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Panel 1.5: Glimpse of Asia

Contemporary Japan at a Crossroad to Multi-ethnic Society?!

Japan has been called a homogeneous country with few minorities. However, with the increased intercultural marriages and more foreign workers and residents than before, the population composition has recently been changing. It is said that approximately 20,000 mixed-race children are born each year in Japan. While the majority of the mixed-race children have Japanese and other East Asian parents, easily passing as Japanese, those with white or black parents cannot do so because of their non-Japanese looks! These children are called Hafu, a half Japanese and a half non-Japanese, whose exotic and ambiguous looks as well as bilingual ability can be great assets! This is evident in the abundant Hafu models, personalities, and even athletes seen on the mass media every day! This presentation examines the changing population composition of Japan and explores what it means to be hafus and what their identities are!