



# IMAZINE No.2



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## ○ What is a Zine ?

Hello, everyone! We're excited to present the second issue of IMAZINE, the BHE Gender Support Team's publication that shares information on gender and sexuality. To start, let's briefly introduce what "ZINE" – the inspiration for our title "IMAZINE" – actually is.

In short, a "zine" is a non-profit, independently produced publication created by volunteers. Zines cover a variety of content, from essays, critiques, and stories to illustrations and photography. Although zines are often mistakenly thought to be shorthand for "magazine," they actually originate from the term "fanzine."

This distinction is important because fanzines were born as a critique of the authoritarian, capitalist structure of magazines, where publishers selectively curate content for sale. Unlike magazines, zines can be created and distributed by anyone, making them a valuable medium of expression for those in socially or economically marginalized positions. Feminist and other social movements have greatly influenced today's zine culture.

We encourage you to explore zines and even create your own. The world of zines is open to everyone!

(Reference: Murakami, Kiyoshi, 2021, "Zines as Media and Activism, and Feminist Practices: Its Diverse Possibilities Beyond Just Making", ed. by Tanaka Toko, Hokuju shuppan, pp. 130-148)

## ○ The Role of Mini-comi in Japan's Women's Movements - Contribution by Ai Higuma

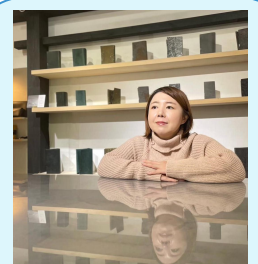


What role has independently produced media played in women's social movements? We are honored to have an article contributed by BHE Director Ai Higuma, whose research focuses on women's movements, diversity, and inclusion.

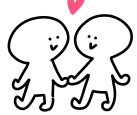
Did you know that zines were crucial to the feminist movement? In Japan, zines were known as "mini-comi" around the 1970s. This term, often abbreviated as "mini-communication media," contrasts with the mass communication media (or "masukomi") and is sometimes grouped under "alternative media." The role of mini-comi in feminism goes back to the second wave of feminism in the 1970s. During this time, society continued to impose difficult conditions on women, even though "equal rights between men and women" had supposedly been achieved by the first wave of feminism before World War II. The second wave of feminism began with critiques of the male-centered systems and ideologies that were at the root of these difficulties.

One of the most important actions during this period was the act of "speaking." In a society with strict gender norms, it was challenging for women to voice their emotions and ideas. Even when they did, they were often dismissed as "unwomanly." Thus, expressing personal thoughts and sharing them with other women became a vital activity. This act of "speaking" included not only face-to-face interactions but also writing and reading.

This is where mini-comi came into play. Women, individually or in groups, created mini-comi to share their opinions on issues often dismissed as trivial or personal. These topics included not only workplace and household discrimination but also taboo subjects such as menstruation, pregnancy, childbirth, and sexuality. Mini-comi helped to raise awareness of the sources of their struggles. Some of these mini-comi, such as those in the Women's Action Network and the National Women's Education Center Repository, are available online, allowing readers to connect with the thoughts of women from that era. We hope that IMAZINE can also become a space where people can freely discuss gender and sexuality.



**Ai Higuma**  
BHE Director  
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# Thailand to Legalize Same-Sex Marriage, Effective January Next Year

On September 24, 2024, Thailand passed legislation allowing same-sex marriage, which will come into effect in January next year following approval by King Maha Vajiralongkorn. This law grants same-sex couples the same rights as opposite-sex couples, making Thailand the third region in Asia, after Taiwan and Nepal, to legalize same-sex marriage and the first in Southeast Asia. Prime Minister Paetongtarn celebrated this milestone by posting “#LoveWins” on social media and congratulating all couples. Groups supporting sexual minorities have started to encourage multiple same-sex couples to submit marriage registrations together on January 22, the day the law takes effect.

(Reference : NHK NEWS WEB, <https://www3.nhk.or.jp/news/html/20240925/k10014591811000.html>)



**Recommended Content : Movie**



## The Danish Girl

This biographical film portrays the life of Danish artist Lili Elbe, one of the first people in the world to undergo gender-confirming surgery in the 1930s. In an era when loving someone of the same sex was considered an illness, Lili came to realize her gender identity, despite facing numerous difficulties. With support from a doctor who understood gender dysphoria and from her wife Gerda Wegener, she gradually established her identity as “Lili.” Watch this film to see the challenges Lili overcame as a sexual minority in the 1930s, as well as Gerda’s courage and love as she supported Lili through her journey.



## ○ Editor’s Note



On October 27, the 50th House of Representatives election took place (as well as mayoral and city council elections in Tsukuba City). Did you vote? Next year’s House of Councillors election is in July, so don’t forget that one!

Elections are an important opportunity for citizens to express their political opinions. However, voting isn’t the only way to participate in politics. Protests, petitions, and signing letters, as well as discussing issues or posting on social media, are also meaningful forms of political engagement.

Women and sexual minorities have shared their challenges and advocated for change through various forms of expression, gradually shaping societal awareness and institutions. Social change is only possible when people start to share their concerns with those around them. We hope more people will engage in political participation in ways that feel right for them. (And, of course, creating zines is an option too!)

## Do You Know About Coming Out ?

This term refers to when sexual minorities communicate their sexual orientation or gender identity to others or the public. The choice of whether to come out, when, and to whom (or to refrain from coming out) is a personal decision based on everyone’s preferences and challenges. **Outing**, or disclosing someone else’s sexuality without their consent, is an action that should never be taken. The fourth edition of **Guidelines on LGBT+ Inclusion at University of Tsukuba** (available online) includes extensive information on coming out. If you’re someone struggling with coming out or unsure of how to respond to a friend who has come out, we encourage you to read it.

## HANASO !

Do you have any questions or concerns about gender and sexuality? Or anything you’d like to ask the gender support team? Scan the QR code next to this passage and help us collect questions and concerns from readers about various aspects of gender and sexuality and the Gender Support Team, and we answer them responsibly. So, **please feel free to ask us anything you might not feel comfortable asking others!**

\* The questions and concerns you submit will be published in IMAGINE.



## Information

The BHE Gender Support Team is involved in planning and organizing events such as International Women’s Day in March, Tokyo Rainbow Pride in April, and Pride Month in June, as well as organizing and operating the SaferSpace **KiteKite**. We also participate in booth exhibitions at the Souhou Festival. Please feel free to join us!

\* If you are interested in BHE Gender Support Team, please use the QR code on the right. This is the Official website! Please take a look !

