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# Meaning of Habit, Concerning Moral Education

*Yuai Miyazaki*

Education in general is said to be acquirement of habit of action or organization of tendencies of act; so the most important thing in moral education is not the mere knowledge of goodness, but the activity or the habit of activity towards goodness.

Now we, agent of this activity, live in the world of generation (*generatio*), in which we are creatures; but also in that of formation (*formatio*), in which we ourselves are agents of our action. Generation consists in that something is made or produced; on the other hand, formation in that the agent makes something else out of something given. That we are human beings is that we ourselves are agents of this formation. Therefore we possess our own value of being as agent, different from the mere nature generated. What is more, we are distinguished from God in the sense that we only make something else out of something given while God creates all things (*creatio* or *creatio ex nihilo*). In this sense, we are said to form connecting link between God and nature or to make the very beginning in which God presents Himself in nature. Thus we cannot be truly human beings without formation.

Now if we regard this formation as the activity towards goodness, we may think it human virtue. Human virtue on the other hand is not so much always in action (*ἔξῆς*) as in possession of such activity (*ἔχειν*); in short, virtue is habit of activity. But the nature of habit has often been treated as mechanical, ignorant, monotonously repeating, and conservative; therefore, so-called progressivists in moral education have been less interested in the cultivation of habit. For this reason, I have tried in this treatise to point out the significance of the cultivation of habit in the light of Aristotle and Ravaisson's analysis.

There seems to be a deep meaning in that Aristotle defined ἀρετή as ἕξις derived from ἔχειν, and in that afterwards ἕξις was interpreted as habitus. For virtue (ἀρετή) is a good state obtained by parallel activities. Although virtue presupposes naturally-given dynamis, it does not amount to dynamis itself, but to the regular way of behaviour accompanied with valuation, and acquired by parallel activities. Virtue in this sense can be said to be the well-habituated state; in other words, to be a certain form of being, obtained by parallel activities, and based upon natural dynamis of human being. The virtue, i. e. the habit as an acquired nature or an formed ability (the second disposition) makes possible its corresponding energeia. Thus we can say that moral education is aiming at this energeia of habit. Furthermore we must keep in mind that, although habit is monotonously repeating or merely habitual at the lower part of it, it is also the productive or dynamic power at the higher part of it. The nature of habit consists in an acquired predisposition towards goodness. We may say therefore that personality is in effect the unity or interpenetration of these habits in this sense.