

ROYAL ROMANCE THRILLS JAPS.

Crown Prince Akihito has broken with centuries of Royal tradition and become engaged to a commoner, 24 year old Michiko Shoda, whose name means "beautiful" and "intelligent". She and the Prince first met on the tennis court and they continue to play there for all the world as if every Japanese Prince had married outside Royalty for two thousand six hundred years. Michiko is the daughter of a prominent industrialist. Considering that before their World War defeat ordinary Japanese people even had to avert their eyes in the presence of the Emperor, this royal engagement to a commoner shows how far Japan has travelled along the democratic road. Incidentally Akihito plays quite a useful game of tennis.

Reports say the Emperor is much pleased by the romance, which brings the Royal Family much closer to the people.