

I am Iranian, born and raised in Japan. My mother tongue is Japanese even though my face is Iranian. And I thought I was equal to everyone else. There is something called discrimination against foreigners in this world. So far, I thought it had nothing to do with me, but it happened.

One day, my mother went to pick up my father. When my parents were coming home, there were some police cars and they were stopping the cars randomly to ask something. It was the parents' turn. When my mother lowered the car window, the police asked immediately, "Where are you from?" My mother answered "We are from Iran." Then, the police told my parents to get out of the car. After that, my parents were questioned about their jobs for several minutes. There were many rude questions such as "Where's your residence card?" "What's your job?" "Show us your wallet" among the questions. Lastly, my father got body checked. When my parents came home and I heard this story, I had really bad feelings. Why? Did they do something wrong? The Japanese driver of the other car didn't have to get out, but my parents did. Why did my parents have to go through this? When I asked my parents, my mom said "Because we're foreigners."

Did something like this happen just because they were foreigners? I was so sad.

Recently, the Crime rate by foreigners has been increasing in Japan. That's probably why the police stopped my parents' car. It's not hard to understand. But is this right? I think that they are judging by appearance. It's called racial discrimination. Judging people by appearance or discriminating against them based on their nationality, etc. constitutes discrimination against foreigners. My parents faced discrimination against foreigners.

In civics class at school, I heard the news that three foreign-born residents of Japan have filed a lawsuit seeking compensation from the government and other entities, alleging that they have been repeatedly questioned and harassed by police officers because of their appearance. This resonated deeply with me.

Can you imagine if your dream was to visit a very special foreign country, you had saved up money for years, studied all about their culture and language, and were finally able to make your dream come true and travel there. But when you arrived, everyone was mean to you and made you feel unwelcome. It would be so heartbreaking and devastating. Then, imagine a different scenario where you were finally able to visit your dream country, and everyone there welcomed you with open arms saying "Hi! Nice to meet you!" and "Where are you from?", "What's your name?" And asked you "Can we be friends?" It would be so heartwarming!

Of course foreigners must also be kind and respect their host country. It must go both ways. Please, let's make a world where we treat others how we would want to be treated. This is the golden rule, and if we follow it, it would make this life we have even more wonderful and filled with love and friendship.

I'm an Iranian woman. I have always been, and always will be, an Iranian. Even if I have permanent resident status or Japanese nationality, my roots will never change. I have the right to be equal to everyone. And no one can take away that right. I hope this speech touches your heart. Thank you.

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I Am Iranian