

The possibility of civic virtue in present-day Japan

Consensus Conference, Jury System and Moral Education

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Background and purpose: In order to avoid the technological accident which we cannot predict beforehand, John Ladd presents the concept of "civic virtue" as an alternative of the old concept of responsibility (Ladd [1991]). Introducing the concept of "civic virtue", he proposes to change the central meaning of responsibility. That is, he thinks that "moral deficiency" should take the place of "fault". Promoted by his argument, scholars in Japan are discussing about the new possibility of prevention ethics from the viewpoint of engineering ethics (e.g. Murata [2006]). On this point, I have already argued how civic virtue could be positioned effectively in the prevention ethics (Tachibana [2007]). In this paper, I consider in what kind of broader (i.e. social) context civic virtue can be positioned in present-day Japan. And I propose one possibility of civic virtue in present-day Japan. **Method:** I take the following three trends in present-day Japan as the clue for consideration. (1) "Consensus conference" which has started also in Japan. (2) "Jury system (裁判員制度)" which will start in 2009. (3) Changing in the education system, from "moral education classes (道徳の時間)" to "moral education (徳育)", which is shown in the second report of the Education Rebuilding Council in June, 2007. First, I show these three trends have started and are treated as the individual activities. Second, I discuss that the three trends' opinions about how the society and the citizen should be, are closely connected to each other. I show all of these social changes are concerned to the civic social and political participation and civic education. Third, in order to make this point clear, I revive Aristotle's concept of "civic virtue (politikê aretê)" into present-day Japan. In his *Politica*, he characterizes the citizen as the people who participate in politics. To explicate the system of society, he uses some concepts; civic love (politikê philia), harmony (homonoia / harmonia), common goods (to koinêi sumpheron) and living good (to zên kalôs). Finally, I show the common features of these trends could be greatly understood when we think about Aristotle's concepts and his thought of society and citizen. **Conclusion:** In present-day Japan, citizen wants and is needed to participate in their way of living. Consensus conference and jury system show this symbolically. Self-determination of the way of living is the feature of the civic participation in present-day Japan. This way of participation is the feature of the civic virtue. The "moral education" has to educate children not only to be "moral" but also to be "social (and political)".