

# Teaching LGBT Rights in Japan: Learning from Classroom Experiences

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**I**N THE PAST YEAR, there has been a surge in the discussion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) issues in the media. Events such as the nationwide legalization of same-sex marriage in the US (which occurred in June 2015) and the more recent debate regarding the toilets that transgender individuals may use have been publicized internationally, and have also led to other countries focusing more on their own LGBT populations. In Japan, LGBT issues have been in the media not only because of what is happening overseas, but because of the changes happening within Japan as well. In April 2015, the Shibuya-ward in Tokyo made it possible for same-sex couples to apply for partnership certificates, and other wards and municipalities are following suit. This marked the first official recognition, and granting, of partnership rights to same-sex couples. However, not all news has been good. A recent report from the Human Rights Watch showed that bullying of LGBT youth is widespread in schools in Japan, and the government has not done much to ameliorate the situation.<sup>1</sup>

In this paper, I discuss the issue of education and LGBT rights in Japan. First, I discuss the current context of LGBT rights in Japan and issues currently under discussion. Second, I provide an overview of how LGBT issues are discussed in educational settings, as well as government attitudes towards teaching such material in schools. Drawing on my own experience from teaching LGBT issues in universities in Japan, I discuss teaching methods and student reactions to these issues, and conclude with a discussion of teaching methods that I found to be effective as well as possible tactics for discussing LGBT issues in class. As my experience has been limited to the university classroom, most of the following discussion focused on the university.

## **LGBT Rights in Japan**

Around the world, people are discriminated against or become targets of violent acts simply because of their gender or perceived sexual orienta-

tion. The extent of such discrimination and violence differs from country to country, but it is generally recognized that individuals may be at risk of discrimination or violence for expressing affection or desire towards someone of the same gender, or for not conforming to social gender expectations, be it in terms of dress or behavior. In addition, individuals may be denied certain rights based on the sex<sup>2</sup> of their partner, or may be denied certain social benefits based on their own legal sex. The Yogyakarta Principles, which were established in 2006, are hailed as a milestone in the discussion of LGBT rights. Although the Principles have never been adopted by the United Nations (UN) and have not been made into binding law in any country, they demonstrate how human rights law can be applied to argue for the rights of LGBT people, as well as how in many cases LGBT individuals are denied basic human rights as defined by the UN.

Among the rights that the Yogyakarta Principles mentions are the right to “Universal Enjoyment of Human Rights, Non-Discrimination and Recognition before the Law” and “Rights of Participation in Cultural and Family Life,” both of which are relevant to Japan. Applied to LGBT individuals, these rights pertain to the right to legal recognition and treatment of partnerships, as well as to protection from discrimination based on one’s gender identity or sexual orientation.

Since the establishment of the Yogyakarta Principles, the UN has made several statements condemning violence and discrimination based on gender identity or sexual orientation. Notably, Japan has supported these statements, demonstrating that the Japanese government is, at least on paper, committed to protecting LGBT rights. However, despite the government’s position in the UN, it should be noted that at present there exist no laws that explicitly protect the rights of LGBT people in Japan. As a 2008 shadow report submitted to the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC) also argues, “Japanese law does not guarantee substantive equality on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity, nor does it protect from discrimination and abuses.”<sup>3</sup> Some of the issues that are often referred to include the rigid conditions for transgender individuals to legally change their sex, lack of legal protection (in employment, accommodation and housing, partner violence, partnership rights) and discrimination (bullying at school and work).

For a long time, Japan had no hate speech law, and it was only in May 2016 that the first anti-hate speech law was passed. The main targets of hate

speech in Japan are mostly individuals who are not ethnically Japanese, such as Koreans in Japan, but the passing of such a law could influence public remarks about LGBT issues as well. In February 2011, the then governor of Tokyo Ishihara Shintaro said he “felt sorry” for LGBT people, and that LGBT people were “deficient somehow.”<sup>4</sup> His comments sparked outrage in the LGBT community, and activist groups were quick to take action and organized events to discuss his problematic statements and the social recognition of LGBT people in Japanese society.<sup>5</sup>

The issue that has received the most attention recently is that of same-sex partnerships. In April 2015, the Shibuya ward in Tokyo made history by becoming the first ward in Japan to officially recognize same-sex partnerships. Same-sex partnerships were not legalized per se, but rather the ward office offers same-sex couples partnership certificates which certify that the couples are to be given the same treatment as couples that are legally married. Setagaya-ward in Tokyo soon followed suit, and most recently Takarazuka in Hyogo Prefecture made the move to recognize same-sex partnerships. There certainly seems to be a domino-effect in place, with movements to recognize same-sex partnerships in Sapporo (Hokkaido) and Naha (Okinawa) taking place as well. In all of these cases, certificates recognizing partnership rights have been issued, and on this basis same-sex partnerships have been recognized.

On the business front, there are increasingly more companies that are publicly declaring themselves “LGBT-friendly.” These companies, which include Sony, Panasonic, and Dai-ichi Life Insurance, are taking a stance towards making their workplaces more welcoming for LGBT employees.<sup>6</sup> These moves were made recently, and it is yet to be seen how these practices will play out in the long run. However, with the impending Tokyo Olympics in 2020 as well as increasing international pressure from abroad and the work of local activists, it seems that this is a transitional phase for LGBT rights in Japan. There seems to be a movement towards recognizing the existence of LGBT individuals, and at least in the immediate moment, towards implementing policies to bring about more equality and social support.

Since 2003, it has been possible for transgender individuals in Japan to change their legal sex. However, the conditions for doing so are rigid. In order to change one’s legal sex,<sup>7</sup> one must meet the following conditions:

- Be above the age of twenty;
- Not presently married;

- Not currently have a child who is a minor;
- Not possess reproductive functions;
- Possess genitals that resemble that of the opposite gender.

These conditions have been criticized for forcing transgender individuals to fit into a specific mold. They are also in stark contrast to the most recent changes in Denmark, for example, where individuals are allowed to decide their own legal sex.<sup>8</sup> Legal sex in Japan is still heavily controlled by government institutions. Transgender individuals who do not desire to undergo sterilization or bodily modification surgeries are not able to legally change their sex. As such, many of them still have their assigned sex (as opposed to gender that they identify as) as their legal sex. This causes problems in cases where legal documentation is required, as there will be incongruence in how the individual identifies and presents her/himself, and the sex indicated on the individuals' legal documents.

The Ministry of Education has recently taken action to address the treatment of LGBT students in schools, and in 2015 issued guidelines for the treatment of transgender students.<sup>9</sup> The guidelines state that schools should allow students to wear the uniform of the gender that they identify as, as well as be recognized as having such gender. A pamphlet for educators was also released in April 2016, providing information about sexual orientation and gender identity, albeit with a focus mostly on the latter.<sup>10</sup> School textbooks are also to include information about LGBT identities and issues, although how and what information is to be included is still up for debate and dependent upon the textbook publisher.<sup>11</sup>

As this section has shown, in terms of rights there seems to be a recent move towards providing more legal recognition of LGBT individuals. However, they are still not given equal treatment – same-sex partnerships are not given the same recognition as marriage, and transgender individuals still face many obstacles in being recognized as the gender they identify as. Despite the strides being made, LGBT individuals are still regarded as different, and not quite equal. In terms of human rights there are many more changes that need to be made in order to assure that LGBT individuals have sufficient social support and equal recognition.

## LGBT and Education

On a recent edition of Ogiue Chiki's radio show, LGBT activists Endo Mameta and Muroi Maika discussed their experiences in school as a transgender man (Endo) and lesbian woman (Muroi).<sup>12</sup> In both of their experiences, they mentioned the lack of support from school personnel, and Muroi even stated that statements made by her homeroom teacher making fun of gay men created an unwelcoming school environment for her. Both activists emphasized that there seems to be a lack of awareness and knowledge of LGBT issues in school, and one of the main problems is that of ignorance. Although teachers may be required to cover LGBT-related topics in class, many of the teachers themselves do not possess the knowledge to teach these issues. For example, due to media representations of LGBT individuals which do not distinguish between drag queens and transgender women, many individuals believe that all gay men desire to become women, and lesbian women to become men. Many educators do not possess sufficient knowledge about LGBT issues, and do not recognize the needs or existence of such students in their midst. I myself have borne witness to this in an educational context. At a recent staff training session about suicide prevention at the university I work at, LGBT issues were mentioned. However, the speaker giving the talk seemed to conflate LGBT with transgender, and discussed LGBT issues in terms of "disability" (*shōgai*). The speaker even said that LGBT individuals are prone to have developmental disabilities. I was shocked to hear that such misinformation was being passed on in a training environment.

There seems to be an effort to include more discussion in classrooms, but the issue is not only one of classroom materials, but also teacher training. Educators themselves need to be more aware of these issues and the fact that LGBT students do exist in their schools and classrooms. In addition, schools should provide support for instructors who teach these issues. On the aforementioned radio show, it was also discussed that one of the problems of covering LGBT issues in the classroom and for LGBT educators to come out is not the reaction of other staff members or students, but rather the reaction of parents or guardians. Schools should be willing to defend covering these issues in the classroom, and to inform guardians of the relevance of studying LGBT issues. They should also be willing to protect employees and students who are themselves LGBT.

## **LGBT Rights in the Classroom**

I have had the opportunity to teach LGBT rights in a number of classroom settings in Japan. Here, I will detail my experiences teaching at a university in the Kanto region<sup>13</sup> over three years, in three different classes. All three classes consisted of mostly Japanese (in terms of nationality and ethnic background) students; two of the courses were taught in English, and one (international law) was taught in Japanese. Each class consisted of between fifteen to thirty students, and included class discussions. None of the classes were solely about LGBT issues, but I made it a point to include these issues in my classes. As such, depending on the class, LGBT issues were discussed alongside women's rights, gender roles, ethnic minorities, and wider social issues of discrimination.

Teaching LGBT issues in the university classroom is different from the primary and secondary levels of education discussed in the previous section. As university students are above the age of eighteen and legally considered to be adults, considering what the students' guardians may think is not of the highest concern. The ability to cover these issues in the classroom may also depend on the university or faculty department, but from my own experience I have only been met with enthusiasm when discussing the issue of teaching LGBT issues in class with colleagues. However, my own teaching career has been relatively short, and I only started teaching these issues when there was already a substantial global and local movement to think of LGBT rights as human rights. It can be assumed that teaching these issues in the past may have been met with some opposition.

In addition, my own research focuses primarily on LGBT issues, and universities seeking to hire me would most likely do so with the expectation that I teach about these issues in the classroom as well. There does seem to be more of an effort by universities to offer courses on LGBT-related issues, as a recent job posting by Waseda University for a tenure-track post in Queer Studies would indicate.<sup>14</sup>

### **Class: Japanese society (2013)**

The first time I taught LGBT issues was in a class about Japanese society, in which I focused on diversity and social minorities, looking at issues such as ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, and sexual minorities in Japan. I allocated two classes (out of fifteen) to cover LGBT issues.

This was my first time broaching LGBT topics in the classroom, and I was unsure about what students thought or knew about such issues. I went in with the assumption that most of them would have a minimal understanding of LGBT issues, and associate LGBT with the drag queens or transwomen they saw on variety television shows. As such, one of my main aims was for them to understand the different identities encompassed within the acronym of LGBT, as well as to address the issue of discursive violence and how terms which are often used in the media (such as *okama*, *nyū hafu*, and *onabe*) are actually regarded as discriminatory by some LGBT individuals. As this class was taught in English, we also discussed the issue of pronouns and the inappropriate use of pronouns to refer to transgender individuals. My aim in this class was for students to be able to discuss LGBT issues respectfully – to give them a new vocabulary to understand LGBT individuals, and to refrain from using language that is discriminatory.

I wanted students to shift their understandings of LGBT individuals as media figures to be laughed at, to everyday situations – the awareness that LGBT people are everywhere. The second class focused on visibility, and how LGBT people are represented in the media, as well as how they are discussed online. As a case study, I showed them comments on *Ni-channeru*, an online messaging board, regarding an article about two models who had recently come out as being lesbian.<sup>15</sup> The comments included a range of opinions, from discriminatory (“that’s disgusting”) to voyeuristic (“hurry up with your porn debut”) to incredulous (“what a waste!”, “why a woman?”), to accepting (“there are people with prejudices in all countries and I feel that Japan is one of those with less prejudice ... I personally feel that you are free to love whoever you want”). We discussed what such statements reveal about perception of homosexuality (in particular homosexual women) in Japanese society.

At this time, another lesbian couple had started making the news for holding their wedding ceremony at Tokyo Disneyland. We discussed this case, but also the fact that in Japan, any such wedding between two individuals of the same legal sex is purely symbolic – the two women did not gain any rights or benefits or any change in legal status based on their wedding. The case had received a fair amount of media coverage both in Japan and overseas, and provided a springboard to discuss LGBT rights. We discussed the significance of partnership rights and why they are desirable (or even necessary) for many couples. Many of the students were not aware that same-sex

marriage was legal in some countries, and we discussed LGBT rights around the world and the legal status of LGBT individuals in Japan.

At the end of the second class, I got students to fill in an anonymous survey to share their thoughts about LGBT issues in society. The results were largely positive, and many students wrote that they had never really thought about the status of LGBT individuals in Japan but were now encouraged to continue doing so. There was one student, however, who wrote about still feeling uneasy about same-sex partnership, and felt that people also had the right to disagree.

Although it was only this one student who expressed negative opinions about LGBT people, I found it interesting that such disagreement is always expressed as a right as well – the “right to disagree” or the “right to freedom of speech.” This made me think that this student still did not think of rights such as partnership rights as a human right, and also made me rethink how I could teach these issues in a way that made it clear that LGBT individuals were being denied what are considered fundamental human rights.

### **Class: Current issues, focusing on gender and migration (2013-2015)**

The next opportunity I had to teach LGBT issues was in a class about current issues, in which gender was a theme. As the class looked at issues from an international perspective, I discussed LGBT issues not just in the context of Japan, but in other countries as well. Rather than focus on terminology, I decided to focus on the issue of potential violence and discrimination, and discuss how LGBT individuals have experienced discrimination around the world and at the risk of violence because of their sexuality or gender identity.

Students were initially puzzled that LGBT individuals were the targets of violent acts, as many felt that in Japan, LGBT people do not experience such problems. This led to a discussion about why LGBT people may be targeted, and what the reasons for such violence and discrimination may be. From there, we moved to looking at the situation of LGBT people in Japan, including a discussion of Ishihara Shintaro’s remarks on LGBT people, as well as the conditions for legal sex change in Japan.

In this class, I also showed students a documentary called *Shinjuku Boys*, which is about a bar in Shinjuku in which all the servers are female-assigned individuals who are masculine-presenting<sup>15</sup> and identify as “*onabe*.”<sup>17</sup> The individuals in this documentary discuss their identity and what it means to identify as *onabe* and to be transgender. For students who were used to



seeing drag queens, transwomen, and gay men referred to as *onee kyara* (big sister characters) on variety shows, this documentary gave them a new perspective to what being transgender means, and the experiences such individuals have in society. Students had some time to discuss the documentary and ask questions in class, and also wrote a short reaction paper about their thoughts on the film. What they wrote was overwhelmingly positive, and many said that it made them think more about gender identity and roles in society, in addition to what it means to be transgender.

We ended the sessions (I usually spent two to three out of 15 classes on gender classes on LGBT issues) with an exploration of LGBT rights movements around the world, including discussion of Pride parades and why such parades are necessary, and LGBT-friendly spaces in Japan and beyond, as well as politicians in Japan who have come out as being LGBT.

### **Class: International law (2014)**

This class dealt explicitly with the issue of law. The class was co-taught with a colleague, and the sessions that I taught dealt mostly with international law and issues pertaining to gender, sexuality, race and ethnicity. I allocated one class to LGBT issues.

The format of this class was similar to the Current Issues class, and we started off by looking at the discrimination that LGBT individuals face around the world today. As the Sochi Olympics and LGBT rights in Russia were being discussed in the media at the time, I started off by discussing this issue, and why there were many protesting the Olympics being held in Sochi. We also looked at how in some countries, discrimination against LGBT individuals is legal. This moved to a discussion of international rights, and students were introduced to the Yogyakarta Principles as well as current UN efforts to bring about recognition of LGBT rights, such as the Free and Equal campaign. I then told students about what rights LGBT individuals have in certain countries, such as partnership and marriage rights, and the right to change one's legal sex and the conditions for doing so. The situation in Japan was then explored after this. We looked at problems of discrimination, as well as current movements promoting recognition of LGBT rights.

### **Effective Methods for Teaching about LGBT Rights in Japan**

Although my approach to teaching LGBT rights depended on the course I was teaching, my teaching methods also changed throughout the years.

Given the limited time to address these issues, I decided that although discursive violence is an important issue, understanding the social situation of LGBT individuals should take priority. As such, I started to devote more time to addressing discrimination, as well as to discussing how LGBT rights have progressed around the world and in Japan, as well as discussing how LGBT rights are in fact human rights.

From teaching LGBT issues in the same university over three years, I can also say that I have observed a change in how students respond to and become aware of these issues. In each class, there is at least one student who has a friend who is LGBT, and they are open to discussing their experiences with their friend. As more young LGBT individuals have openly discussed their sexuality and identity with the people around them, awareness about these issues has increased as well. In addition, students who are LGBT have also come out to me privately after discussing these issues in class.

### **LGBT issues in context**

There is a tendency to discuss Japan as “lagging behind” when it comes to LGBT rights. As I have outlined earlier in this paper, there is little recognition of LGBT rights in Japan, and much needs to be done in terms of social recognition and support. However, framing the discourse in terms of “progress” also has the danger of creating a specific trajectory that needs to be followed for LGBT rights. It is important to understand that the issues LGBT individuals experience vary depending on cultural context, and how rights develop in specific contexts also has to do with the issues that LGBT people experience there. Violent hate crimes against LGBT people, for example, have not been prominent in Japan, which is also what some say has led to a lack of urgency in the government’s handling of these issues. I try to discuss rights not only as universal (which human rights also tend to be), but also as locally situated.

### **Time for discussion – Overcoming stereotypes and prejudice**

Many students do possess stereotypes and prejudices, and I feel that it is important for them to be able to express these potentially discriminatory opinions in the classroom. I have encountered a student who said that same-sex marriage should not be legalized because the birthrate in Japan will further decrease, and another who said that he did not think it was appropriate for same-sex couples to show affection for each other in public, as

a child may see them. It is important to be able to discuss these issues in the classroom, such that students can see what is potentially problematic about such statements. When I talked with these students about their opinions, they came to learn about other perspectives.

### **First-person experiences**

A recent nationwide survey about awareness of LGBT issues in Japan showed that most people in Japan, while generally aware of the existence of LGBT people, do not think that there are LGBT people within their own vicinity.<sup>18</sup> Because of this research and because of my own classroom experiences where a majority of students say they have never met someone who is LGBT, I realized the importance of exposing students to LGBT people. One way I could do this was by using documentaries, or inviting LGBT activists to speak in class. Another way was by simply for me to come out to my students.

As someone who is queer and teaches about LGBT issues, the question of coming out is something I have always struggled with. Is there a need to come out in class? Will students treat me differently if I do? Initially, I decided not to come out directly to my class, but to be open about my relationship with someone of the same sex if students asked me about such issues.

Coming out in a public setting is an individual choice, and also depends upon the environment one is in and how comfortable one feels in it. Inspired by the survey discussed above, I decided to start a guest talk at a university by telling students about my sexuality, and assuring them that they know at least one person who is LGBT (me!). This proved to be a conversation starter, and in the question and answer session afterwards students asked about my experiences in a same-sex relationship, and also about public perceptions of LGBT people. One student also asked if people in same-sex couples should be allowed to show affection for each other in public. Being open about my sexuality allowed students to open up about reservations they had about LGBT people, and to become more aware of their own surroundings. I also received very positive feedback from the session. This experience has also encouraged me to be open with students if it is relevant to what we are discussing, as I have found that it will also encourage them to be more open with me.

I have had very positive student reactions from dealing with these issues in the classroom. Students have spoken with me and written about their

own gender identity and sexuality in reaction papers, as well as moved on to studying these issues in more detail for their graduation projects. The classes I discussed in this paper did not focus only on LGBT issues, and as such served to introduce students to thinking about LGBT issues and rights. It is possible to integrate these issues into classes about human rights, gender, sociology, and Japanese society. In fact, discussing LGBT issues in the wider context of Japanese society will also help students realize that these are not just minority issues, but societal issues.

### Resources for educators

In my classes I relied mostly on newspaper articles, as well as including snippets of online discussions that students might be familiar with. I tried to engage students in discussions that they may have encountered online on message boards such as *Ni-channeru* or on Twitter. The internet, as such, served as an important resource.

As mentioned above, personal experiences are important, and recently there are more online resources which include first-person accounts by LGBT people. The Conference on World Sexualities (COWS) is one such online project, and includes interviews with LGBT activists and scholars (including myself) in Japanese or English, with English, Japanese, and Chinese subtitles.<sup>19</sup> There are also various LGBT organizations which can be called upon to give talks about these issues, such as ReBit<sup>20</sup> and Kyosei-Net.<sup>21</sup> Some members of these organizations are bilingual, and are able to give talks in English as well.

### Conclusion

LGBT issues are being discussed in the media in Japan now more positively and with more urgency than in the past. From my own experience, students are also interested in discussing these issues, and are starting to become more aware of how LGBT issues relate to their own surroundings. More materials are also being produced by LGBT organizations and activists for classroom use. Education can be a form of activism, and I hope that through learning about these issues students will be more inclined to work towards the social change necessary not just to talk openly about LGBT rights, but also to bring about tangible changes in current legislation.

## Endnotes

1 Human Rights Watch, “Japan: Bullied LGBT Students Unprotected,” 5 May 2016; [www.hrw.org/news/2016/05/05/japan-bullied-lgbt-students-unprotected](http://www.hrw.org/news/2016/05/05/japan-bullied-lgbt-students-unprotected) (last accessed 20 June 2016).

2 I use the term “sex” to refer primarily to legal sex.

3 Gay Japan News, Global Rights, International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission, International Human Rights Clinic, Human Rights Program, Harvard Law School, “The Violation of the Rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Persons in Japan,” 2008. Available online: [www.iglhrc.org/sites/default/files/159-1.pdf](http://www.iglhrc.org/sites/default/files/159-1.pdf).

4 Human Rights Watch, “Japan: Governor should retract homophobic comments,” 1 February 2011; [www.hrw.org/news/2011/02/01/japan-governor-should-retract-homophobic-comments](http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/02/01/japan-governor-should-retract-homophobic-comments) (last accessed 16 June 2016).

5 More information about this can be found on the homepage for the People United Against Tokyo Governor Ishihara’s Homophobic Comments:

<http://ishiharakougieng.web.fc2.com/> (last accessed 16 June 2016).

It should be noted that a month after his comments the Tohoku earthquake happened, which also derailed the LGBT activist movement.

6 Nikkei Asian Review, “Japanese workplaces inching toward LGBT inclusion,” 22 June 2016; <http://asia.nikkei.com/Business/Trends/Japanese-workplaces-inching-toward-LGBT-inclusion> (last accessed June 30, 2016).

7 Legal sex refers to the sex that an individual is legally recognized as, and which is listed on official documents such as birth certificate, driving license, or in the case of Japan, on the family register. This is in contrast to the sex or gender that an individual identifies as. It is possible, for example, to be legally female but identify as male.

8 It should also be noted that Denmark is in the minority in this regard – there are few countries in which transgender is not recognized as a medical condition and in which individuals are allowed to decide upon their own gender without the confirmation of a medical specialist.

9 Japan Ministry of Education, “Sei dō itsu sei shōgai ni kakawaru jidō seito ni taisuru kime komaka na taiō nado no jisshi ni tsuite,” 30 April 2015; [www.mext.go.jp/b\\_menu/houdou/27/04/1357468.htm](http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/houdou/27/04/1357468.htm) (last accessed 30 June 2016).

10 Japan Ministry of Education, “Sei dō itsu sei shōgai ya seiteki shikō, seijin ni kakawaru, jidō seito ni taisuru kime komaka na taiō nado no jisshi ni tsuite,” 2016; [www.mext.go.jp/b\\_menu/houdou/28/04/\\_\\_\\_icsFiles/afiedfile/2016/04/01/1369211\\_01.pdf](http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/houdou/28/04/___icsFiles/afiedfile/2016/04/01/1369211_01.pdf) (last accessed 30 June 2016).

11 Mainichi Shinbun, “LGBT hatsu tōjō tayō na sei, kōkō de manande,” 18 March 2016; <http://mainichi.jp/articles/20160318/koo/ooe/040/232000c> (last accessed 30 June 2016).

12 Information about the show can be found here: [www.tbsradio.jp/31870](http://www.tbsradio.jp/31870) (last accessed 30 June 2016). It is also possible to stream the recording online.

13 The Kanto region in northern Japan covers the prefectures of Chiba, Saitama, Tokyo, Gunma, Kanagawa and Tochigi.

14 See [http://flas.waseda.jp/flas/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2015/04/02-recruitment\\_information.pdf](http://flas.waseda.jp/flas/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2015/04/02-recruitment_information.pdf) (last accessed 16 June 2016).

15 The comments were drawn from the following website: <http://awabi.2ch.net/test/read.cgi/mnewsplus/1361199687> (last accessed 16 June 2016).

16 This means that their legal sex is “female,” but they neither identify themselves as female nor do they present themselves as such. Some of the individuals in the documentary pass as men, and others as butch women (women who are masculine and/or dress like men).”

17 Although the term “onabe” is one that is generally recognized to refer to female-assigned, masculine-presenting (presumed to be lesbian) individuals, it is also regarded as a discriminatory term. We discussed some of the problematics of the term in class, but as the individuals in the documentary used it positively to refer to themselves it was also important to understand how this term could be used and differently understood.

18 Nihon ni okeru kuia sutadeizu no kōchiku kenkyū gurūpu, “Seiteki mainoritei nit suite no ishiki. 2015 nen zenkoku chōsa,” 2016; <http://alpha.shudo-u.ac.jp/~kawaguch/chousa2015.pdf> (last accessed 30 June 2016).

19 cows: Conference on World Sexualities homepage: <http://cowsjapan.wix.com/startup> (last accessed 30 June 2016).

20 ReBit homepage: <http://rebitlgbt.org/> (last accessed 30 June 2016).

21 Kyosei shakai wo tsukuru sekushuaru mainoritei shien zenkoku nettowaku homepage: [www.kyouseinet.org/](http://www.kyouseinet.org/) (last accessed 30 June 2016).