

Aim and Gain

Johanne Henders (Center for Japanese Language and Culture)



In the world of today it is almost expected from a university student that he has spent a more or less long time in another country, no matter what your major is. Your future employer wants you to be more flexible, more cosmopolitan in a world that is growing together. Intercultural competence is especially needed in jobs dealing with different kinds of nationalities inside the company. Moreover you get the image of a worker who can easily adapt to new situations and act flexibly. You happen to have a spirit of adventure and, due to your experiences, be more tolerant in comparison to people who have never gone abroad. The fact you took part in an exchange student program reflects your desire of a constant self-improvement.

When you arrive in a new country and a new city, it is up to you to find out where to go out and how to make friends. Of course there are different types of an exchange. It depends on where you go and again what kind of stay it is going to be. So there are short programs, which are from one to three months, and then up-to-six-month-stays and up-to-twelve-month stays. Besides these, there are international students in many countries in the world who complete their whole studies in the certain country.

Facing an environment completely unfamiliar and unknown requires a brave mind. Inevitably you will grow by your challenges and tasks, and you are going to be more independent. If you go abroad the adjustment might be even greater when there is a new culture and language to adapt to. Outside of home, in the process of finding your own way in less protected surroundings, you might feel fear and yield stress in the beginning of your stay. Once you begin to interact with people and face things you have never experienced before, it makes you a lot more sensitive to certain topics. It is interesting to think about issues in different perspectives, and an exchange is definitely one chance to make that possible.

In most cases the study abroad brings with it a change in your social status, meaning that the costs are probably much higher than in your home country, or higher just because of the fact that you live on your own. On the one hand it teaches you to have good management over a limited budget, a very practical skill for your future life anyway. On the other hand it might be important to create new friendships, but this is only partly possible with a limited amount of money. Effectively you are more mature when you come back, and you think twice before you start talking to choose your words wisely.

Hence, I from my experience can say that I once started to watch people. I tried to figure out their behavior and then began to understand their thinking. The recognition of differences is one step forward to an understanding and a good intercultural exchange.

03 | Cooking

Eva Habereeder (Center for Japanese Language and Culture)
Recipes courtesy of Conny Habereeder ☺

Ben-K's



EASY COOKING

Tiroler Gröstl German Style Pan-fry

(Serves 2)
Cooking time: ~30 minutes

Ingredients:
5 potatoes
½ onion
4 button mushrooms
2 sausages
1 egg
salt, pepper, vegetable oil, parsley



Right: Peeling potatoes
Above: "Pan-fry" step 3
Left: Chopping red bell peppers

Editor's Note:
For the 10th issue, we featured Korean Style Leek Pancakes. This time, we got together and had a German cooking party!

1. Peel and boil the potatoes, check with a fork to see when they are done. Cut into cubes.
2. Cut the onion, heat a little bit of oil and stir fry the potatoes and onions.
3. Add the button mushrooms (cut them into half) and sausages (cut into bite-sized pieces).
4. Crack an egg over the mixture and keep stirring.
5. Season with salt, pepper and some parsley. Enjoy!

Pasta Salad (side dish)

(Serves 2)
Cooking time: ~20 minutes

Ingredients:
60 gr. pasta
¼ cucumber
½ bell pepper
30 gr. green peas
mayonnaise
1~2 teaspoons of mustard and vinegar each
salt, pepper



1. Cook the pasta and cool it with cold water.
2. Cut the cucumber and bell pepper into small cubes.
3. Mix the pasta with the cucumber, bell pepper and peas.
4. Add mayonnaise to taste and flavor with mustard and vinegar, salt and pepper. Enjoy!

Sweet Pancake Dessert

(Serves 2) Cooking time: ~15 minutes

Ingredients:
2 eggs
15 gr. sugar
180 ml milk
60 gr. flour
butter, salt



Optional: add 15 gr. raisins to the batter

1. Mix the egg yolks with the sugar, add a little bit of salt.
2. Slowly add the milk and the flour - add the raisins if you like them.
3. Whisk the egg whites until stiff and gently mix them with the batter. Do not mix for too long or the batter will get hard!
4. Heat a little bit of butter in a pan and add the batter. Let it sit for a while on low heat and then tear the dough into bite sized pieces with two spatulas while flipping the pieces over so the other side gets browned as well. Enjoy!

Optional: serve with a layer of powdered sugar on top

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TPP and Japan: Pros, Cons, and Implications

1. What is TPP?

Suel Ki Kim (Faculty of Economics)

TPP (Trans-Pacific Partnership) began in 2005, with the four countries of New Zealand, Singapore, Chile, and Brunei. The existing eleven countries of the Asia-Pacific region (United States, Canada, Mexico, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, Brunei, Vietnam, Malaysia, Chile and Peru) are participating now. If Japan also takes part, the countries become twelve. It will be a multilateral free trade agreement (FTA) that aims for a hundred percent no tariffs.

According to Peter A. Petri (Brandeis University, U.S.) and Michael G. Plummer (John Hopkins University, U.S.), the eleven countries currently participating in the TPP is the most developed form of FTA model being evaluated in the world, and if Japan participates in the signing of the Agreement, Japan will be the main beneficiary.

2. Japan's participation in TPP and its effect on the economy

When the Japanese government announced a policy to join the TPP, it also demonstrated the economic effect of the results of the trial. If Japan participates in the TPP, imports will increase, and therefore there is an expected reduction in the production of the agricultural sector; but due to a substantial expansion in exports, a 0.66% (3.2 trillion yen) rise in the nation's GDP is anticipated.

There are various benefits that Japan may receive from participating in the TPP:

- (1) Asia Pacific Free Trade (FTAAP) will be the first phase of the initiative.
- (2) Trading will increase by the mutual removal of tariffs between TPP agreement participants.

- (3) Japanese products are not to be discriminated against in comparison with the domestic products of TPP participating countries.
- (4) It will become possible for Japan's technology and brand to be maintained.
- (5) In the corresponding region, Japanese business investors are not to be treated unfairly.
- (6) Because trade procedures will be simplified, and business people will be able to apply for immigration and emigration more easily than now, the international activities of SMEs (small- to medium-sized enterprises) will become facilitated.

On the other hand, there are of course penalties, or detriments, that may arise from Japan's participation in the TPP:

- (1) In principle, the discount due to the tariff elimination should immediately take place, so there are concerns about the decline of the agricultural industry, as well as the degradation of self-sufficiency.
- (2) There is a possibility that unsafe food will increase, and the food safety standards might be mitigated.
- (3) The range of public health benefits is likely to be reduced.
- (4) Low quality foreign professionals (doctors, lawyers, et cetera), or simply a large number of unskilled workers are likely to be introduced to Japan.
- (5) Since it will also make local governments' public businesses more open to foreign companies, the latter may deprive the former of business.
- (6) It is likely to affect the sovereignty of the nation, for example with changes in Japan's system due to a foreign investor's lawsuit in Japan. (ISD, or Investor-State Dispute Settlement)

3. Implications

As discussed above, the TPP strives for high-level multilateral trade liberalization in the Asia-Pacific region over a wide area. Even without the United States, the TPP covering Southeast Asia, Oceania, and South and

North America (Canada) aims for the highest levels of the FTA with the goal of open market; and in assuming that, one can expect the impact on the future of the Asia-Pacific economic region to be significant. TPP negotiations are held by eleven countries, the GDP of which accounts for 55.2% of the overall proportion of the APEC (Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation) nations; if Japan is included, it will expand to 70.8% (with 2010 statistics).

It is also necessary to recognize that the TPP has the ability to become a Game Changer in the usual global paradigm of trading in which the United States has been playing a leading role. At the same time, the United States is promoting the TPP as part of the Obama Administration's Pivot to Asia policy; and it is recommending Asian countries, including Korea, to participate in the TPP. In addition to the idea that the TPP will enable more simplified and smooth procedures of trading, the United States promotes the "21st-century trade agreement" as an attempt to construct a high-standard normative order in the Pacific Rim area that is beyond the simple TPP concepts of trade and tariffs.

Thirdly, Japan's participation in TPP negotiations is expected to make a difference in the speed of FTA negotiations between Japan, Korea, and China. In the meantime, Japan responded about FTA more modestly than Korea. However, it recognizes as a matter of top priority that TPP is oriented to a high level of trade liberalization and has the ability to lead the formation of a new trading system Rule. This can spur on the FTA with the huge market that is the EU. The biggest issue of joining the TPP negotiations is the agricultural market liberalization in Japan. If the problem is resolved, Japan will be removing a major obstacle in enabling the FTA. In that case, it is expected to pursue an active foreign trade policy in the future. A large number of Southeast Asia countries are participating in the TPP. Joining the Partnership is of substantial importance in furthering Japan's game plan for advancement into Southeast Asia.

Surprising Ways to Enjoy Arashiyama

Nathalie Stummer (CFJC)

Arashiyama (嵐山), which can be translated into "storm mountain," lies in the western Ukyo ward of Kyoto. It is known throughout all of Japan and is especially famous for its bamboo groves and monkey park, making it a very popular spot for tourists visiting Kyoto. If you think bamboo groves and monkeys sound boring, you will quickly change your mind when you see them for the first time.

The easiest way to reach Arashiyama is probably by train. From Kyoto station it takes about 30 minutes by JR, but going by Keihan is also possible. When getting off the train at Saga-Arashiyama, one might at first notice how idyllic and rather quiet Arashiyama is, since it is far off the city of Kyoto. While strolling through the little streets you will approach shops and street stands offering traditional Japanese sweets and accessories. After a few minutes of walking, one can see the unbelievably tall bamboo groves rising up into the sky. It is simply breathtaking how tall the bamboos are and how small one feels next to them. Not only are they very beautiful to look at or walk through, but they also protect you from the sun and the heat on hot days, and as you all know, the Kyoto heat can be unbearable. Luckily you can enjoy the bamboo for quite a while, because the forest is very spacious and also gives you the opportunity to visit shrines and temples located nearby.



Exploring Kyoto

Stuck on summer plans? Our member's reports might give you an idea!

After walking through the bamboo groves you can enjoy the beautiful scenery of the Hozu River valley with its mountains and lush trees. If you walk down a little slope you will immediately approach Hozu River itself, where you can even have a nicer view of the whole setting. You also have the opportunity to ride pleasure boats (highly recommended!) over the river. Another very famous aspect of Arashiyama is the Togetsukyo (渡月橋) leading over Hozu River. It was originally built in the Heian Period and was reconstructed in the 1930s. It is said to be very attractive with the mountains in the background, and it really is. Especially in spring when the cherry blossoms bloom, one can enjoy thousands of cherry blossoms on a small island located in the center of Hozu River and simultaneously enjoy the bridge with the mountains in the background.

As I mentioned before, Arashiyama is also famous for the monkey park located on top of Iwatayama. After a 10~15 minute hike (on very hot days it might take a little longer) you will reach the plateau on top of the mountain where about one hundred monkeys live freely, you might even approach some of them while walking up the hill. Since there are always many tourists and the animals of course should be allowed to live peacefully and freely, there are a few things one should be careful of while being at the monkey park. At the entrance tourists are being told not to bring any food to the monkey park, and if they do, then only safely placed inside their bags since the monkeys can be approached anytime while hiking up to the plateau. Further, people are told not to look at the monkeys directly in the eyes since they might feel threatened or afraid by people looking at them.

This might sound dangerous at first, but actually the monkeys are very calm, and sometimes they come very close. You can also feed the monkeys with nuts from inside a little house. And speaking of food, did you know that the monkey's favourite food is not bananas but cicadas?

Another reason why you should hike up to the monkey park is the excellent view over the whole city of Kyoto, and if you look closely you can even see Doshisha University!

After a long and exhausting walk you can of course also enjoy several typical Kyoto delights and stroll through numerous gift shops and buy some things for your friends and family or buy a nice little souvenir for yourself.

I hope that after reading this article, you all have a little impression of the beauty of the nature of Arashiyama. Enjoy your walk through the bamboo groves!

Spectacular Spectacular: the Gion Matsuri

Johanne Henders (CFJC),

Ryohei Miyazawa (Faculty of Policy Studies),
Kana Nogami (Faculty of Economics)

You might have heard about one of the most famous traditional festivals in Japan: The Gion Matsuri. It is held in Kyoto during the entire month of July. The highlight of the event is the parade, which is called "Yamaboko Junkō", in form of a procession of floats, on the 17th of July. "Yama" describes one type of the floats built for the festival; all in all there are 23 of them. "Hoko" (there are nine) is the second type of floats and are, because of their height up to 25 meters, probably one of the most impressive things. They can weigh around 12 tons. The three nights before the parade, the downtown area of Kyoto is converted into a full pedestrian area where people can get food and drinks.

The host of the Gion Matsuri is the well-known Yasaka Shrine located in the eastern part of the city. Until the end of the Meiji-period (1868-1912) the shrine was named Gion-Shrine, which is where the name of the festival comes from. One can trace back the festival's tradition to the Heian-period (794-1192), where the festival was held for the appeasement of the gods (goryō-e/御霊会). In the first place the festival was held in the occasion of a great epidemic plague. The deity which was made responsible for the epidemic plague is called Gozu-Tennō (牛頭天皇/which means an "ox-headed king from heaven"); he originally is an Indian god, and guardian of the Buddhist hell. He is seen at the same level as the Japanese god Susanoo-no-mikoto, which is the main god of the Yasaka Shrine. In 869 they showed sixty-six stylized and decorated halberds, each symbolizing one of the sixty-six provinces in old Japan, and in addition they had so-called "mikoshi", which are portable shrines taken from the Yasaka Shrine.

The Ashikaga shogunate (1338-1573) tried to ban the festival in 1533 due to a ban of all religious events. The protesters said they wanted at least to have the procession, which was finally permitted. The floats, produced especially for the festival, are usually kept in special storehouses.

From that time, they held the festival every year, when they suffered from epidemics. In 970 it was defined an annual event and this tradition has seldom been broken. Overtime it became a festival very much influenced by powerful merchants; therefore the purpose of the parade became more to show off their wealth than the original meaning.

Gion Matsuri is one of the three biggest festivals of Japan, and its long history, gorgeousness, and large-scale rituals, lasting for about one month in July, are well known by people from all over the world.

(Continued on p.5)



(Continued from p. 4) Gion Matsuri has a lot of events. The first event is Kippuri (吉符入). In this event, those who are involved in it make an agreement with Gion Matsuri. Then the festive mood of the people is at fever pitch especially when Yamaboko-junkō (山鉦巡行) is taking place. This event is conducted on July 17th, and 32 yamabokos (a kind of dancing car) go along the main street in Kyoto in a lively fashion. Before this event, people light lanterns of the yamabokos, which are displayed in the town. This is called Yoiyama (宵山), on the sixteenth and Yoiyoyama(宵宵山) on the fifteenth. They are famous for their musical accompaniment, “kon-chiki-chin.” These yamabokos are luxurious and splendid. And now, 29 of 32 yamabokos are designated as Important Tangible Folk-Cultural Properties. What is more, they are also registered as UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritages.

In fact, there is another event on the seventeenth. It is the divine service of portable shrines, called Sinkousai (神幸祭). It is practiced after Yamaboko-junkō, and more than 1,500 people carry three portable shrines. In this event, it is most exciting when the three portable shrines gather and show us some acts. For example, their carriers lift them higher than their heads. The impact is worth a watch.

People not only from Kyoto but other prefectures and overseas go to the Gion Matsuri, so there are a lot of people in Kyoto during the Gion Matsuri. As you know, there are huge numbers of people during this festival, and I searched how many people went to this prominent festival last year. It says the exact number is not obvious, but almost one million, eight hundred thousand (1,800,000) people were there. (Ryohei and I are one of them because we went there last year!)

I asked a friend who is native to Kyoto – as in born and raised in Kyoto – “What do you think about Gion Matsuri?”

These are his comments. “I think there are too many people, and I couldn’t ride the train after my part-time job. And I used to go to this festival when I was little, but I haven’t been there for a while, like four or five years. But I want you to know that I’m so proud of this festival as one of the Kyoto people, and I do like this festival so much.” So I guess there are no people who don’t like Gion Matsuri!

Gion Matsuri is the representative Japanese festival and one of the biggest summer events in Japan, so if you want to experience the Japanese summer, Gion Matsuri is a must!

Why don’t you visit this fabulous, brilliant, and magnificent festival this summer?

Falling in Love with Uji

Three reasons why Uji is worth a visit

Reason 1: Uji-tea

What is Uji-tea?

Uji-tea is kind of green tea. Uji is very famous for tea, made there and in other tea-farm sites of Kyoto. The city’s name is Uji, so we call it *Uji-cha*. The history about Uji-tea is very long. It has been made since 760. The color of Uji-tea is brown green.



How to drink delicious Uji-tea

One of the characteristics of Uji-tea is that the leaf is harder than other tea leaves. So we need to have longer leaching time than other tea to drink delicious Uji-tea. If the leaching time is short, the color is similar to real Uji-tea, but the flavor is different. The suitable amount of time for putting in hot water into the kettle is about one minute, and when the leaves open, it is the right time to drink. The temperature of hot water and the amount of the leaves are also very important to brew delicious Uji-tea.

Other ways to taste Uji-tea

Uji-tea is very tasty, so it is usually added onto other food, like Uji-tea soba, Uji-tea ice cream, et cetera. The taste of the tea matches well with other food. There are a lot of Uji-tea food restaurants and stores on Byoudouin-douri and Ujibashi-bouri in Uji city. These places are very famous. Some stores were made more than 400 years ago. We can enjoy Uji-tea a lot there.

Feeling about Uji-tea

When I saw Uji-tea first, I didn’t know the difference between just green tea and Uji-tea. But when I drank it, I could understand why people just look for Uji-tea, and I could feel its depth of flavor and scent. I can just say the taste is like the end of the valley unknown. I also felt the history of Uji-tea and the effort for making it. If you ever have the chance to come to Kyoto, I really recommend you to try Uji-tea.

Kim Suel Ki (Faculty of Economics)

Full of Mysteries: Fushimi Inari-taisha

Most historical buildings in Kyoto are simple. But Fushimi Inari-taisha is different. There are buildings painted bright red, a long line of Torii(鳥居), sculptures of animals... They are things that we have not seen much at historical sites in Kyoto. So we would like to provide a brief introduction to Fushimi Inari-taisha.

◆ The History of the Fushimi Inari-taisha

The shrine is believed to have been built in 711 by Hata-no-Irogu, a descendent of the powerful Hata family that came over to Japan from the continent and administered the shrine over many generations.

During the early Heian period (792-1192) the Fushimi Inari-taisha became the object of Imperial patronage. In 965 Emperor Murakami decided that written accounts of important events should be carried by messengers to the highest guardian kami (god) of Japan. These heihaku were initially presented to sixteen shrines – including the Fushimi Inari-taisha.

From 1871 through 1946, Fushimi Inari-taisha became one of the Kanpei-taisha, meaning that it stood in the first rank of government-supported shrines.

Over the course of history, however, Inari’s role evolved to include now being a kami guardian of success in business matters. Jannik Kuechen (CJLC)

◆ The legends of Fushimi Inari-taisha

The worshipped kami in the “Fushimi Inari Shrine” is Inari, the kami of harvest. It is an agricultural kami, which isn’t only in charge of harvest, but also of wealth, harmony, success and good fortune. Furthermore it is a protector of warriors since the 16th century. Inari is represented in either female or male form.

The fox is an important symbol of Inari. It is Inari’s messenger, and in every shrine where Inari is worshipped, there are fox statues.



Reason 2: Mimurotoji

One of the most attractive tourist spots in Uji are the gardens at Mimurotoji. When we went there in June, the 紫陽花 (hydrangea) were in full bloom, and it was a stunning view. According to the temple, about 10,000 hydrangeas bloom in June. But that is not all. You can view the cherry blossoms in April; about 20,000 azaleas bloom from end of April to early May; Lotuses in July and August; and red-colored maple-leaves at the end of November – making the temple worth a visit all throughout the year. It is obvious why so many people from all over Japan are coming to see the beauty of nature that is displayed in the perfectly cared for gardens. Wandering around the temple grounds is a refreshing break from our hectic everyday lives.

Mimurotoji is a Buddhist temple from the Shingon-sect and was founded by Emperor Kōnin in 770. It prospered during Japan’s Heian era, and like many temples suffered from fires and had to be repeatedly rebuilt. The current buildings on the ground date back to 1805. It is also one of the temples offering amulets for purchase to pilgrims.

Fun fact: on the temple grounds you can also find a stone statue of the 宝勝牛 (hōshō-ushi; “Wish granting Bull”), which is related to a famous legend of a bull bringing fortune to his poor owners surrounding the temple. The statue is placed where one would normally find the 狛犬 (komainu; guardian dogs). It is said to bring you good luck to touch the stone marble that was placed inside the statue’s open mouth – which cannot be removed, making you wonder how they got it inside in the first place.

Mimurotoji’s entrance fee for adults is 500 Yen, for children 300 Yen. From JR Uji station bus Nr. 43 runs hourly via Keihan Uji Station to Mimurotoji.

Eva Habereeder (CJLC)

Basically all Shintō Shrines in Japan have legends involving the enshrined deities. The Fushimi Inari Shrine has also a foundation myth. In the “Nihon- Shoki,” it is written that emperor Kinmei heard someone saying in his dream that if he could find a man from the Hata clan, he would be able to dominate the country. In 711, Hata no Irogu, the successor of the Hata clan who lived in Yamashiro-no-kuni, according to its Fudoki, once shot an arrow at a target made of rice-cake. The rice cake suddenly turned into a swan and flew away to the mountains. As he found the swan in the mountains a rice field appeared. Seeing this, Hata no Irogu in gratitude to the kami decided to build a shrine and to worship Inari. So Hata no Irogu founded the Inari shrine at the foot of the mountain, where he had carried out his shooting exercises.



Magdalena Ernst (CJLC)

◆ Sennbonn-torii (Thousand Torii)

The Sennbonn-torii is like a tunnel. There are many Torii in a row. You can go through them. They started to build them from the Edo to Meiji periods. It is said that if you carry a Torii to Fushimi Inari-taisha, your wish comes true. (It comes from the Japanese word, “tōru(通る)”. Japanese people use the word in two ways: one is “to go through.” The other is “to have one’s wish come true.”) Thus many companies dedicate Torii to pray for the success of business. As a proof of this, names of them are written at Torii.

By the way, why are there such a large number of Torii there? The place where Fushimi Inari-taisha stands is an entrance to an area through which god comes to this world. Therefore, Sennbonn-torii was built as a gate to the world of the gods’ existence.

Sennbonn-torii takes a lot of damage easily from wind and rain, because they are made of wood. Then about three new Torii are built in a day, and some Torii are fixed. Hasegawa Moe (Faculty of Economics)

Were you able to get some useful information from our article? If it has sparked an interest in you for Fushimi Inari-taisha, it will make us happy.

Reason 3: The Tale of Genji Museum

After we visited Mimurotoji, we found The Tale of Genji Museum. Before I write about what we did over there, let me first introduce what the *Tale of Genji* is and its relation to Uji. The *Tale of Genji* is a full-length novel which has 54 chapters in total. It was written in the 11th century in the middle of Heian period. This novel was written by a woman known as Murasaki Shikibu, and it is considered as a masterpiece that depicts the life of an imperial prince. The *Tale of Genji* is divided into three main parts. Especially, the third part depicts the life of his son intertwined with stories of love and tragedy, primarily set in the Uji region and are actually referred to as the Ten Uji Chapters or Uji-Jujo.



The first room we entered in the Tale of Genji Museum was the Heian Room. This room was focused on the first half of the *Tale of Genji* and the ancient capital of Heian-kyo and Hikaru Genji. In this room, we could see through a video the rough story about *Tale of Genji* and pictures of the four different imperial courts, which changes depending on season.

And we saw the oxen-drawn carriage called ‘gissha’ which is a symbol of the luxurious life in the *Tale of Genji*. Also, there was an exhibition of the Heian period accessories in the novel, such as “kai-awase” (a shell-matching game), “sugoroku” (a board game), along with the annual events in the Heian Period for each season. Through this exhibition we could know details about the culture of the imperial court and their life style.

After the first room, we crossed a beautiful bridge called Kake. This bridge is to cross Uji River from Heian-kyo and is the background of last scene of *Tale of Genji*. Then we entered a twenty-minute running theater. The movie title was “Hashi-Hime” based on the Ten Uji Chapters. Through this video, we could see how Murasaki Shikibu depicted the Depth of Women’s Love.



Soul Dong Eun (Faculty of Commerce)

Minorities in Japan

Magdalena Ernst (Center for Japanese Language and Culture)



When you think about Japan's society you think homogenous - at least that is what my expectation was. So I was very surprised when a seminar on Japan's minorities was organized. I found out very soon that there are numerous minorities, and with minorities comes discrimination. I started to wonder: how do the Japanese feel about these minorities? Do they even perceive them, or is it something that people would rather not talk about?

In international comparison Japan is a mostly homogenous country; nevertheless 1.22 percent of the Japanese population are foreigners and minorities living in Japan. Minorities are defined as people whose ethnic, racial, religious, or gender identity is different from the majority. Japan's minority groups are also often called hidden minorities because they already live as second or third generation in Japan, were born in Japan and speak Japanese as their first language. They're also not easily distinguishable as non-Japanese. The two largest groups are the Chinese people and the Korean minority known as "Zainichi Kankokujin". Furthermore there is the Nikkeijin (for example Japanese Brazilian) and the Filipino minority, as well as the so-called Burakumin (people who used to be at the bottom of Japanese social order due to their occupation). At first I would like to shortly introduce the Ainu, who represent somewhat of a special case since they are also an indigenous people from the Japanese peninsula but are not mentioned in most textbooks on Japanese history.

The Ainu were hunters and fishermen, and they lived in Hokkaido which is also called "Ezochi," which has meant the "Land of Ainu" since ancient times. Only in the 15th century the Japanese began to settle down on the northern part of Japan and with their assimilation policies and strict rules; especially after the Meiji restoration, the Ainu were oppressed, and not only their way of living but also their traditions disappeared. On top of that the Ainu language was banned and people were forced by the government to change their name into a Japanese name. Furthermore many lost their land due to a redistribution of farmland.

Even today many Japanese do not know of the existence of the Ainu. The government didn't want to admit for a long time that there is a problem regarding discrimination and was even denying the "Ainu issue." In 1930 the Ainu people established their own association (The Hokkaido Ainu Association) in order to improve their situation by themselves. The aim was to change the social policy, to fight for their rights and also seek social justice which turned out to be quite a challenge. It was a big step for them when in 1991 the government finally admitted the Ainu as a native ethnic minority. But that alone wasn't the solution as many Ainu still have to hide their background in order not to be bullied in school or to face discrimination in the workplace or even marriage. I think you could compare these problems to the situation of the Native Americans, who also had to fight for their rights as indigenous people.

I think the biggest problem is that we are often not aware of the problems which minorities are dealing

with, and we are automatically ignoring the fact that discrimination may be taking place around us.

Zainichi, the Korean minority is one of the biggest minority groups in Japan. About 600,000 Koreans are permanent residents of Japan but haven't acquired Japanese citizenship. Yet the Japanese government for a long time regarded the Ainu as the only minority, and Koreans or other groups have been seen as foreign residents. In 1991 Zainichi Koreans received the status of "special permanent residents."

The Korean minority is linked to the Japanese colonial period and the occupation of Korea from 1919 until 1945. In the beginning some Koreans migrated by their free will to Japan with the hope for a better life. Later in the 1940's many poor peasants, mostly from the southern parts of Korea, were brought forcibly to Japan as workers, to replace the Japanese, who had been inducted to war. However as the war ended, they were faced with the decision whether to stay in Japan or to return to Korea. Many of them couldn't return because of the difficult economic situation and the division of Korea as well as the change in the Japanese repatriation policy which made it more difficult to return.

Even though over 80 percent of the Zainichi Korean minority had been born in Japan right after the war, they were considered foreign residents and had to carry their alien registration card all the time.

The first and second generation of Koreans were faced with a difficult situation since there were a lot of stereotypes attached to them. Also many Zainichi Koreans had problems with discrimination, like bullying in schools and neighbourhoods, as well as exclusion in education and employment. They weren't allowed to register their Korean names, or speak Korean; during the war time and colonial period, they were forced to change their name into Japanese names. Most of the second, third, and fourth generations were born, educated, and has practically lived their whole lives in Japan. They are basically more or less unfamiliar with their Korean roots and not easily distinguishable as Korean. Even so they are still often confronted directly or indirectly with discrimination once their identity is revealed. But what exactly are they? Can they really be considered Koreans just because their parents or grandparents come from there? Or are they Japanese since they have lived all their lives in Japan? Maybe the answer isn't this simple. Like so many times in life it's not a black or white situation, it's somewhere in the grey.

On the other hand, there are slowly some changes approaching, and Japanese civil rights activists and Zainichi Koreans are in the process of fighting together for equal rights hand in hand. The fact that Japanese and Koreans are trying to change something together, something that would have been quite unimaginable in the past, is a sign that change is coming.

It's important to keep in mind that there are still problems going on today and to realize how fundamentally necessary it is to be aware of discrimination. Since you are blind to things you do not know, once you talk about it and think about it, you are already on the road to making a difference. That includes teaching about minorities in school and by this means embracing cultural differences which could be a first step to create a more relaxed and harmonious environment for all of us.

What does it mean to be Japanese?

Akane Yoshizaki (Faculty of Social Studies)



To the reader of this article: what is your nationality? What does it mean to be Japanese? Having black hair? Having two Japanese parents? Speaking Japanese? Being born in Japan? Many people, both inside and outside of Japan, envision Japanese-ness to be a narrow concept. Since the 2000's, we have seen a rise of nationalism by young people who claim that Japan belongs to only Japanese people and that foreigners cause trouble in Japan. However, the history and culture of Japan show just the opposite; Japan is and has always been a multicultural nation.

First off, arrival of foreigners is nothing new in Japan. At least as early as the third century, people from the Asian continent, especially China and the Korean peninsula, have been coming into Japan as artisans, scholars, refugees, and technicians. One example is the Hata family from Korea, who played an influential part in Japanese politics in the sixth and seventh centuries and contributed to the building of Fushimi Inari Shrine in Kyoto.

In fact, we only need to look as far as our dinner tables to experience multiculturalism in Japan. From household staples such as curry rice to delicacies such as tempura (said to be derived from Western fritters, the name coming from the Portuguese language), Japanese food has incorporated many foreign influences, resulting in the diversity (and deliciousness, of course) we can see today. If our food is delicious precisely because it is so diverse, why not recognize that it could be the same for our society?

According to Soo Im Lee, professor at Ryukoku University, "every year, approximately 10,000 applicants apply for naturalization." However, Lee also states, "Japan is perhaps the only developed country which requires native-born applicants to go through a time-consuming procedure for naturalization." While Japanese government and businesses scream for globalization and internationalism, we often fail to recognize the very same concepts inside our country. One of my professors, an American man who has lived in Japan for decades, admitted that Japanese people still ask the question, "So when are you going back home?"

"I am neither Korean nor Japanese, I am only here as a soccer player." These are the words of Tadanari Lee, a fourth-generation zainichi Korean who obtained Japanese nationality and played for the All Japan team in the AFC Asia Cup 2011. Being Japanese should not be an exclusive club, and never was. Maybe you were born in Brazil, maybe you have blonde hair and blue eyes, maybe you have Korean parents, maybe you are Ainu or Okinawan, or maybe you grew up in a foreign country, like me. None of these things should exclude us from being Japanese. As history shows, diversity has always made Japan stronger.

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