



Violence against Lesbians, Bisexual Women, and Trans People in Japan

Submitted to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women
Annual Communications Procedure

August 1, 2015

Presented by:

International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission

Introduction

The International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC) is a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council. IGLHRC works with activists throughout the world to advocate to end discrimination and abuse on the basis of actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or gender expression (SOGIE).

IGLHRC is submitting this communication, along with six others, to the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) through its annual communications procedure. IGLHRC strongly urges the CSW to identify violence against lesbians, bisexual women, and trans individuals (LBT) people as an emerging trend and formulate appropriate policy responses.

In May 2014, IGLHRC's Asia and the Pacific Islands Program released a report, *Violence: Through the Lens of Lesbians, Bisexual Women, and Trans People in Asia* (The IGLHRC Asia report). A product of over two years of research by regional women's, gender, and sexual rights activists and over 370 interviews with LBT people and stakeholders, the report documents and examines violence directed towards LBT people in Japan, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Sri Lanka. A copy of the full report is available at this link: http://iglhrc.org/sites/iglhrc.org/files/LBT_ForUpload0614.pdf.

From November 2010 to March 2012, Gay Japan News, a non-commercial online news source and advocacy group based in Tokyo, interviewed over 50 LBT people in Tohoku, Kanto, Chubu, Kansai, Chugoku, and Kyushu/Okinawa to document their experiences with violence. Prior to this project, no comprehensive documentation of violence against LBT people in Japan existed. Highlighting Gay Japan News's main findings, this communication includes 17 case studies of violence against LBT people in Japan.

Due to a host of safety and privacy concerns, this communication uses pseudonyms for the victims mentioned. Many do not want the media, their government, communities, and/or families to know of their participation in the research project for fear of retribution. Many are not open about their gender identities and/or sexual orientations and wish to maintain their privacy to avoid further violence. Many victims who experience violence within the private sphere wish to remain anonymous to avoid public exposure of their families and intimate relationships. All names and information are on file with IGLHRC. Please contact us if you have any questions regarding the cases mentioned.

The need for this precaution further highlights the urgency of our petition. LBT people often are compelled to remain invisible to avoid further violence. As a result, violence against them remains severely under-documented and is largely overlooked by state governments and nongovernmental organizations. Because the IGLHRC Asia report focuses on broad trends of violence against LBT people, many specific contextual details of our case studies, including exact times

and dates of violent incidents, were not documented. Interviewers were primarily concerned with understanding the nuances of violence experienced by their respondents, including its overlapping forms and manifestations, root causes, and lasting effects on victims. All respondents have experienced violence multiple times in their lives; exclusive focus on an individual perpetrator or incident would have limited and flattened our analysis. Given the dearth of documentation of violence against LBT people in Japan, IGLHRC trusts that the CSW will find the information in this communication useful in its efforts to promote global gender equality.

Definitions

Bi/bisexual people have sexual and romantic desires for both females and males.

Cis/cisgender people are individuals whose gender identity matches their birth sex.

Coming out is the process of revealing one's SOGIE to other people.

FtM/transmen are female-to-male (FTM) transgender or transsexual people who were assigned female at birth but identify as a male.¹

FtX individuals are trans people who were born biological females but do not identify as male or female.

Gender expression refers to the ways people choose to express their gender. Some common mediums of gender expression include choices in hairstyle, clothing, behavior, speech, and gestures.

Gender Identity Disorder is the formal diagnosis for gender dysphoria in Japan. A person who wishes to change their gender marker on their official documents in Japan must be diagnosed with Gender Identity Disorder.

Lesbians are women who have sexual and romantic desires for other women.

MtF/transwomen are male-to-female (MTF) transgender or transsexual people who were assigned male at birth but identify as female.

¹ Even though FtM individuals do not identify as women, IGLHRC strongly recommends that CSW consider cases of FtM individuals in its efforts to promote gender equality. Some of the most ignored in the LGBTIQ+ community, FtM individuals often experience severe violence because they are often perceived as women who need to be punished and converted. No other UN organization serves to promote their gender rights.

Pansexual people have sexual and romantic feelings for individuals of any gender or sexual identity.

People who are **questioning their sexuality** have not yet determined their sexual orientation.

SOGIE stands for sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or gender expression.

Trans/transgender people are individuals whose gender identity does not match their birth sex.

Violence, as defined by the World Health Organization's (WHO) World Report on Violence and Health, is "the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual...that results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury...psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation."² This communication uses two analytical categories to examine violence:

1) Forms of Violence

- a) **Emotional violence** refers to mental and psychological abuse. Actions and behaviors that constitute emotional violence in this research are verbal abuse (e.g., insults, taunts, allegations of abnormality, etc.); threats (e.g., to dissole SOGIE to others, abandon, evict, imprison, harm self or others, etc.); controlling actions (e.g., restricting interactions, invading privacy, monitoring communication, etc.); silent hostility (e.g., non-verbal behaviors that express contempt, denial, or rejection of a person's SOGIE); neglect (e.g., withholding financial support, denying medical treatment, etc.); and discrimination (e.g., employment discrimination, refusal of access to gendered facilities, etc.).
- b) **Physical violence** involves bodily harm. Examples include battery (e.g., beating, hair-pulling, throttling, kicking, pushing, burning, tying-up, head-butting, etc.); physical confinement and imprisonment; deprivation of basic necessities (e.g., food, shelter, clothing, etc.); forced electro-shock therapy; assault; and more.
- c) **Sexual violence**, according to WHO, is "any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, or unwanted sexual comments or advances...using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim." Examples of sexual violence include threats to rape, forcibly showing sexual images, unwanted sexual touching, and more.

² While homicide is considered violence, we exclude it from our research because it is outside of the scope of our study. Suicide or attempted suicide is considered an impact of violence in this study.

2) Sites of Violence

- a) The most common site of violence against LBT people is the **private sphere**: households, families, intimate relationships, and tightknit communities. From a policy perspective, violence in the private sphere is difficult to combat because many perceive it to be a private matter without need for state protection or redress.
- b) Both State and non-State actors perpetuate violence in the **public sphere**. Examples of the former include violence by State institutions (police, immigration authorities, courts, welfare departments, passport control centers, educational centers, etc.) and violence facilitated by State policies, such as endorsement of harmful religious or cultural practices. The latter primarily refers to violence by passers-by in public or open spaces (i.e. streets, public transportation facilities, stores, restaurants, etc.), neighbors, members of ethnic and religious communities, co-workers and bosses, and classmates.

Violence against LBT People in Japan: At a Glance

Social norms in Japan are largely premised on heterosexuality, the existence of only two genders (men and women), and gender identities and expression that conform to birth sex. LBT people challenge these norms and are commonly perceived to be unnatural and abnormal. They are thus highly susceptible to various manifestations of violence, including sexual abuse by intimate partners; rejection by loved ones; demeaning attitudes and comments; employment discrimination; and more.

Most violence against LBT people in Japan occurs in the private sphere, specifically the family. In Japanese culture, obedience to parents and collective family harmony are paramount. LBT children and young people are often considered selfish, disrespectful, and shameful for defying traditional roles and often refusing to participate in conventional heterosexual marriage.

Emotional violence is the most common form of violence against LBT people in Japan. It occurs in both the public and private spheres, usually intensifies over time, and often precedes physical and/or sexual violence.

While Japan has taken a number of steps to combat violence against women, including its Campaign to End Violence Against Women (started in 2001), Anti-Domestic Violence Law (2001), and Anti-Stalking Law (2002), it has not taken any steps to specifically target violence or discrimination against LBT individuals. The Anti-Domestic Violence law, for example, does not explicitly provide

protection for LBT individuals and assumes that perpetrators of domestic violence are exclusively men and husbands. In addition, Article 177 of the Japanese criminal code states that a forced sexual act only constitutes a criminal offense if there is insertion of a penis into a vagina or if a victim does not (physically) resist the assault.³ This disregards lesbian, gay, and many trans victims of rape.

In 2003, the Japanese Parliament passed legislation permitting trans people to legally change their sex under strict conditions: applicants have to be over 20 years-old, unmarried, without children below 19 years-old, infertile, and have completed sex reassignment surgery. These conditions violate basic human rights to health, privacy, non-discrimination, and physical integrity.⁴

Case Studies

At the time of interview, **Tanaka** was a 45 year-old trans FtX pansexual living in Osaka city, Osaka prefecture. About ten years ago, Tanaka was in an abusive relationship with a housemate. One time, Tanaka's partner locked Tanaka out of their home when Tanaka was not wearing clothes. Tanaka's partner also regularly beat, punched, kicked, and raped Tanaka. As a result, Tanaka suffered brain injuries resulting in a current disability, which Tanaka refers to as "a disturbance of higher cerebral function." After the couple separated, Tanaka's partner continued to harass Tanaka, leaving over ten messages on Tanaka's answering phone every day with threats such as "I'd burn your house down" and "I'll kill your dog." Tanaka's partner also stalked Tanaka at Tanaka's trans self-help group and sexually abused Tanaka further.

One time, when Tanaka was severely injured following a violent encounter with his partner, Tanaka was denied medical services by multiple hospitals in Osaka because of Tanaka's gender identity. One of Tanaka's other housemates, a self-identified feminist, was surprised when Tanaka's allegations and even told Tanaka, "Really? I'd understand if you were a perpetrator though," deeply hurting Tanaka. When Tanaka went to the Women's Studies Association of Japan to seek help and support, Tanaka was rejected access to services. A commentator told Tanaka, "There are priorities." Tanaka interprets this to mean that heterosexual female victims of domestic violence are prioritized over victims with nonconforming SOGIE, such as Tanaka.

Interviewed on May 2, 2012 in Osaka, Japan.

³ Gay Japan News, "Striving for Dignity and Respect: Experiences of Violence and Discrimination as Told by LBT Persons in Japan," *IGLHRC Asia Report*, Page 92.

⁴ Ibid.

At the time of interview, **Aya** was a 54 year-old trans MtF lesbian living in Osaka. Aya came out as trans at age 48 and lesbian at age 50. From age 20 to 45, Aya was married to a cisgender heterosexual female. Aya's partner kicked, beat, and verbally abused Aya on regular basis for about 20 years. One time, Aya's partner put a knife to Aya's chest. She often forced Aya to have sex with her as well. Aya engaged in self-blame, believing that, as a man, it was her responsibility to sexually please her partner.

Aya has experienced severe emotional violence since she came out. Passers-by have called Aya *Okama*, an extremely derogatory term that roughly translates to "faggot." Aya's family does not accept her. Aya's boss forced her to wear male clothing at work and Aya's co-workers started ignoring her. One co-worker suggested to Aya that she should become a sex worker. She felt so demeaned and isolated that she quit her job. Aya's doctor's office asked her to wear more masculine clothing to avoid upsetting older patients. Aya feels uncomfortable at voting stations because election officers stare at her once she selects "female" on her ballot. When Aya tried explaining her complex sexual orientation and gender identity to a person in a civil society organization, the person insisted that Aya should be attracted to men because she is MtF. Aya's counselor told Aya to revert back to being a female.

Aya says that she often wishes she committed suicide.

Interviewed on January 30, 2012 in Osaka, Japan by Akira Shimada.

At time of interview, **Aya Kamikawa** was a 43 year-old transwoman based in Setagaya City, Tokyo. Aya is an elected official. Ever since she decided to run for office in 2003, she has experienced severe emotional violence. Neighbors gossip about her, often giving her disapproving looks. Passers-by regularly call her *okama* (faggot). Someone even put fliers calling Aya "*okama* public official" all over Tokyo. Once, a man in camouflaged clothing tried to approach Aya at an Assembly meeting, yelling "Bring Kamikawa in!" Luckily, city officials were able to capture the man, but the experience left Aya feeling frightened. Some of Aya's colleagues (other elected officials) harass her by making loud noises when she speaks about the concerns of sexual minorities in her Assembly meetings.

Interviewed on January 30, 2011 in Setagaya City, Tokyo, Japan by Azusa Yamashita.

At the time of interview, **Ozawa** was a 54 year-old masculine woman questioning her sexuality living in Hachioji City, Tokyo. She still has not come out to her family, though a cousin teased her for wearing masculine clothing and asked her if she was becoming a man. When Ozawa came out to her friends at age 47, most ceased communicating with her, making her feel isolated. Ozawa suffers from serious depression. When Ozawa came out to her counselor in 2009, her

counselor expressed deep disappointment in her, making Ozawa regret confiding in her.

In 2006, when Ozawa was studying in a master's program specializing in women's studies, other students organized a campaign to kick her out of their dorm. Some students called her "*les*," an extremely derogatory term for lesbians. Her roommate wrote in big letters "Get out" near her pillow and purposely was loud in their room to prevent Ozawa from studying. Ozawa's research supervisor completely ignored her and told her that "Lesbians are the same as [all] women," implying they do not have unique needs. In summer of 2006, Ozawa attended a forum at the National Women's Education Centre (NWECC). At the forum, a fellow participant made a derogatory comment towards LGBTQI+ people, saying that "[NWECC] does not have such people."

Interviewed on October 8, 2011 in Iwate Prefecture, Tokyo, Japan by Azusa Yamashita.

At the time of interview, **Kimura** was a 36 year-old masculine bisexual woman living in Kanazawa, Ishikawa Prefecture. In adolescence, Kimura's mother chased her with a shaver to remove hairs from her eyebrows, forced her to wear "feminine" clothing against her will, and read over Kimura's diary. In present day, Kimura's mother constantly pressures Kimura to get married to a man. Kimura feels uncomfortable at the university she works at because people commonly stare at her for wearing jeans instead of a skirt. When Kimura's colleagues were editing a book on social welfare services, Kimura convinced them to include information on same-sex partners. For the graphic associated with this section of the book, Kimura's colleagues chose a picture of two robots holding hands, saying it looked nice. This deeply offended Kimura, though she was too fearful to voice any concerns. Her colleagues also regularly make homophobic remarks.

Kimura often has suicidal thoughts, largely because she feels unaccepted for her sexuality.

Interviewed on April 18, 2012 in Kanazawa, Ishikawa Prefecture, Japan by Hiroko Masuhara.

At the time of interview, **Airi** was a 26 year-old lesbian woman living Hirosaki City, Aomori Prefecture. Since 2010, relatives have been pressuring Airi to marry a man, even though she is in a relationship with a woman. Airi's mother has told Airi that she does not want homosexuals in their family. In 2009, Airi's mother and father unexpectedly came to Airi's apartment and started yelling at Airi for being a lesbian, even wishing that she were dead. For the following two years, Airi's parents continued to express disapproval with her sexuality and repeatedly recommended her to receive treatment at a hospital to "cure" her homosexuality.

Since then, Airi's parents have not acknowledged Airi's sexuality at all. Airi is convinced that there is nothing she can do to convince her parents to accept her sexuality.

Largely due to feeling rejected, Airi suffers from severe depression and has had suicidal thoughts.

Interviewed on February 5, 2012 in Aomori Prefecture, Japan by Hiroko Masuhara.

At the time of interview, **A** was a 23 year-old trans FtM individual living in Yokohama, Kanagawa Prefecture. A and his mother have gotten into several arguments over his preference for masculine clothing. Often, A's mother beat, pushed, and kept food from A for being trans. Several times, she even kicked him out of their house. She also restricted him from spending time with other people with non-normative SOGIE. She forced A to see a doctor to "cure" A of his non-normative gender identity. The doctor, under the impression that all people with Gender Identity Disorder suffer from depression, forced A to take anti-depressants.

A was not allowed to wear a male uniform at her high school and his school nurse consistently denied that he was trans. In college, A's research supervisor was often unjustifiably irritated with A, blaming him, and none of the other students, when the research laboratory was untidy. In a 2010 job interview, even though A dressed as a woman to divert attention from his nonconforming gender identity and expression, the interviewer, a city official, mentioned that he looked athletic and asked if he was a sexual minority. Often, taxi drivers, passers-by, and people he meets at parties ask A prying questions regarding his gender identity, making A feel extremely uncomfortable.

Due to the violence she faces on the basis of her gender identity, A suffers from anxiety.

Interviewed on January 29, 2011 in Tokyo, Japan by Azusa Yamashita.

At the time of interview, **Meg** was a 32 year-old trans MtF lesbian living in Kyoto. When Meg started taking female hormone injections around 2009, her father stopped communicating with her. They have not spoken since. Her mother also refers to Meg as her "son," despite Meg's insistence that she is her daughter. Meg hides her sexuality, because most people do not understand how she can be both a transwoman and a lesbian. When Meg goes to vote, election officers often look at her suspiciously, making her feel uncomfortable. One time, Meg's mutual friend, who suspected Meg was different, approached her and told her that he would "keep her secret" if she would "get closer" to him.

Meg works as a nurse at a local hospital. A male co-worker once teased Meg and touched her inappropriately. Starting in March 2009, Meg filed multiple requests to the hospital's human resources department to use female locker rooms. Her boss told her that she "cannot be an exception" and repeatedly denied her requests. It wasn't until June 2011, after Meg threatened to quit, that her request was granted.

Interviewed on January 18, 2012 in Kyoto, Japan.

At the time of interview, **Nana** was a 32 year-old lesbian woman living in Aomori Prefecture. From 2006 to 2009, when Nana worked as a care worker, Nana's boss repeatedly told her that he was concerned that disabled female clients wouldn't be able to "resist inappropriate behavior" by lesbian care workers. Nana's boss and coworkers also regularly made derogatory comments about homosexuals in front of her. Nana's work environment made her feel so uncomfortable that she decided to quit. After she came out to her loved ones, one of Nana's friends harassed her by sending her pictures of naked women via email for a period of six months, deeply upsetting Nana. Since Nana's early twenties, Nana's aunt has repeatedly told her she needs to see a doctor to "cure" her of her homosexuality and has tried to pressure Nana into an arranged marriage with a man.

About 10 years ago, Nana dated men in an attempt to "fix" her lesbianism. After she broke up with one man, he stalked her for a period of three years, calling her and showing up at her house everyday. One day, when Nana's ex-partner stalked her at the restaurant she worked at, Nana revealed to him that she was not sexually attracted to men. The ex-partner yelled at her in front of customers, saying she was crazy and abnormal and that she would be punished. Soon afterwards, Nana's ex-partner raped Nana in an attempt to "correct" her. Nana did not seek help at women's centers, because she did not want to explain that she was a lesbian.

Today, Nana suffers from a severe depression. She believes the continued violence she has faced on the basis of her sexual orientation is the primary cause.

Interviewed on July 1, 2011 in Aomori, Aomori Prefecture, Japan.

At the time of interview, **Ajima** was a 38 year-old trans FtX person attracted to women living in Izumi Ward, Sendai City, Japan. Ajima feels uncomfortable using public transportation because often people stare at Ajima as if to determine Ajima's gender. Also, when Ajima uses women's restrooms, people commonly glare at Ajima. At Ajima's former job at an IT customer service office, Ajima's colleagues often pressured Ajima to date men, even though most knew Ajima is exclusively attracted to women. Some of Ajima's male colleagues repeatedly sexually harassed Ajima at office parties. Because of these negative experiences,

Ajima is not open about Ajima's gender identity or sexual orientation at Ajima's new office.

Over the past 10 years, Ajima has often cut Ajima's body to cope with not feeling accepted. Ajima has dealt with repeated instances of depression and has had suicidal thoughts.

Interviewed on December 25, 2011 in Sendai City, Japan by Yumi Uchida.

At the time of interview, **Taka** was a 38 year-old transwoman living in Akita City, Akita prefecture, Japan. Taka's uncle consistently told Taka to take female hormones and to dress more feminine in order to look like a female. Taka's former boss, who did not know Taka identified as a man, "playfully" attempted to touch Taka's breasts. Taka considered this sexual violence and felt that his dignity was violated and his gender identity was invisibilized. Taka consistently had a difficult time attaining employment because of his gender identity. In 2011, Taka was told in four separate job interviews that his Gender Identity Disorder disqualified him for positions. Taka eventually lost confidence and started identifying as "female" on his curriculum vitae. Claiming he was a female, however, proved to be difficult – around that time, he started receiving hormone injections to look and sound more like a male.

The violence and discrimination Taka faced due to his gender identity caused him great psychological distress. Since his early twenties, Taka suffered from depression. He always wondered why he had to be "born that way." At age 20, Taka attempted suicide by pouring gasoline over himself and setting himself on fire. Luckily, he recovered from the burns after three days in a coma. At the end of his interview with Gay Japan News on January 30, 2012, Taka shared that he wanted to help others who were struggling with having non-normative SOGIE. However, on July 23, 2012, Taka once again poured gasoline on himself and set himself on fire. He tragically died that day.

Interviewed on January 30, 2012 in Tohoku region, Japan by Masaki.

At the time of interview, **Nomiya** was a 46 year-old trans MtF lesbian living in Tokyo, Japan. In 2011, when Nomiya went to a local pharmacy to receive a prescription, she had to present her ID to the pharmacist. Nomiya's ID says that she is male, so Nomiya had to explain that she was trans. When the pharmacist walked to the back of the pharmacy to grab Nomiya's prescription, Nomiya heard him laughing. This deeply upset her. Nomiya often refrains from receiving medical services and travelling abroad because she wishes to avoid similar situations with nurses and immigration authorities, respectively.

Nomiya also has been kicked out of lesbian bars for not being biologically female. Passers-by sometimes call Nomiya *okama* and *okama chan*, which roughly

translates to “Mrs. Fag.” One time, a man kissed Nomiya without her consent when they were alone in an elevator.

Interviewed on February 11, 2011 in Tokyo, Japan by Azusa Yamashita.

At the time of interview, **Neko** was a 35 year-old bisexual woman living in Osaka, Japan. From early childhood through her teenage years, Neko’s father, uncles, and cousins sexually abused her. In her twenties, Neko came out to her mother first. Without Neko’s consent, her mother told her father and her father told her relatives, making Neko feel uncomfortable. To this day, Neko’s parents and brother do not accept her sexuality and avoid discussing it. Neko’s mother also consistently pressures Neko to marry a man.

One of Neko’s friends told her that she does not understand Neko’s sexuality and cried in disappointment. One of Neko’s past partners continuously physically abused Neko and restricted her interaction with friends. Neko often refrains from reaching out to lesbian communities and organizations for help, because she feels like they would not understand or accept her sexuality.

Neko wishes to have children with her current partner, a female. Neko was not allowed to list her partner in her employment insurance forms, which would prevent her from receiving specified services given to couples with children. Neko’s hospital did not permit her to receive in vitro fertilization because she is not in a heterosexual relationship. Her only option is artificial insemination. Unfortunately, Neko has trouble getting pregnant through this method and is being treated by her doctor. Neko has not told her doctor about her partner or her situation, because she fears losing access to the treatment. These experiences bring Neko great distress.

Largely due to the violence she has faced on the basis of her sexual orientation, Neko has had suicidal thoughts multiple times throughout her life.

Interviewed on December 23, 2012 in Osaka, Japan.

At the time of interview, **Ohtsuki** was a 32 year-old pansexual female living in Tokyo, Japan. About ten years ago, one of Ohtsuki’s former boyfriends constantly told her that bisexuals disgusted him. Whenever she resisted his requests to have sex, he would tease her, making derogatory comments such as “[you] love girls, so you can’t be satisfied with [men],” and repeatedly raped her without contraception. Another of Ohtsuki’s past boyfriends also demeaned her on the basis of her sexuality, pressuring her to watch lesbian pornography with him. One of Ohtsuki’s female friends asked Ohtsuki if she often had thoughts about raping her, making Ohtsuki feel extremely targeted. At a gay and lesbian parade that Ohtsuki volunteered at, a cisgender gay man made an extremely misogynistic comment to her, saying, “Look, a vagina is approaching.”

Interviewed on February 17, 2012 in Tokyo, Japan by Azusa Yamashita.

At the time of interview, **K** was a trans FtM gay man in his forties. Growing up and throughout his adult life, coworkers, friends, acquaintances and strangers have often confused his gender and have referred to him as a woman. While his parents use his male name, they do not communicate with K other than by post, making K feel isolated. Once, when he was 35, a boss at work told him “to act like a woman.” He was often ignored and discriminated again by this boss because of his non-conforming gender identity and expression.

K has faced significant difficulties in obtaining an accurate patient’s registration card. Many large hospitals refused to issue a card with his correct gender. After a long, exhausting search, he found a smaller hospital that agreed to list him as a male on the card. On his scholarship application forms, K was forced to list his gender as female.

Interviewed on November 13, 2011 in Kyoto, Japan by Azusa Yamashita.

At the time of interview, **Yoshihara** was a 41 year-old transwoman living in Tokyo. When Yoshihara decided to come out to her mother 2 years ago, her mother did not accept her gender identity. Since then, they have rarely spoken with each other. In 2011, she had trouble obtaining prescriptions at a local pharmacy. Because her ID listed her as a male, she was not able to receive medications until she had to explain that she was trans to the pharmacist. Passers-by have called Yoshihara “*okama*.”

Yoshihara works at a government institution. In August 2011, after Yoshihara had been requesting her office’s personnel division to officially recognize her as a woman for six months, it finally agreed to do so. Her boss organized a meeting with the full office to announce that she was working as woman, making Yoshihara feel humiliated. Soon after she transitioned, Yoshihara’s boss moved her to an isolating position that required little interpersonal interaction. Yoshihara believes this was an act of discrimination on the basis of her gender identity. Her boss also instructed her to not discuss her transition in the office.

Yoshihara has suffered from depression quite often because of her treatment at work, requiring two two-month leaves of absence.

Interviewed on September 29, 2011 by Azusa Yamashita.

At the time of interview, **Kanaya** was a 22 year-old bisexual woman living in Minamitsugaru County, Aomori Prefecture. In high school, Kanaya stopped going to school for two months when a girl publicly revealed her sexual orientation and

students started bullying her on the school bus. These incidents caused her to have panic attacks that continue today. Kanaya's sister pressures her to get married and have children "like normal people." In 2011, a boyfriend repeatedly mocked her for acting more 'manly' than he did. These incidents exacerbated her panic attacks. Kanaya feels too afraid to share her sexual orientation with her doctor.

Interviewed on June 30, 2011 by Kaoru Ozawa.