Chapter 2
Lessons to the "Kyosei" Inclusive Society:
Challenges and Directions for Multicultural Education in Japan

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ABSTRACT

It is essential to know that there are various cultures in the world and necessary to understand and respect them to live together, also known as "共生 Kyosei." Japan is assumed to be a homogeneous society, but there are indigenous people who have consciousness detached from Japan. In recent years, the number of foreign newcomers has also been increasing. Under these circumstances, the importance of mutual understanding of different cultures and languages has been made apparent in the field of education, and understanding the diversity of culture in education is being promoted. In this study, three educational practices targeting schoolteachers and adults in the Japanese community to promote international understanding and multicultural education will be presented and examined. The "共生 Kyosei" practices have been found to help teachers design their multicultural education as well as to help students to understand the cultural diversity and help them to realize how they live together with people who have different social backgrounds.

1. BACKGROUND

We now live in a cross-border global society. People and things are constantly traveling across national borders, and knowledge and information are exchanged around the world more efficiently due to the worldwide spread of the internet. Under these circumstances, it is becoming more and more important to be aware that there are various cultures in the world, to understand and respect them, and to collaborate with them with a sympathetic mind-set.

In a society where there are various groups with different cultures, the idea that each group should be treated on an equal footing is known as multiculturalism. When we say multiculturalism, it includes not only differences in language, religion, nationality, history, and geography, but also gender, sexual orientation, illnesses or disabilities, cultural backgrounds, social status, values, modes of behavior, ways of thinking, and communication styles (Glazer 1997, Hollinger 1995, Banks and Banks 2020). Multiculturalism, as a normative ideal of Western liberal democracy, aims for the co-existence of diverse people in terms of roots, ideas, and orientations. It can also be called co-existence or "共生 *Kyosei*"of diverse cultures.

In culturally diverse societies, there are four strategies in policy and practice termed "melting pot," "segregation," "multiculturalism," and "exclusion" (Berry 2006, Lee and Olsen 2015). Of these, it is clear that "segregation" and "exclusion" should not be the goal of multicultural society. What is equally important here though, is to reject the ideals of a "melting pot" where minorities are expected to assimilate into the dominant culture. It is important for members of the minority to take pride in having their own collective identity and to be themselves to realize the co-existence of a diverse society. At the same time, it is necessary that the culture of the minority be respected by the majority. To achieve this, "multiculturalism" will be essential.

One of the reasons behind the call for multiculturalism is the fact that there are certain groups of people who have an aversion to different cultures, or those who not only verbally harass others, but also attack them physically, sometimes to the point where they cause life-threatening harm. These negative perceptions and attitudes toward people of different racial and ethnic groups are known as xenophobia. Xenophobia, which is the dislike, exclusion, or hatred of people or groups that are considered foreign or of a different ethnicity, exists all over the world. This is partly due to the sense of crisis that the number of immigrants as labor force has increased and thus the number of unemployment among their own citizens has increased. It is also due to discrimination and prejudice against those whose culture is different from their own.   Xenophobia comes from fear of unfamiliar custom, such as dress and eating habits.

Such prejudice and discrimination against foreigners is most strongly expressed in emergency situations such as disasters and pandemics. For example, in general, discriminatory acts that occur during a pandemic tend to target "outsiders," i.e., foreigners, ethnic minorities, social minorities, etc. (Yoshii 1990). In the situation of COVID-19, the target of discrimination was Asians and people of Asian descent, as the infection was initially reported in Wuhan, China. These discriminatory acts included verbal attacks in public places, harassment on social media, restricted participation in events and activities, and in some cases, limited access to education. In some cases, the victims were called "coronas" or ridiculed at public spaces and even subjected to violence, including sudden beatings. There were and still are reports of hostility as tormentors shout, "Everything is your fault, go back to your country!" (Giordano 2020).

Not only are newcomers (e.g., job seekers) from different racial and ethnic groups such as indigenous peoples, aboriginals, immigrants and refugees vulnerable to discrimination, but also social minorities such as people with illnesses and disabilities, sexual minorities, are targeted as well. They too are prone to prejudices because their cultures differ from those in the dominant strata. This situation has to change. All of these individuals need to be recognized and respected as human beings, with the rights they were born with. Only when people are ensured their human rights can we achieve a good society.

In multiculturalism, the social structure is not uniform, and the coexistence of different identities and cultures becomes a value in and of itself. Differences are not seen as potential problems, but as sources of enrichment (Banks & Banks, 2020). Berry refers to acculturation as "the process of cultural and psychological change that occurs through continuous contact between people of different cultural

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