

GLOBAL OUTLOOK

Meiji University Prof. Ken Suzuki: Law Scholar & Social Activist who Facilitated NTU, Hokkaido University Partnership



After coming to Taiwan, Prof. Suzuki developed a keen interest in Taiwanese Law. He realized it is simultaneously influenced by both the Chinese and Japanese Law systems, both of which he had studied in depth.

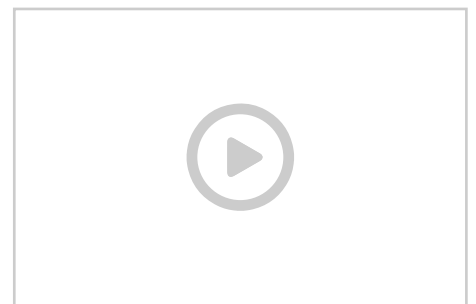
Developing a Lifelong Interest in Taiwan Law

Ken Suzuki began his studies at Hokkaido University's Department of Law in 1979. During his time there, he studied abroad at Renmin University, learned Mandarin, and conducted research in Chinese Civil Law. In 1991, he started his career as an Associate Professor at Hokkaido University. Following the advice of a colleague in the Political Studies Department, he applied for funding from the Japan-Taiwan Exchange Association and came to NTU's Department of Law in 1999 to serve as a visiting professor.

During the exchange, Professor Suzuki developed a keen interest in Taiwan Law and cultivated a partnership between Hokkaido University and NTU. A young student in NTU's Department of Law at the time, Sieh-Chuen Huang became one of the first exchange students at Hokkaido University. Today, nearly 23 years later, she has become a professor and Vice Dean of the NTU College of Law. Her relationship with Professor Suzuki has transformed from that of student and teacher to one of close colleagues, as she represented NTU in inviting him to a visiting professor again this year.

A 23-Year Promise: Translating the History of Taiwan Law

This is the third time that Professor Suzuki has served as a visiting professor at NTU. Not only is he comparing the law systems of China and Taiwan under martial law, but he is also fulfilling a promise he made 23 years ago. During his first visit, he met the pioneer in the field



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of Taiwan legal history, NTU Professor Tay-Sheng Wang, and promised to translate his book, *Introduction to Taiwan Legal History*, into Japanese.

Utilizing his final time as a visiting professor at NTU, Professor Suzuki is completing this translation and plans to publish the Japanese version when he returns to Japan. He describes this project as more significant than his own thesis, as it will surely encourage more Japanese scholars to study Taiwan Law and facilitate academic exchanges in the field of Law between these countries.

A Project of Pride: Publishing *The Birth of Taiwan's Same-Sex Marriage Law*

As an openly-gay scholar of Civil Law, Professor Suzuki has always been passionate about marriage equality. He personally participated in the progression of the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement in East-Asia, marched in the first Tokyo Pride Parade in 1994, and organized the first Sapporo Pride Parade in 1996. He sees Hokkaido as a comparatively open-minded place in Japan, given its relatively diverse history of family cultures.

Professor Suzuki has closely followed the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement in Taiwan, participating in nearly every Taiwan Pride since 2005. When Taiwan legalized marriage equality on May 24, 2019, he personally went to Taipei's Household Registration Office to witness the marriage of his friends and leading advocates for marriage equality, Chih-Chieh Jian and Victoria Hsu, the respective Secretary General and Lawyer of the Taiwan Alliance to Promote Civil Partnership Rights (TAPCPR).

In March of 2022, with the remarkable support of Executive Yuan Minister Audrey Tang, Professor Suzuki published his book *The Birth of Taiwan's Same-Sex Marriage Law* in Japanese, introducing the social movements and political processes that brought about marriage equality in Taiwan. This monumental book has already sparked much discussion about marriage equality in Japan.

Enjoying Life as a Visiting Professor at NTU

When Ken Suzuki first came to NTU, the Department of Law was still located on the Xuzhou Road campus. When he came to NTU the second time in 2010, the College of Law had recently moved to the grand Wan-Tsai Building on NTU's main campus. This third visit marks the last time Professor Suzuki plans to do research abroad. While he notes that NTU has become more internationalized during the last two decades, he has not noticed any other big changes. "Maybe this is because I came to Taiwan almost ten times each year before the pandemic, and I witnessed the process of change over time," he said.

Ken Suzuki has enjoyed his time as a visiting professor at NTU, appreciating its open-minded environment, conducive to free thinking. Walking on the NTU campus is reminiscent of walking through his alma mater, Hokkaido University, as both universities were originally imperial colleges of Japan. Not only do the two universities share similarities in campus architecture, but through his efforts they have established a partnership that continues to grow and flourish today.



Prof. Suzuki: Professor, School of Law, Meiji University, Visiting Professor, College of Law, National Taiwan University.



The relationship between Prof. Sieh-Chuen Huang, Vice Dean of the College of Law, and Prof. Suzuki has transformed from that of student and teacher to one of close colleagues. Representing NTU, she invites him to serve as a visiting professor this year.



Suzuki Ken has enjoyed his time as a visiting professor at NTU, finding it to be a free-thinking and open-minded environment without limitations.

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