

Same - Sex Wedding



In March 2013, two women, Koyuki and her partner of one and a half years, Hiroko got married at Tokyo Disneyland. Koyuki first knew that she was gay as a high school student in Kanazawa. While working as an actress a couple of years later, she realized that ‘it was fine to be in love with another girl.’ The wedding ceremony itself was held in front of 30 of the couple’s friends. The event made the news, so many more gay people throughout the country also celebrated. At the same time, Koyuki wrote “My love Hiroko and I wore wedding dresses and had a mini-parade at Disney Sea, a place I also love,” then continued, “I was really happy.” Koyuki then wrote on Twitter, “My partner Hiroko and I just had a gay wedding at the Tokyo Disney Resort. Even Mickey and Minnie are here to celebrate with us.” One newspaper headline said, “Mickey Mouse supports gay marriage.”

Disney had been allowing same-sex weddings to be held in their U.S. and other parks since 2007, but this was the first wedding to take place in Japan. At first, Disney said that the two women had to dress “like a man and a woman” so that other park visitors would not feel uncomfortable. Within a week, Disney apologized, and the couple were told that they could dress in any way they wanted. Disney wrote, “If we caused them sadness and discomfort, we are sorry.”

While the wedding itself was not legally recognized in Japan, there are no laws against being gay, and there is little if anything opposed to homosexuality in Buddhism and Shinto. Hiroko said, “Mostly, we just wanted people to know that gay people exist for real, and that we would like to have weddings just like everyone else. “Hence, while the wedding was only symbolic, it was perhaps the first step towards helping to create a dialog about same-sex marriage. Japan’s gay community is growing and homosexuality is becoming more common. Taiga Ishikawa, a gay politician, said, “This is only a guess, but I’d say there are more gay people now who are in long-term relationships and want them to at least be recognized in the form of a civil partnership.”

In 2013, a poll found that a slight majority of Japanese people support making same-sex partnerships or marriages legal. In 2015 in Shibuya in Tokyo, Koyuki and Hiroko received a certificate that recognizes their same-sex civil partnership. This was a first in Japan. Although it is not an official marriage certificate, it is considered to be another step towards marriage equality. With her wife by her side, Koyuki said, “I’m so happy...when they gave us the certificate, I cried. Our friends cried, too.”