

INTRODUCTION

Ich lehre euch den Freund, in dem die Welt fertig dasteht, eine Schale des Guten,—den schaffenden Freund, der immer eine fertige Welt zu verschenken hat.

—Also sprach Zarathustra

IN CONTEMPORARY JAPANESE MEDIA as well as in Western research, Inoue Enryō (1858–1919) is best known for his Mystery Studies, which earned him the humorous title, Doctor Specter or Ghost Doc. But Enryō was much more than his nickname suggests. He was a key figure in several important processes in modern Japanese intellectual history: the reception of Western philosophy, the emergence of Modern Buddhism, the decline of superstition, and the permeation of the imperial ideology. Enryō was one of the most widely read authors of his time and one of the first Japanese authors ever to be translated into Chinese. Through his large body of writings, the distance learning program at his Philosophy Academy, and his extensive lecture tours over the course of almost three decades, Enryō is likely to have reached more people than any other public intellectual of modern Japan until the end of World War I. Enryō also left noteworthy institutional traces in modern Japanese society. He founded the first—and still existing—Philosophical Society of modern Japan. His private Philosophy Academy developed into Toyo University which is today one of the ten largest Japanese research universities. And finally, Enryō bequeathed the wondrous space known as the Temple Garden of Philosophy in Tokyo's Nakano ward. What he did not bequeath are memoirs—but this is not the reason why this study is primarily a philosophical portrait and not a biography.

The eminent scholar Sueki Fumihiko wrote about Inoue Enryō in 2004: “Although his thought was not necessarily deep, in his scale as promoter of enlightenment he is worth being reconsidered” (60–61). The present study follows this suggestion by particularly emphasizing the broad practical range and wide theoretical horizon as the preeminent feature of the historical figure Inoue Enryō. What distinguished the Meiji period most clearly from the preceding periods was Japan’s new global outlook. Enryō is one pioneer of today’s remarkable panoramic outlook of modern Japanese humanities. His bold universal claims, on the other hand, stand in stark contrast to contemporary finely subdivided and detailed historical investigations. In his keen universal purview, as well as in the scale of his projects, the historical figure Inoue Enryō inherited a certain greatness. This greatness is obscured if the focus of examination becomes too narrow. Today, many of Enryō’s beliefs are common sense and many of his achievements taken for granted. To adequately assess his philosophical views and enlightenment activities, it is necessary to meet him on the expanse of his own horizon, namely, to view him from the perspective of world history. Wider perspectives, however, do not just bear the risks of being insufficiently substantiated by scholarly evidence, there is also the danger of being deceived by the overmodulated and jingoist zeitgeist, which Enryō, in his bold confidence, also exemplifies. Six years of research may justify the endeavor to provide the basic historical coordinates for an assessment of the figure Inoue Enryō in the context of world philosophy. It is the method and the argument of this book that such an assessment is only possible if the validity of Enryō’s views is taken into account. The critical portrait presented here is therefore not only about a philosopher but is itself philosophical. A concise outline of the systematic investigations interwoven with the chronological and thematic structure of the book may provide orientation for the reader.

In Parts One to Three of this book Inoue Enryō is portrayed in biographical order. Part One, *Toward the Eastern Capital*, describes the intellectual influences the young Enryō received on his way to Tokyo. The concentration of power into the emperor system (chapter 1) and the widely resounding formula “Civilization and Enlightenment” (chapter 2) during the early Meiji period prefigured Enryō’s own life-long slogan, “Protection of Country and Love of Truth.” Chapter 3 broaches the contentious debate about the Protestant character of Enryō’s Buddhist order, the True Pure Land School. New historical details about the early pioneers of modern Buddhism in Kyoto presented in

chapter 4 prove that the notion of Protestant Buddhism was not an orientalist projection, but that it originated from the Buddhist Enlightenment movement itself. This finding is the basis for the argument unfolded in chapter 5 and the following “Interlude on Occidentalism”: Instead of discrediting the pioneers of modern Japanese Buddhism in terms of identity politics, the first scholarly endeavor should be to examine the validity of their arguments.

Part Two, *The Love of Truth*, covers Enryō’s encounter with Western philosophy at Tokyo University and his successful establishment as a leading intellectual of his time. The new culture of academic discussion initiated by the scholars of the Meiroku Society (chapter 6) and the related topic of language modernization (chapter 7) shed historical light on the circumstances through which not only modern Japanese philosophy, but East Asian humanities in general today communicate in a terminology that was coined in Japan during the Meiji period. In order to substantiate this claim, elements of a conceptual history of truth in modern Japanese are presented in chapter 8 as backdrop to the first logical discussion of scientific truth in the writings of Nishi Amane. The approach of conceptual history is complemented by an institutional perspective in chapter 9. It was Katō Hiroyuki who institutionalized the philosophical idea of truth as the organizing principle of the newly founded Tokyo University. In chapters 10 and 11, the contents of Enryō’s philosophy course at East Asia’s first research university are introduced. Through his teachers Toyama Masakazu and Ernest F. Fenollosa, Enryō encountered the scientific worldview as promoted by Herbert Spencer and the other members of the Londoner X-Club (chapter 10). The fact that Katō Hiroyuki, for reasons of academic comprehensiveness, integrated not only Chinese philosophy but also Buddhist studies into the Faculty of Letters made Enryō’s curriculum a veritable “Crossroads of World Philosophy” (chapter 11).

The outcome of the preceding chapters facilitates the analysis of Enryō’s own concept of truth in his early writings. Enryō adopted both the scientific worldview and the philosophical idea of truth, and applied them in religious discourse. Whereas Christianity cannot hold against the challenge posed by modern science, Buddhist doctrine can be reconstructed in philosophical terms without appealing to scriptural authority (chapter 12). The coincidence between Western metaphysics and Buddhist thought that Enryō discovered was mediated by the Hegelian notion of ascending dialectics that he learned from Fenollosa. This kind of “Upward Philosophy” meant a departure from the

down to earth concept of truth as found in Nishi Amane and Katō Hiroyuki (chapter 13). In “In the Paradigm of Philosophy,” the last chapter of Part Two, an overview of Enryō’s writings is given by introducing his own system of the sciences. The new philosophical metalanguage afforded Enryō the opportunity to unfold modern humanities in its whole breadth. It is my thesis that Enryō was instrumental in spreading the new academic terminology not only in Japan, but also in China. In the following “Interlude on Enlightenment,” it is argued that the idea of unprejudiced research, as it was institutionalized with the foundation of Tokyo University, is not an Enlightenment event due to its affinity with the European Enlightenment: the term *Enlightenment* simply functions as reference to the historical acceptance of ideas we still consider as valid.

In Part Three, *The Protection of Country*, the full breadth of Enryō’s activities as educator, promoter of enlightenment, and ideologist of the emerging Japanese empire are introduced. The first chapter provides the theoretical background for the narrative: the intricate relationship between Enryō’s practical nationalism (“Protection of Country”) and his theoretical universalism (“Love of Truth”), which he himself did not consider contradictory, is discussed. The result of the examination about “The Truth and the Good” (chapter 15) can be summed up in the proposition that the philosopher who speaks the truth about the good does good. Chapters 16 and 17 portray Enryō as a modern globetrotter and an inspiring educator concerned with safeguarding the East Asian cultural heritage. In chapter 18, it is pointed out that Enryō’s embrace of the Imperial Rescript of Education meant that his Japanese ethics indeed lack universal validity. However, his Mystery Studies, by not only denouncing irrational religious beliefs theoretically, but by also standing for this conviction in the form of a large-scale campaign against superstition, represents the best evidence for Enryō’s claim that loving the truth does indeed benefit the country (chapter 19). The general denial of Enryō’s achievements in this field reveals a self-contradiction on the part of postmodern scholarship. The very idea of academic truth upon which the respective scholarship itself relies is ignored. Whereas Enryō’s Mystery Studies display no contradiction between love of truth and protection of country, the Philosophy Academy Incident signified the concrete historical collision of Enryō’s core principles. The Imperial Meiji State could not tolerate free ethical investigation as pursued in the Philosophy Academy (chapter 20). The incident was one factor in the crisis of the years 1903 to 1905 that led to Enryō’s retirement from the Academy (chapter 21).

In chapter 22, another problematic element of Enryō's thought is brought into the picture. Although Enryō's affirmative attitude toward war disappeared in his later writings, Social Darwinism, which was spread in Japan by the founder of Tokyo University, Katō Hiroyuki, was also a constant feature of Enryō's philosophy. Katō Hiroyuki's naturalist concept of descriptive truth deceived him and others about the specific kind of validity ethical ideas inhere. Chapter 23 rounds up the biographical portrait by introducing Enryō's activities during his "Late Life," namely his lecture tours to spread the message of the Education Rescript and the creation of the Temple Garden of Philosophy.

Just as the Interlude after Part Two argues for the rehabilitation of the concept of Enlightenment, the Interlude following Part Three attempts the same for the idea of progress. As long as progress is not misunderstood as the natural outcome of evolution, the concept is an indispensable practical component of political action. The criticism of the idea of progress as metaphysical metanarrative obscures its character as a postulate implied in every purposive act.

Part Four, *The Philosophy of Buddhism*, does not follow chronological order, but reconstructs the essential lines of Enryō's Buddhist thought and reform ideas. The discussion turns more philosophical insofar as those elements of Enryō's Buddhist philosophy are emphasized that appear fruitful for contemporary discourses. Starting point of the examination is the claim that Buddhist doctrines are misunderstood if they are analyzed as pure theory. Enryō's Buddhist metaphysics does not hold up against the criticism of philosophical speculation as brought forth in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* (chapter 24). The same applies to the philosophy of Identity Realism as proposed by Inoue Tetsujirō (chapter 25), and also to Spinoza's pantheism which Enryō regarded as comparable with Buddhist monism (chapter 26). Chapter 27 sets the stage for the affirmative account of Enryō's Buddhist ideas in the remainder of the book. The "Historical Critique" of East Asian Buddhism, that it would go astray from the ideas of its Indian founder by supposing reified notions of essence, substance, and monism, does not apply to Enryō's project. Enryō's account of Buddhism is not historical, but is an attempt to prove Buddhism's philosophical consistency and its benefits for modern civilization. The chapter on "Living Buddhism" outlines Enryō's proto-sociological approach, which perceives Buddhism as a living social organism that develops in accordance with civilization. Buddhism's vitality attests to its capability to

adjust to historical change and guarantees its engagement with society (chapter 28). Enryō's basic stance that Buddhism is applied philosophy is discussed in chapter 29 by comparing his views with the *Treatise on the Awakening of Mahāyāna Faith*. The examination confirms that suchness is not a metaphysical concept but rather a guiding notion to be applied in meditation. The general character of Buddhist thought as being conducive to peace of mind is specified in the following chapter as "Religious Pragmatism." In Buddhism, insight is verified by its efficiency in reducing spiritual suffering. This pragmatic criterion of truth allows for a plurality of soteriological means, and hence can be characterized as a Buddhist concept of religious tolerance (chapter 30). The Mahāyāna added a second criterion of truth in Buddhism, namely that of compassion. If compassion does not flow from insight, awakening cannot be authentic (chapter 31). The cardinal virtue of compassion is complemented by an account of the ethical dimension of the Buddhist concept of causality in chapter 32. Causality is the prime example for Enryō's key premise that Buddhism applies theory in religious practice. The doctrine of cause and effect guarantees that Buddhism is in accordance with modern science in theoretical regard. In practical regard, causality provides Buddhism with a sound ethical foundation. Three interpretations of the practical dimension of causality are extrapolated from Enryō's writings: karma as consequentialism, as the principle of retribution, and as a postulate of conscience. The last chapter of the book reviews Enryō's "Institutional Reform" proposals that resulted from his philosophy of Buddhism. Rather than Enryō's secularized notion of state-protecting Buddhism, it is Enryō's repeated call for Buddhist overseas missions in support of Japanese expansion that exemplifies Buddhist nationalism (chapter 33).

Enryō's placement of Buddha, Confucius, Socrates, and Kant as the Four Sages of World Philosophy in the center of his Temple Garden of Philosophy provides an opportunity to distinguish between philosophical syncretism and eclecticism in the Epilogue. Whereas syncretism compromises its theoretical elements by integrating them either too forcefully or too loosely into one system, eclecticism is the original attitude of the philosopher. The framework Enryō bequeathed can be interpreted as an appeal to survey comprehensively in order to select the best from the various strands of world philosophy.

This study was accepted as dissertation thesis by the Philosophy Department of Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin in 2012 and presented the same year

as gift to the 125th anniversary of Toyo University. On this occasion, Toyo University established the International Association for Inoue Enryō Research, of which I became a board member and an editor of its online journal. On the homepage of the Association, I compiled the Inoue Enryō Research Database, which provides regularly updated materials such as bibliographies, electronic texts, and glossaries. Since 2012, I have substantially revised and enlarged my thesis for publication. Through the database, the journal, and this book a historical figure is brought onto the horizon of Western research that had until today only been covered fragmentarily by English language research. The only previous study that has attempted a balanced account of the complete range of activities and ideas of the multifaceted phenomenon Inoue Enryō was an article by Kathleen Staggs in 1983.