

Japan court says requiring same surname in marriage is legal

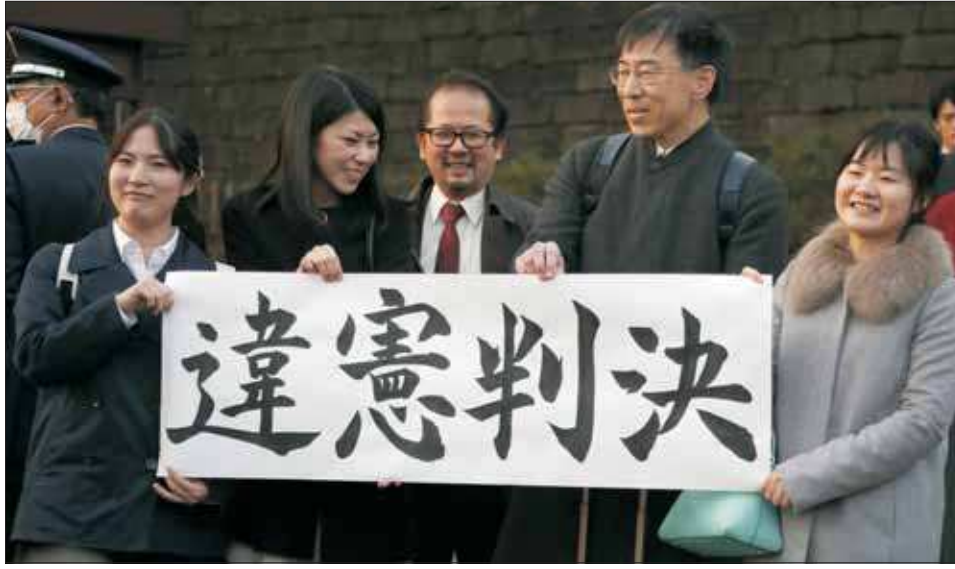
By Yuri Kageyama
The Associated Press

TOKYO — Japan's Supreme Court has ruled that requiring married couples to have the same surname is constitutional, dealing a blow to a longtime effort for gender equality in choosing names.

The law does not say which partner must give up his or her name in marriage. In practice it has almost always been the woman who took the husband's name. Some women say that is unfair and feel as though their identity is lost.

In traditional marriage, one person, usually the woman, enters the household of the partner and is registered as a member of that household. Men are seen as more powerful in Japanese traditional culture. But as women increasingly have careers, some argue that changing surnames is confusing.

Some Japanese women continue to use their maiden name professionally, even after their surnames are legally changed following marriage. Some couples simply don't register their marriages.



Kaori Okuni, one of the plaintiffs, said she was deeply disappointed.

"This has consequences for the future, meaning suffering for those who plan to marry and those who are set to be born," she told a news conference.

In a separate case, the Supreme Court ruled that prohibiting women from remarrying for six months is unconsti-

tional.

The thinking behind that requirement was to prevent a woman who was possibly pregnant by one man from marrying a different person.

The court said that was outdated because of advances in science, such as DNA testing, that provide proof of the biological parent, Tomoshi Sakka, a

SUPREME COURT RULINGS. Tomoshi Sakka, second from right, a lawyer for a female plaintiff who is not in the photo, and her supporters, hold a banner reading "Unconstitutional Judgment" after their victory in a court case in front of the Supreme Court in Tokyo. The court ruled that prohibiting women from remarrying for six months is unconstitutional. The court said it was outdated because of advances in science, such as DNA testing, that provide proof of the biological parent, Sakka told reporters outside the courtroom. (AP Photo/Koji Ueda)

lawyer for that case, told reporters outside the courtroom.

"The policy degraded women, and this is a step toward gender equality," he said.

The court found that a ban on remarrying exceeding 100 days was excessive. Sakka said he was optimistic that the change would be extended to less than 100 days in parliamentary discussions.

That was little comfort for some.

Akemi Ujitani, among a group of people gathered outside the Supreme Court building, broke into tears when the ruling was announced.

"This is about women's human rights," she said. "This is not right."

Indonesia deports 50 internet scammers to Taiwan, China

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — Indonesia has deported 50 Taiwanese and Chinese citizens who were members of a cross-border telephone and internet fraud ring, officials said.

Immigration official Yurod Saleh said the 49

Tokita collects, elaborately decorates eggs

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The one piece she said she would grab if there were a fire is a Faberge-inspired piece called the "Mosaic Egg." It is covered in colorful beads in an embroidery-inspired pattern of stripes and rings encircling three pink roses.

In all of her travels, Tokita said she has found similar reverence for the egg and what it symbolizes.

"I have found that almost all cultures have placed importance or significance on an egg because it represents new life," she said. "It represents spring, fertility, and abundance."

Taiwanese and one Chinese were repatriated to face charges in their homeland. They have already spent two months in Indonesian jails and have been fined \$770 for violating their tourist visas.

He said 419 Taiwanese and Chinese citizens have been arrested since August in several major Indonesian cities for involvement in cross-border telephone and internet fraud. About 280 have been sent home since October.

Jakarta police chief of detectives Lt. Col. Krishna Murti said the arrests followed a tip-off from Chinese police.

"They were committing the crimes from Indonesia to avoid being tracked down by their respective law enforcers," Murti said.

No details about the nature of the fraud were given. Such scams generally involve suspects obtaining personal information or prompting victims to transfer funds into overseas bank accounts.

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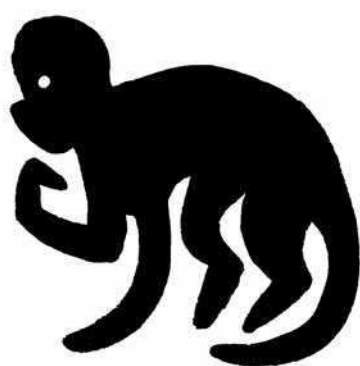
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