



Katsuragi Nami

President

People's Alliance for Protection of Imperial Lineage
by Paternal Male Succession to the Imperial Throne (PAPIL)

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Attention: Ms. Hilary Gbedemah

Chairperson

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

Honorable Members of the Committee:

Our Statement regarding CEDAW/C/JPN/QPR/9

The Japanese Imperial House Act states that "succession to the throne by the paternal male" is handed down as tradition since ancient times and to regard this as discrimination against women is an infringement of our "freedom of religion."

1. About us

We, the People's Alliance for Protection of Imperial Lineage by Paternal Male Succession to the Imperial Throne (PAPIL), are a civic organization, formed in October 2019. With the consensus of the Japanese people, we stand to protect the Imperial lineage as defined by paternal male succession, which has lasted over 126 generations, for more than 2,600 years.

2. The purpose of our statement

(1) Regarding the "List of issues and questions prior to the submission of the ninth periodic report of Japan (CEDAW/C/JPN/QPR/9)" dated March 9, submitted to the

Japanese Government, we have learned that the Paragraph 2 stated: “Regarding the Imperial House Act, the provisions of which currently exclude women from succeeding to the royal throne, please provide details on the steps envisaged to enable female succession to the throne.”

- (2) We also read that a Japanese NGO, “Japan Civil Liberties Union (JCLU)”, stated that, “the exclusion of women to succeed the imperial throne under the Imperial House Law violates articles 1, 2 and 15 of the CEDAW Convention. It deeply rooted in sexism, which reinforces discrimination against women in Japanese society.”
- (3) Paragraph 2 of LoIPR and the NGO’s statement violate our free expression of our religious beliefs and religious traditions which are rooted in timeless Japanese history and the Japanese people. The demand made of the Japanese Government, that “details on the steps envisaged to enable female succession to the throne” is really pointless and goes against the free expression of religion as espoused by the UN.

3. Our assertions

- (1) Succession to the throne by paternal male as stipulated in the Japanese Imperial House Act is a long-standing tradition inherited from the Japanese people since ancient times and has nothing to do with discrimination against women, which CEDAW is currently claiming without basis.
- (2) Consequently, we demand that you to delete Paragraph 2 from your "List of issues and questions prior to the submission of the ninth periodic report of Japan (CEDAW/C/JPN/QPR/9)" dated March 9 this year, issued by CEDAW.
- (3) We state the basis for our assertions below.

4. Grounds for our assertions

- (1) According to the ancient book of Japanese history *Nihonshoki* or *Chronicles of Japan*, written by Imperial order early in the eighth century, Japan was founded by Emperor Jinmu. Ever since the national foundation, Japan has existed as a state, without interruption, for 2,600 years. Thus, Japan is the oldest and longest lasting state in the world. Japan has never once experienced dynastic changes as often seen in other parts of the world.

- (2) The source of strength that enables the longevity of the Imperial throne lies in the continuity of the Imperial lineage. Last year, Emperor Akihito abdicated due to old age and Crown Prince Naruhito succeeded him, marking the 126th Imperial generation.
- (3) In Japan, the Emperor is esteemed and cherished as a treasure sent from heaven and the people respect Emperor as a divine priest who prays for the people's happiness and welfare. This close and long-sustained relationship between the Emperor and the people has no likes elsewhere in the world.
- (4) The concept of Imperial succession lies in deep respect for succession by the paternal male, or going back via the father's side, ultimately leading to the first Emperor, Jinmu. Without exception, the lineage through the paternal male has been sustained.
- (5) Among the one hundred and twenty-six Emperors, there were eight (or ten generations of) female Emperors. However, all of them were Empresses or Princesses from the paternal line, whose paternal ancestors went back to the first Emperor Jinmu. These female Emperors were enthroned as a go-between, as when the previous Emperor died young or when the succeeding Emperor was too young to take the throne. With the understanding of imperial history, the Imperial position and succession to the imperial throne is a religious matter, based on the Japanese people's intrinsic view of the universe. Therefore, to meddle in this matter is very much blasphemous and ignores modern free expression of religion--this matter should not be taken up at all by CEDAW.
- (6) From another perspective, Catholic Popes, Cardinals and priests are exclusively men. They are not allowed to marry. Islamic allamah are said almost to be males. They hold their holy position only for a generation. In these cases, there is no biological transfer of religious "genes". On the other hand, the Japanese people recognized a long time ago the importance of passing on the Imperial blood from generation to generation. Having overcome several crises along the way, the first Emperor's genes is passed on to his descendants to this day. This is truly a "spectacular bloodline", and there is nothing quite like it in all of human history. We believe that should there ever be a "World Heritage of Dynasties", Japan's long-lasting Imperial system would be the first to be so designated. We sincerely hope that your Committee will realize that intervention in the Imperial succession in Japan is clearly racial discrimination and violates our freely expressed religious beliefs. To be fair, the Committee should

take it up as the advices to the Vatican and Islamic states for their practices as well.

- (7) Here are some additional facts of the matter. The Japanese national sport of *sumo* was first performed at the Imperial Palace with the Emperor in attendance, early in the Nara Period, 1,300 years ago. Masculine men from all over the country came to compete for the honor of their hometown. The traditional Japanese play *kabuki* started at the beginning of the Edo Period and only males played all roles. For 360 years since, women have never been allowed to participate in *kabuki*. The long-sustained rule is that female roles are to be performed by men. By contrast, female musical theater *takarazuka kageki*, with many ardent female fans, men are not allowed play roles—as all male roles are performed by females. The Japanese people have long known of and accepted biological differences between men and women. The Japanese people are not at all discriminating against males and females. Japanese culture, while respecting differences in sexes, is a flexible and generous culture.
- (8) Japanese Imperial throne succession all by paternal descendants means that civil males cannot be an Emperor by any means without exception. However, any civil females could be a candidate to be an Empress. Empress Masako is from general public. Any women can be a member of royal family, but no men are allowed to be.

5. Conclusion

We ask that Imperial lineage by paternal male should be respected as an extension of the Japanese sense of value with having longest history and tradition from the viewpoint of Japanese religious belief and consensus.