

COMPLETION REPORT

A Comparative study of Marriage Equality in Japan, Hong Kong and Taiwan

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We have finished our ethnographic fieldwork according to the schedule. In summary, we have conducted focus groups and interviews with lesbians and gay men totaling 30 participants for this one-year pilot study. We have also conducted extensive participant observation by attending seminars and events pertaining to the topic of marriage equality in Japan, Hong Kong and Taiwan. A public seminar was held at the University of Hong Kong titled “A Comparative Study of Marriage Equality in Japan, Hong Kong and Taiwan” on May 26, 2017. Due to Taiwan’s landmark ruling from its Constitutional Court favoring same-sex marriage on May 24, our seminar received wider interest from the community and we changed the venue to accommodate a larger audience. An audience of approximately 70 attended the seminar including academics, community activists and a representative from the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government Equal Opportunities Commission. I have attached the poster and photos of the public seminar with this report. There was significant interest for the research study as demonstrated by the many questions from the audience after we have finished our presentation. We had originally intended for the seminar to run from 4:30pm to 6pm. The seminar was extended for an extra 45 minutes as a result of increased audience engagement. The research team also held a research meeting on the following day to discuss our future publication plan. We are planning to submit articles to the following journals: *Sexualities*, *Sociological Review*.

Abstract for the seminar is as follows:

Marriage equality has been at the forefront of media attention in East Asian societies. In March 2015, the ward of Shibuya in Japan allowed same-sex couples to register as partners, thereby minimizing the chances of LGBT persons being denied hospital visitation rights and housing. In Taiwan, a lesbian wedding was officiated by a Buddhist nun at a monastery in 2012. Registration of same-sex couples in 11 counties of Taiwan have begun even though it is symbolic rather than legal, as civil law stipulates that only a man and a woman can lawfully marry. Hong Kong, on the other hand, has the least legal protection for LGBT persons. In 2012, a public consultation on the enactment of Sexual Orientation Discrimination Ordinance was voted down by the Legislative Council. Yet, the Immigration Department has to face the issue of same-sex marriages registered abroad as expatriates bring their same-sex partners to work in Hong Kong.

Our comparative study examines the discourse and understanding of same-sex marriage among gay and lesbian couples across three Asian societies. Our study explores the reasons, motivations and expectations for gays and lesbians in getting registered as same-sex couples. We examine the role of the state to govern gay and lesbian persons through registration of couples or marriage. Project funded by the Sumitomo Foundation (Grant No. 158038).

Publication of the Results of Research Project:

Verbal Presentation (Date, Venue, Name of Conference, Title of Presentation, Presenter, etc.)

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May 26, 2017

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Presenters: Prof. Diana Khor, Prof. Chen Yi-Chien and Dr. Denise Tse-Shang Tang

Thesis (Name of Journal and its Date, Title and Author of Thesis, etc.)

Book (Publisher and Date of the Book, Title and Author of the Book, etc.)