

# BBC Newsday - Multiethnic Japan

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Yerr, Mariko Oi there for erh in, for us rather in Tokyo. Well, two weeks ago Japan opened the Tokyo Olympics, as Mariko was saying, with a ceremony which featured two mixed race Japanese athletes in very high **profile** roles. The MBA basketball star, Rui Hachimura and tennis champion, Naomi Osaka. In the days since there has been **intense** debate over whether this could be a **watershed** moment in the way Japan views its growing multi-ethnic population. From Tokyo, Rupert Winfield Hayes reports.

It was the **crowning** moment of the Opening Ceremony and a big surprise. Two of Japan's most famous mixed race athletes given the honour of leading the team and lighting the cauldron. But in the two weeks since, Naomi Osaka, in particular, has been targeted with online **abuse** with some questioning whether she is really Japanese. It's something Ariana Miyamoto knows well. Back in 2016 she also caused shock here becoming the first mixed race woman to be crowned Miss Universe Japan. Watching the Olympic opening ceremony Ariana says she was pretty **sceptical**.

I don't know why they were chosen. It seems like it was to get good publicity.



Japan has a lot of mixed race celebrities and sports stars. Bi-racial people are often held up as being more beautiful, even more intelligent. But Ariana says within that, there is still a **hierarchy**.



Half white people are greatly celebrated in Japan. But when it comes to half black people it's different. When I was working as a model I was told that a lot of Japanese women [wouldn't] want the clothes that I wear since my skin colour is very different. So they wouldn't allow me to model their outfits.

**crossroads**  
(turning point)

**doubtful or**  
**unconvinced**

**great (extreme)**

**mistreatment**

**pecking order**  
(ranking)

**public attention**

**ultimate (top)**

## As I look at Japan as a..

Baye McNeil is a writer who has lived in Japan for 17 years. He says Naomi Osaka lighting the Olympic cauldron will not change the fact that most Japanese still think this is a mono-ethnic society.



So, the first thing Japan will need to do is **dispense with that rumour, with that fallacy** that they are a **homogeneous** country. It's a **misperception** and the fact that they haven't been correcting it is feeding this

negativity. Erh, the response towards Naomi Osaka, Rui Hachimura and all other people because, erh, Japanese... most Japanese people don't understand this basic fact that their country is not homogeneous.

Bi-racial people are not the only ones who face exclusion and **discrimination** in Japan. In the southern Okinawa Islands there are nearly one and a half million Ryukyuan people who are not even recognised as an official minority despite having their own culture and language. In the far North there are the Ainu people and then in Japan's big cities like here, there is the group that perhaps faces the greatest **hostility**, and those are ethnic Koreans.

They never mention the ethnic Korean in the Opening Ceremony so where we are, where are we, I mean.



Kihō's Korean grandparents were brought here over 80 years ago. He has never known another home. But that fact means little to Japan's many right-wing Nationalists.



...They say. OK, you are **utilising** Japan so you guys taking all the resources from Japanese people so you should go home. It doesn't matter that which passport you are. But, erh, for them, the origin is very important.

Those who **yearn** for a more inclusive Japan look at the Opening Ceremony and wonder whether it really was a sign this country is changing or a pretense. An attempt to make Japan look more open than it really is. Rupert Winfield Hayes, BBC news, in Tokyo.

do away

enmity (hate)

exploiting (using)

false view

identical (uniform)

mistaken belief

pine (wish)

unfair treatment