

When seeing somebody of a different physical ethnicity, hearing a different language, and a different accent, people often have a different reaction to that person, than to somebody much more similar to themselves. When it comes to Japan, the concepts of what is foreign and what is Japanese vary, making it much more difficult to determine the differences than one would presume. As various other countries have a significant percentage of their population being immigrants and descendants of immigrants, there is a much different concept of foreign from the Japanese concept. These other countries were built in part by immigrants, who have become a natural part of the country and its culture. In Japan, the percentage of foreign persons is much lower than most other countries, as foreigners and foreign residents make up only 1.5% of the populace (Foreigners make up, 2013). This makes the naturalization of a global view much more difficult, with a strong sense of homogeneity.

From the foreign resident perspective, there are various reasons for why they live in this country. Many of them were introduced to Japanese culture through some form of commodified culture, such as anime. After the introduction, many foreigners say that they like to remain in Japan for the kind, modest and quiet culture that it is. But, in coming to Japan, foreigners become residents that stand out, or must otherwise blend themselves in. Many of them were part of the majority in their own country and must thus adapt to a minority mindset in Japan.

There is not much available to assist them in attempting to come to and remain in Japan. According to Mr. Taro Kono, a member of Japan's House of Representatives, "Japan is not a country of immigration" (Yamanaka, 2008). Yamanaka found from a discussion with Mr. Taro Kono, that his opinion on Japan's "willingness to grant amnesty to undocumented transnational migrant workers." His opinion can be summed up as saying that illegal workers are criminals, Japanese see them as criminals, and Japan does not want to encourage immigration by granting amnesty to immigrants." Yamanaka has found that the common attitude of political figures regardless of their stance, is that "Japan is a country for the Japanese." There are options available for temporary stay and some homes available for long term stay, but most Japanese assume that foreigners are foreign and thus will eventually leave.

This popular view has led to a rigid model of immigration called "differential exclusion," which perceives ethnic diversity brought by immigrants as a threat to the society and its stability. It threatens the *sameness* found throughout most of the country, from its cultural values to its traditions. This view, especially existing on a political level, causes a large branch of social construct to form out of the belief of homogeneity, the belief that Japanese are all the same people, from the same ethnic background and the same culture. This perception harms Japan's long term and permanent residents, who are often Japan born residents and follow the laws just as Japanese civilians do. Japan's openness to foreigners and Japanese residents who are descendants of a different ethnicity and culture, is thus not as existent as many like to assume.

This effects permanent and long term residents as well as the tourism sector, as they become perceived as the *other*, something different to be feared and/or admired only from afar. Political views of immigrants as the *other* and social views of foreigners as the *other*, collides to create an assumption of ideas. This assumption can be positive or negative, but either way is an assumption of a sum of people, so that they do not have to get to know an individual. Somebody who does not look Japanese is assumed to be not Japanese, and therefore is probably an English speaker who does not know any, or perhaps only a little, Japanese. A person who lives permanently or long term in Japan, who appears to be Asian, is a person of the same ethnicity and culture and can be assumed to be a natural speaker of Japanese as well as having the same cultural mindset. The assumption becomes that those who look and act Japanese are assumed Japanese, while those who do not look "Japanese enough" or sound "Japanese enough" are considered foreigners who do not belong. This boils down to the unspoken stance that immigrants are welcome into Japan, but only temporarily.

The effect it has on its long term residents leaves most of them feeling excluded and separated from their identity. Especially for children of families with one Japanese parent and one foreign parent, this creates a barrier between them and their perceived identity and the society they live in. Legally, immigrants cannot become "Japanese" without some form of relation tying them into an already established Japanese family, which leads many foreigners to marry a Japanese partner. To be accepted socially, they are expected to not

only have a natural understanding of culture, social graces and other unspoken rules, but also look Japanese. This is one of the problem's root causes.

When asked how they feel about how other Japanese perceive and treat them, many Japanese citizens descended of a different ethnicity will respond with explaining how they have to "prove their Japaneseness" to dissuade Japanese from treating them as the *other*. This extends to studying Japanese as their own identity, current events, cultural norms and policies that they otherwise would not be questioned on by others. But, because they are not seen as being fully Japanese, or perhaps just as a foreign person from another country, they must prove that they are in fact Japanese. They spend their lives, within their country, proving themselves to be a part of that country and its culture.

There is, however, a positive light that is the changing policies of Japan's immigrant and minority groups. Even recently, cases have been improving quality of life for minorities such as South Eastern Asians and Black Japanese (Kozuka, 2013). Such improvements include a ban on hate speech outside of a pro-Pyongyang Korean elementary school in Kyoto. The Zaitokukai, which is described as "a citizens' assembly opposed to granting special rights to foreigners residing in Japan," whose members stood outside of the school slandering the Korean children and their parents, in efforts to have the school shut down, was ordered to pay 12 million yen in damages. They attempted to appeal the ruling, but was upheld by "Osaka High Court Presiding Judge Hiroshi Mori [who] said in his ruling that the rallies outside the school were clearly driven by racist ideals, and not at all in the interests of public" (Osaka court upholds, 2014). He said that their rally, which terrorized the school children and disturbed their classes, constituted as "racial discrimination defined under the United Nations' convention on the elimination of racial discrimination." As an ethnic minority of about 500,000 in Japan, Koreans face discrimination from the many members of this group, along with the assumptions that this group has created their claims from.

The existence of the Zaitokukai group is akin to the KKK of the United States, and perhaps should thus be considered as existing on the fringe of Japanese culture. However, with approximately 10,000 members, their reach is more than simply a glimmer of existence. Their claims are based on common assumptions about foreigners and especially Koreans. The claims they make reach new ears, and while they may not convince others fully of their claims, they put a new piece of bias into others' ears. Their existence is the existence of a negative form of racism against at least one ethnicity of Japanese civilian.

A pessimistic side to the ruling was that the ruling was applied using existing civil code, not an anti-discriminatory law. There does not exist any discrimination laws based on race. Existing rules about discrimination are vague and easy to reinterpret, meaning that a ruling can be made in favor of discrimination, as easily as against it. It is a large step in changing perceptions and moving legal principals towards equality rulings, but prevention of discrimination in businesses and other areas still legally exist. They are also considered normal within some areas, whether it is an onsen or a restaurant, various people can and do still discriminate based on a person being different or foreign. This is usually based on an assumption of "foreigners act or behave this way, and that is not desired in this place" therefore they refuse service, to avoid foreigners. Instead of starting a discussion on acceptable behavior with possible foreign customers, clientele, etcetera, they shut out those who are different, whom they assume do not understand or know how to behave in their place. Thus is the assumption to group all people together, so that they do not have to meet the individual as a person.

Various cases involving landlords refusing housing to foreigners have occurred recently. These cases involve government officials refusing to do anything about discrimination (Osaki, 2014), and mere warnings towards such individuals and businesses, which are not followed up on, when they are ignored (The Asahi Simbun 2008). This has resulted in issues in finding housing for foreigners, and open listings refusing to hire or house foreigners being listed without regulation on an anti-discriminatory basis.

But, if this is the way that Japanese treat legal residents and Japanese who are simply different from them, how do they treat tourists? It is a difficult depiction to find, as research shows that in many prefectures, the usual reaction to foreigners is distancing themselves from the *other* or foreign people. However, personal experience and discussion with tourists also shows that many Japanese respond to visitors with a welcoming attitude, especially those of the younger generation. Adults of a younger generation both understand the need for tourism in Japan and some of the desired traits of Globalization. Many Japanese are aware of foreigners bringing in something desired, such as English teachers and popular culture, and so they reflect this by opening up with a more accepting attitude towards those who are different.

So how does this effect tourism? Well, with the way foreigners are treated, being either completely ignored or pointed out as the *other*, we find that many are discouraged from visiting Japan. Even without learning much about Japan, many Westerners, especially U.S. Americans, are aware that Japan has a homogenous pride, with a culture that is difficult to understand, even with a translator. This makes many of them hesitant to visit, taking away what could be a large amount of tourism for Japan.

Many foreigners do visit though, some for a two week visit to a unique nation with a unique culture, and others with years of studying about the language and culture. These people come back with various kinds of stories, most of them varying based on how long they stayed within Japan. Foreigners who have been in Japan for short amounts of time report that their stay held many nights of drinking parties, cultural oddities, and strange commodities that would otherwise be considered inappropriate or taboo to display in their own culture. They see Japanese people as polite or shy people, and always felt that people encouraged them when they tried to understand Japanese language and culture.

Tourists who remain for a longer amount of time, the aforementioned problems of faux homogeneity in Japan becomes more apparent. For those who are in Japan for a longer period of time, it becomes more apparent that there is a different level of judgment in some of the things that seem encouraging to the short term tourists. Being around more Japanese people and having the same stimuli for an extended period of time, tourists who stay in Japan longer notice some of the racial issues more prominently than others. This varies from repetition of encouragement, such as “you speak Japanese well, keep it up” or “you use chopsticks well, keep it up” to completely avoiding them physically. Some Japanese people go as far as to completely avoid situations where they end up sitting next to a foreign person or halt a conversation when a foreign person comes within the parameter.

It is a “soft” racism, an unintentionally systematic behavior that makes people feel excluded or otherwise given the cold shoulder. At times, it removes the reason tourists come to Japan in the first place, whether that be to study Japanese language and culture, or to simply enjoy themselves in this unique country. Removing the social aspect by distancing them or belittling their capacity for things typically seen as being uniquely Japanese, removes the reasons for which they come to Japan.

But, there are plenty of foreigners who remain in Japan for a long period of time. They do not simply tolerate the discriminatory behavior, they find things that they enjoy about Japan and its culture. They enjoy socializing with Japanese people. Some even enjoy working in Japan.

While much of these discriminatory behaviors seem integral to the culture, many Japanese people go out of their way to come out of their shells, or otherwise make foreigners feel welcome. One of the most popular ways they do so, however, is speaking English to them primarily, even if they do not know a lot of English.

From the foreign perspective, especially for those who are native to Japan, simply being a minority born in the country, this becomes a grating routine of letting strangers know that they speak Japanese. But, the intention behind it, according to many Japanese citizens who admit to having done so before, is that they want to make foreigners feel welcome and safe. They want tourists to feel welcome in their country, so they use what they know, in an attempt to make them feel greeted. They want to start a discussion, and especially in business settings, they want to be able to communicate with foreigners efficiently. In order to do so, they presume that it would be easier for foreigners if they spoke English with them.

This often leads to another, rarer way that Japanese people try to do the opposite of discriminate. That is to speak to foreign strangers. Most Japanese people would not speak to a stranger, as it is a little taboo to do so without any reason of doing so. However, some foreigners have had various encounters where strangers decide to greet them and start up a conversation. It is an odd thing to do in Japanese culture, because Japanese people typically mind their own, if they do not otherwise know you.

However, for foreigners, this makes them feel that they are being viewed as something different, something to stare at. It gives many foreigners a feeling of being out of place, thus being viewed as the *other*, as many long term tourists are aware of Japanese cultural norms. However, the intent is to make foreigners feel more comfortable. While it does mean that somebody foreign stands out, it means that they are attempting to make them feel more at home. Coming out of their shells to greet somebody of a different ethnicity in an attempt to talk to them, usually in English, is in the Japanese perspective an attempt to give them a positive perspective of Japan.

In conclusion, much of Japan's perspective of foreigners is very narrow, despite the wide array of foreigners that visit and live in Japan. Many ethnicities that do live in Japan have not been mentioned, but that does not disclude them from the list of tourists who are discriminated against and otherwise greeted by Japanese. The interactions of foreigners with native Japanese people is not limited in format, as there are various views amongst the Japanese, with varying degrees of experience with foreigners.

Each individual in Japan has a different way of approaching tourists, both trying to be friendly and inviting and giving it a reputation. It is in the hospitable attitudes that come with the culture that make most long term residents decide to stay in the country. There is something unique and enjoyable about how Japanese people treat each other and their friends in their culture, and that attracts many people.

Much of tourism has been harmed by the sour reputation of Japan's treatment of foreigners, however. Many people are afraid of going outside of their comfort zone and knowing that Japan is such a vastly different country that closes itself off with a homogeneity concept, many people are afraid to try. There is strength in the way people talk about a country and its culture, more so than companies, news articles and politicians can say about it. People have connections, something that becomes lost to tourists during some of their stay in Japan. Whether they are immigrants, long term residents or tourists, the behavior towards them affects the long term stability of incoming tourism from other countries for Japan's economy.

References

- Foreigners make up 1.5% of populace | The Japan Times. (2013, August 29). Retrieved June 26, 2015, from <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2013/08/29/national/foreigners-make-up-1-5-of-populace/#.Vau6zvmqqkp>
- Kozuka, J. (2013, November 11). Is Japan really racist? Retrieved July 11, 2015, from <http://www.japantoday.com/category/opinions/view/is-japan-really-racist>
- Osaka court upholds ruling banning anti-Korean hate speech outside school. (2014, July 9). Retrieved July 13, 2015, from <http://www.japantoday.com/category/national/view/osaka-high-court-upholds-ruling-banning-anti-korean-hate-speech-outside-school>
- Osaki, T. (2015, April 9). No-foreigners landlord case shows Japan 'utterly unprepared' to fight discrimination: Expert | The Japan Times. Retrieved July 12, 2015.
- The Asahi Shimbun Culture Research Center. (2008, October 1). Japan's Entrenched Discrimination Toward Foreigners. Retrieved July 19, 2015, from http://www.japanfocus.org/-The_Asahi_Shimbun_Culture_Research_Center-/2932/article.html
- Yamanaka, K. (2008). Japan as a Country of Immigration: Two Decades after an Influx of Immigrant Workers. Retrieved July 11, 2015, from http://camel.minpaku.ac.jp/dspace/bitstream/10502/2054/1/SER77_016.pdf