because politically the function of the imperial institution was restored to the care of the spiritual issues separated from the state government institutions dealing with secular affairs. The most fundamental impact of this separation was that the imperial institution could truly serve as a protector and spiritual symbol for all Japanese people without distinction of political flow. Thus the imperial emblem in the context of Japanese history was the unifying symbol of a deeply embedded nation, within Japanese culture and tradition, and at the same time being the identity and icon of the Japanese nation. This had implications that there was harmony or similarity of interests between the imperial institution and the interest of the Japanese who have been imprinted since the institution was in Japan. Throughout history, there has never been a confrontation between Emperor and his subjects, although there are also extremist groups who want to abolish imperial institutions.

2.4 The position of the Emperor in the Meiji Constitution

The position of the emperor in the Meiji Constitution was very central, because he was the organizer of the highest authority over executive, legislative and judicial power. This

can be seen, among others, in the preamble and the articles of the Meiji Constitution. In the preamble it is stated: "We have inherited the right of power over the State from our ancestors, and we will pass on that right to our descendants" Chapter I of article I: the Japanese empire will be ruled and governed by an unbroken lineage of Emperors throughout the ages. In chapter 3: Emperor is sacred and inviolable. Article 5: the Emperor exercises legislative power over the approval of the imperial parliament. Chapter 11: The Emperor holds the highest office of the Army and Navy. The Emperor can also issue government decisions without parliamentary approval, (chapters 7 and 8). State Ministers either individually or collectively can advise the Emperor (chapter 55). The court will be held by the Court of Justice on behalf of the Emperor (article 57)

Beyond the operational mechanism of the Meiji Constitution, there was the interference of influential people or institutions that deviate from the spirit of the Meiji Constitution, as a result, the emperor cannot freely exercise the power of the state, and under certain conditions, exercise the power of the State on the will of persons or officials certain, by means of constitutional gaps. This condition may corner the Emperor as a man who is being used by people near him, both on behalf of institutions and individuals. For example, in Japan there is known term of *Musekinin no senso* (no one is responsible for the occurrence of war). In a rather detailed text in Inoue Kiyoshi's book, (1977) *Tenno no senso sekinin* (the responsibility of the Emperor's war) this term emerged during the trial of high-ranking military officials accused of being war criminals by allies, immediately after the end of World War II. None of these military officials acknowledged responsibility for World War II, even though the idea of war was launched in *SanbōHonbu* and *KaigunGunreibu* (General Staff Office of the army and navy). The Emperor only announced the verdict, perhaps in a forced state and a very difficult position.

3. Problem Definition

The question in this research is the extent to which major changes in the world and Japan have had an impact on the Imperial of Japan, both past and present, in particular in terms of cultural dimensions and the Imperial of Japan as the icon of the identity of Japanese unity. What dimensions are being altered or retained within the Japanese imperial institution?

4. Approach

This research is based on qualitative research, descriptive analysis, by reviewing the results of past authors' research related to the Imperial Institution of Japan. The author also conducted a review of literature related to the results of previous research by Japanese Studies experts and carefully followed the actual developments in Japanese society related to the existence of the Imperial Empire of Japan. The major books of previous research results, international journals and information over the internet became the main reference in this study. This research is a continuation of the author's previous research that has not been completed. Historical,

cultural, ideological and social approaches are used as the basis for analysis in this study.

5. Discussion

5.1 Emperor and Militarism

The core of the Meiji Restoration in 1868 was the return of military power from the Tokugawa regime to the Emperor, which also ended the Tokugawa feudalistic military rule for 260 years. The later Meiji modernization has an international sphere in the fight against imperialistic western military forces, which is considered a major threat to Japan. Therefore, the modernization model applied in Japan is taking the western model, with the orientation of economic development and industrialization that focuses on military development.

The concept of Meiji Constitution is based on two choices of mainstream thinking: the Basic Law model based on parliamentary democracy thinking, or the Basic Law model based on the Absolute Monarchist thought. The choice of the bureaucratic elite ultimately fell on the Prussian-style Monarchical Constitution, which gave the emperor great prerogatives. This choice fits the conception of the Restoration figures who wanted to restore the highest political power to the Emperor. That is why, the democracy movement in the Meiji era known as *JiyuuMinkenUndou* (自由民権運動) was crushed out with high cost and quite many victims¹³. Based on this brief description, the rise of militarism in Japan is inseparable from the context and concepts of western modernization i.e. western countries that have passed through the industrial revolution that Japan is studying and practicing in its country, namely modernization in military industries to confront the West. In analyzing Japanese militarism, two synchronic approaches are adopted: the constitutional approach to the Meiji Basic Constitution as the main grip, and the ideological political approach, by adhering to the process of organizing the State's politics based on the Constitution and political culture, inspired by the structure social hierarchy primordial with Emperor's charisma as the central political thought. From this approach, it would be understood that the deceased Emperor Showa was constitutionally "swept away" in militarism after World War II, but ideologically and politically still many unclear issues that needed in-depth research. In this case, the extent to which the Emperor "drifted" about historical data on this subject has not been fully revealed until now. But I myself agree with experts of Japanese history, that during his reign since inaugurated in 1926, Emperor Showa only acted twice on his own will in accordance with the mechanism of the Meiji Constitution. First, condemning military coup in 1936 and second, at the time of deciding to surrender in World War II, based on the Allies' Postwar Declaration issued in August 1945¹⁴.

¹³About JiyuMinken Undo, lihat : I Ketut Surajaya, Pergerakan Demokrasi Jepang, (Japan's Democracy Movement) Jakarta, PT Karya Unipress, 1984

¹⁴See article (dialogue) between Miura Shumon and Yamamoto Shichihei, "The Imperial Institution :Japan's Unbroken Thread", Japan Echo, vol XVI no.2, 1989, pp.8 -14

5.2 Sources of Militarism

The source of Japanese militarism in the context of the Meiji Constitution is the existence of dual power (*nijuseifu*), the legitimately born power, which has been regulated in the Meiji Constitution, and the unconstitutional power of the constitution, as a result of constitutional irregularities. For example: the parliament of two councils, the Royal Council and the House of Representatives, are not accountable to the people, but to the Emperor. The Emperor from the Emperor's family, nobles and persons who had special position in society appointed the members of the Royal Council. Only members of the House of Representatives are elected through an election composed of representatives of political parties. In accordance with the principle of representation, the Representative Council shall be entitled to nominate a prime minister candidate who is generally elected from the winning political party in the general election. But this did not go smoothly, because there was considerable intervention from *genrōina* group of elder statesmen who were legal advisors of the Emperor. If *genrōin* does not recommend to the emperor a Prime Minister who will be appointed, even if elected by parliament, one cannot become Prime Minister. Similarly, if *genrōin* "dislikes" the ruling Prime Minister, then he can propose to the Emperor to dismiss him. The "dismissal" was generally engineered by the people around the Emperor through the *genrōin* (old statesman).

In the substance of the Meiji Constitution, in fact, the prime minister's strategic position is not that significant, since every minister either individually or collectively can "pit" to the emperor, so that if there is a problem in the cabinet, the Prime Minister cannot always cope. The most frequent disputes are in determining the State budget, particularly defense and military budget. Minister of the Army and Navy in the service of the military, has the special right to face directly to the emperor (*iakujōshō*), if the military and defense budget is rejected by the cabinet, before being submitted to parliament¹⁵.

Before the Emperor decided whether the proposal was accepted or rejected, the Emperor received input or sometimes "pressure" from *Gensuifu* (Supreme Military Council), *GunjiSangiin* (Supreme Military Assembly), *SanbōHonbu* and *KaigunGunreibu*. Generally, the proposal is approved, and if so the cabinet must affirm as the proposal submitted to parliament. To disqualify the parliament is not too difficult, because if no agreement can be taken through voting mechanism. If the voting has been taken it will surely have been granted because the Council of Nobles will surely approve it, according to the "message" *Kunai Daijin* (Imperial House Minister) who is the liaison between various departments and state high institutions. If the agreement cannot be reached, then as a consequence is implementing the state budget last year, which generally give high priority to the military budget.

The increasing budget of defense every year, especially before the events of Manchuria in 1931, was the beginning

¹⁵ *Iakujōshō* the right for subject to meet directly to superior), see I Ketut Surajaya, *Demokrat Yoshino Sakuzō*, p.124

of great adventure of Japanese military landings in China, Manchuria, Korea, then through the gap of the Meiji Constitution, the military can hold a central role, even beyond the Emperor. Thus Japanese militarism was actually born within the context of the Meiji Constitution and the Emperor's existence. In establishing the political policy of the state in accordance with the instruments of the Constitution, the Emperor is often violated by the people around him, even deceived by the government, as Shinobu (1967: 673) stated in his research, in certain cases the government's position can be stronger than the prerogative inherent in Caesar's rule.

If the government's opinion is right, then the General Staff Office is independent of the government or the Diet. The independent decision-making powers of the General Staff Office and the Naval General Staff Office, those of the important organs of military commands, which are organs of military command, which belong to the Emperor, would be impotent and the government would be superior to all of these military organs¹⁶.

In the case of Japanese militarism, a policy that came out of Emperor's "decree" was something that "should" be obeyed by the Japanese people. Those behind the command are sometimes born from military groups competing with the military of the western countries expanding its hegemony and market in Mainland China or in other colonized Asian countries. Militarism in the context of social ideology has not yet been thoroughly covered in this study, but importantly, as the spiritual leader of the nation, the Emperor's charisma, both institutional and individual, is so great and united as the standard Japanese value in their culture. Sheldon (1978: 34) in his research positioned the Emperor and the Imperial System with the following statement:

*"What is the fault of the power of the empowered by the power-holders of a power greatly enhanced by the general emotional commitment to the myth-laden Imperial institution as a focus for loyalty and patriotism, with its potential for both good and evil"*¹⁷.

5.3 The greatest power hidden

Succession that occurred in Japan is more personal succession, meaning that the imperial institutions and all their shamanistic ritual devices will be maintained. In fact, I think the sacred imperial institution, along with the charismatic, democratic personality of the Emperor, is a hidden and powerful force that has a deep and wide base and roots in Japanese culture. In other words, a powerful spiritual force sourced from the Imperial Institution supports the established Japanese parliamentary democracy system and seculars. The power is so powerful that it penetrates the "rebel generation" symbolized by an attitude of ignorance, indifferent and apathetic. Likewise, the school children were possessed by mystical, supernatural, sacred feelings and some feelings especially when they patiently and solemnly

¹⁶ Shinobu (1967:673), dalam Stephen S.Large, *Emperor Hirohito and Showa Japan A political biography*, p.42

¹⁷ Sheldon, dalam Stephen S.Large, *Emperor Hirohito and Shōwa Japan A political biography*, p. 3.

extended the line of queues in front of the Emperor's palace when their Emperor was severely ill, until his death. We know that no subject of "moral education honors the Emperor" given in schools in Japan, is different from the Meiji era one hundred years ago.

6. Conclusion

In this study, it can be concluded that there has been a change of tradition within the Imperial Empire of Japan, namely Emperor Akihito as a unifying symbol and the identity of the Japanese people personally want to lay the throne of the Empire for personal reasons, namely the fear of not being able to perform the duties of statehood as well have age and health reasons. This culture is still inherent in the Japanese people until now. For example, when the Prime Minister or any state official or agency official may feel unable to carry out his duties and responsibilities properly - for various reasons and reasons - the official will resign from his position.

7. Future Scope

Changes that occurred in various parts of the world also occurred in Japan. Of course, certain major changes will affect the Empire. For that reason, study and research on Imperial Japan has always been important and relevant to understand the tendency and direction of cultural change and the Japanese Imperial Institution that became the icon of the Japanese identity.

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