

The Mainichi

Tokyo Disney Resort to allow same-sex wedding ceremonies

URAYASU, Chiba -- Same-sex couples will be allowed to hold wedding ceremonies at several Tokyo Disney Resort hotels and facilities, including in front of the enormously popular Cinderella Castle inside Tokyo Disney Land.

The move was pushed forward after same-sex activist and lesbian Koyuki Higashi, 27, recently contacted the resort, asking whether same-sex couples will also be able to take part in the park's new plan that promotes weddings in front of the famous castle, starting this September.

Resort officials, however, told Higashi that although same-sex couples will not be exempt from the plan, one of the partners would have to wear a groom outfit, because "other visitors will also be watching."

Higashi posted a summary of the exchange on Twitter, triggering an immediate backlash, including opinions stating that the fantasyland's response was "disappointing."

A week later, Higashi was once again contacted by resort officials, telling her that after confirming the circumstances with the Walt Disney Company in the United States, they have reached a decision that same-sex couples could hold wedding ceremonies at the park wearing the same outfits.

The second exchange was once again put on display on Twitter, this time triggering a wave of positive responses, including some that wrote, "applause for a new step forward."

"Even though same-sex marriages are not legally permitted, we reached the decision that wedding ceremonies can take place," said an official with the resort's public relations department, adding that female couples will be free to have their ceremonies wearing wedding dresses, while male partners can both wear tuxedos.

"Japan still lacks favorable projects when it comes to sexual minorities, but the fact that Disney took this stance publicly means a lot," Higashi said.

Higashi's girlfriend, Hiroko, 34, echoed the activist in her thoughts, saying, "I guess that they anticipated claims, but chose to go with the decision nevertheless, which makes me very happy."

The two visited Tokyo Disney Resort on May 5 to deliver a thank you message to Mickey Mouse. "We are a couple. We came to express our gratitude," the pair said to Mickey, who apparently made a banzai pose in response.

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