

The Essential Principle of the Japanese Imperial Succession

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Introduction

Roughly speaking, there are two things that have been passed down by "heredity (seshū)" in Japanese society since long ago. One is "ancestral worship" and the other is "property and occupation." The two inheritance principles are different. Ancestral rites are inherited by a group called "uji", which is a patriarchal group based on paternal lineage, whereas property and occupation are inherited by a group called "ie", which is based on a group consisting of men and women who are married. In other words, "uji" refers to ancient heredity formed going back at least around the beginning of the 1st century, whereas "ie" refers to popular heredity formed in the 10th century and became permeating through the society during the era of feudalism. The former principle of ancient heredity or "uji" continues in a pure form only for the Imperial clan and Izumo kokuzō (the clan of the main priest of Izumo Taisha Shrine). And only the Imperial clan has relations with the state. This is the ultimate ground of the imperial succession.

1 Misrecognition of "discrimination against women"

At first, I would like to correct the misrecognition of paternal lineage in advance. Indeed, the first article of the Imperial House Law states, "The Imperial Throne shall be succeeded by a male offspring in the male line belonging to Imperial Lineage." However, to interpret this as "discrimination against women" is the misrecognition caused by getting caught up in the phrase "a male offspring" and overlooking the serious limitation of "the male line belonging to Imperial Lineage" after it.

Certainly, if no woman could become an emperor, but any man could become an emperor, it could not be helped to be called discrimination against women. According to UN population data in 2016, there are about 3,702,490,000 women and 3,767,150,000 men in the world. Nevertheless only 3 of the 3,767,150,000 men are qualified to become the Japanese emperor: Prince Fumihino, Prince Hisahito and Prince Masahito. For men in general, the imperial paternal lineage is not a privilege or anything.

In contrast, 3,702,490,000 women around the world have special privileges that men do not. Regardless of nationality, any women can become members of the Imperial household by marriage. She can be the mother of a Japanese emperor. In some cases, she can be a regent. However, all men other than the three who belong to the Imperial paternal lineage, even if they are Japanese, cannot become a member of the Imperial household by marriage. He cannot be the father of the emperor. He can never be a regent.

None of the privileges granted to all women are granted to men. Looking at this reality, it is men who are excluded from the Imperial household. Women are rather welcome. What is the reason for this "male exclusion"? Knowing this is

the key to understanding the essence principle of imperial succession and why it should be protected.

2. There is no concept of the maternal or female lineage

In the first place, what is "the paternal lineage of the Imperial line"? I would like to draw a conclusion in advance. In accordance with the ancient Japanese concept of "bloodline," regardless of whether a person is male or female, "bloodline" refers to one's own paternal line that goes back to one's father and ancestors. It is truly regrettable that misrecognition has spread through discussions over whether to accept the emperor as maternal or female lineage, but there is no such concept as a "bloodline" as such lineage. As it is an important point, I would like to repeat that although there are men and women in the world, there is no concept of a "bloodline" as a maternal or female lineage in ancient Japan. There are only various paternal lines that are different from the imperial paternal line. Based on this principle, the Imperial House Law is intended to prevent the Imperial Throne from being transferred to different paternal lines through marriage with female members of the Imperial family; otherwise, the paternal imperial line since the first Emperor Jinmu would be extinguished.

3. Two views of heredity or *sesū*

Let's look at the Article 2 of Japanese Constitution. "The Imperial Throne shall be hereditary and succeeded to in accordance with the Imperial House Act passed by the Diet." Article 1 of the Imperial House Law explains the meaning of "heredity or *sesū*" in the Article 2 of the Constitution, as "The Imperial Throne is inherited by a male in the Imperial line who belongs to the paternal lineage." In a nutshell, the "heredity" of the continuation means "imperial paternal lineage."

However, this is different from the common sense of the general public. The dictionary *Kōjien* (commonly used popular dictionary of the Japanese language) which seems to represent the common sense of the general public, describes "heredity" as "the act of inheriting the position, property, or occupation of a family from one generation to the next." In other words, if a child born to a married man or woman would inherit them, it was a "heredity" in the common sense of the general public whether the child would be a man or a woman. According to a survey conducted by Sankei and FNN from May 11 to 12, 2019, 64.2% were in favor of the imperial succession by the female lineage; 21.4% were against it. 64.4% were in favor of establishing a house whose head is a female imperial member; 16.3% were against it. And 78.3% were in favor of a female emperor; 13.1% were against it.

To summarize the discussion so far, although there is a common view that the Imperial Throne should be "heredity" (succession by blood line), there are two views regarding the substance of the "heredity." One is based on the idea of the Imperial House Law, which considers "imperial paternal lineage" as "heredity." The other is the idea based on the general public that if a biological child born from parents succeed to the position, property, or occupation of a family, it should be considered as "heredity." The former is based on the concept of "uji" and the latter on the concept of "ie." While "uji" refers to "ancient

heredity" formed since about the 1st century, "ie" refers to "popular heredity" formed since the 10th century.

4. The concept of "uji" (ancient heredity)

In ancient Japan, heredity meant a succession in the paternal line that led to one common ancestor going back from father to father, regardless of whether the person oneself would be a man or a woman, and people who belong to the same paternal line are regarded as a same clan. This paternal line is called "uji" in East Asia.

The "sei (surnames)" is the name used in East Asia to distinguish a clan member of the same paternal line from a clan member of another paternal line. The Chinese and Koreans "sei" convey this ancient sense. The "sei" is the name that represents the continuation of the paternal line, so it does not change even if you get married. Because, even if you get married, neither your real father nor your paternal line will change. Therefore, Chinese and Koreans have different "sei" between husband and wife in a same family.

This idea was also common in ancient Japan. The typical "sei" are "Minamoto, Taira, Fujiwara, Tachibana," which are followed by 'no' such as Minamoto no Yoritomo, Taira no Kiyomori and Fujiwara no Michinaga. The "sei" did not change after marriage, as can be guessed from the fact that sixteen years after becoming the empress, Kōmyōshi (born 701- died 760) signed her own document as "Tōsanjō" (the third daughter of the Fujiwara clan) and used the seal of "Sekizen-Tōke" (I should do good for the Fujiwara clan).

In England, too, there was a principle of "A child belongs to his father's family," and when the queen's child or the descendants of the king's daughter ascended the throne, the family name would change to the father's side.

In Japan, what is inherited by this paternal line is the position of conducting rituals with the privilege to enshrine ancestor deities. The Japanese term referring to "position of conducting rituals" is *maturinushi*. In other words, the ancient notion is that "the position of *maturinushi*" can only be inherited through the paternal line. An interesting story illustrating this concept is recorded in both the *Kojiki* (Records of Ancient Matters) and the *Nihonshoki* (Chronicles of Japan). The story is following:

When 10th Emperor Sujin made a divination to end the continued disasters, Ōmononushi no kami (deity) possessed Yamato Tototohi Momoso Hime no Mikoto (princess) and, through her, told Sujin to enshrine Ōmononushi no kami. Emperor Sujin himself conducted religious services according to the oracle, but it did not work at all. So, he prayed again, and Ōmononushi no kami appeared in the emperor's dream and told Sujin to order a person named Ōtataneko to enshrine Ōmononushi no kami. So, Ōtataneko was searched throughout the country and was found to be a descendant of Ōmononushi no kami. And, when Ōtataneko enshrined the deity, the disaster subsided and the five grain crops became abundant.

What we can understand from this story is that one who conducts rituals should be connected to the enshrined deity through the paternal line. Otherwise the rituals could not reach the deity. Even if the emperor prayed, the prayer would not be lead to the deity unless they were connected by the paternal line.

This is the idea of the ancient hereditary "uji" that the Imperial House Law relies on.

In response to a question often raised: "why female emperors could exist before the Meiji era," I would like to explain the relationship between female emperor and "uji." In Japanese history, there are eight female emperors among the one hundred twenty-six emperors. All of them belonged to the paternal lineage of the Imperial line, so they were able to enshrine their ancestral deities. However, there is no case that a female emperor married a man who did not belong to the paternal lineage of the Imperial line and her child became the emperor. The child had the right to worship the ancestors of the child's father, but the child did not have the right to worship the ancestors of the Imperial line because the child did not belong to the paternal lineage.

It is true that there are some cases in which children of female emperors or female Imperial families became emperors. However, without exception, their husbands were an emperor or a member of the Imperial clan. This is because the ancient law concerning the Imperial clan required female members of the Imperial clan to marry male imperial members. In other words, even if a child who was born of a female emperor or a female imperial member became emperor, the paternal line succession would be maintained through his father and the ancestral religious service could be continued.

5. The concept of "ie" (popular heredity)

Now, what is the origin of the hereditary view held by the general public? The hereditary view is based on the concept of "ie" (family) that is centered on married couples. And peoples who belong to the same "ie" are regarded as a same familyline⁽¹⁾. In Japan, especially after the medieval period, feudal lords came to strongly embrace this idea. It is property, position, and occupation that were passed down from generation to generation based on this hereditary view. A group that inherits these is "ie" and the name that represents "ie" is surname or "myōji," many of which are derived from the names of residential areas and cultivated lands. Therefore, a man and a woman who get married and stay in the same house will have the same "myōji." In the principle of this hereditary view which values the succession of property, position, and occupation, the continuity of bloodline, or paternal lineage, was secondary, but rather the individual ability to protect the property, position, and occupation of "ie" was valued. For that reason, a head of family without children can adopt a couple who were both children born in different families and has them succeed to his property, position, and occupation. In this way, they think "ie" is still succeeded.

In fact, the European royal family is a family of feudal lord who inherits a huge amount of private land. Therefore, no matter how much you do research on the way of their succession law, it would be of little help to grasp the Japanese Imperial succession. For, it is essentially succession of "the position of conducting ancestral rituals or *maturinishi*." It is a different category from the European way of succession, which is essentially the succession of property, position, and, occupation. Rather, it is the way of succession for a Japanese feudal lord's family that can be fallen in the same category as the way of succession to the throne in Europe. Therefore, through taking Europe as an example, the argument that female members can inherit the throne is a misrecognition to grasp the Imperial succession from the heredity view formed since the medieval period.

And peoples who belong to the same "ie" are regarded as a same familyline⁽¹⁾.

(1)

It was difficult to find suitable English words in this part. I hope you will understand the reason in the following sentences, but I will give you a brief reason in advance. "ie" values the connection of bloodline, but that is not a top priority. The first priority is the maintenance of property and occupation. The sense of camaraderie among members of "ie" originates from belonging to and supporting the same organization of "ie" rather than from bloodline. By analogy, when a family corporation is forced to continue its business or to continue its bloodline, it chooses to continue its business in order to protect the lives of the people involved.

6. Loss of concept of "uji" or ancient heredity from the public people

The succession to the Imperial Throne is not succession of "ie" but succession of "uji." The essence is not inheritance of property, position, or occupation but inheritance of ancestral religious service by paternal line. In fact, until recent times, the concept of "uji" coexisted with the concept of "ie" even outside the Imperial members. You can understand this by looking at the official names of famous people. Tokugawa Ieyasu's official name was a "Tokugawa" "Jiro Saburo" "Minamoto" no "Ason" "Ieyasu." He was an individual called "Ieyasu," who belonged to "Tokugawa" as "ie," whose paternal line was "Minamoto" as "uji." Oda Nobunaga's official name was "Oda" "Kazusanosuke" "Taira" no "Ason" "Nobunaga." He was an individual called "Nobunaga," who belonged to "Oda" as "ie," whose paternal line was "Taira" as "uji."

This coexistence of "uji"'s name and "ie"'s name came to an end in modern times. On September 19, 1870, as part of the modernization and westernization of Japan, the 'Order for Permission of "ie"'s name to Commoners' was issued to the common people who did not have a family name. Next, on October 12, 1871, 'Order prohibiting the use of "uji"'s name,' and those who had used "uji"'s name were not able to use it. As a result, the concept of "uji" was lost among the people. Furthermore, on February 13, 1875, 'Order requiring Commoners to use "ie"'s name' was issued and the Japanese name was unified into their "ie"'s name. In this way, the public people's perception of heredity became limited to the concept of "ie." However, even among the public people, the idea that succession by bloodline was important has been remained and has been incorporated into the idea of succession in "ie." In this way, it came to be considered that the bloodline also continued through the female line. And even if a family with only daughter adopted a husband from another family, they have thought the bloodline has continued through the daughter.

In other words, the acceptance of heredity lacking the ancient perception, in which bloodline would be still succeeded if a daughter inherits a family, has been rather new phenomenon since the modern era. Thus, it is, so to speak, "invention of tradition." This modern idea of heredity underlies the results of a public opinion poll that were in favor of establishing household of an imperial female head or *Josei Mikake*.

7. Remarkable difference of concepts between "uji" and "ie"

Let me give you some examples from the Imperial genealogy of how the concept of ancient heredity of "uji" differs from popular heredity of "ie". The

succession of the Imperial Throne from the 25th Emperor Buretsu to the 26th Emperor Keitai goes back to the 15th Emperor Ōjin. This succession goes back to the father of the grandfather of the grandfather of Buretsu, 5 generations. On reverse, it descends to Emperor Keitai as the son of the grandson of the grandson of Ōjin. Both the ascending line from Buretsu to Ōjin and the descending line from Ōjin to Keitai are regarded as the same imperial paternal lineage. In this imperial genealogy, five male figures were found, who were not emperors, and some of which might not have been lawful members of the imperial household. Moreover, Emperor Buretsu had several sisters. From the viewpoint of the popular heredity or "ie," it would have been an easy tactics that one of his sisters should have inherited to the Imperial Throne. But, that was not the case. The reason why the almost impossible strategy was taken was because the ancient heredity was exclusively valued.

Let me give you another example. At the time of the unification of the Northern and Southern Courts, the succession from the 99th Emperor Gokameyama to the 100th Emperor Gokomatsu was much further apart. Going back to the 88th Emperor Gosaga, who was the father of the grandfather of the grandfather of Gokameyama, the Imperial Throne was handed down to the son of grandson of grandson of grandson of Gosaga. It is by the concept of ancient heredity of the paternal line or "uji" that even such succession was legitimized.

By the way there are two important things in the concept of popular heredity or "ie." One is the ability of successors. The other is the closeness of ties, in terms of kinship or intimacy, between persons who cede the position and ones who succeed. But in the concept of ancient heredity or "uji," the ability of successors or the closeness of ties is not an essential factor as long as successors are connected to the paternal line. Speaking of why, in the concept of ancient hereditary, it is considered that the position of conducting rituals or "maturinushi" directly has connected to the first ancestor of the "uji," regardless of the generation gap.

8. The essential point of maintaining the Japanese imperial succession

As you can understand from the above description, the Imperial Throne has been succeeded by the concept of ancient heredity, which has been maintaining almost only in Imperial clan in Japan. And it is closely related to the emperor's role as "maturinushi," namely, a priest who conducts rituals. This concept does not match the common people's concept of succession formed during the modern age described in 'Kōjien' dictionary. Therefore, if you asked the people about their honest opinions today, they would only give you an irrelevant answer. Furthermore, you might not get an appropriate answer from even members of the Imperial clan.

Therefore, the question to be asked now, in accordance with the public people's modern concept, whether it would be all right to abandon the concept and practice of succession that has continued since ancient times. What we should consider is the fact that the ultimate legitimacy of the emperor is rooted in this ancient concept. In ancient Japan, as for the bloodline, the concept of maternal lineage was never existent. The bloodline was exclusively dependent on the paternal lines.

On the other hand, one of the popular discussions today is as follows; It would be fine to establish a house of an imperial princess; she could get married a male who does not belong to the Imperial paternal line; their child

could succeed to the Imperial Throne. Whereas, from the popular view, this plan is considered to be relevant, it would not be the continuation of the Imperial line by the maternal line, but the transition to another paternal line and consequently the extinction of the Imperial line, according to the ancient concept,

9. What eventually would happen after respecting of the will of common people

There may be an argument that the succession of the Imperial Throne should be in accordance with the concept of the common people, as we live in a world of the sovereignty of the people. But what are waiting us for after it? After breaking the paternal succession that is inseparable from the position of the emperor as a priest or *matsurinushi*, the next thing would be the acceptance of the emperor who is not the *matsurinushi* of the imperial ancestors, such as; "The Emperor's faith may be free," "He does not have to be *matsurinushi* of the imperial ancestors," and "In the first place, Imperial faith is nothing more than private matters, so the Emperor can have his own religious freedom."

Beyond that, there would be the argument against the Emperor; "Since the Emperor is no longer different from the common people, there is no need to place him in a special position." This is why there are some people who are actually thinking of denying the Emperor, among those who advocate the acceptance of maternal imperial succession. This point has become clear when the Japanese Communist Party, which aims to abolish the Imperial system, recently expressed its support for maternal imperial succession. In other words, the approval of the Japanese Communist Party proved their hidden agenda of the allowance of the maternal imperial succession. By the way, in England, the king has no freedom to choose his faith; he is required to have a faith in the Church of England. The right of succession to the throne would be not granted to the royal members who did not have faith in the Church of England. Even if a king, he would lose the throne when he left the Church.

The Japanese emperor's unique role is to worship the Imperial ancestral deities or *Kōsoshin* centered on *Amaterasu Ōmikami*. The status of the priest or *matsuriushi* can only be inherited by paternal descendants of the first Emperor *Jinmu*. A person of another paternal line is not entitled to inherit the position of *matsurinushi* to worship the Imperial ancestral deities. If a person who belongs to another paternal line ascended the throne, he or she could not enshrine the Imperial ancestral deities.

There are two kinds of things in human society. One is artificially created; thus, its necessity is clearly understood. For example, about the system of the legislature or the courts, the criteria for judging their propriety are based on reasonableness. The other is rather spontaneous; such as monarchy and language have existed since immemorial; one might not be able to fully grasp its *raison d'être* with rational thinking. The standard of judgment to legitimacy for the existence of the second kind might be whether or not it has endured the test by time for a long period. Traditionalism and conservatism respect things that have survived for a long time, unless they would be clearly harmful. The concept that "Japanese imperial throne should be inherited by the paternal line" also falls into this second kind. In addition, it has remained only in the Imperial clan. Would it be really good to just throw away this prototypical concept?

Maintaining paternalism by Imperial clan, there was no one who were troubled among common people in the past, and there will be no one in the

future. In the first place, Japanese people are no longer able to pursue paternalism among them. It is essentially inappropriate to think about the Imperial clan according to the people's secular values. The prime minister would be enough as the central figure of Japan if the country should be made up of only common people who lived on their popular view.

The essence of succession to the Imperial Throne is to continue the Emperor system. It is a system in which an emperor who belongs to a specific lineage continues to assume the public position of the symbol of Japan and the unity of the people. In other words, it is based on the principle of "pedigree principle." This "pedigree principle" is not always compatible with "principle of equality." It would be unthinkable from the standpoint of "principle of equality" that those who hold public positions are limited to certain bloodlines. In short, the Emperor system is outside of the "principle of equality." Therefore, the human rights vested in ordinary people are not vested in those who have the potential to hold this position. They have no freedom of occupation, housing, politics or marriage, so on.

The Emperor system of Japan places *matsurinushi* to the head of the nation; those eligible to succeed the throne are imposed various restrictions and sacrifice their freedom. And again, no commoners would be compelled to give up human rights, even if the Imperial succession is limited to the paternal line.

10. The Japanese mythology and the Imperial clan

For people who value mythology, one of the questions that bothers them is the claim: since the mythology features Amaterasu Ōmikami, an emperor's ancestor, as a goddess, the Imperial clan must originate in a maternal line. I will explain the reason why this claim is not relevant. According to Japanese mythology, by the divination of Amaterasu Ōmikami and Susano no mikoto, Oshihomimi no mikoto was born. He is the father of Ninigi no mikoto, who descended to earth as the order of his grandmother Amaterasu and became imperial ancestor. In the ancient book the *Nihonshoki*, it is written that Amaterasu declared to Susano, "Oshihomimi is my son," and she raised him as a child. If this myth is viewed from the same perspective as human bloodline, in despite of the proclamation of Amaterasu, the father of Oshihomimi should be Susano. In fact, in the *Honchō kōin shōunroku* which has been regarded as the most unified and authoritative genealogy of the Imperial clan since the medieval period, Oshihomimi is described as "Susano's first child." In this way, the paternal line—Izanagi no Mikoto; Susano no Mikoto; Oshihomimi no Mikoto; Ninigi no Mikoto—would continue even if the narrative of mythology was regarded as human bloodline. And Amaterasu is also a daughter of Izanagi; thus, she is a woman who belongs to this paternal line.

11. Without concubines, would be paternal succession impossible?

Some people say that without the concubine system, paternal succession would not be able to be maintained. However, the concubine system was once necessary because of the high infant mortality rate, and it is not necessary under modern medicine. In fact, from the first Emperor Jinmu to the present emperor, there are one hundred six emperors. Including the emperors of the Northern Court, however, the emperors who were married are one hundred twenty in total. And it is one hundred sixty-eight sons in total that were born from only lawful wives of the one hundred twenty emperors. Therefore, the

maintenance of paternal imperial succession would be more than enough under modern medicine if we take into account the number of sons born to the lawful wives of the emperor's brothers and relatives,

In addition, let's see how difficult it was for children to become adults before modern times. Emperor Meiji had five boys, but only one of them lived to adulthood, and he had ten girls, but only four of them lived to adulthood. His father Emperor Kōmei had two boys, but only one of them lived to adulthood, and he had four girls, but none of them lived to adulthood. Kōmei's father Emperor Ninkō had seven boys, but only one of them lived to adulthood, and he had eight girls, but only two of them lived to adulthood. Ninkō's father Emperor Kōkaku had ten boys, but only one of them lived to adulthood, and he had nine girls, but only one of them lived to adulthood. This high infant mortality rate is unthinkable under modern medicine. This shows that the concubine system is not necessary to sustain the paternal succession.

12. Crisis caused by an occupation policy and attempts to overcome it

Under modern medicine, why does the current Imperial clan have to worry about the decrease in the number of male successors to the throne? That is because as a result of the defeat in the war, twenty-six male members of the imperial clan were forced to demote from nobility to subject in 1947. There were thirty-five men in this lineage as of 2005. At present, there are at least five boys in their 20s or younger among them. If they had not been forced to leave the Imperial House, there would be no current crisis.

To overcome this crisis, a group of people who support the ancient heredity have been attempting to sustain the imperial paternal lineage by restoring the former imperial members' right of the Imperial succession. However, there is opposition to this idea among those for popular heredity: saying that they are too distant from the current Imperial line; The former line is belong to the Fushiminomiya line, which separated from the current Imperial line in the period of the Northern and Southern Courts, so more than six hundred years have passed and it is too far.

As this point has already been mentioned, so far long distance between the two lines is not an essential issue, as long as their paternal lineage is directly connected to the first ancestor. In addition, the Fushiminomiya line had the right of succession to the Imperial Throne until the defeat for more than five hundred years. If these former members of the imperial clan had stayed in the Imperial household after the defeat in World War II, there would be no discussion about their bloodline being too distant. And only seventy years have passed since they lost the right of succession to the Imperial Throne. Rather, we should pay attention to the reason why they had kept the right of succession to the Imperial Throne for more than five hundred years. That is because the concept of ancient heredity has continued for a long time.

Some of those who support "Female-line Emperor" criticize that the former imperial members are distantly related to the current one. However, just as Takeda Tsuneyasu, who was born into the Takeda clan, a former member of the Imperial clan, is a descendant of Emperor Meiji's daughter. Many former imperial members have been married to women belong to the current Imperial line. The members of the Fushiminomiya line are very close to the current line if you talk about them in terms of the maternal line; there would be no point of the supporter's criticism.

Despite the assumption of some people that both lines must have lost contact each other, the former members of the Imperial clan and the present Imperial line have a get-together called *Kikuei shinboku kai* and continue to associate with their relatives.

By the way, in the case that a male member of the former Imperial line would return to the present Imperial line, when would the Imperial Throne be transferred to the blood line of him? It would be when Prince Hisahito was enthroned and died without leaving a son. If this happens, it will be more than 60 years later in terms of life expectancy of Japanese men today. That should be enough time for the returned members to be accepted by common people.

13. Difficulty in finding a suitable husband for an imperial female member

In September 2017, the engagement of Princess Mako of the Akishinonomiya household was unofficially decided, and it was announced that the wedding would be held on November 4, 2018. However, the wedding was suddenly postponed, which announced on February 9, 2018. It is widely believed that this is a result of various media reports on the issues of the fiancé's family, of which the Imperial Household Agency denies. I don't know if the report is correct on the reason why really caused the delay. However, at least from this incident, it has become clear that it is not necessarily easier to choose the man deserving of the imperial female's husband than to choose the man deserving of restoration of Imperial succession among the people belonging to the former paternal Imperial line.

Finally, I will explain the reason why the emperor as "the position of conducting rituals or *maturinushi*" have been basically limited to men. It is "the severity of the religious service". Anyone without a religious service experience would assume that it can be easily performed, but that's not the case. It is not easy for everyone to continue them in a fixed form on a fixed day, especially for women. Let me give you an example. *Daijōsai* is one of the most important rituals performed by new emperor as enthronement ceremony with style of Shinto. It has been held in the coldest climate within a year since ancient times. In modern times, a new rite of empress' worship was added in this ceremony, but Empress Shōken did not attend the *Daijōsai* of her husband, Emperor Meiji, on November 17, 1871. It was because she had a cold according to *True Record of Empress Shōken*. In the *Daijōsai* of Emperor Taishō on November 14, 1915, Empress Tōmei could not perform the rite because she was pregnant. In this way, strict observance of religious services is a severe obligation for women.

The emperor is a shamanic figure that has its roots in ancient times. The ultimate foundation of the emperor system is the fact that it has continued from time immemorial to this day. The Japanese ancestors sustained the continuity who have long felt the will of something invisible and tried to realize it. On one hand, it is important to consider the preference of the people today, but that is not the most important thing. Even if the will of the contemporary people is taken into account, that of their ancestors, who supported the ancient heredity, must also be taken into account. There is still a way to preserve the paternal imperial succession. Therefore, as long as it is not something that suppresses the human rights of the people, it is the right way to respect the continuity of imperial succession on the ancient concept.

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