



# EDWINA

## CHIH-YU CHEN

- AWARD: Li-Ching Graduate Fellowship
- MAJOR: Political Science
- YEAR: Third-year Ph.D.

### WHY DID YOU APPLY?

"I applied for this fellowship to support essential fieldwork for my dissertation chapter examining Taiwan's legalization of same-sex marriage. My broader dissertation compares LGBTQ+ rights development inside and outside the United States, with a specific focus on Asia. This funding was critical for enabling on-site research in Taiwan, where in-person interviews and direct engagement with key actors are necessary for qualitative data collection."

### PROVIDE A SUMMARY OF WHAT YOU DID WITH YOUR SCHOLARSHIP OR GRANT.

"With the fellowship's support, I completed four interviews—one virtual and three in Taiwan—with individuals directly involved in Taiwan's marriage equality movement. These included NGO workers and retired Constitutional Court justices who participated in the 2017 same-sex marriage ruling. Early interviews highlight the interconnected nature of judicial, legislative, and movement strategies in the path to marriage equality. They suggest that policy change in Taiwan is shaped less by single institutions and more by relationships among courts, legislators, activists, and legal professionals. Ongoing fieldwork will expand interviews with legal actors and examine how the 2019 law is implemented and understood in practice."

### HOW DID THIS SCHOLARSHIP OR GRANT HELP YOU?

"The grant directly enabled my travel to Taiwan and supported a locally based undergraduate research assistant, who helped coordinate outreach, schedule interviews, and assist with data management. Conducting interviews in person was essential—some interviewees expressed discomfort with virtual interviews due to the sensitivity of the topic. Without this funding, these key conversations would not have been possible. The strength of this initial fieldwork also allowed me to share these developing insights at the Taiwan-Europe Connectivity Workshop at the CCKF-ERCCT, University of Tübingen, Germany (June 29–July 5, 2025). The workshop generously covered travel and accommodation, enabling me to present my work and engage with scholars from Taiwan and Europe."

### DO YOU HAVE ANY ADVICE FOR FUTURE APPLICANTS?

"Future applicants should reach out to past awardees in their department for guidance and examples of successful proposals. It is also helpful to remember that applications will be reviewed by scholars from outside one's discipline, so proposals should clearly communicate research questions, goals, relevance to the region, and the necessity of funding."