

It's been more than three years since I came to Japan from my home country, Nepal. I have three friends who also came from other countries. We have all different backgrounds, but we enjoy our school lives together. Is this situation surprising to you? Maybe it is, and I feel like that's because Japan is said to be a racially homogeneous country. But I think that situation has been rapidly changing. Fortunately, the Corona virus situation has died down in Japan, so many tourists and workers have started to return. Because of this, we have more opportunities to meet people of different nationalities and backgrounds. So I think we should ask ourselves, what is important to living in this kind of society?

By the way, do any of you know much about Nepal? I tried asking my classmates what their image of Nepal was. Most of them gave answers like, curry and rice, Mt. Everest, similar to India, and so on. These answers are mostly true, but they don't paint the whole picture.

Nepal's a landlocked country, in between China and India. The most unique thing to Nepal is the shape of its flag, as it's the only country flag in the world with a triangular shape. It has two triangles, which symbolize not only the Himalayas, but also represent the two major religions, Hinduism and Buddhism. Nepal is also filled with natural beauty, and is a friendly country with many different religions living harmoniously.

As I told you, Nepal is different from Japan, but I want you to realize there are similarities, too. For example, the lord Gautam Buddha was born in Nepal. Many Japanese people believe in Buddhism, don't they? Also, they are both mountainous countries, with rice as their staple food. Surprisingly, even the grammar of Japanese and Nepalese is quite similar! Actually, I was at a loss when I first came to Japan because I couldn't speak Japanese. But I have been able to get used to Japan gradually thanks to people willing to help me.

As a representative of Nepal, I've talked a little about my country. To live in a society where people with different nationalities and backgrounds live together, we sometimes need to open up about ourselves as I did in this speech. However, the more important thing is that we should try harder to understand and learn from each other. So, what else can we do to start building relationships with each other?

To start with, we can listen to others carefully. At first we may find many cultural differences that we find interesting. However, at the same time we should also look for similarities, giving us chances to become familiar with each other. If we try to do so, we will recognize that there are various other aspects of life and ways of thinking. Also, it allows us to think outside of the box, and appreciate the rich cultural backgrounds of other countries.

Practicing this kind of cultural exchange every day, little by little, will help us to build strong relationships with others.

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What Can We Do to Build Relationships?