



尋道會

Spiritual Seekers Society

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To the Panel of Information Technology and Broadcasting

Concern on the judgment of the Broadcasting Authority over an appeal against the decision of the Commissioner for Television and Entertainment Licensing on the complaints on RTHK program “Hong Kong Connection” on the topic of homosexuality

The Spiritual Seekers Society is a mainly Christian religious group which supports the rights of minorities such as homosexuals. We hope that they could have rights to marriage as recognition of their love and commitment.

We welcome the Broadcasting Authority’s (BA) decision of upholding the Commissioner for Television and Entertainment Licensing’s previous rulings that the complaint of the program being unfair to Christians is unjustified, and also rightly pointed out that the major cause of AIDS being unprotected sex and not homosexual sex, and that a warning caption has been included in the program.

Spiritual Seekers Society was puzzled, however, by the decision of the BA that the program was found to be biased. In Hong Kong, many homosexuals are living a secret life because of the negative public attitudes toward them, and the program concerned has given the public an opportunity to take a glimpse on the life of them. The handling of this sensitive subject matter was balanced, and encouraging, as it is not sensational but a very **realistic portrait** of real people.

This type of program is actually much needed, and should be **encouraged** instead of discouraged. The negative messages against homosexuals based on bias, fear or misunderstanding has dominated the media, and this type of program is much needed in striking a balanced view on homosexuality.

We concern that the government has taken a lead in discriminating against homosexuals, and not fulfilling its obligation to create a society of **harmony**. We also like to remind that Hong Kong is an international city, and there are citizens and residents in Hong Kong who are same sex couples married in other countries.

We do think the attitude of tolerance and respect should be taught to **children**. As this program promotes tolerance and respect instead of bias, it should not be considered unsuitable for children. A survey done by the HAB has shown that most people in Hong Kong do not have homosexual friends; we encourage children to watch such programs to gain understanding on homosexuals. How

can we promote understanding when the views of homosexuals are being discouraged or deemed too controversial?

If the **subject matter** were on whether we should legalize same sex marriage, then an opportunity should be given to those who are against the proposal. But that is not the case for the present program. The segment of the program which mentioned same sex marriage was presented in a neutral manner. The interviewees' wishes should be considered expressions of *personal feelings*. The mentioning of the option of registered marriage in other countries should also be considered to be presentation of *fact*.

Negative comments on minorities, especially sexual minorities, should be discouraged as it promotes disharmony and disrespect toward minorities. And we would not consider it a balanced view when a positive presentation of homosexuals has to be coupled with negative and insulting comments on them.

We urge the Panel of Information and Broadcasting to take a stand in upholding the **freedom** of press and the freedom of expression of RTHK in producing positive programs on controversial topics, and to send a clear message to the public that more programs like this are **encouraged** for public education.

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