

A Study on the Conceptual Transition of “Kyōsei” in Japanese Education: An Analysis of the Shifting Discourse on Multicultural Coexistence

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Abstract

As Japan becomes increasingly diverse, with a growing number of children from multicultural backgrounds, the concept of *kyōsei* (coexistence) has emerged as a central theme in educational policy and practice. While various terms—including “Multicultural Education,” “Education for Foreign Residents,” and “Education for International Understanding”—are used to address this diversity, the specific nuances and historical transitions of *Tabunka Kyōsei Kyoiku* (Multicultural Coexistence Education) within the Japanese context require further clarification.

This study aims to analyse the shifting discourse on “Multicultural Coexistence” in Japanese education to better understand the conceptual transition of *kyōsei*. Adopting a historical and comparative approach, the research first examines the international origins of multicultural education, with particular focus on its emergence during the 1960s civil rights movements in the United States. It then explores how these international trends influenced Japanese discourse and how the term was adapted alongside related concepts.

Preliminary analysis suggests that “Multicultural Coexistence” in Japan is not merely a translation of Western multiculturalism but a concept shaped by localised socio-political needs, and that the discourse has shifted in unique ways. Deviating from international trends such as World Culture Theory, Japan’s unique transition reflects local socio-political needs. The study emphasises that understanding *kyōsei* requires analysis of the specific historical contexts and actors that drive these terminological shifts.