

Survey of LGBTQ-Related Books Holding at the Gender Equality Centers

Kazuyuki Sunaga

Kokugakuin University

Abstract: Interest in LGBTQ people has increased in recent years in Japan. Although same-sex marriage is not tolerated at the national level, the same-sex partnership system, which began to be introduced in 2015 in Setagaya and Shibuya wards in Tokyo. An increasing number of local governments are enforcing similar system.

Materials on LGBTQ issues are available to citizens in public libraries, and the libraries of local government gender equality centers also hold these materials.

This study therefore investigates whether LGBTQ-related materials are held in the library of a gender equality center in Tokyo.

Keyword: LGBTQ, Gender Equality Center, Tokyo, Discrimination

1. Introduction

Today in Japan, bills for LGBTQ are a hot topic. There are the opposition parties' LGBT discrimination abolition bill and the Liberal Democratic Party's LGBT understanding promotion bill. Opposition groups aim to end all forms of discrimination against LGBT people. On the other hand, the ruling party has prioritized deepening understanding of LGBT people and has not included the elimination of discrimination. LGBTQ people are forced out of their jobs due to discrimination. LGBTQ students drop out of college or school voluntarily and commit suicide to escape the pain of discrimination.



Article 24, Paragraph 1 of the Constitution of Japan states that "marriage shall be established solely on the basis of the consent of both sexes," and it is often interpreted as not recognizing same-sex marriage. A ban on same-sex marriage creates tax issues that put people at a disadvantage. Prejudice and discrimination against LGBTQ people persist in Japanese society, despite increased awareness campaigns over the past decade. Of course, it is important to understand LGBTQ people. However, it is unacceptable for employers to force them to leave because they are LGBTQ. We cannot allow ourselves to be victims of bullying at school.

In our society, it is necessary to create an environment where LGBTQ people can live comfortably. We are working steadily on the problem. In this context, we consider the roles that libraries, gender equality centers, and LGBTQ community archives play.

2. Historical Background on LGBTQ in Japan

Since the introduction of Buddhism in the sixth century, Buddhist temples had often allowed male monks to be gay to forbid monks from having wives and to avoid lewd acts with women in accordance with the precepts. In the 16th century, when battles were frequent, it was difficult to recruit women into battle, so warlords often brought young male soldiers with them as sexual partners. In Noh, men played female roles. Also, in the early days of Kabuki, women sometimes played the roles, but the government prohibited women from performing, so male actors played all the roles. Today, in Noh plays female actors sometimes play, but mostly men play female roles. In Kabuki today, men still play female roles.

Thus, gay culture is not prohibited by law in Japan and has been accepted by the masses (Leupp, 1997). Even in the fields of theater such as Noh and Kabuki, it was common for men to transform into a different sex, in other words, to dress up as women. Homosexuals were never violently persecuted in Japan, and their behaviors were never taboo in religion.

In the 17th century, Edo period, literary works on the theme of same-gender relationships between men appeared. Among them, Saikaku Ihara's "Nanshoku Okagami" is one of the most famous works. In the 20th century, one of famous Japanese novelists, Junichiro Tanizaki's "Manji" (1928-1930), which dealt with lesbian and bisexuality, also titled "Quicksand" in English, and Yukio

Mishima's "Confession of Mask" (1949) and "Forbidden Colors" (1951-1953), which dealt with gay sexuality. He is also world-famous for committing suicide by belly cutting "Harakiri" in November 1970.

3. LGBTQ Survey in Japan

A Japanese company called Dentsu conducted four surveys on LGBT people in 2012, 2015, 2018 and 2020. In 2020, the company conducted a survey that included LGBT and other sexual minorities. They conducted these surveys through the Internet.

"Dubbed the LGBTQ+ Survey, the December 2020 study analyzes responses to a nationwide survey of 60,000 people between the ages of 20 and 59." (Dentsu, 2021) In the 2018 and 2020 surveys, defining non-heterosexuals as LGBTQ+, they totaled 8.9% in both surveys.

From January to February 2019, Osaka City mailed questionnaires to 15,000 people aged 18 to 59 randomly selected from among the residents, and conducted a survey on LGBTQ+, and the effective response rate was 28.6%. As a result, 3% of residents were found to be LGBTQ+ (Osaka City, 2019).

These findings estimate that the percentage of Japan's LGBTQ population is between 3% and 9%. These surveys on LGBTQ+ conducted in Japan cover a large scale, but they were only sampling surveys, not surveys of the entire population.

4. LGBTQ Materials in the Gender Center's Collection

As a community center for LGBTQ, Pride House Tokyo, located in Shinjuku, Tokyo, opened on October 11, 2020, and has a community archive that serves as a resource center for collecting and preserving LGBTQ-related materials. Pride House Tokyo has a different purpose and nature than the Gender Centers, which will be discussed later, but it is a great reference for classifying materials. This institution the catalog of resources in the collection published on December 31, 2022, indicates the classification of the materials that they collected (Pride House Tokyo, 2022).

- 1 Books
- 2 Magazines
- 3 Scholarly papers
- 4 Archival Materials

- 5 Brochures, flyers
- 6 Photographic materials
- 7 Visual materials
- 8 Audio materials
- 9 Paintings and other artwork
- 10 Actual materials such as costumes
- 11 Other

The books in the collection are further classified as follows.

- Academic and critical works
- Encyclopedias and dictionaries
- Introductory and practical books
- Reportage, biographies, and essays
- Japanese fiction
- Foreign fiction
- Comics
- Comic Essays
- Picture Books
- Art Books & Photo Books
- Plays/Scenarios
- Poetry & Songbooks

Library materials on LGBTQ issues include magazines, fiction, comic books, “light novels,” autobiographies, leaflets, pamphlets, books on the law, and books promoting understanding of sexual minority people.

Magazines include lesbian, gay, and transgender magazines. In Japan, gay-oriented magazines were published in the 1970s and 1980s, but in the 2000s, with the spread of the Internet, magazines were discontinued or ceased publication one after another. Gay-oriented magazines had a correspondence column, which was a popular communication tool. With the spread of e-mail, the demand for the correspondence column disappeared. Lesbian-oriented magazines are fewer in number than gay-oriented magazines, with only about three titles. Even when they were first published, they were rarely continued.

As mentioned above, fiction on the theme of male same-gender relationships were published from the 17th to the 19th century. Also in the 20th century,

Junichiro Tanizaki, Yasunari Kawabata, Yukio Mishima, and Rieko Matsuura published fiction with gay themes.

There are two types of manga: those created by gay artists and boys' love manga. The former is represented by Gengoro Tagame's "My Brother's Husband" and a series of short story manga drawn by Mochigi. The latter is aimed primarily at women in their teens and twenties who are interested in male same-gender relationships.

"Light novels" may be a uniquely Japanese expression. "Light novels" are illustrated novels for young adults that do not use difficult words or expressions. Among them, novels featuring gay youths are popular, and as mentioned in the manga, there are boys' love novels favored by women in their teens and twenties. In Japanese bookstores, boys' love novels are sometimes called aesthetic novels. Novels depicting romantic feelings between boys or between a young man and a young man are the favorites of women in their teens and twenties.

Even though boys' love manga and boys' love novels depict gay youth, their readers are women in their teens to twenties, and even among gay readers, there are those who prefer them and those who dislike them. There is no research on whether gay people read Boys' Love manga and novels, but it is likely that there are few gay readers. The survey excluded boys' love novels and comics, which are preferred by young women interested in same-gender relationships. Even the Gender Center does not consider these novels and comics to be LGBTQ material.

Neither public libraries nor gender centers in Japan actively collect nude photobooks. This is because in Japan there is a sense of resistance to sexually explicit photos in public places, and there are penalties for exhibiting obscene material, and the crackdown is strict. The Japanese have a sense of resistance to paintings and sculptures that express highly artistic nudes.

5. Topography and Population of Tokyo

As of February 2023, the population of Tokyo is 14,031,030. The population of Tokyo is 11% of Japan's total population. Tokyo consists of four areas: wards, suburb cities, rural counties, and islands. The wards are the eastern area surrounding Tokyo Bay, while the cities and counties are the flat upland, hills, and mountains to the west. The islands with Tokyo are in the Pacific Ocean

south of the Japanese archipelago and consist of the Izu Islands and the Ogasawara Islands. The Ogasawara Islands were registered as a UNESCO World Natural Heritage Site in 2011. The breakdown by region is 9,716,776 in wards, 4,236,236 in cities, 54,404 in counties, and 23,614 in islands. Seventy percent of the population lives in twenty-three wards.

The Imperial Palace is located in Chiyoda Ward, the center of Tokyo's 23 wards, surrounded by the National Diet Building and government offices. The areas of Ginza, Shibuya, Shinjuku, and Ikebukuro have commercial facilities such as department stores and large-scale stores, while Ueno has a zoo, museums, and art galleries. "Shinjuku 2-Chome" is a corner of downtown Shinjuku where LGBTQ-friendly bars and goods shops are lined up. Pride House Tokyo is close to this gay town.

Today, same-sex marriage is not recognized in Japan, so the Partnership Ordinance is in force instead. Starting in November 2015, Setagaya-ward and Shibuya-ward in Tokyo enforced the partnership ordinance, and in November 2022, the partnership declaration system was enforced in Tokyo Metropolis. This system has been extended to 255 local governments as of 10 January 2023. Still, the partnership system is a system for accepting same-sex marriage, a first step on the road to a solution, not a solution to all problems for LGBTQ people. Discriminatory exclusion and oppression at workplaces, universities, and schools remain deeply rooted.

6. Resource on LGBTQ holding in Gender Center

There are gender centers in Tokyo's 23 wards, and all gender centers in the twenty-one wards, apart from Edogawa and Nakano, have libraries.

More than half of the materials in the collection are about women, but there are also materials about LGBTQ. From February to March 2023, we visited the Gender Center and conducted an interview survey. When I was unable to obtain the data at the time of the visit, the staff provided it later.

Gender centers in Chiyoda, Shibuya and Taito wards are attached to libraries and other facilities. The collections of the Gender Center Libraries in Chiyoda, Meguro, Adachi, Sumida, Shinjuku, Minato, and Itabashi are centrally managed by the public library system. The library of the Gender Center in Arakawa Ward does not classify materials related to LGBTQ, so we could not confirm the exact number. This figure includes issues related to women and family. The ratio to

the whole is 45.24%, which is a remarkably large figure. Since in the Chuo Ward Gender Center library they have not classified their fond, we were unable to identify the number of materials related to LBGtQ.

The collection of the Center for Gender Equality consists mostly of materials related to women, and there are few materials related to LBGtQ. Because the Gender Equality Center is not a facility for LBGtQ people.

Since 2000, interest in LBGtQ has increased in Japan. Gender equality centers established before 2000, such as Meguro, Katsushika, Sumida, Arakawa, and Nerima wards, have few materials on LBGtQ.

The Gender Equality Center in Setagaya Ward had the largest collection of LBGtQ materials. The Gender Equality Centers in Chiyoda Ward, Shibuya Ward, Adachi Ward, and Shinjuku Ward have more than one hundred items. The Gender Equality Centers in Minato Ward, Suginami Ward, and Koto Ward possess 94 to 70 items.

The Gender Equality Center in Shinagawa Ward had the highest ratio of materials related to LBGtQ to the total number of materials, but the number of overall materials was the smallest. This is because the collection of materials was reduced because the area of the facility was reduced. The next highest percentage was at the Gender Equality Center in Shibuya Ward. The Gender Equality Centers in Suginami Ward and Koto Ward have 2.5% of the LBGtQ materials in their collections, even though their overall collections are small. Chiyoda Ward, Setagaya Ward, Toshima Ward, Kita Ward, and Ota Ward have more than 1% of LBGtQ materials.

| Ward | Visit date | LBGTQ | Total | Proportion |
|------------|------------|-------|-------|------------|
| Chiyoda | 2023.2.1 | 138 | 7702 | 1.8 |
| Meguro | 2023.2.3 | 22 | 14860 | 0.15 |
| Setagaya | 2023.2.6 | 250 | 17000 | 1.48 |
| Taito | 2023.2.7 | 13 | 3237 | 0.41 |
| Adachi | 2023.2.8 | 105 | 14602 | 0.72 |
| Katsushika | 2023.2.9 | 28 | 13345 | 0.21 |
| Sumida | 2023.2.9 | 22 | 7437 | 0.3 |
| Koto | 2023.2.9 | 70 | 2800 | 2.5 |

| | | | | |
|--------------------|-----------|-----|-------|-------|
| Edogawa | 2023.2.10 | | | |
| Shinjuku | 2023.2.10 | 100 | 11320 | 0.89 |
| Minato | 2023.2.14 | 94 | 18771 | 0.51 |
| Ota | 2023.2.14 | 42 | 4000 | 1.05 |
| Shinagawa | 2023.2.14 | 7 | 98 | 7.15 |
| Kita | 2023.2.15 | 50 | 4382 | 1.15 |
| Arakawa | 2023.2.15 | 574 | 1269 | 45.24 |
| Bunkyo | 2023.2.15 | 30 | 7000 | 0.43 |
| Shibuya | 2023.2.16 | 120 | 1697 | 7.08 |
| Itabashi | 2023.2.20 | 13 | 2228 | 0.59 |
| Toshima | 2023.2.20 | 16 | 1261 | 1.27 |
| Suginami | 2023.2.21 | 90 | 3539 | 2.55 |
| Nerima | 2023.2.24 | 39 | 15000 | 0.26 |
| Chuo | 2023.3.1 | | | |
| Nakano | | | | |
| Tokyo Women Plaza | 2023.2.16 | 40 | 31000 | 0.13 |
| Human Rights Plaza | 2023.2.14 | 27 | 16000 | 0.17 |

Figure 1 Materials for LGBTQ owned by the Gender Equality Centers

At the gender equality centers in Setagaya Ward and Shibuya Ward, which introduced Japan's first same-sex partnership system in November 2015, LGBTQ-related materials accounted for a significant percentage. La Place, a center for gender equality in Setagaya Ward, has a low ratio of 1.48% to the total, but in this survey, LGBTQ-related materials were the most common. Shibuya Ward Gender Equality Center "IRIS" has only 1697 materials, but it has 120 materials related to LGBTQ.

Tokyo Women's Plaza in Shibuya ward is a facility established and operated by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government that aims to achieve gender equality. This library also actively collects LGBTQ materials. However, the term LGBTQ has only been used in Japan for the past ten years or so, so the number of materials available is small. The Human Rights Plaza in Minato ward is also

a facility established and operated by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, whose purpose is to protect the rights of socially vulnerable people such as Ainu, Chinese and Koreans living in Japan, and women. For the same reason as Tokyo Women's Plaza, there are few LGBTQ materials.

The Japan Association for Sex Education is a private organization that aims to promote sex education in primary and secondary education. The library also has materials on same-gender relationships and sexual issues. We have back issues of gay magazines.

Facilities that hold LGBTQ materials include community centers like Pride House Tokyo and Akta, and gay book cafes like Okamaruto in the Shinjuku 2-chome area, which is famous for its gay town.

Pride House Tokyo is a hospitality facility that disseminates information about LGBTQ+, taking advantage of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games. As mentioned above, it is the facility that collects the most LGBTQ-specific materials.

Akta is an information center on HIV/AIDS and other issues, located in Shinjuku 2-chome, which is said to be the largest gay town in Asia. It is an open space that anyone can use. There is information on bars, clubs, shops, LGBT, addiction such as mental health and drugs.

Book cafe OKAMARUTO is run by a drag queen owner. The store owner collects LGBTQ materials, and the personal collection is substantial.

7. LGBTQ and an aging society with a declining birthrate

Is there a way to prevent LGBTQ people from leaving their jobs? How can gender equality centers and libraries get involved this problem?

Japan is an aging society with a declining birthrate. People over the age of 65 make up 30% of the total population. In the future, the working population will continue to decline. The core problem of the declining birthrate and aging population is the shrinking working population. LGBTQ people are assumed not to have children. Of course, bisexuals can have children. Even if they do not have children, excluding them from the workplace through discrimination will lead to a decline in the working population. Accepting diverse human resources has the potential to increase worker communication and improve work motivation.

Therefore, it is necessary for companies to proactively understand the diverse nature of their employees and promote employment. All employees, including employers, will eliminate misunderstandings about LGBTQ people and eliminate discrimination based on sexual orientation. Libraries and gender equality centers will promote the provision of materials on LGBTQ by holding lectures by LGBTQ parties and experts for nearby businesses.

What are the misconceptions about LGBTQ people? LGBTQ people are harmless. LGBTQ people do not always indulge in sexual fantasies. LGBTQ people are the same people as non-LGBTQ people. They are characterized by the fact that they can have different sexual orientations. LGBTQ people hide their sexual orientation and work as office workers, civil servants, or teachers. Unfortunately, factories and companies exclude LGBTQ people, and in they often work in restaurants, bars, and massage parlors. It is necessary for the national and local governments to enact laws and improve the social environment so that LGBTQ people can be employed in workplaces and lead economically stable lives.

LGBTQ children are often bullied by their classmates because of their sexual orientation and often refuse to go to school for fear of being bullied. School and university problems are often the responsibility of teachers and school administrators, but they are also community problems. Therefore, it is necessary to collect LGBTQ materials in public libraries and gender equality centers and to accept LGBTQ children throughout the community. This will reduce the burden on schoolteachers and administrators. Inadequate education for children will result in the loss of future workers and will increase social instability.

Japan is one of the countries with the highest number of suicides in the world. The reasons for suicide vary, but Discrimination and prejudice tend to drive LGBTQ people to commit suicide. If even one member of society is lost, it means that our lives will be lost. Libraries and gender equality centers need to collect materials that can provide different perspectives to address the concerns of LGBTQ people in their lives. Materials explaining the situations and lifestyles of LGBTQ people around the world provide Japanese users with a variety of ways of thinking. Of course, we also need materials to know the situation in Japan.

The situation surrounding LGBTQ is constantly changing. Archives store materials that contain past information and must be placed in a location where the latest information can be viewed easily.

8. Conclusion

Historically and culturally, Japan has been a tolerant country for LGBTQ people. Like Noh and Kabuki, they have gained popularity because men play female roles. Furthermore, in modern literature, there are literary works that depict lesbians and gay people as the themes of Junichiro Tanizaki and Yukio Mishima.

In Japan's history, except for a brief period (1872-1880) in the Meiji era, same sex behavior has never been punished by law. Today same sexual behavior is not prohibited by law, nor is it considered taboo in Buddhism.

A company called Dentsu and a sample survey of the city of Osaka found that LGBTQ people in Japan make up between 3% and 9% of the total population. However, due to the lack of understanding and prejudice of others, LGBTQ people are now excluded from their workplaces, isolated at universities and schools, and often drop out or even commit suicide.

In Japan's parliament, the opposition parties are clashing with the LGBT Discrimination Elimination Bill, while the ruling party is clashing with the LGBT Understanding Bill. The Act on Promotion of Public Understanding of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, abbreviated as the LGBT Understanding Promotion Act, was passed by the Diet on June 16, 2023, and went into effect on June 23.

Among the countries that have achieved economic development in the world, it is the country with the highest aging population and the lowest birth rate. Therefore, the working population will decrease in the future. LGBTQ people should not be excluded from the workplace or isolated in colleges and schools to make up for a shrinking workforce.

To realize a society in which people recognize diversity, it is necessary to provide materials and information at libraries and gender equality centers.

A survey of the collection of LGBTQ-related materials in the libraries of Gender Equality Centers in Tokyo's 23 wards revealed differences in the number of items held by each facility. The passage of the bill is expected to enhance the collection of materials.

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