

# www.**Breaking News English**.com

Ready-to-use ESL / EFL Lessons

## **The Breaking News English.com Resource Book**

“1,000 Ideas & Activities For Language Teachers”

<http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/book.html>

## **Japan close to allowing female emperor**

URL: [http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/0510/051027-japan\\_emperor.html](http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/0510/051027-japan_emperor.html)

## **Contents**

The Article	2
Warm-ups	3
Before Reading / Listening	4
While Reading / Listening	5
Listening Gap Fill	6
After Reading	7
Discussion	8
Homework	9
Answers	10

**27 October, 2005**

## THE ARTICLE

### **Japan close to allowing female emperor**

An advisory panel to Japan's Prime Minister Koizumi has unanimously approved radical revisions to the laws determining succession to the imperial throne. The advisors recommend female emperors be allowed, and that their offspring be able to ascend the throne to secure stability in the monarchy. Legislators are also set to pass as law a ruling that guarantees an emperor's first-born child as heir to the Chrysanthemum throne, regardless of its sex. This momentous decision follows ten months of deliberations and political wrangling and represents a centuries-old break with male dominated monarchical rule in Japan. The recommendations increase the likelihood that three-year old Princess Aiko will one day reign over the world's oldest hereditary monarchy as empress.

Opponents of the proposals have already voiced their concerns. Many fundamentally disagree with the idea that a woman can ascend to the position they believe is a God-granted privilege for men. On October 6, a group of eminent academics called for the return to imperial ranks of former family members who withdrew their association with the throne in the aftermath of World War II. The group argues that passing succession on to only males is an intrinsic and sacrosanct part of Japanese history and culture. The emperor traditionally presides over many male-only Shinto rituals, which fiercely forbid a woman's presence. The public strongly supports Mr. Koizumi's initiative. The *Tokyo Shimbun* newspaper reported that 84 percent of Japanese back the changes.

## WARM-UPS

**1. ROYAL ME:** You are now a member of one of the world's royal families. Walk around the class and talk to the other "royals" about your everyday life. Is it a good life? Are you jealous of any other royals, for example, those in Britain, Denmark, Japan, Swaziland, Saudi Arabia, Brunei, Bhutan, Thailand...? What do you think of the royals on other countries? Do you have any stories about them?

**2. ROYAL TITLES:** Match the monarchical title with the countries/country. After you have finished, talk about what you know about the monarchies.

- |                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| a. Emir              | 1. UK, Belgium, Cambodia, Denmark, Holland, Morocco, Nepal, Spain, Swaziland, Thailand... |
| b. Emperor / Empress | 2. Oman, Malaysia, Brunei, parts of Indonesia   |
| c. King / Queen      | 3. Qatar, Kuwait  |
| d. Sultan            | 4. Liechtenstein, Monaco  |
| e. Prince            | 5. Japan  |
| f. Grand Duke        | 6. Bhutan   |
| g. Druk Gyalpo       | 7. Samoa  |
| h. Chief             | 8. Luxembourg   |

**3. CHAT:** In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

*Advice / Japan / Junichiro Koizumi / thrones / emperors / females / chrysanthemums / first-born children / tradition / academics / Shinto / rituals*

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

**4. MONARCHY:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word "monarchy". Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

**5. TWO-MINUTE DEBATES:** Debate each of the arguments below with a partner for just two minutes, before moving on to the next partner and debate. Student A agrees with the first argument, Student B, the second.

- Japan should have a female emperor. vs. No. Tradition should be honored.
- All monarchies should be abolished. vs. Monarchies are valuable. They should stay.
- Monarchs should work in real jobs. vs. Monarchs are important and should get money from taxpayers.
- Kings and Queens should ride bicycles in the town, like they do in Scandinavian countries. vs. No. Way too dangerous.
- Every country should have its own monarchy. vs. No way! Monarchies are an anachronism.
- Monarchs should sell their possessions for charity. vs. That's a short-term fix. They can't do that forever.
- There should be a world monarchy. vs. How ridiculous.
- People should vote for their monarch. vs. Monarchies are too special to vote for.

## BEFORE READING / LISTENING

**1. TRUE / FALSE:** Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- a. Japanese immigration will grant a foreign empress a tourist visa. T / F
- b. Japan is revising laws concerning succession to its imperial throne. T / F
- c. Laws will make first-born sons and not older sisters heir to the throne. T / F
- d. A Japanese princess called Aiko will be the world's oldest monarch. T / F
- e. Opponents say the emperor's role is a God-granted privilege for men. T / F
- f. Opponents prefer a foreign prince as emperor to a Japanese woman. T / F
- g. A male emperor is an intrinsic and sacrosanct part of Japan's history. T / F
- h. The Japanese public opposes Mr. Koizumi's initiative. T / F

**2. SYNONYM MATCH:** Match the following synonyms from the article:

- |                  |                |
|------------------|----------------|
| a. panel         | right          |
| b. unanimously   | considerations |
| c. offspring     | sacred         |
| d. deliberations | made known     |
| e. reign         | wake           |
| f. voiced        | overwhelmingly |
| g. privilege     | rule           |
| h. aftermath     | committee      |
| i. sacrosanct    | officiates     |
| j. presides      | children       |

**3. PHRASE MATCH:** Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- |                                       |                                      |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| a. An advisory panel to               | oldest hereditary monarchy           |
| b. the laws determining               | part of Japanese history and culture |
| c. heir                               | their concerns                       |
| d. represents a centuries-old break   | succession to the imperial throne    |
| e. reign over the world's             | of World War II                      |
| f. voiced                             | with male dominated monarchical rule |
| g. a group of eminent                 | to the Chrysanthemum throne          |
| h. in the aftermath                   | Japan's Prime Minister Koizumi       |
| i. an intrinsic and sacrosanct        | over many male-only Shinto rituals   |
| j. The emperor traditionally presides | academics                            |

## WHILE READING / LISTENING

**GAP FILL:** Put the words in the column on the right into the gaps in the text.

### Japan close to allowing female emperor

An \_\_\_\_\_ panel to Japan's Prime Minister Koizumi has unanimously approved radical revisions to the laws determining succession to the imperial \_\_\_\_\_. The advisors recommend female emperors be allowed, and that their offspring be able to \_\_\_\_\_ the throne to secure stability in the monarchy. Legislators are also set to pass as law a \_\_\_\_\_ that guarantees an emperor's first-born child as heir to the Chrysanthemum throne, regardless of its sex. This \_\_\_\_\_ decision follows ten months of deliberations and political wrangling and represents a centuries-old \_\_\_\_\_ with male dominated monarchical rule in Japan. The recommendations increase the likelihood that three-year old Princess Aiko will one day \_\_\_\_\_ over the world's oldest \_\_\_\_\_ monarchy as empress.

*momentous*

*hereditary*

*ascend*

*break*

*advisory*

*ruling*

*reign*

*throne*

Opponents of the proposals have already \_\_\_\_\_ their concerns. Many fundamentally disagree with the idea that a woman can ascend to the position they believe is a God-\_\_\_\_\_ privilege for men. On October 6, a group of \_\_\_\_\_ academics called for the return to imperial ranks of former family members who withdrew their association with the throne in the \_\_\_\_\_ of World War II. The group argues that passing succession on to only males is an \_\_\_\_\_ and sacrosanct part of Japanese history and culture. The emperor traditionally \_\_\_\_\_ over many male-only Shinto rituals, which fiercely \_\_\_\_\_ a woman's presence. The public strongly supports Mr. Koizumi's \_\_\_\_\_. The *Tokyo Shimbun* newspaper reported that 84 percent of Japanese back the changes.

*presides*

*aftermath*

*voiced*

*forbid*

*initiative*

*granted*

*intrinsic*

*eminent*

## LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

### Japan close to allowing female emperor

An \_\_\_\_\_ panel to Japan's Prime Minister Koizumi has unanimously approved radical revisions to the laws determining \_\_\_\_\_ to the imperial throne. The advisors recommend female emperors be allowed, and that their offspring be able to \_\_\_\_\_ the throne to secure stability in the monarchy. Legislators are also set to \_\_\_\_\_ a ruling that guarantees an emperor's first-born child as heir to the Chrysanthemum throne, regardless of its sex. This momentous decision follows ten months of deliberations and political \_\_\_\_\_ and represents a centuries-old break with male dominated monarchical rule in Japan. The recommendations increase the likelihood that three-year old Princess Aiko will one day \_\_\_\_\_ over the world's oldest \_\_\_\_\_ monarchy as empress.

Opponents of the proposals have already \_\_\_\_\_ their concerns. Many fundamentally disagree with the idea that a woman can ascend to the position they believe is a God-granted \_\_\_\_\_ for men. On October 6, a group of \_\_\_\_\_ academics called for the return to imperial ranks of former family members who withdrew their association with the throne in the \_\_\_\_\_ of World War II. The group argues that passing succession on to only males is an \_\_\_\_\_ and sacrosanct part of Japanese history and culture. The emperor traditionally \_\_\_\_\_ over many male-only Shinto rituals, which fiercely forbid a woman's presence. The public strongly supports Mr. Koizumi's initiative. The *Tokyo Shimbun* newspaper reported that 84 percent of Japanese back the changes.

## AFTER READING / LISTENING

**1. WORD SEARCH:** Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'voice' and 'concern'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS:** Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**3. GAP FILL:** In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the gap fill. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

**4. VOCABULARY:** Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

**5. STUDENT "MONARCHY" SURVEY:** In pairs / groups, write down questions about monarchies.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

**6. TEST EACH OTHER:** Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- |              |             |
|--------------|-------------|
| • panel      | • voiced    |
| • offspring  | • granted   |
| • first-born | • ranks     |
| • momentous  | • intrinsic |
| • break      | • presides  |
| • hereditary | • back      |

## **DISCUSSION**

### STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- b. Do you think a woman should be allowed to become emperor?
- c. What do you think of going against centuries of tradition?
- d. What do you know about Japan's royal family?
- e. Do you think the new law is a big change for Japan?
- f. Do you think it is important to maintain the bloodline in a royal family?
- g. What do you think of the idea that it is a God-granted right for a male to be monarch?
- h. What questions would you like to ask a monarch?
- i. What do you think the monarch's answers would be?
- j. Would you like to be a monarch?

### STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What do you think about what you read?
- c. Do you like the idea of monarchy?
- d. What is the role of a monarch in today's world?
- e. Do you think it makes a big difference if the monarch is a man or woman?
- f. How are countries with monarchies different from those without emperors, queens and sultans?
- g. Do you think former members of Japan's royal family should be allowed to return and provide a male heir?
- h. Are there any male-only rituals or ceremonies in your country?
- i. Are women forbidden from doing things in your country that men can do?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

**AFTER DISCUSSION:** Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
- b. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- c. Was there a question you didn't like?
- d. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- e. What did you like talking about?
- f. Do you want to know how anyone else answered the questions?
- g. Which was the most difficult question?

## **HOMEWORK**

**1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION:** Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

**2. INTERNET:** Search the Internet and find more information on Japan's royal family. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

**3. WORLD ROYALS:** Make a poster describing one of the world's royal families. Show your posters to your classmates in your next lesson. Who found out the most interesting things?

**4. DIARY/JOURNAL:** You are a member of a royal family. Write your diary/journal entry for one day in your life. Show what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

## ANSWERS

### ROYAL TITLES:

a 3      b 5      c 1      d 2      e 4      f 8      g 6      h 7

### TRUE / FALSE:

a. F      b. T      c. F      d. F      e. T      f. F      g. T      h. F

### SYNONYM MATCH:

a. panel	committee
b. unanimously	overwhelmingly
c. offspring	children
d. deliberations	considerations
e. reign	rule
f. voiced	made known
g. privilege	right
h. aftermath	wake
i. sacrosanct	sacred
j. presides	officiates

### PHRASE MATCH:

a. An advisory panel to	Japan's Prime Minister Koizumi
b. the laws determining	succession to the imperial throne
c. heir	to the Chrysanthemum throne
d. represents a centuries-old break	with male dominated monarchical rule
e. reign over the world's	oldest hereditary monarchy
f. voiced	their concerns
g. a group of eminent	academics
h. in the aftermath	of World War II
i. an intrinsic and sacrosanct	part of Japanese history and culture
j. The emperor traditionally presides	over many male-only Shinto rituals

### GAP FILL:

#### Japan close to allowing female emperor

An **advisory** panel to Japan's Prime Minister Koizumi has unanimously approved radical revisions to the laws determining succession to the imperial **throne**. The advisors recommend female emperors be allowed, and that their offspring be able to **ascend** the throne to secure stability in the monarchy. Legislators are also set to pass as law a **ruling** that guarantees an emperor's first-born child as heir to the Chrysanthemum throne, regardless of its sex. This **momentous** decision follows ten months of deliberations and political wrangling and represents a centuries-old **break** with male dominated monarchical rule in Japan. The recommendations increase the likelihood that three-year old Princess Aiko will one day **reign** over the world's oldest **hereditary** monarchy as empress.

Opponents of the proposals have already **voiced** their concerns. Many fundamentally disagree with the idea that a woman can ascend to the position they believe is a God-**granted** privilege for men. On October 6, a group of **eminent** academics called for the return to imperial ranks of former family members who withdrew their association with the throne in the **aftermath** of World War II. The group argues that passing succession on to only males is an **intrinsic** and sacrosanct part of Japanese history and culture. The emperor traditionally **presides** over many male-only Shinto rituals, which fiercely **forbid** a woman's presence. The public strongly supports Mr. Koizumi's **initiative**. The *Tokyo Shimbun* newspaper reported that 84 percent of Japanese back the changes.