

Regarding the recent reporting in the weekly magazines concerning H.I.H. Princess Mako

Ever since the postponement of the engagement and other ceremonies related to the marriage of H.I.H. Princess Mako was announced, various speculations have been made and articles written with regard to Their Majesties' thoughts and responses about this matter, in particular those of Her Majesty. With regard to this matter, Their Majesties' response has been the same and remains unchanged from the beginning.

Their Majesties' first thought has been that this is a matter which concerns the innermost feelings of Princess Mako, and what all, anyone, including perhaps even Princess Mako's parents, T.I.H. Prince and Princess Akishino, can do is to wait for Princess Mako to make her own decisions. Under such circumstances, Their Majesties have felt that it would be best to protect Princess Mako as much as possible from the various commotion coming from outside and maintain a quiet condition to help her think the matter through.

Towards that end, both Their Majesties have been consistent in refraining from speaking about this matter in any form at all. In fact, no one has heard Their Majesties' thoughts or has been asked by Their Majesties to explain the situation, including the Grand Steward and the Vice-Grand Steward of the Imperial Household, and other officials of the Imperial Household Agency, as well as those serving Their Majesties at Their side, the Grand Chamberlain to His Majesty the Emperor, the Chief Lady-in-waiting to Her Majesty the Empress, and others serving on the Board of Chamberlains. This also applies to the counselors and advisors who are usually consulted by Their Majesties.

Their Majesties have been most careful to remain silent, and it is our understanding that no one has raised the matter with Their Majesties, including those working for the Imperial Household Agency, Their Majesties' relatives, friends, lecturers, and others.

It has surprised Her Majesty that various unforeseen speculations have been made, attributed to Her Majesty, to disturb the quiet condition which Their

Majesties have striven so hard to preserve around Princess Mako and Prince and Princess Akishino, to give Princess Mako a chance to reflect quietly on the matter. His Majesty is also greatly grieved to learn of this. Whenever anyone in the Imperial Family was suffering in the past, Her Majesty has always said that the suffering affected the whole family, and showed Her concern while quietly looking on.

From the outset Their Majesties have considered it most important to give Princess Mako, Prince and Princess Akishino, and the party concerned, a quiet environment to reflect on the matter, and They have maintained a complete silence. Considering it most regrettable that Their Majesties' considerations have been in vain, the Imperial Household Agency would like to take this opportunity to convey Their Majesties' thoughts and responses.