

# Princess Ayako's wedding

## Joyful couple to marry at Meiji Shrine

KYODO

Princess Ayako, the youngest daughter of Emperor Akihito's late cousin, is set to marry commoner Kei Moriya today, relinquishing her royal status.

Nearly a year after their first encounter, the 28-year-old princess and the 32-year-old employee of shipping firm Nippon Yusen K.K. will tie the knot in a traditional ceremony at Tokyo's Meiji Shrine.

The couple first met last December through Princess Ayako's mother Princess Hisako, a long acquaintance of Moriya's parents, who had also met with Moriya the month prior at a photo exhibition of a nonprofit organization supporting children in developing countries.

Princess Hisako, the widow of Prince Takamado who passed away in 2002, had hoped to spark her daughter's interest in international welfare activities through introducing her to Moriya, who is a board member of the nonprofit group Kokkyo naki Kodomotachi (Children Without Borders), or KnK.

During a July press conference after the official announcement of their informal engagement, Princess Ayako said she hit it off with Moriya from the beginning and enjoyed talking with him so much that she did not feel like it was their first meeting.

The two soon began courting and Moriya proposed to the princess earlier this year after the couple dined together at a restaurant. The princess said at the press conference that she accepted his offer in April, attracted to Moriya's "kind, smart and decisive" personality.

Describing Princess Ayako as a "bright and positive person," Moriya said he came to hope that he would be able to share his life with the princess who is "warm and kind in interacting with anyone."

Princess Ayako, a research fellow at Josai International University's Faculty of Social Work Studies, said her marriage to Moriya, a graduate of Keio University, has come about largely thanks to an opportunity given by her mother and Moriya's late mother Kimie, who was KnK executive board member prior to her death in 2015.



Princess Ayako and Kei Moriya, both keen on global welfare, look forward to their wedding. KYODO

Princess Hisako had known Moriya's father Osamu for around 40 years after she became acquainted with him during her studies in the U.K. Additionally, when the couple's engagement was announced in June, KnK Chair Saeko Terada shared that Princess Hisako has attended the group's events almost every year since 2007 thanks to the bond built by Kimie. Moriya's mother had been involved with KnK since its launch in 1997.

Describing Moriya as a "pleasant and

wonderful young man," Terada said in a statement, "I hope he will continue his mother's wishes and contribute to providing educational support to children in developing countries." Moriya became a board member in March.

Following the wedding, Princess Ayako will no longer be part of the Imperial family — Imperial House Law stipulates that women lose their royal title after marrying a commoner. Her cousin, Prince Mako, will also follow that path.

Last year, the Imperial Household Agency announced the informal engagement between Emperor Akihito's eldest grandchild Princess Mako and Kei Komuro, a paralegal, student, commoner and her long-time boyfriend, although the couple has subsequently postponed their wedding to 2020 due to "lack of preparation."

After Princess Ayako and Princess Mako marry, the number of Imperial family members will fall to 17 and that of female members to 12, raising possible concerns about stable succession and ways to share the burdens of public duties among remaining members.

To address the shrinking number of Imperial family members, a resolution attached to the Emperor's abdication law enacted last June calls on the government to start deliberating succession issues, including an option to allow a princess to establish her own branch within the Imperial family after marrying a commoner.

However, such deliberations have yet to begin. 84-year-old Emperor Akihito is set to retire on April 30, 2019, based on his desire to step down due to concerns about his age and failing health.

Members of the Imperial family, including her mother and Princess Tsuguko, the eldest sister of the bride, will attend Princess Ayako's wedding ceremony.

The next day, a banquet will be held at the Hotel New Otani in Tokyo, and will be attended by Crown Prince Naruhito and Crown Princess Masako, as well as the heads of the three branches of the government.

Princess Ayako will receive about ¥107 million (roughly \$950,000) from the state to maintain her lifestyle after her marriage based on the law on Imperial household finance.

Noriko Senge, one of Princess Ayako's older sisters, received the same amount when she married Kunimaro Senge, a senior priest of Izumo Taisha, a Shinto shrine in Shimane Prefecture, in 2014.

Sayako Kuroda, the daughter of Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, received about ¥150 million when she married Tokyo Metropolitan Government employee Yoshiaki Kuroda in 2005.



Left: Princess Ayako waves to residents in Sabae, Fukui Prefecture, on Oct. 5. Right: Princess Hisako and her daughter Princess Ayako. KYODO

## Princess dedicated to society

KYODO

Princess Ayako, the third daughter of Emperor Akihito's late cousin Prince Takamado and Princess Hisako, is known as a bright and hard-working person with keen interests in sports and welfare activities.



Born on Sept. 15, 1990, Princess Ayako was 12 years old when her father suddenly died of a heart attack at age 47 and grew up seeing her mother perform public duties while trying to overcome the grief of losing her husband.

Since her childhood, the 28-year-old princess has enjoyed numerous sports, including squash and swimming, and joined a ski club in high school before later becoming a supporting member of a soccer club at her university.

Aiming to learn about social welfare issues, she studied at Josai International University's Faculty of Social Work Studies in Chiba Prefecture instead of Gakushuin University, originally created for the Japanese peerage.

Her entrance into the university reflected her strong will to pursue welfare studies and look after her grandparents, the late Prince Mikasa, who died in 2016 at age 100, and Princess Yuriko, 95, according to a source who has known the princess since high school.

Known for her openness and friendliness, the princess lived in a home shared with fel-

low students during her university years and did her own household chores.

Tetsuji Koyama, who served as a coach of the university soccer team the princess joined, noted her hard work and dedication in everything she did, and how her strong traits would make her a wonderful wife. "She washed uniforms and prepared drinks so devotedly that we did not feel hesitant because of her royal status."

After her graduation in 2013, she continued her research at the university's graduate school and studied for two years at Camosun College and the University of British Columbia in Canada as part of her program.

She is currently working as a research fellow at the social work studies faculty at Josai International University and is also qualified as a child caregiver.


A senior official at the Imperial Household Agency says the princess has a down-to-earth personality, just like her mother Princess Hisako.

When Princess Ayako underwent surgery to remove ovarian cysts in 2015, it was her own decision to disclose it, so as not to have misunderstanding among the public, the official said.

"She is always invigorating and carefully listens to agency staff, and is a person who can make her own decisions about the path she should follow," another Imperial Household Agency staff said.


In a statement released on the occasion of her 20th birthday in 2010, the princess said: "I like children so I want to marry one day and raise kids. I want to build a warm family full of smiles with someone whom I can respect."

Congratulations to Princess Ayako and Kei Moriya




**Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan**  
H.E. Dr. Bashir Mohabbat  
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary

Congratulations to Princess Ayako and Kei Moriya




**Embassy of the Republic of Armenia**  
H.E. Dr. Grant Pogosyan  
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary

Congratulations to Princess Ayako and Kei Moriya




**Embassy of the Republic of Djibouti**  
H.E. Mr. Ahmed Arait Ali  
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary

Congratulations to Princess Ayako and Kei Moriya




**Embassy of Madagascar**  
H.E. Ms. Rakotomalala Mireille  
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary

Congratulations to Princess Ayako and Kei Moriya




**Embassy of the Federated States of Micronesia**  
H.E. Mr. John Fritz  
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary

Congratulations to Princess Ayako and Kei Moriya



**Embassy of the Federal Republic of Nigeria**  
H.E. Prof. Mohammed Gana Yisa  
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary

Congratulations to Princess Ayako and Kei Moriya



**Embassy of Panama**  
H.E. Mr. & Mrs. Ritter Diaz  
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary


Congratulations to Princess Ayako and Kei Moriya



**Embassy of the Kingdom of Tonga**  
H.E. Lady Tania Laumanulupe 'o Talafolika Fusitu'a  
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary

**Embassy of the Republic of Congo**


On behalf of the President of the Republic of Congo, I would like to congratulate both of you on your wedding day. Let your marriage live as long as the sun does.



**H.E. Mr. Felix Ngoma**  
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary

**Embassy of Ghana**


Congratulations to HIH Princess Ayako of Takamado and Kei Moriya on the occasion of their wedding, on behalf of the Government and People of Ghana, and on my own behalf.



**H.E. Mr. Frank Okyere**  
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary

**Embassy of the Kingdom of Morocco**


On behalf of the Government and the people of the Kingdom of Morocco, I would like to extend my sincere and heartfelt congratulations to HIH Princess Ayako of Takamado and the Imperial family.



**H.E. Mr. Mohammed Rachad Bouhlal**  
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary

**Royal Thai Embassy in Tokyo**

On behalf of the Thai people, I humbly offer our best wishes and sincerest congratulations to HIH Princess Ayako of Takamado and Kei Moriya on this delightful occasion.



**H.E. Mr. Bansarn Bunnag**  
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary

# Princess Ayako's wedding



Princess Ayako (standing) with her older sisters Princess Tsuguko (left), Noriko Senge (right) and their grandfather, the late Prince Mikasa, in Karuizawa, Nagano Prefecture, in August 2014. KYODO

## Devotion amid global background

KYODO

Kei Moriya, Princess Ayako's husband-to-be, is known as a dedicated and trusted man with rich international experience.



The 32-year-old employee at major Japanese shipping firm Nippon Yusen K.K. is also a board member of Kokkyo naki Kodomotachi (Children Without Borders), a nonprofit organization where his late mother worked as an executive board member that is dedicated to supporting children in developing countries.

The only child of his father Osamu, a 63-year-old former bureaucrat, and mother

Kimie, Moriya attended kindergarten in Paris and studied at an international school in Geneva from April 2000 to November 2001. His parents were long-term friends of the princess' mother, Princess Hisako.

While majoring in social science at the Faculty of Letters at Keio University in Tokyo, he studied for a short period at Oxford University in Britain.

At work, Moriya is in charge of the company's wood chip transport contracts. One of his colleagues described him as a "smart and competent" person who has gained great trust from business clients.

In an in-house magazine introducing new employees in 2009, Moriya, who entered Nippon Yusen that year, said he hopes to become a businessperson "who would always strive to do better without becoming complacent about current situations."

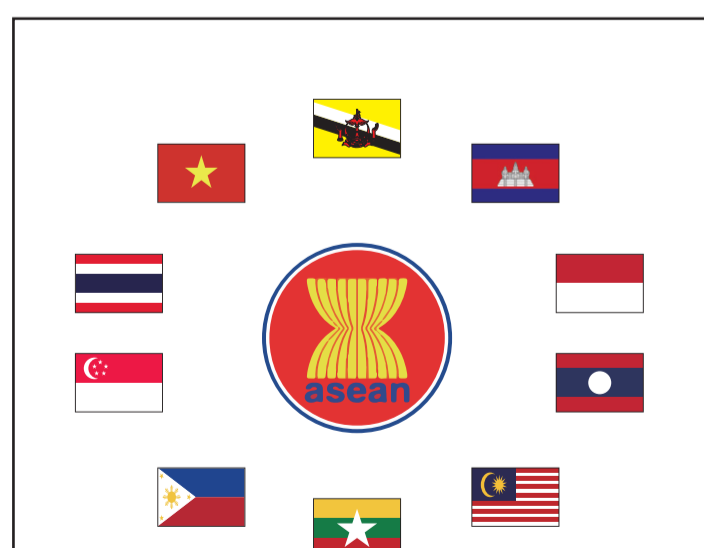
"He is fluent in English and is known as a very skillful man," another colleague said. "I believe he will be an diligent and good husband."

Moriya's late grandfather Kaneyoshi once worked as an executive of the company and was posted for a long time in Britain, where he had exchanges with Crown Prince Naruhito, who also studied at Oxford University.

The groom's hobbies include skiing, marathons and competing in Ironman triathlons. His father previously worked for the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry and is currently the president of Brazil-Japan Ethanol Co. Ltd. His mother Kimie fell ill during a business trip to Cambodia before passing away in 2015 in Bangkok at age 56. Moriya, who was in Thailand on business at the time, was able to be at her side when she died.



Above: Princess Ayako at her graduation from Josai International University in Togane, Chiba Prefecture in March 2013. Right: Princess Ayako and Kei Moriya at a press conference for their engagement in August. KYODO



Congratulations to Princess Ayako and Kei Moriya



**Embassy of  
the Republic of Zimbabwe**

H.E. Mr. Titus M. J. Abu-Basutu  
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary

**ASEAN Committee in Tokyo  
(ACT)**

would like to extend our heartfelt congratulations to  
HH Princess Ayako of Takamado and Kei Moriya and  
wishes their marriage will be filled with happiness.