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# Can Morals be Taught ?

*Minoru Murai*

It was Sophistes of B. C. 5 century who first in the history of education raised the question "Can Morals be taught?". But this question is not yet adequately answered, and seems to be even more worthy of serious examination in the present day Japan. In this country the discussions about moral education are mostly directed to whether moral instruction is necessary or what sort of moral ideal is desirable, instead of first examining whether moral instruction itself is possible.

In order to examine the possibility of moral instruction, this paper first analyses the implication of the word "morals" and points out that it is constituted of two aspects of intelligence (knowledge) and habits (virtue), each respectively corresponding to the original meaning of 道 (way) and 徳 (habit) which in combination make up Japanese word 道徳 meaning morals.

In the examination of the first aspect 道 (way) the paper follows the Aristotelian analysis of moral act in Nicomachean Ethics, and makes the point that an important part of our moral act is played by our intelligent understanding (or knowledge) of moral principles, moral situation, and their relationship.

The paper suggests that this aspect of intelligence is the necessary condition first satisfied in the moral instruction and further points out that it is too often neglected in the discussions on moral instruction.

The paper keeps the examination of the virtue aspect of morals in abeyance but suggests on several grounds that our interest in this aspect should be only of the second importance for the moral instruction in the school.