



The Imperial Throne of Japan, enjoying the Grace of Heaven and everlasting from ages eternal in an unbroken line of succession, has been transmitted to Us through successive reigns. The fundamental rules of Our Family were established once for all, at the time that Our Ancestors laid the foundations of the Empire, and are even at this day as bright as the celestial luminaries. We now desire to make the instructions of Our Ancestors more exact and express and to establish for Our posterity a House Law, by which Our House shall be founded in everlasting strength, and its dignity be forever maintained. We hereby, with the advice of Our Privy Council, give Our Sanction to the present Imperial House Law, to serve as a standard by which Our descendants shall be guided.

[His Imperial Majesty's Sign-Manual.]

[Privy Seal.]

The 11th day of the 2nd month of the 22nd year of Meiji.

THE IMPERIAL HOUSE LAW.

CHAPTER I.

SUCCESSION TO THE IMPERIAL THRONE.

ARTICLE I.

The Imperial Throne of Japan shall be succeeded to by male descendants in the male line of Imperial Ancestors.

ARTICLE II.

The Imperial Throne shall be succeeded to by the Imperial eldest son.

ARTICLE III.

When there is no Imperial eldest son, the Imperial Throne shall be succeeded to by the Imperial eldest grandson. When there is neither Imperial eldest son nor any male descendant of his, it shall be succeeded to by the Imperial son next in age, and so on in every successive case.

ARTICLE IV.

For succession to the Imperial Throne by an Imperial descendant, the one of full blood shall have precedence over descendants of half blood. The succession to the Imperial Throne by the latter shall be limited to those cases only, when there is no Imperial descendant of full blood.

ARTICLE V.

When there is no Imperial descendant, the Imperial Throne shall be succeeded to by an Imperial brother and by his descendants.

ARTICLE VI.

When there is no such Imperial brother or descendant of his, the Imperial Throne shall be succeeded to by an Imperial uncle and by his descendants.

ARTICLE VII.

When there is neither such Imperial uncle nor descendant of his, the Imperial Throne shall be succeeded to by the next nearest member among the rest of the Imperial Family.

ARTICLE VIII.

Among the Imperial brothers and the remoter Imperial relations, precedence shall be given, in the same degree, to the descendants of full blood over those of half blood, and to the elder over the younger.

ARTICLE IX.

When the Imperial heir is suffering from an incurable disease of mind or body, or when any other weighty cause exists, the order of succession may be changed in accordance with the foregoing provisions, with the advice of the Imperial Family Council and with that of the Privy Council.

CHAPTER II.

ASCENSION AND CORONATION.

ARTICLE X.

Upon the demise of the Emperor, the Imperial heir shall ascend the Throne, and shall acquire the Divine Treasures of the Imperial Ancestors.

ARTICLE XI.

The ceremonies of Coronation shall be performed and a Grand Coronation Banquet (Daijōsai) shall be held at Kyoto.

ARTICLE XII.

Upon an ascension to the Throne, a new era shall be inaugurated, and the name of it shall remain unchanged during the whole reign, in agreement with the established rule of the 1st year of Meiji.

CHAPTER III.

MAJORITY. INSTITUTION OF EMPRESS AND
OF HEIR-APPARENT.

ARTICLE XIII.

The Emperor, the Kōtaishi and the Kōtaison shall attain their majority at eighteen full years of age.

ARTICLE XIV.

Members of the Imperial Family, other than those mentioned in the preceding Article, shall attain their majority at twenty full years of age.

ARTICLE XV.

The son of the Emperor who is Heir-apparent, shall be called "Kōtaishi." In case there is no Kōtaishi, the Imperial grandson who is Heir-apparent, shall be called "Kōtaison."

ARTICLE XVI.

The institution of Empress and that of Kōtaison shall be proclaimed by an Imperial Rescript.

CHAPTER IV.

STYLES OF ADDRESS.

ARTICLE XVII.

The style of address for the Emperor, the Grand Empress Dowager, the Empress Dowager and of the Empress, shall be *His*, or *Her* or *Your Majesty*.

ARTICLE XVIII.

The Kōtaishi and his consort, the Kōtaison and his consort, the Imperial Princes and their consorts, the Imperial Princesses, the Princes and their consorts, and the Princesses shall be styled *His*, *Her*, *Their* or *Your Highness* or *Highnesses*.

CHAPTER V.

REGENCY.

ARTICLE XIX.

When the Emperor is a minor, a Regency shall be instituted.

When He is prevented by some permanent cause from personally governing, a Regency shall be instituted, with the advice of the Imperial Family Council and with that of the Privy Council.

ARTICLE XX.

The Regency shall be assumed by the Kōtaishi or the Kōtaison, being of full age of majority.

ARTICLE XXI.

When there is neither Kōtaishi nor Kōtaison, or when the Kōtaishi or the Kōtaison has not yet arrived at his majority, the Regency shall be assumed in the following order:—

1. An Imperial Prince or a Prince.
2. The Empress.
3. The Empress Dowager.
4. The Grand Empress Dowager.
5. An Imperial Princess or a Princess.

ARTICLE XXII.

In case the Regency is to be assumed from among the male members of the Imperial Family, it shall be done in agreement with the order of succession to the Imperial Throne. The same shall apply to the case of female members of the Imperial Family.

ARTICLE XXIII.

A female member of the Imperial Family to assume the Regency, shall be exclusively one who has no consort.

ARTICLE XXIV.

When, on account of the minority of the nearest related member of the Imperial Family, or for some other cause, another member has to assume the Regency, the latter shall not, upon the arrival at majority of the above mentioned nearest related member, or upon the disappearance of the aforesaid cause, resign his or her post in favour of any person other than of the Kōtaishi or of Kōtaison.

ARTICLE XXV.

When a Regent or one who should become such, is suffering from an incurable disease of mind or body, or when any other weighty cause exists therefor, the order of the Regency may be changed, with the advice of the Imperial Family Council and with that of the Privy Council.

CHAPTER VI.

THE IMPERIAL GOVERNOR.

ARTICLE XXVI.

When the Emperor is a minor, an Imperial Governor shall be appointed to take charge of His bringing up and of His education.

ARTICLE XXVII.

In case no Imperial Governor has been nominated in the will of the preceding Emperor, the Regent shall appoint one, with the advice of the Imperial Family Council and with that of the Privy Council.

ARTICLE XXVIII.

Neither the Regent nor any of his descendants can be appointed Imperial Governor.

ARTICLE XXIX.

The Imperial Governor can not be removed from his post by the Regent, unless upon the advice of the Imperial Family Council and upon that of the Privy Council.

CHAPTER VII.

THE IMPERIAL FAMILY.

ARTICLE XXX.

The term "Imperial Family" shall include the Grand Empress Dowager, the Empress Dowager, the Empress, the

Kōtaishi and his consort, the Kōtaison and his consort, the Imperial Princes and their consorts, the Imperial Princesses, the Princes and their consorts, and the Princesses.

ARTICLE XXXI.

From Imperial sons to Imperial great-great-grandsons, Imperial male descendants shall be called Imperial Princes; and from Imperial daughters to Imperial great-great-granddaughters, Imperial female descendants shall be called Imperial Princesses. From the fifth generation downwards, they shall be called, male descendants Princes, female ones Princesses.

ARTICLE XXXII.

When the Imperial Throne is succeeded to by a member of a branch line, the title of Imperial Prince or Imperial Princess shall be specially granted to the Imperial brothers and sisters, being already Princes or Princesses.

ARTICLE XXXIII.

The births, namings, marriages and deaths in the Imperial Family shall be announced by the Minister of the Imperial Household.

ARTICLE XXXIV.

Genealogical and other records relating to the matters mentioned in the preceding Article shall be kept in the Imperial archives.

ARTICLE XXXV.

The members of the Imperial Family shall be under the control of the Emperor.

ARTICLE XXXVI.

When a Regency is instituted, the Regent shall exercise the power of control referred to in the preceding Article.

ARTICLE XXXVII.

When a member, male or female, of the Imperial Family is a minor and has been bereft of his or her father, the officials of the Imperial Court shall be ordered to take charge of his or her bringing up and education. Under certain circumstances, the Emperor may either approve the guardian chosen by his or her parent, or may nominate one.

ARTICLE XXXVIII.

The guardian of a member of the Imperial Family must be himself a member thereof and of age.

ARTICLE XXXIX.

Marriages of members of the Imperial Family shall be restricted to the circle of the Family, or to certain noble families specially approved by Imperial Order.

ARTICLE XL.

Marriages of the members of the Imperial Family shall be subject to the sanction of the Emperor.

ARTICLE XLI.

The Imperial writs sanctioning the marriages of members of the Imperial Family, shall bear the countersignature of the Minister of the Imperial Household.

ARTICLE XLII.

No member of the Imperial Family can adopt any one as his son.

ARTICLE XLIII.

When a member of the Imperial Family wishes to travel beyond the boundaries of the Empire, he shall first obtain the sanction of the Emperor.

ARTICLE XLIV.

A female member of the Imperial Family, who has married

a subject, shall be excluded from membership of the Imperial Family. However, she may be allowed, by the special grace of the Emperor, to retain her title of Imperial Princess or of Princess, as the case may be.

CHAPTER VIII.

IMPERIAL HEREDITARY ESTATES.

ARTICLE XLV.

No landed or other property, that has been fixed as the Imperial Hereditary Estates, shall be divided up and alienated.

ARTICLE XLVI.

The landed and other property to be included in the Imperial Hereditary Estates, shall be settled by Imperial writ, with the advice of the Privy Council, and shall be announced by the Minister of the Imperial Household.

CHAPTER IX.

EXPENDITURES OF THE IMPERIAL HOUSE.

ARTICLE XLVII.

The expenditures of the Imperial House of all kinds shall be defrayed out of the National Treasury at a certain fixed amount.

ARTICLE XLVIII.

The estimates and audit of accounts of the expenditures of

the Imperial House and all other rules of the kind, shall be regulated by the Finance Regulations of the Imperial House.

CHAPTER X.

LITIGATIONS. DISCIPLINARY RULES FOR THE MEMBERS OF THE IMPERIAL FAMILY.

ARTICLE XLIX.

Litigation between members of the Imperial Family shall be decided by judicial functionaries specially designated by the Emperor to the Department of the Imperial Household, and execution issued, after Imperial Sanction thereto has been obtained.

ARTICLE L.

Civil actions brought by private individuals against members of the Imperial Family, shall be decided in the Court of Appeal in Tokyo. Members of the Imperial Family shall, however, be represented by attorneys, and no personal attendance in the Court shall be required of them.

ARTICLE LI.

No member of the Imperial Family can be arrested, or summoned before a Court of Law, unless the sanction of the Emperor has been first obtained thereto.

ARTICLE LII.

When a member of the Imperial Family has committed an act derogatory to his (or her) dignity, or when he has exhibited disloyalty to the Imperial House, he shall, by way of disciplinary punishment and by order of the Emperor, be deprived

of the whole or of a part of the privileges belonging to him as a member of the Imperial Family, or shall be suspended therefrom.

ARTICLE LIII.

When a member of the Imperial Family acts in a way tending to the squandering of his (or her) property, he shall be pronounced by the Emperor, prohibited from administering his property, and a manager shall be appointed therefor.

ARTICLE LIV.

The two foregoing Articles shall be sanctioned, upon the advice of the Imperial Family Council.

CHAPTER XI.

THE IMPERIAL FAMILY COUNCIL.

ARTICLE LV.

The Imperial Family Council shall be composed of the male members of the Imperial Family, who have reached the age of majority. The Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal, the President of the Privy Council, the Minister of the Imperial Household, the Minister of State for Justice and the President of the Court of Cassation shall be ordered to take part in the deliberations of the Council.

ARTICLE LVI.

The Emperor personally presides over the meeting of the Imperial Family Council, or directs one of the members of the Imperial Family to do so.

CHAPTER XII.

SUPPLEMENTARY RULES.

ARTICLE LVII.

Those of the present members of the Imperial Family of the fifth generation and downwards, who have already been invested with the title of Imperial Prince, shall retain the same as heretofore.

ARTICLE LVIII.

The order of succession to the Imperial Throne shall in every case relate to the descendants of absolute lineage. There shall be no admission to this line of succession to any one, as a consequence of his now being an adopted Imperial son, Kōyūshi or heir to a princely house.

ARTICLE LIX.

The grades of rank among the Imperial Princes, Imperial Princesses, Princes and Princesses shall be abolished.

ARTICLE LX.

The family rank of Imperial Princes and all usages conflicting with the present Law, shall be abolished.

ARTICLE LXI.

The property, annual expenses and all other rules concerning the members of the Imperial Family, shall be specially determined.

ARTICLE LXII.

When in the future it shall become necessary either to amend or make additions to the present Law, the matter shall be decided by the Emperor, with the advice of the Imperial Family Council and with that of the Privy Council.
