

京大過去問 2007年 第1問

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Society is supposedly founded upon a shared understanding. The only way it can maintain this commonly agreed upon outlook from generation to generation is by passing on from parents to children the most basic thoughts and ideas that hold people together. By so doing, it is able not only to keep itself alive but to thrive over time. This is more than mere intellectual assent or agreement to some vague principle or compromise. It is something deeply held and shared so that it involves not just a description of how the world is, but how it should be. (1)The understanding depends upon its founding values, with the early experiences of infancy being the most critical for the formation of a social sense in a child, which is why parental concern for morality or the actual values adopted is vital. This means that the lessons taught during the first weeks or months are the most important, as every subsequent value must be based upon those already adopted by the maturing mind. Once the foundation of values is set, it is for life, and the values taught become a permanent part of the adult's understanding.

As reason or logic can be employed when morality is taught and established, instructing children in morality must be by the clear demonstration of right from wrong on the part of concerned parents. Not to provide such firm but clear guidance would be to abandon one's parental and social responsibilities. Even after children come to be able to reason independently, instruction must continue with a concern for their moral development and society's well-being. It is not that total cooperation to authority in all contexts is desirable; it is that in certain situations where the good of the community is at stake, the complete acceptance of authority is more than helpful. (2)Take, for example, a principle used by central governments in places such as desert regions where individuals are not allowed to keep for themselves a natural spring even if they own the very land on which it exists. One-hundred per cent cooperation in this sense prevents fights certain to develop over the scarce water resources.

Tradition, customs and manners must all be taught in the same principled way, not just to reinforce the notion of the need for close cooperation, but also because these beliefs are an essential part of communal understanding and so must be adopted by all citizens. By so doing, children grow up with a greater appreciation for the wisdom behind the communal understanding and learn humility enough to doubt their own ability to judge the reasons behind such beliefs. (3)If parents fail to teach the traditions of the community to their offspring, then the resulting adult might become a less cooperative citizen than some would like, and will become more like a fish

out of water — a person with an outlook different and possibly incompatible to the shared worldview on which society, for better or worse, bases itself. Once such people become sufficient in numbers, then the communal bonds might loosen beyond repair and the web of human relations may disintegrate. Perhaps for this reason, some in countries that are industrially advanced and very protective of individual rights are now calling for a balance of individual freedom with concern for the common good.