

How Will the Media Report on the Imperial Succession?

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1. What are the ceremonies related to the imperial succession?

- A series of ceremonies through which the crown prince (the member of the imperial family first in line for imperial succession) becomes emperor
- The same significance as ceremonies for royal succession in other countries
- This will be the first time a living emperor has abdicated under the modern imperial system
- This means in addition to the usual ceremonies, the Ceremony of the Abdication of His Majesty the Emperor at the *Seiden* (State Hall) will also be held

2. Order of ceremonies related to the imperial succession

- The first ceremony will be the Ceremony of the Abdication of His Majesty the Emperor at the Seiden (State Hall)→ April 30
- The main ceremonies will be the crown prince's Ceremonies of the Accession to the Throne
- The Ceremonies of the Accession to the Throne consist of five ceremonies:
 - ①Ceremony for Inheriting the Imperial Regalia and Seals→ May 1
 - ②The First Audience after the Accession to the Throne, the first time the new emperor will make a speech→ May 1
 - ③The Ceremony of the Enthronement of His Majesty the Emperor at the Seiden (State Hall), in which the enthronement of the new emperor will be declared→ October 22
 - ④Imperial Procession by motorcar after the Ceremony of the Enthronement→ October 22
 - ⑤Ceremonies for Proclamation of Crown Prince will also be held to proclaim that the new emperor's younger brother, Fumihito, Prince Akishino, has become first in line for the imperial succession→ April 19, 2020
- The new era, Reiwa, will begin on May 1, 2019

3. General description of ceremonies related to the imperial succession

For details, see the website of the committee on the ceremonies related to the abdication of the emperor and succession of the crown prince (Japanese only):

https://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/singi/gishikitou_iinkai/index.html

- ①Ceremony of the Abdication of His Majesty the Emperor at the Seiden (State Hall) (April 30, likely from 17:00 to around 17:10)
 - The emperor and empress arrive
 - Chamberlains present the Imperial Regalia (sword and jewel) as well as the State and Privy Seals
 - The crown prince and crown princess, along with all adult members of the imperial family, arrive
 - Chamberlains place the sword, jewel, State Seal, and Privy Seal in front of the emperor
 - Speech from representative of the people (the prime minister)
 - Message from the emperor
 - The emperor and empress leave

②Ceremony for Inheriting the Imperial Regalia and Seals (May 1, likely from 10:30 to 10:40)

- At 10:30, the emperor arrives. The crown prince and all adult male members of the imperial family arrive
- Chamberlains enter presenting the Imperial Regalia (sword and jewel) as well as the State and Privy Seals
- Chamberlains place the sword and jewel in front of the emperor
- Chamberlains place the State Seal and Privy Seal in front of the emperor
- The emperor leaves
- Attendees are the Prime Minister, Ministers of State, Speaker and Vice-Speaker of the House of Representatives, President and Vice-President of the House of Councillors, and the Chief Justice of Japan or a Justice of the Supreme Court of Japan (as a proxy for the Chief Justice)

→Only adult male members of the imperial family will attend, with female members not allowed. This is following a past example (based on the 1909 Tokyokurei [Regulations Governing Accession to the Throne], which was abolished with the establishment of the current constitution). This was used as precedent for the Heisei succession, without any significant debate. Some believe that the reason it is being done the same way again is due to the government wanting to avoid a debate over allowing empresses and matrilineal imperial succession if female members of the imperial family were to join the ceremony.

③First Audience after the Accession to the Throne (May 1, likely 11:10 to 11:20)

- At 11:10, the emperor and empress will arrive. The crown prince and crown princess, along with all adult members of the imperial family, will accompany them
- Message from the emperor
- Speech from representative of the people (the prime minister)
- The emperor and empress leave
- Attendees are the Prime Minister; Ministers of State; Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary; Vice Ministers and Director-General of the Cabinet Legislation Bureau; Speaker, Vice-Speaker, Chairmen of Standing Committees, Chairmen of Special Committees, Chairmen of Commissions, and Secretary General of the House of Representatives; President, Vice-President, Chairmen of Standing Committees, Chairmen of Special Committees, Chairmen of Research Committees, Chairmen of Commissions, and Secretary General of the House of Councillors; Director General of the National Diet Library; Chief Justice of Japan, Justices of the Supreme Court of Japan, Presidents of High Courts, and Secretary General of the Supreme Court; officials other than those listed above; two representatives each of prefectural governors and members of prefectural assemblies; two representatives each of mayors and members of municipal assemblies from cities; two representatives each of mayors and members of municipal assemblies from towns or villages; other guests other than those listed above; and the spouses of those listed above

④Ceremony of the Enthronement of His Majesty the Emperor at the Seiden (State Hall), Court Banquets after the Ceremony of the Enthronement, Banquet hosted by Prime Minister and his spouse

- The Ceremony of the Enthronement of His Majesty the Emperor at the Seiden (State Hall) (October 22) will have around 2500 attendees, including domestic and foreign guests

→Following the same standards as the previous succession, it would be around 2900 attendees. Attempts have been made to limit the size to the same as last time, such as not inviting spouses unless necessary

- The Court Banquets after the Ceremony of the Enthronement will have around 2600 attendees including domestic and foreign guests, with sit-down banquets on October 22 and 25 and standing banquets on October 29 and 31, for a total of four banquets
- Streamlined. Last time, there were seven banquets with 3400 attendees. Also, instead of holding lunch and dinner banquets, more time has been included between banquets
- The banquet hosted by the Prime Minister and his spouse will have around 900 attendees, including foreign heads of state and celebratory delegates

⑤ Imperial Procession by motorcar after the Ceremony of the Enthronement (October 22)

- A Toyota Century will be used, with consideration given to safety and environmental features. It will be modified to be an open-top car.
- A domestic Japanese car will be used (a Rolls Royce was used last time). Toyota, Nissan, Honda, Rolls Royce, Mercedes-Benz, and BMW were all considered, with the requirements that the car be larger than the others in the procession and that the new emperor and empress in the backseat would be clearly visible from the roadside.
- For the Heisei Imperial Procession by motorcar after the Ceremony of the Enthronement (November 1990), a Rolls Royce open-top car was purchased at a cost of approximately 40 million yen, but the vehicle was decommissioned in 2007. Since it was only used twice, for the new emperor's parade in 1990 and the parade celebrating the marriage of the crown prince in 1993, this time the vehicle will become property of the Cabinet Office, with plans to use it for events such as the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games.

4. What kind of reporting will be carried out?

- On April 30 and May 1, newspapers will print special features, and TV stations will air specials
- Criticism tends to get buried. Much like the announcement of the new era name, will it be a "celebratory" mood?
- There is criticism of carrying out the Ceremony for Inheriting the Imperial Regalia and Seals as a State act
- Despite it not being a State act, 2.7 billion yen of public funds will be spent on the Daijosai (Great Thanksgiving Ceremony) in November 2019
- This is a ceremony to pray for bountiful harvests and the safety of the country when a new emperor is enthroned. Fumihito, Prince Akishino, who will become the new crown prince, has criticized the use of public funds for it.

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