

DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR “DIVERSITY IN JAPAN” DR. STEPHEN MURPHY-SHIGEMATSU

- Organizing Questions
- Why has Japan historically found it difficult to encourage diversity?
 - What are the benefits and challenges of diversity for Japanese society?
 - How can you apply lessons from Japan’s approach to diversity to your own society?

Summary

In December 2024, Dr. Stephen Murphy-Shigematsu, adjunct professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University and former professor at the University of Tokyo, recorded a 22-minute video about diversity in Japan. He described Japan’s current levels of diversity among several dimensions, discussed how perceptions around diversity in Japan are changing, and provided examples of how Japanese society has experienced tension over increasing diversity. In this discussion guide, students take notes on the video and then research specific examples that Dr. Stephen Murphy-Shigematsu mentioned. They then share what they learned in small groups and end the unit with a full-class discussion of how to apply lessons from Japan’s approach to diversity to their own society. This discussion guide is appropriate for advanced secondary students and university students.

- Objectives
- Through the course of this discussion guide, students will
- understand various dimensions of diversity;
 - understand Japan’s journey toward recognizing more diversity among its population; and
 - explore the benefits and challenges for Japan society in becoming more welcoming of diversity.

Materials

Handout 1, *Video Notes*
Handout 2, *Research on Examples from Video*
Handout 3, *Notes on Presentations*
Answer Key 1, *Video Notes*
Answer Key 2, *Research on Examples from Video*
Teacher Information, *Video Transcript*
Video, “Diversity in Japan,” online at
<https://spice.fsi.stanford.edu/multimedia/diversity-in-japan>

Equipment	Computer with Internet access and an HTML5-supported web browser Computer projector and screen
Teacher Preparation	<p>Instructions and materials are based on a class size of 30 students. Adjust accordingly for different class sizes.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make the appropriate number of copies of handouts. 2. Preview Video, “Diversity in Japan” (running time: 22 minutes). You can use Teacher Information, <i>Video Transcript</i>, as a reference for the video content. 3. Become familiar with the content of the handouts and answer keys. 4. Set up and test your class computer and projector before starting the lesson.
Time	Two 50-minute class periods, plus homework before each class period
Procedures Before Day One	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inform students that they will be learning about diversity in Japan for the next two class periods. 2. Distribute one copy of Handout 1, <i>Video Notes</i>, to each student. Instruct students to watch the video and complete this handout before the next class period. Tell students to reserve 90 minutes to watch the video and complete the handout.
Day One	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ask students to verbally share their responses to the questions on Handout 1, <i>Video Notes</i>. Use Answer Key 1, <i>Video Notes</i>, to guide the discussion. 2. Collect Handout 1 from each student for assessment. 3. Organize the class into six groups of students. 4. Distribute one copy of Handout 2, <i>Research on Examples from Video</i>, to each student. Clearly communicate your expectations around whether or how students can use large language models (LLMs) and other forms of generative artificial intelligence to complete this assignment. 5. Allow groups the remainder of the class period to research their assigned examples. Circulate throughout the class to answer questions. At your discretion, use Answer Key 2, <i>Research on Examples from Video</i>, to help students with their research. 6. Before the end of the class period, inform students that they will present their research to their group mates and turn in their research in the class period. They should complete any remaining preparation as homework.

- Before Day Two** Students complete their research per the instructions on Handout 2, *Research on Examples from Video*.
- Day Two**
1. Ask students to reconvene in their groups. Distribute one copy of Handout 3, *Notes on Presentations*, to each student.
 2. Inform students that they have 30 minutes to share their research with the other members of their small group. Instruct students to write down what they learn on the physical copy of Handout 3, *Notes on Presentations*, which you will collect for assessment.
 3. After 30 minutes, collect Handout 2, *Research on Examples from Video*, and Handout 3, *Notes on Presentations*, from each student.
 4. Conclude the lesson with a discussion on the following two questions. Alternatively, assign students to address one or both questions in a concluding essay:
 - a. What was the most surprising thing you learned about diversity in Japan?
 - b. How can you apply lessons from Japan's approach to diversity to your own society?
- Extension** Ask students to write an essay or blog post or to record a podcast or video conversation answering one of the following questions:
- Why has Japan traditionally prioritized conformity in its society?
 - In your opinion, how should Japan try to balance diversity with cultural homogeneity? Why do you believe this is the best approach for Japan?
- Assessment** The following are suggestions for assessing student work in this lesson:
1. Evaluate student responses to Handout 1, *Video Notes*, based on Answer Key 1, *Video Notes*.
 2. Evaluate student responses to Handout 2, *Research on Examples from Video*, based on Answer Key 2, *Research on Examples from Video*, and the quality of the sources they cited.
 3. Evaluate students' notes on Handout 3, *Notes on Presentations*, based on Answer Key 2, *Research on Examples from Video*, and how accurately and completely they captured their classmates' remarks.
 4. Assess student participation in group and class discussions, evaluating their ability to
 - clearly state their opinions, questions, and / or answers;
 - provide thoughtful answers;
 - exhibit sensitivity toward different cultures and ideas;
 - respect and acknowledge other students' comments; and
 - ask relevant and insightful questions.

VIDEO NOTES

You are about to watch a 22-minute video from Dr. Stephen Murphy-Shigematsu, adjunct professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University and former professor at the University of Tokyo. Dr. Murphy-Shigematsu discusses Japan's approach to diversity in its society since World War II and describes Japan's current levels of diversity along several dimensions. He provides examples of how Japanese society has experienced tension around these dimensions of diversity and concludes by explaining why he believes that Japan must become more comfortable with diversity.

Use the space below to answer each question. You may want to take notes on another sheet of paper as you watch the video.

1. What issues around diversity did Dr. Murphy-Shigematsu encounter in his childhood and youth?
2. How did Japan view its homogeneity in the years after World War II?
3. Why has Japan recently moved to recognize diversity more actively?
4. What dimensions of diversity does Dr. Murphy-Shigematsu mention?

5. What central tension does Japan face around welcoming greater diversity?
6. Which three examples does Dr. Murphy-Shigematsu share of people who have shown how Japanese society can respect individuality?
7. What did the members of Japan's 2019 men's rugby team do to communicate effectively despite their linguistic differences?
8. Why does Dr. Murphy-Shigematsu believe Japan needs to become more comfortable with diversity?

Key Terms (in order of mention)

Ehime—a prefecture (administrative division equivalent to a state or province) on Shikoku, one of the four main islands of Japan

tanitsu minzoku kokka—Japanese phrase that can be translated as “ethnically (or racially) homogenous nation”

Todai—Japanese abbreviation for the University of Tokyo, one of the most prestigious universities in Japan

nuclear family—family unit consisting of at most a mother, a father, and their dependent children

neurodiversity—the concept that recognizes and values the natural variations in how people’s brains function, emphasizing that there is no single “correct” way for the brain to work. It includes a range of neurological differences, such as autism, ADHD, and learning disabilities, and promotes acceptance and inclusion of these differences as part of human diversity.

overtourism—when the number of visitors to a destination exceeds its carrying capacity, leading to a range of social, environmental, and economic problems. The World Tourism Organization defines overtourism as “the impact of tourism on a destination, or parts thereof, that excessively influences perceived quality of life of citizens and/or quality of visitor experiences in a negative way.”

RESEARCH ON EXAMPLES FROM VIDEO

In the video, Dr. Murphy-Shigematsu mentioned several examples related to increasing diversity in Japan. These examples reveal nuances around Japan's definition of and openness to diversity. Each member of your small group will research one of these examples to better understand its significance. You'll then share what you learned with the other members of your group.

Step 1: Choose Your Example

First, assign one of the five examples listed below to someone in your group. Enter the name of the student assigned to each example in the table below.

Example	Name of Assigned Student
Hirotsada Ototake (aka "Ototake-san")	
Ariana Miyamoto	
Japan's 2019 men's rugby team	
Concerns about overtourism in Japan	
Public schools' forced dyeing of students' non-black hair	

Step 2: Conduct Research and Prepare to Share Your Response

Work individually to research your assigned example. Document your answers and bring them to the next class period, where you will have three to five minutes to share these responses with the other members of your group.

1. Provide a short introduction of the person/group/issue in your example.
2. What type(s) of diversity are central to this example?
3. What does this example illustrate about how Japanese society defines diversity and is reacting to increased diversity?

Remember to use reliable sources and list them along with your answers because your teacher will evaluate the quality of your sources.

NOTES ON PRESENTATIONS

Use the table on the following pages to take notes on your groupmates' presentations. Your teacher will collect this handout for assessment.

Example	
Presenting Student	
Notes	

Example	
Presenting Student	
Notes	
Example	
Presenting Student	
Notes	

handout 3

Example	
Presenting Student	
Notes	

Example	
Presenting Student	
Notes	

VIDEO NOTES

1. What issues around diversity did Dr. Murphy-Shigematsu encounter in his childhood and youth?

- *Dr. Murphy-Shigematsu was born to an American father and a Japanese mother. At the time, this meant that his parents could not legally marry. His last name (Murphy) was different from his older sisters' last name (Shigematsu).*
- *When Dr. Murphy-Shigematsu moved to the United States, his family was one of the few in his area with Asian ancestry. This engendered curiosity and sometimes hostility.*
- *Dr. Murphy-Shigematsu was aware that some of his family's traditions were culturally unique in the environment where he grew up.*
- *Dr. Murphy-Shigematsu's family practiced Catholicism, whereas most other people in his community were Protestant Christian or Jewish.*

2. How did Japan view its homogeneity in the years after World War II?

Japanese leaders promoted the view that its homogeneity and identity as a monoethnic society was a source of strength. They saw racial diversity as something that existed in other countries, but not in Japan.

3. Why has Japan recently moved to recognize diversity more actively?

Japan's rapidly aging population has created the need for more labor from other countries, thus increasing immigration and subsequently the need to accept people of other nationalities and different cultural, linguistic, and ethnic backgrounds in society.

There's also a growing awareness in Japan that differences—especially but not exclusively related to abilities—make for more dynamic groups and teams. Organizations in Japan increasingly view recognition of diversity as important for team building, collaboration, and cooperation.

4. What dimensions of diversity does Dr. Murphy-Shigematsu mention?

Dr. Murphy-Shigematsu mentions the following dimensions of diversity in the video:

- *Racial and ethnic*
- *Gender*
- *Religious*
- *Disabilities/diversity in abilities*
- *Family type*
- *Class*
- *Regional*
- *Neurodiversity*
- *Sexual orientation*

5. What central tension does Japan face around welcoming greater diversity?

According to Dr. Murphy-Shigematsu, even though Japan increasingly recognizes the need to become more diverse and the benefits of increased diversity, this contradicts its longstanding conviction that Japan's ethnic and cultural homogeneity is one of its great strengths. Due to this ingrained belief, greater visible diversity in society often generates fear, especially as more people from other countries move to and visit Japan.

6. Which three examples does Dr. Murphy-Shigematsu share of people who have shown how Japanese society can respect individuality?

Dr. Murphy-Shigematsu shared three examples:

- **Ototake-san:** *a well-known public figure in Japan born without arms and legs who has spoken about the need for all individuals to express their uniqueness, no matter how they look.*
- **Ariana Miyamoto:** *a biracial Japanese citizen who won the Miss Universe Japan beauty contest in 2015. She challenged traditional Japanese perceptions of beauty and appearance.*
- **Japanese 2019 national men's rugby team:** *the team was composed of many players who were not born in Japan but were part ethnically Japanese. Several players did not fluently speak Japanese and were not familiar with all aspects of Japanese communication and customs, so it was surprising when the team went much further in the Rugby World Cup than expected.*

7. What did the members of Japan's 2019 men's rugby team do to communicate effectively despite their linguistic differences?

Because several players on the rugby team didn't speak Japanese fluently, the team knew that they could not assume they would understand each other. Thus, they made an intentional effort to communicate clearly in their words and gestures.

8. Why does Dr. Murphy-Shigematsu believe Japan needs to become more comfortable with diversity?

He believes that Japan will need to become more accepting of diversity because it's inevitable that society will become more diverse, especially as Japan's population ages and it needs to interact more with people from other backgrounds.

RESEARCH ON EXAMPLES FROM VIDEO

Check students' responses to see if they reflect the sample responses below. Ensure that students listed their sources and that their sources are reliable. Sample sources for each item are listed below.

1. Hirotada Ototake (aka "Ototake-san")

- Provide a short introduction of the person/group/issue in your example.

Hirotada Ototake is a Japanese writer, educator, and advocate who is very well known in Japan. He was born with a rare condition called tetra-amelia syndrome, resulting in the absence of all four limbs. He gained national attention with his 1998 memoir No One's Perfect, published when he was 22 years old and still a university student. In the book, Ototake framed his disability as a difference worth celebrating rather than a limitation. No One's Perfect became a bestseller and was translated into multiple languages, including English. It made him a well-known figure in Japan and encouraged greater acceptance of and accommodations for disability in Japan.

After writing No One's Perfect, Ototake became a sports journalist and then a primary school teacher. He tried to enter politics, but a series of extramarital affairs tarnished his image and he did not win the seat in Japan's House of Representatives he ran for in 2024.

- What type(s) of diversity are central to this example?

Disabilities/diversity in abilities, diversity in physical appearance

- What does this example illustrate about how Japanese society defines diversity and is reacting to increased diversity?

Ototake's inspiration story led to increased discussion in Japan about how disabilities did not have to limit people and could be conceptualized as a positive variation in human experience. No One's Perfect and Ototake's accomplishments in general challenged stereotypes that people with disabilities should be hidden or pitied and led to increased acceptance of disabilities. It has also led to more accommodations for people with disabilities, such as better wheelchair access in Japan's larger cities.

- Reliable sources:

Reliable sources for this item include:

- Wikipedia
- Ototake's memoir No One's Perfect
- Japanese news sources, especially The Japan Times, NHK World, and Asahi Shimbun
- South China Morning Post and other newspapers with wide circulation

2. Ariana Miyamoto

- Provide a short introduction of the person/group/issue in your example.

Ariana Miyamoto is a Japanese beauty pageant winner, model, and public speaker who made history in 2015 as the first biracial woman to be crowned Miss Universe Japan. When she won the national title, some in Japan criticized her as "not Japanese enough" because of her darker skin and mixed heritage.

Since her pageant win, Ariana Miyamoto has become a spokesperson for multiracial identity in Japan. She also advocates against bullying and discrimination and is a frequent guest speaker at international forums that discuss racial diversity in Asia. Miyamoto speaks openly about her experiences facing

racism growing up in Japan and uses her platform to encourage greater acceptance of Japan's growing multicultural population.

- What type(s) of diversity are central to this example?

Racial and ethnic diversity, diversity in physical appearance

- What does this example illustrate about how Japanese society defines diversity and is reacting to increased diversity?

As the first biracial Miss Universe Japan winner, Miyamoto's victory sparked a conversation about race, identity, and diversity in Japan and Japanese beauty standards. Some questioned whether Miyamoto could really be considered Japanese because of how she looked and because she was mixed race.

Miyamoto advocates for greater recognition of mixed-race Japanese people and challenges the belief that only those with 100% Japanese ancestry are "truly Japanese."

- Reliable sources:

Reliable sources for this item include:

- Wikipedia
- BBC News (see, for example, "[The beauty contest winner making Japan look at itself](#)")
- Videos from major news networks, such as [CBS News](#) and ABC News
- Major newspapers, including The Washington Post

3. Japan's 2019 men's rugby team

- Provide a short introduction of the person / group / issue in your example.

Japan hosted the men's Rugby World Cup in 2019 for the first time. Japan was not considered a serious rugby nation and was seen as a heavy underdog for the tournament. Of the 31 players on Japan's World Cup roster, 15 were not ethnically Japanese. They had qualified for the team by living in Japan for years or being raised there. Some had Japanese citizenship, while others did not.

The team's coach Jamie Joseph, himself a former player on the Japanese national rugby team due to his heritage, chose the slogan of "One Team." Since not all the players spoke fluent Japanese, they learned to use clear and concise verbal and non-verbal communication to make sure they understood each other.

The team greatly surpassed expectations. They won their group for the first time ever, defeating perennial rugby powers Ireland and Scotland. The Japanese team became the first Asian team to make the quarterfinals of the tournament and won praise for their fast and exciting style of play. Along the way, they enjoyed incredible support from the Japanese people and became a source of great national pride.

- What type(s) of diversity are central to this example?

Racial and ethnic diversity, linguistic diversity

- What does this example illustrate about how Japanese society defines diversity and is reacting to increased diversity?

When the Rugby World Cup squad was first announced, some members of the Japanese public criticized the amount of "foreigners" on the team. However, the team won widespread support when the tournament started and the team won all the games in its group. The team challenged traditional notions of "Japaneseness" and provided an example of a national identity that was not just based on ethnicity. It marked acceptance of a more diverse sense of who could represent Japan.

- Reliable sources:

Reliable sources for this item include:

- “A Richly Diverse Team Flies the Flag for Japan: That’s Rugby,” Nippon.com: <https://www.nippon.com/en/japan-topics/g00740/a-richly-diverse-team-flies-the-flag-for-japan-that%E2%80%99s-rugby.html>
- “Brave Blossoms challenging old ideas of what it means to be Japanese,” The Guardian: <https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2019/oct/09/brave-blossoms-challenging-old-ideas-of-what-it-means-to-be-japanese>
- “Diversity strengthens Japan on and off the rugby pitch,” Nikkei Asia: <https://asia.nikkei.com/Spotlight/Rugby-World-Cup/Diversity-strengthens-Japan-on-and-off-the-rugby-pitch>
- “What Japan’s Rugby World Cup Can Teach Us About Leadership,” Forbes: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/worldeconomicforum/2019/10/01/japan-rugby-world-cup-leadership/>

4. Concerns about overtourism in Japan

- Provide a short introduction of the person / group / issue in your example.

As Japan’s economy has slowed, the government has actively promoted tourism as a vital economic growth strategy, especially in aging and rural areas. This effort has been wildly successful and tourism to Japan has boomed: 2024 set a record for tourist arrivals to Japan, and 2025 is projected to break that record.

However, the surge in international visitors has led to overcrowding, strained infrastructure, and concerns about the impact of so many visitors on local residents and cultural heritage sites. The term “tourism pollution” has emerged to describe these concerns.

Many Japanese complain about tourists overcrowding transit, dropping litter in their wake, and disrespecting local norms. Some local governments have placed physical barriers to block common photo spots after locals complained about disruption from tourists.

- What type(s) of diversity are central to this example?

Racial and ethnic diversity, cultural diversity, different national origins

- What does this example illustrate about how Japanese society defines diversity and is reacting to increased diversity?

Foreign visitors arrive with different behaviors, norms, and expectations that sometimes clash with Japanese customs and expectations—for example, around appropriate noise levels in public and queuing etiquette. Many Japanese see these differences as disruptive rather than enriching. This reflects the challenge of tolerating people who don’t share the same cultural habits.

Some observers see Japanese anti-tourist sentiment as part of a deeper concern about tourists eroding Japan’s sense of unique identity. Others note the tension between the official welcome of tourists with popular criticism of the social and cultural impact of so many non-Japanese people.

- Reliable sources:

Reliable sources for this item include:

- “‘A free-for-all’: Japan divided as return of tourists brings Instagrammers and litter,” The Guardian: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/feb/03/a-free-for-all-japan-divided-as-return-of-tourists-brings-instagrammers-and-litter>
- “‘Hell’: Video shows iconic Kyoto street overrun by hordes of tourists,” News.com.au: <https://www.news.com.au/travel/destinations/asia/hell-video-shows-iconic-kyoto-street-overrun-by-hordes-of-tourists/news-story/6684e4e11a436008ebfc5cffe2a71b2e?utm>

- “Japan quietly and politely hates its tourism boom,” Asia Times: <https://asiatimes.com/2023/12/japan-quietly-and-politely-hates-its-tourism-boom>

5. Public schools’ forced dyeing of students’ non-black hair

- Provide a short introduction of the person / group / issue in your example.

Until the past few years, many K–12 schools in Japan had strict dress codes that included a requirement that students have black hair. They assumed that non-black hair was dyed and required students to make their hair black if it was not.

In 2017, an 18-year-old student at Osaka Prefectural Kaifukan High School filed a lawsuit against the Osaka prefectural government after being repeatedly ordered to dye her naturally brown hair black to comply with school regulations. The student’s mother had told the school that her daughter’s natural hair color was brown, but the school insisted she conform to the rule prohibiting dyed or bleached hair. The student experienced physical discomfort, including scalp irritation and rashes, due to the frequent dyeing. As a result, she ceased attending classes in September 2016 and sought 2.2 million yen (approximately \$19,300) in damages.

In February 2021, the Osaka District Court ruled that while the school’s hair color policy was legally permissible, the method of enforcement caused the student emotional distress. The court ordered the prefectural government to pay the student 330,000 yen (about \$3,190) in damages. The ruling highlighted that the school’s actions—such as removing her name from class lists and denying her participation in school activities—lacked serious legitimacy and failed to consider the psychological impact on the student.

This case brought national attention to the strict appearance regulations in Japanese schools and sparked discussions about individual rights and conformity within the education system. In the wake of this case and a viral video campaign and petitions, some schools have dropped their black hair rule. Tokyo’s board of education decided to abolish its rule in 2022.

- What type(s) of diversity are central to this example?
Racial and ethnic diversity, diversity in physical appearance
- What does this example illustrate about how Japanese society defines diversity and is reacting to increased diversity?

The original lawsuit from 2017 highlighted that the Japanese education system only recognized black as a natural hair color, reflecting a definition of acceptable appearance that excluded anyone with naturally non-black hair.

In this case, the movement toward allowing non-black hair shows that Japan is beginning to recognize the increased ethnic diversity in its society and expand the definition of acceptable appearance.

- Reliable sources:

Reliable sources for this item include:

- “Japan student forced to dye hair wins compensation,” BBC: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-56099237>
- “Japanese girl says school forced her to dye hair black, sues government - media,” Reuters: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-japan-education-hair/japanese-girl-says-school-forced-her-to-dye-hair-black-sues-government-media-idUSKBN1CW0MH>
- “Japanese school pupils told: dye your hair black to fit in,” The Telegraph: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2019/05/22/campaign-grows-stop-japanese-schools-forcing-pupils-dye-hair> (This was the article displayed in the video.)
- “Japanese Student Forced to Dye Her Hair Black Wins, and Loses, in Court,” The New York Times: <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/19/world/asia/japan-hair-school>

VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

“Diversity in Japan”

Dr. Stephen Murphy-Shigematsu

Recorded 11 December 2024

Hi! This is Stephen Murphy-Shigematsu, and I'll be talking to you a little bit about diversity and especially diversity in Japan.

My work is really based in my own family background, which originates in Japan. My father was an American who was there, living there after the war. My mother was a Japanese from Ehime, and we had a family that was mixed. My father was welcomed into the family even though they were not allowed to marry at the time because of the laws that existed in occupied Japan but were not actually very different from the laws that existed in many of the United States, including California. So at that very time in California, my parents would not have been able to be legally married because they were considered to be of a different race.

So issues of diversity really were part of my original family. Because of the differences in nationality laws, my older sisters were born as Japanese with the name Shigematsu, I was born as an American with the name Murphy. So these kinds of experiences that occurred very early in life helped me to become sensitized to issues of diversity and to be seeking an understanding of what my own family background was. I knew that I had a family that came from Ehime and when I went to the United States as a child, I learned that I had another family, which were the Murphy family who had immigrated from Ireland.

And that also raised the issues that were most prominent for me in childhood of religious diversity, because the Irish were Catholic mostly, and so that was part of my own upbringing in this Irish community as being Catholic which was also different from a lot of my friends who were in other types of religious groups. Mostly other Christians, but also some Jewish families. But even more prominent, I think, was the sense of racial diversity. Because that was something in which my family stood out because we were the only people from Asia that anyone had ever seen apparently, and so that made a certain type of curiosity which sometimes, of course, was hostility. But it was something that we felt very clearly in that environment. But also a kind of cultural diversity because we clearly had habits or ways of doing things and seeing things that were different from the people around us. And that was something that was probably not as apparent, but something that I had to learn to understand as I grew older.

In my career, I first was in education but then I started to look at issues of diversity. Originally in education, they were about multicultural education, anti-racism education, things that I did with very young children. But as I developed into the study of psychology, that that was something that I also looked at in terms of the diversity that existed in my particular field of mental health and how different societies looked at issues of illness and healing. And how there were different forms of mental health services that had a very deep cultural basis depending on people's background and what would be especially helpful for them in terms of the kinds of mental health services that were offered. This was part of my early career, studying about diversity in the United States.

But then I moved to the University of Tokyo. And that's where I became involved with issues that were seen as really important in Japanese society. So at the time, around 1980, then-Prime

Minister Nakasone formed a vision of how one aspect of Japanese society, the higher educational system, could become more international. And the government made a plan that by the year 2000 there would be 100,000 international students in Japan. And therefore they needed a whole infrastructure in the national universities. So I was hired at that time at the University of Tokyo to begin something which we called an international center. And that was really my introduction to the way in which Japanese society was starting to see the need for diversity.

And while it was very good, I felt that there was this emphasis on bringing more international students to Japan, it was clear that there was also the desire that they return home so that the government's programs did not provide with family support and sometimes students were told very directly, "Leave your family home, you're here to study." And so there was a huge cultural gap with many of the people that were wanting to come to Japan because they felt a clear sense that we are wanted there, but we are just temporarily and we're not encouraged to stay really.

There was a program on NHK at the time, the Japanese public broadcasting system, and it was a Japanese language program. And the first question that the Japanese asked to the international student was "*Itsu kimashita ka?*"—"When did you come here?" And then after the answer she says "*Itsu kaerimasu ka?*"—"And when are you going back?" And to the international students that was always something they thought was very humorous, whereas the Japanese who made the program obviously didn't think it was very funny.

But it started by, this experience which I did for 11 years, started me to research much more about diversity in Japan. And the issues that were encountered were often really based in the whole sense of ideology of homogeneity that there was, especially in postwar Japan, an ideology that Japan was strong because of we are all the same. So the Japanese word that was being used was *tanitsu minzoku kokka*, the idea that Japanese is a mono-, Japan is a mono-ethnic society, and that's what gives us strength.

And so of course this is something that is very difficult with an ideology like that to embrace diversity, and diversity was really seen as something racial, something that exists in other countries, but not in Japan. There was some recognition of ethnic diversity in terms of the population that had come from Korea. And there was recognition of that although the nationality law changed after the war in which Koreans were no longer Japanese citizens. And so that awareness of diversity has always existed to some degree, but it's really in recent years that it's become a very big issue throughout society. The whole issue of diversity, equity, and inclusion is part of every major corporation's agenda about how do we increase diversity. Because it's something that's very necessary especially in terms of the aging population in Japan, which is creating the need for greater labor, especially coming from other countries.

But also the form that diversity is usually seen as taking is gender diversity and therefore the corporations, all kinds of companies, universities have programs to increase the number of women who are not only parts of the companies and the schools but also increasing their role in management level, so higher levels of corporations. This is something that's true in companies but also even in universities like the University of Tokyo, where recently there's been a lot more publicity about how the number of, the population of *Todai* students is extremely centered on, it's very heavily still, young men. Professorship of course is still very heavily men, and the students also often come from the same class background in the big cities of Tokyo and Osaka. And so the representation in *Todai*, universities like the University of Tokyo, is very limited and this is something that's becoming a lot more publicity about this type of lack of diversity.

Sometimes diversity is seen in companies as about abilities and disabilities. And so there's much more awareness of bringing in people who have certain types of disabilities but also can offer

abilities in other ways. There's more awareness these days about family diversity. The kinds of different families, alternative families, compared to what is considered the ideal nuclear family so many more families in which there are single parents, mostly single mothers.

And this also raises the issue of class diversity, that there's an increasing awareness that there is growing class differences in Japan and that there is a population now of people who are really struggling to make their basic needs met in Japan.

There's more awareness too of regional diversity. So something that is mostly apparent when you look at the extremities of Japan, Okinawa but also Hokkaido, that the differences in people in those areas is more apparent. But also throughout the Japanese other islands, the major islands of Honshu and Shikoku and Kyushu, you also see regional differences there in terms of local cultures. And you also, as I mentioned previously, you see much less representation of people from all these different areas of the country when they come to the major companies and schools, universities in Tokyo area, especially the most prestigious ones in those areas. So there's much more recognition now of the need to increase regional diversity in terms of both at universities but also in companies.

Another area that's come to the attention of a lot more people, both in companies but also in universities, is neurodiversity. So the diversity that exists in every human being in terms of the way our brains are structured and the way our brains function. And it's just much more recent compared to the awareness in countries like the United States about the ways in which humans differ by things, categories, such as called ADHD or *tadousei shougai*, or things like autism, the *jihai-shou*, and what was once considered to be a clear line between somebody who is normal or abnormal or healthy or unhealthy. There's much more awareness of what is called a spectrum that every human being falls somewhere along this line of diversity in which we have different abilities and different disabilities and different ways, different strengths and different weaknesses.

So there's a growing awareness that people who were once excluded from Japanese society are now seen as that they can be included with a recognition of not only their disability but also their abilities and how it's become very important in terms of team building, collaboration, cooperation but also the dynamic structure of groups to recognize people who have different types of abilities and who could therefore form a very dynamic team.

One of the things that's still confronting the embracing of diversity in Japan, though, is the sense of the ideology of homogeneity and how that's something that has always been a strength for Japan. And so there's even a denial of the diversity that does exist. For example, of students at some schools who have naturally brown hair, being forced to dye their hair black, even though the school has a policy against dyeing their hair, so they're forced to dye their hair as though it's important to maintain this image that everybody is the same.

In reality, of course, there is a great diversity even among all these people who are considered to be just the same Japanese. But this fear of diversity still continues when you see the kinds of rapid increase in the number of people who live in Japan now who come from other countries, it's also arousing a fear that this is threatening what makes Japan a really great country.

And you see this sometimes in terms of what is called the fear of overtourism. And so the people coming to Japan now as tourists even are sometimes not welcome because they feel like ... local people feel they're disrupting the sense of the local culture. So these types of fears about how other people from other countries will change Japan is something that still really needs to be confronted in order for Japan to become a society in which people feel that they're more able to be who they really are.

So there are some surveys that say that maybe 10% of the population is lesbian, gay, or bisexual but that's not something that you can come out very openly about. For example, in the ways in which American universities would have clubs, very public, in which you could join a club in which you would identify yourself by a certain sexual orientation. But there is more growing sense of that it's okay to express yourself in some circles, some awareness that there is the use of pronouns as you see very commonly in the United States. A magazine called *They*, which makes it very clear that there are people who don't identify as he or she so clearly, but would like to identify with some other pronoun that would show a broader sense of identity.

So even though there are these fears, there's also a history in Japan of really respecting the individuality of different people. And it's something that I think Japan can still draw on in the sense of engaging with diversity. And there are certain people who have led this type of effort. For example Ototake-san, who was born without arms and legs, engaged a few years back with Ariana Miyamoto, I think was her name. But pointing out how the two of us are both very different, obviously different because I don't have arms or legs and your skin is darker than most Japanese, but I think that we can help others to recognize that there are huge numbers of people in Japan who feel their sense of uniqueness and want to express that and feel that the society is really restricting them in that sense and holding them back from really being who they are, and that this is something that's very painful for human beings: to be locked into a society in which they feel that they have to pretend that they are somebody else and that they can't really express who they are. But as that becomes more desirable, I think that that will make it more possible for people to do that.

And one example that we have is the popularity of the rugby national team in 2019, in which they were extremely successful which surprised a lot of people because they said, how could such a diverse team, this was the most diverse national team in Japanese sports history. And people questioned why were they so successful. And in an interesting way they said, "We are strong because we are diverse." And they said, "We recognize our diversity and we have mutual respect for each other. The Japanese players respect the players from other countries. The players from other countries respect Japanese culture, and we're very conscious and intentional about doing that. But also we recognize that because we are different, we have to communicate more clearly with each other. And therefore the way in which all-Japanese groups sometimes assume that they don't need to communicate directly because they're all the same, we don't make that assumption. And we are very conscious of communicating very directly with words and in details and that's what makes us a strong country."

And so hopefully there are examples like this that will help other Japanese who don't see the strength of diversity to really believe that is something that is not just necessary, but that it actually brings benefits. And so even though the difficulties of diversity can be quite apparent, I think that what is really needed now is for people to see what diversity can bring and how necessary that is when the world is changing so rapidly that it requires new solutions, innovative solutions, creative solutions. And that that's what diversity brings, is that sense of dynamic energy to a group in which people have different ways of seeing things, different ways of doing things.

And that's something that I think we can bring more to Japanese society, Japanese schools, Japanese groups, and that the education has to begin very early. It can begin not waiting until people get into companies to have diversity training, but hopefully in schools where kids learn at a very early age that we're really all the same human beings and that the differences are very minor, but also very important to recognize. And if we recognize them and accept them, that that's something that can really help us to bring diversity into Japanese society, accepting the

ways in which we ourselves are different and also accepting the ways in which we are different from other people.

Accepting ourselves and accepting others in that way, I think, can really enhance the acceptance of diversity in Japanese society because it's inevitable that society will become more diverse. And so I think it's important to really address that in the educational system from a very early age and to continue to address that in the companies level, but also at the governmental level, where it's often important to create policies that also enhance diversity.

So this is a very brief introduction to my understanding of what diversity is in Japan. But I hope it helps you to understand a little bit better what some of the basic conditions and situations are today. Thank you.