

Female Emperors and the Imperial Court in Early Modern Japan: A Case Study of 17th Empress Go-Sakuramachi

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Female Emperors in Japan

<Ancient>

- 33rd **Empress Suiko** 推古天皇 (554-628)
- 35th **Empress Kōgyoku** 皇極天皇/37th Empress Saimei 齋明天皇 (594-661)
- 41st **Empress Jitō** 持統天皇 (645-703)
- 43rd **Empress Genmei** 元明天皇 (661-721)
- 44th **Empress Genshō** 元正天皇 (680-748)
- 46th **Empress Shōtoku** 稱徳天皇/48th Empress Kōken 孝謙天皇 (718-770)

<Early Modern>

- 109th **Empress Meishō** 明正天皇 (1624-1696)
- 117th **Empress Go-Sakuramachi** 後櫻町天皇 (1740-1813)

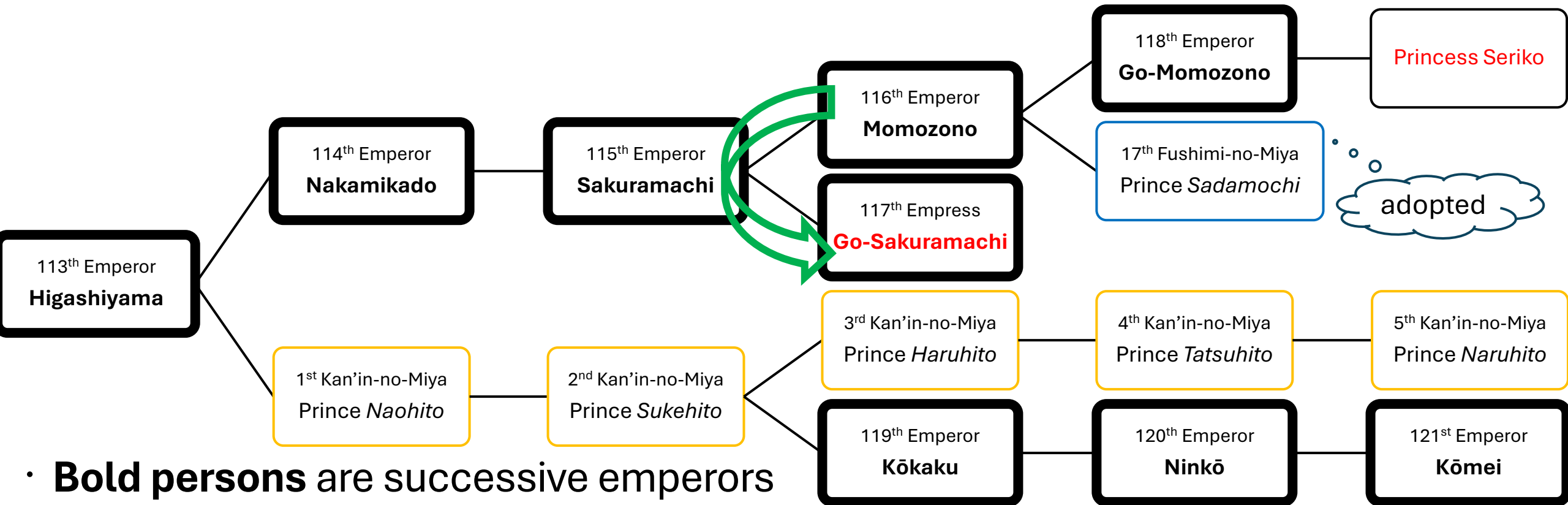
Imperial Court in the early modern Japan



Imperial Palace in Kyoto

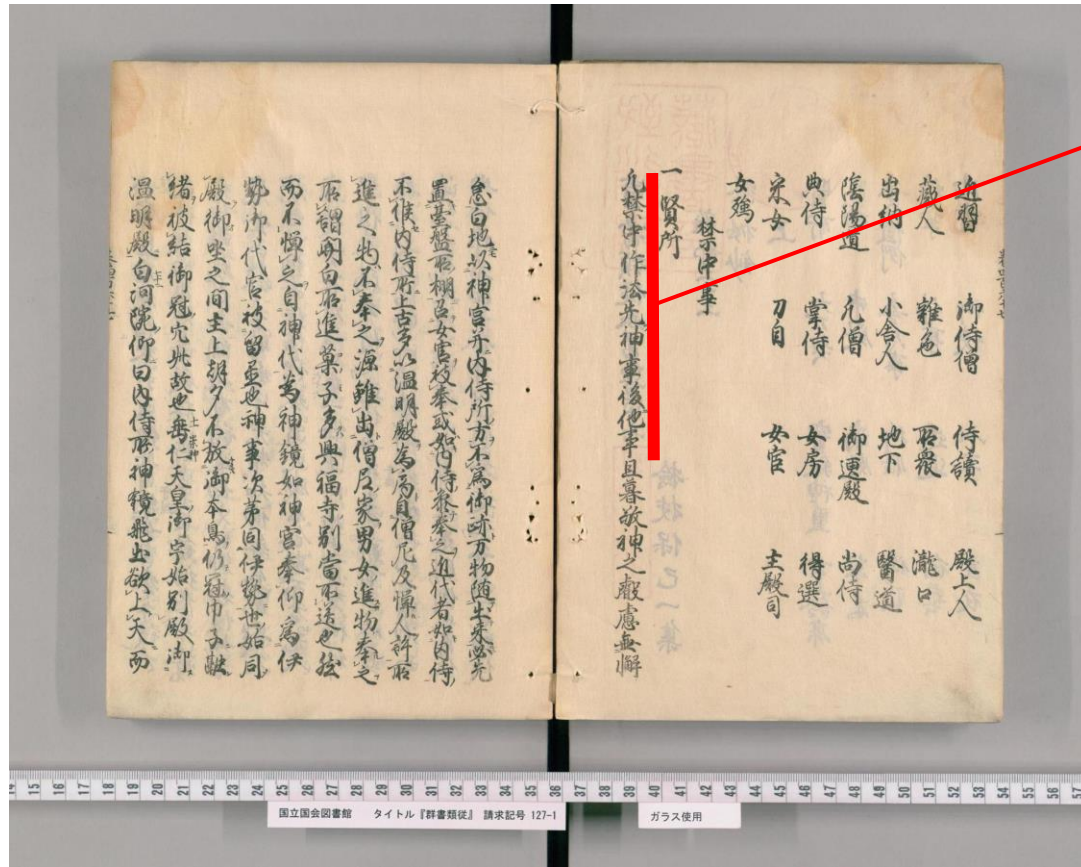
- All military and economic power dependent on the Shogunate
- Under de facto control of the Laws of the *Laws for the Imperial and Court Officials*
- Decisions on important matters require the permission and approval by the Shogun
- Court politics was led by the five regent families (Konoe 近衛, Ichijō 一條, Kujō 九條, Takatsukasa 鷹司, and Nijō 二條)
- The maximum number of branch families of the Imperial House was four

Imperial succession during 18–19 C



- **Bold persons** are successive emperors
- *Italic persons* are successive heads of each miyake
- **Red persons** are females

Emperors of Japan are priest kings

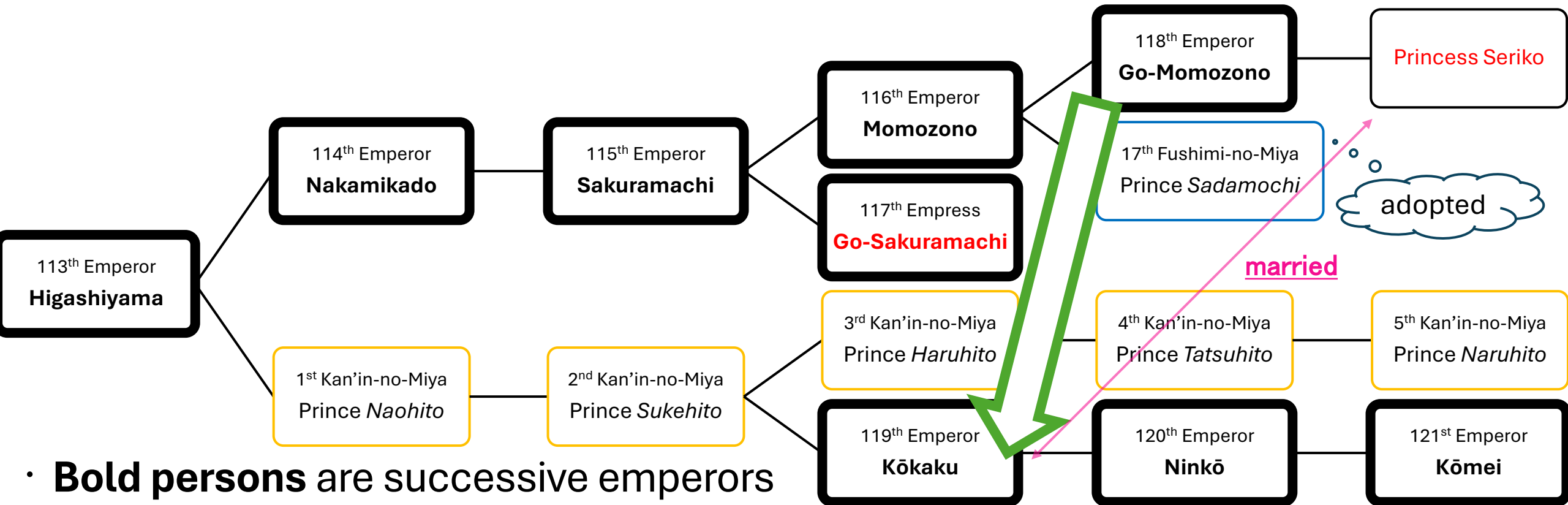


"凡禁中作法、先、神事、後、他事、
(At the Imperial Court, Shinto rituals must come first and everything else must come afterwards.)"

→ Shinto rituals are most important for the emperors

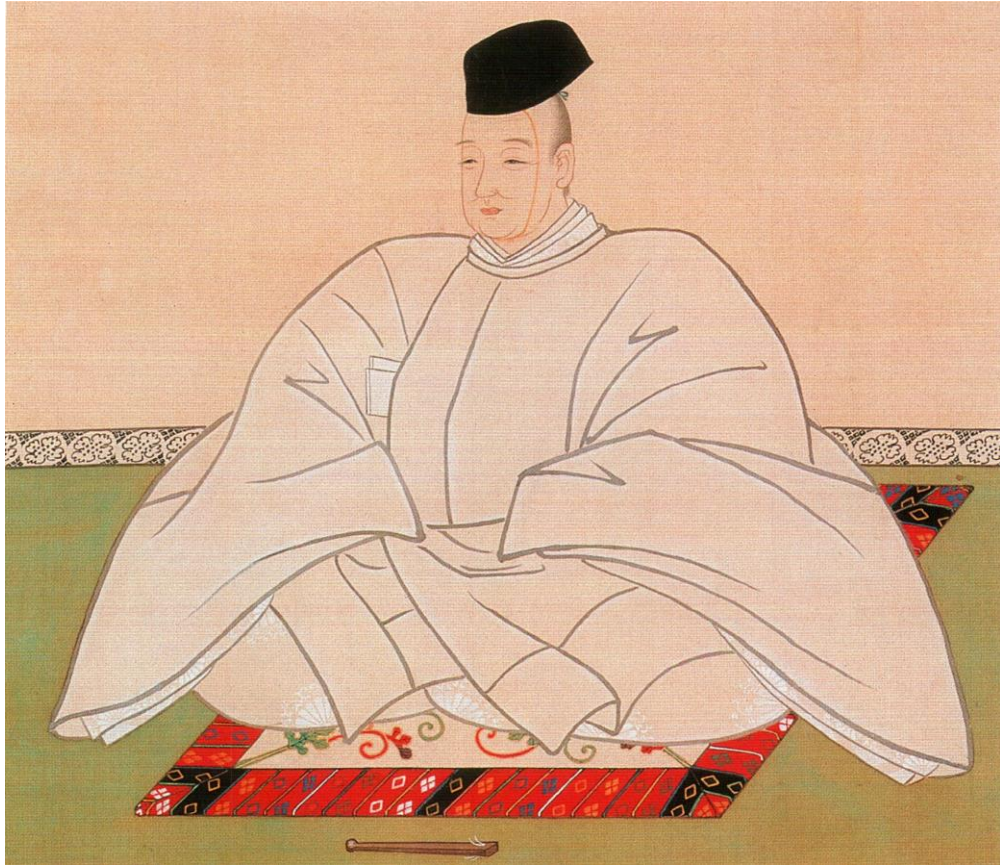
Kinpishō 禁秘抄 by 84th Emperor Juntoku 順德天皇

Imperial succession during 18-19 C



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Monarchical consciousness of Emperor Kōkaku



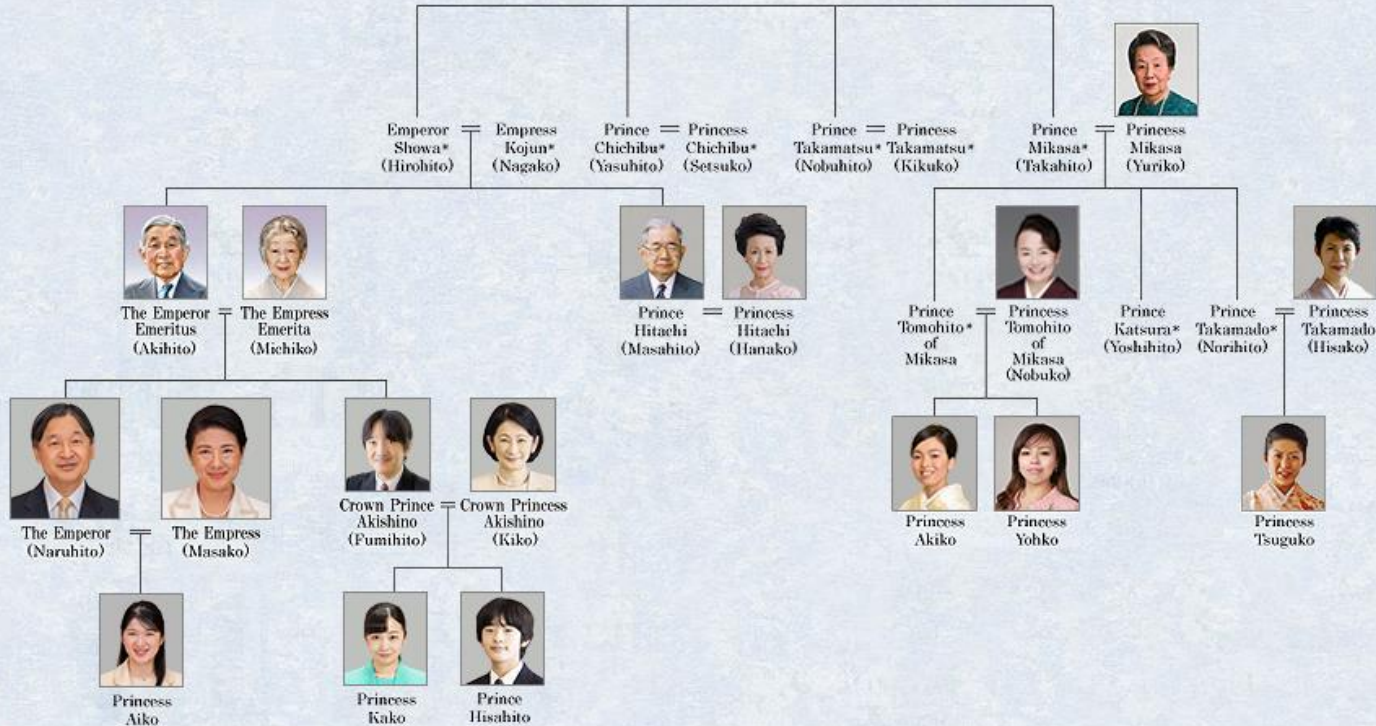
119th Emperor Kōkaku 光格天皇
(1171-1840)

- Had an inferiority complex from a branch family
 - Restored of various traditional ceremonies
 - Attempted to confer the title of Emperor Emeritus on his father Prince Sukehito 典仁親王
 - Directed the Shogunate to help the weak people
- Re-emergence of Emperor's authority, pioneer of the modern imperial system

Current issue for the Imperial succession

Genealogy of the Imperial Family

*Deceased.



Line of the Imperial Succession

1. H.I.H. Crown Prince Fumihito of Akishino
皇嗣秋篠宮文仁親王殿下(1965-)
2. H.I.H. Prince Hisahito
悠仁親王殿下 (2006-)
3. H.I.H. Prince Masahito of Hitachi
常陸宮正仁親王殿下 (1935-)

Living Former Imperial Branch Houses

- Higashikuni-no-Miya 旧東久邇宮家
- Kuni-no-Miya 旧久邇宮家
- Kaya-no-Miya 旧賀陽家
- Asaka-no-Miya 旧朝香宮家
- Takeda-no-Miya 旧竹田宮家
- Fushimi-no-Miya 旧伏見宮家

17 Members of the Imperial Family

- Princes = 3 (3 *shinnō* 親王, 0 *ō* 王)
- Princesses from the Imperial Family = 5 (2 *naishinnō* 内親王, 3 *joō* 女王)

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Thank you for your attention

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