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Dear Ms. Hilary Gbedemah, Chairperson, and Honorable Members of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW),

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.”

We request the Committee to retract and rescind the issue regarding the Imperial House Act and “female succession to the throne.” It is not an issue of elimination and discrimination against women, and inappropriate to be discussed in the Committee. We would like to state the reason and the significance of the male succession below.

The Significance of the Y-chromosome and Paternal-Line Male Succession to the Japanese Imperial Throne

In Japan, the Emperor, the master of Shinto rituals, has been succeeded by the paternal line. This tradition has not changed since the first Emperor, Jimmu, to the current 126th Emperor.

To be precise, there were exceptions during the 126 reigns—eight female Emperors with ten reigns (among the eight, two became Emperor two times). However, all eight female Emperors held the Throne temporarily under such circumstance as paternal line successors were too young to be Emperor. The interim female Emperors never imposed on male linked succession.

Such a long-standing tradition of Imperial secession, by a paternal line male, means, in the biological sense, passing down the Y sex chromosome almost intact for generations. Genes exist in chromosomes. In humans, there are twenty-two pairs of autosomes (chromosomes present regardless of sex) and one combination of sex chromosomes. The male human has a chromosome combination of XY, while the female has XX. In the process of creating new cells, when autosomal and sex chromosomes X pair with another autosomal and sex chromosomes X, crossover phenomena occur, and then X chromosomes are changed. So over generations, genes found on autosomal and sex chromosomes X are markedly changed from that of the first generation. However, basically, there is no crossover between an X and a Y chromosome. So, the almost identical Y-chromosome passes on from father to son.

Thus, the current Emperor has inherited, almost completely, the first Emperor Jimmu's Y-chromosome. The current Emperor's younger brother, Prince Akishino no Miya and his son, Prince Hisahito, have the same Imperial Y-chromosome.

Of course, people in ancient times had no knowledge of chromosomes. Nevertheless, ancient people stood with Imperial succession based on the paternal line male. Ancient people could have thought, "There is something inherited solely from father to son." This is likely not speculation. It is of most importance for all creatures on earth, including humans, to discern between kin and strangers and how close or distant relationships are. It is spectacular that humans possess the ability to perceive that there is something that connects father and son.

The British Royal Family is often headed by a queen. And when the queen's son succeeds her, the Dynasty changes and a new Dynasty is named after the queen's husband. It is possible that the British instinctively realized that the Y-chromosome of the new King is directly from that of the queen's husband, changing the name of the dynasty name accordingly.