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Extra Edition

Princess Kiko has boy

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Princess Kiko, the wife of Prince Akishino, the Emperor's second son, gave birth to a boy Wednesday morning, a long-awaited male heir to the Chrysanthemum Throne.

The baby is the first male born to the Imperial family in 41 years and the third in line to the throne after Crown Prince Naruhito, 46, and Prince Akishino, 40.

The birth will put off the succession crisis facing the Imperial family for a while, according to experts. The Imperial House Law allows only males with emperors on their father's side to ascend the throne.

The 39-year-old princess gave birth to her third child, who weighs 2,558 grams, at 8:27 a.m. by Cesarean section at Aiiku Hospital in Minato Ward, Tokyo.

Both the baby and the mother were in good health, according to government sources.

The boy is the fourth grandchild of Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko.

Prince Akishino and Princess Kiko have two daughters, Princess Mako, 14 and Princess Kako, 11. Crown Prince Naruhito and Crown Princess Masako have one daughter, Princess Aiko, 4.

Prince Akishino arrived at the hospital at around 7 a.m. to wait for the delivery. Princess Kiko entered the operating room a few minutes before 8 a.m.

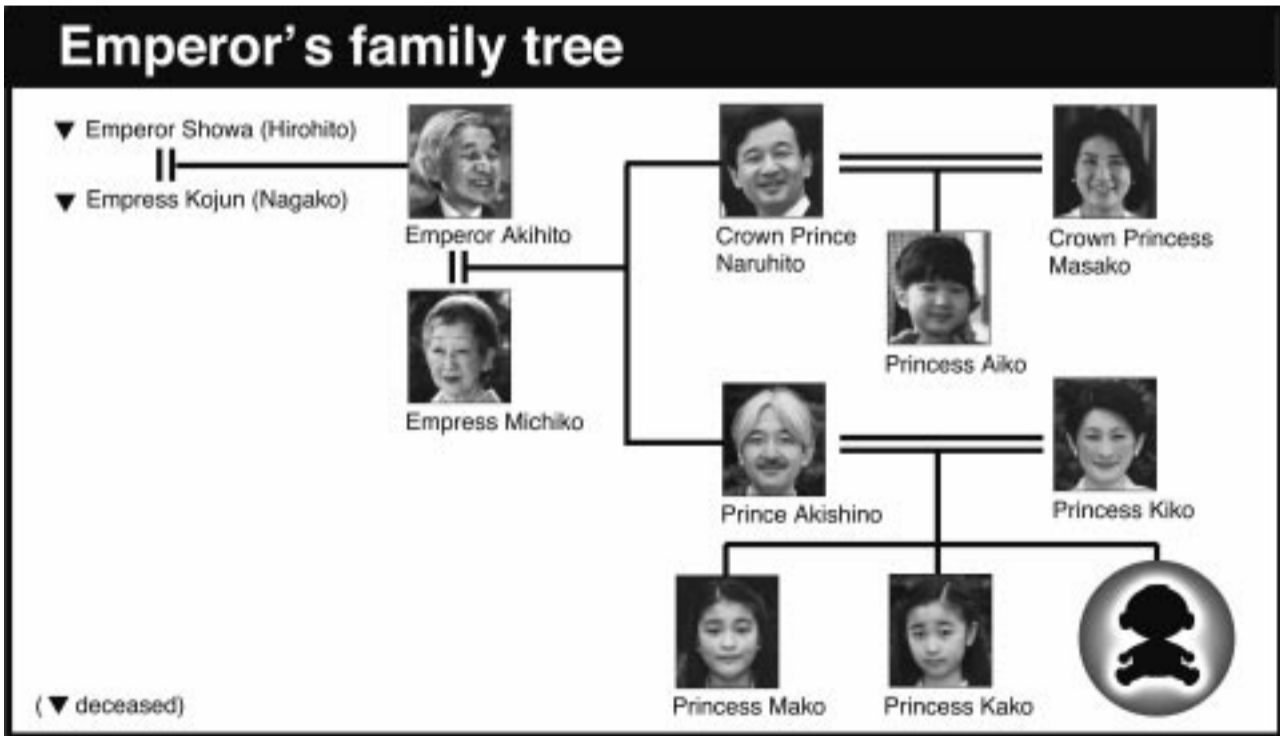
The Imperial family will hold a series of rites for the baby.

According to the Imperial Household Agency, the Emperor's chamberlain was to deliver a sword for the baby's protection to Prince Akishino later Wednesday in a ceremony wishing the baby a life of good health.

A naming ceremony will be held in



PRINCE AKISHINO (above) enters Aiiku Hospital in Minato Ward, Tokyo, on Wednesday morning to wait for Princess Kiko (left) to deliver their third child. KYODO PHOTOS



seven days. The name will be registered on the Imperial family member list later.

When he is around 50 days old, the child will visit three Shinto shrines in the Imperial Palace. After around 120 days, when his teeth begin to grow, a ritual will be held to wish him good health.

Princess Kiko was admitted to the

hospital Aug. 16 to prepare for the Cesarean section following pregnancy complications.

It was the first time anyone in the Imperial family has undergone this operation.

The princess met Prince Akishino in the 1980s when they were studying at Gakushuin University in Tokyo. They married in June 1990.