
26 February 2019, Tuesday ✦ 12.30pm – 2.00pm

(Registration starts at 12.00noon)

NUS Law (Bukit Timah Campus), Eu Tong Sen Building Level 1, Lee Sheridan Conference Room

RELIGION, MORALITY, GENDER, AND LAW: SAME SEX MARRIAGE IN JAPAN

Speaker: Professor Frank K. Upham, New York University School of Law

Chairperson: Associate Professor Dan W. Puchniak, NUS Law

ABSTRACT

Japan is the only member of the G-7 that does not provide for some form of same sex marriage. In this talk, I will explore why that is the case and specifically why Japanese LGBT individuals say that they “do not exist” to the rest of Japanese society in a way reminiscent of Ralph Ellison’s famous evocation of the “invisible man” to describe the 1950s situation of African Americans. In an important sense Japanese gays have chosen to remain unseen in a way dramatically different from that of their fellows in other rich countries. The easy answers are not there. Japan is remarkably non-religious – unlike America and Korea - and has (almost) never criminalized homosexual behavior – unlike virtually all European countries - and has a history of celebrating male-male sexuality in art and literature. And, although they face discrimination, gays and lesbians in Japan do not now, nor have they ever faced the virulent hatred, religiously driven disgust, and murderous violence that they have routinely suffered elsewhere, which of course is what makes the puzzle interesting and important in understanding not only the status of LGBT issues in Japan, but also the evolution of human rights more generally throughout the developed world.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER



Frank Upham teaches the basic property course, as well as courses on advanced property topics, law and development, and comparative law and society with an emphasis on East Asia and the developing world. His scholarship focuses on Japan and China, and his book *Law and Social Change in Postwar Japan* received the Thomas J. Wilson Prize from Harvard University Press. Recent scholarship includes “Who Will Find the Defendant If He Stays with His Sheep? Justice in Rural China,” “Property rights, commodification, and land disputes in contemporary socialist Asia,” “Lessons from Chinese Growth: Rethinking the Role of Property Rights in Economic Growth,” and “Resistible Force Meets Malleable Object: The Story of the ‘Introduction’ of Norms of Gender Equality into Japanese Employment Practice.” His most recent book, *The Great Property Fallacy: Theory, Reality, and Growth in Developing Countries*, employs an empirical study of the roles of property rights in global development from the English enclosures to contemporary Cambodia. His next project is a comparative study of the interaction of legal doctrine, social and economic structure, and culture in gender discrimination in France, Japan, and the United States. Upham has spent time at various institutions in Asia and works in Japanese, Chinese, and French. He graduated from Princeton University in 1967 and Harvard Law School in 1974 and worked as a journalist in Asia and as an assistant attorney general in Massachusetts before entering academia. In addition to having taught at NYU School of Law since 1994, he has taught at Ohio State, Harvard, Boston College, and UCLA law schools in the United States and Tsinghua University in China.

REGISTRATION

There is no registration fee for this seminar, but seats are limited.
Light refreshment will be provided on a first-come, first-served basis.
To register, go to <https://goo.gl/59DKQZ> or scan the QR code
Closing Date: **Thursday, 21 February 2019**
For enquiries, please contact Chris Chan at rescle@nus.edu.sg

