Taiwan and the struggle for sexual minority rights in Asia today

同志平權抗爭:今日臺灣及亞洲性少數群體的權利困境

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# Transnational Gay Taipei

The 'warm power' impacts of LGBTQI rights in Taiwan across Asia



## Civil Society (1987 onwards)

Democracy put Taiwan on the 'gay map'





Photograph 7.1 Masked *tongzhi* demonstrators at the 1996 Women's Day march. The placard reads 'Protect *tongxinglian* rights'. (Photograph appeared originally in *Stir* 1, June 1996, p. 64 and is used here with the kind permission of the Awakening Foundation.)



Photograph 7.2 Masked activists from the Tongzhi Space Alliance meet with the Taipei City Government in 1996. (Photograph by Lian Hui-ling appeared of the Awakening Foundation.)

Masked *tongzhi* (同志) demonstrators at the 1996 Women's Day march

Masked activists meet with the Taipei City Government in 1996

### Transnational Gay Taipei emerges

Visibility (1998-2008)

Tongzhi Hotline (1998) Rose boy (葉永鋕) death (2000) Taipei Pride (2003)

### **Hypervisibility (2009–2019)**

-gay apps & digital

space (GRINDR: 2009)

-TAPCPR (伴侶盟) &

same sex

marriage politics (2009)

-May 2017-May 2019

司法院釋字第七四八號解釋施行法





"Taipei has become a new frontrunner in regional gay tourism. This has led to a subsequent desirability of Taiwanese partners and subcultural influence."

-Dredge Byung'chu Kang (Eastern Orientations, 2017)



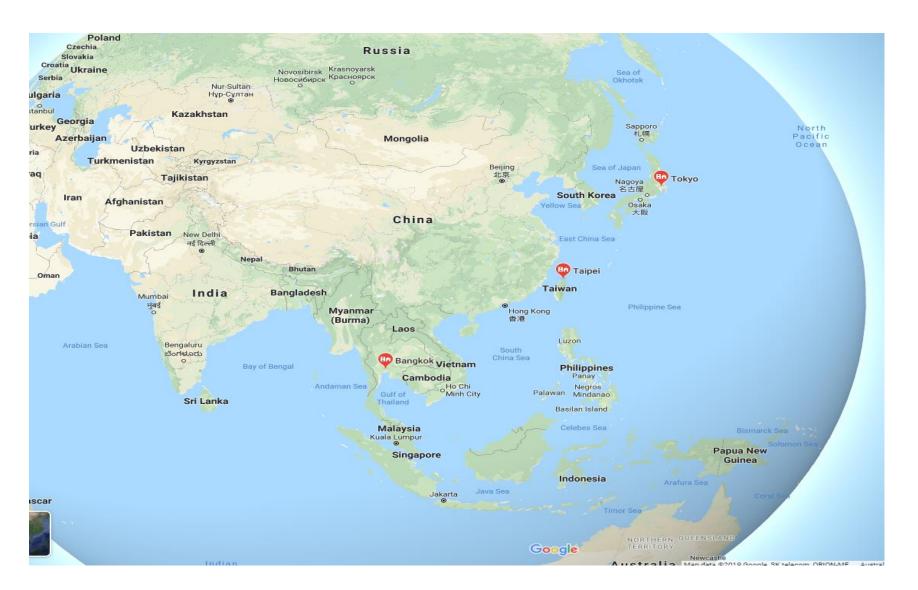
### Gay Cities in Asia

Bangkok has historically been considered the capital of 'gay Asia'

Taipei is now rivaling Bangkok as Asia's top gay destination

- -Tokyo is a popular destination for Thai and Taiwanese gay men
- -Taiwan lifted visa requirements for Thai citizens in 2017 (spike in gay tourism)

## Taipei, Bangkok, Tokyo





### **Research Questions**

· What influence does the New Southbound Policy and Taiwanese socio-political affinity with Japan play in shaping 'warm power' projection among sexual minorities in Asia?

· How do political dynamics in Taiwan (robust democracy, free speech, human rights promotion, progress in legal protections of LGBTQI people) affect the image of and support for Taiwan among sexual minorities in the region?

· What role does Taiwanese gay media production play in this process?

Jay Lin, CEO, Portico Media



### Asia's 'Queer Netflix' (2016)



下載APP 需先註冊成為會員







# Original content production by **GagaOOLala** started in 2018

\*250,000+ paying customers

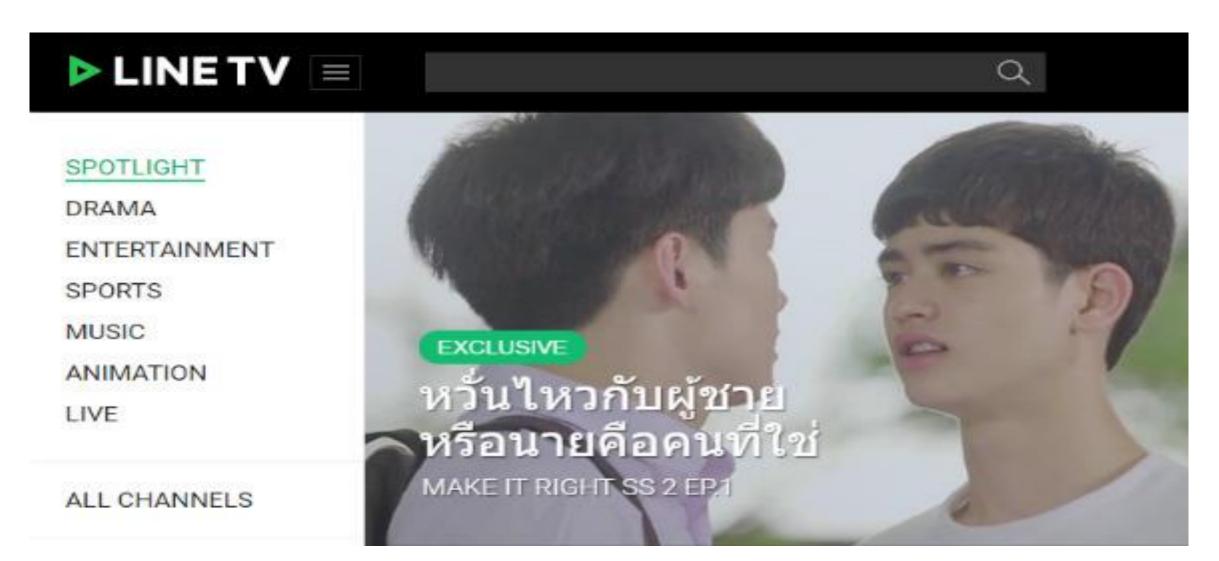


FOUR REGIONS ENDLESS STORIES FIND YOURS



A GagaOOLala ORIGINAL PRODUCTION

## LINE TV in Thailand & Taiwan launched in 2015



### Tokyo-Taipei LGBTQI flows

#### 台湾各地のプライド・パレード



Annual Japanese-Taiwanese gay event in Taipei



# Japanese media call Taiwan the closest 'hottest gay spot'



### LGBTQI Forums & Trainings



## Taiwan Pride every October





# Thank you

President Tsai Ing-wen is fond of saying:

"We should respect what Taiwan has always had: a diverse island culture."

This respect for diversity and democracy defines Taiwan's "warm power"