Japan is often thought of as an ethno-nationalist country ‘where the myth of ethnic homogeneity and cultural uniqueness’ defines its national identity. Yet, if the streets of Tokyo and overseas Japanese schools are any indication, then the reality of ‘immigrant Japan’ has already arrived to challenge that myth (Liu-Farrer 2020). In this context, how do young people ‘with overseas roots’ or a multicultural background make meaning for themselves and find belonging in Japanese social contexts both in Japan and overseas? This paper explores the voices of young people, who identify as partly Japanese and are living (mainly) in Japan and Indonesia, in the context of Japan’s imperial history and its resulting ‘dual positioning' of seeing the West as superior and the rest of Asia as inferior (Iwabuchi 2002, 2014). It also employs methodological transnationalism in the study of Japan’s multicultural youth to bring together the experiences of different ethnic groups in Japan under one analytical lens and to highlight the role that educational contexts play in exporting national narratives overseas (Glick Schiller, Basch, & Blanc-Szanton, 1992).

Danau Tanu is a Japan Foundation Research Fellow at the Institute of Asia Pacific Studies, Waseda University and the author of Growing Up in Transit: The Politics of Belonging at an International School. Her current research project is titled 'Japan’s Multicultural Youth'. Danau holds a Ph.D. from The University of Western Australia’s former Discipline of Anthropology and Sociology and Discipline of Asian Studies.

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