

## ON INOUE ENRYO'S REFORM OF BUDDHISM ITS INTELLECTUAL HISTORY CONTEXT

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### 0. Introduction

At the basis of INOUE Enryō's 井上円了 thought and real-world undertakings lay the idea of revitalizing Buddhism through philosophy. Enryō famously recalls in *Prolegomena to a Living Discourse on Buddhism* 『仏教活論序論』 his joy in finding philosophical truth in Buddhism and how he thus became determined to reform it into a "religion of the civilized world."<sup>1</sup> After this discovery Enryō used philosophy to improve Buddhism both on a theoretical and practical level. Or, from another perspective, one could also say that he pushed it in a philosophical direction.

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<sup>1</sup> "After having already discovered the glistening moon of truth in the world of philosophy, I looked upon other traditional religions. It became clearer and clearer that truth was not in Christianity, and I also easily proved that truth was not in Confucianism. I saw that only Buddhism's teachings were considerably in accordance with philosophical truth [...]. I thus did away with my desire to create a new religion and decided to improve Buddhism to make it into a religion of the civilized world. This was in 1885, the first year of my reformation of Buddhism." See INOUE Enryō 井上円了, 『仏教活論序論』 [Prolegomena to a living discourse on Buddhism], in 『井上円了選集』 [Inoue Enryō selected writings], vol. 3 (Tokyo: 東洋大学, 1986).

His attempt to reform Buddhism is sometimes seen as a rationalist revitalization that is inadequate for its lack of true "modern Buddhist faith."<sup>2</sup> Since Enryō's work came at an early stage in modern Buddhist history, it certainly was seen by later generations as something to be overcome. However, the direction of Enryō's philosophy-based reformation of Buddhism arose out of the demands of his era and also became the foundation for the subsequent development of modern Buddhism.

In this paper, I would like to relativize the somewhat fixed view of INOUE Enryō's place in Meiji Buddhist history, and rethink the meaning of his reform of Buddhism. I will do so by looking at the intellectual and religious trends in Europe and the United States during his time as well as their importation into Japan. Thereby I hope to destabilize traditional views in scholarship that contextualize Enryō's thought in terms of domestic circumstances during the Meiji period. My aim in doing so is to understand his reformation of Buddhism within the global process of "modernization," and reconsider its meaning in intellectual history terms.

## 1. The Conflict between Science and Religion

First, let us go back again to Enryō's aforementioned story of discovering truth in Buddhism. Enryō, who was born into a branch temple of the Shin sect's Ōtani branch in 1858, experienced as a boy the discourse around the time of the Meiji Restoration (1868) that led to and was followed by the persecution of Buddhism (called *haibutsu kishaku* 廃仏毀釈), which came about, along with the "separation of Shinto and Buddhism" 神仏分離, partially as a result of the Meiji government's Shinto-centric religion policies that aimed to revive the "unity of rites and rule" 祭政一致. Enryō spent his youth amidst this headwind faced by the Buddhist world, which he recalls in his *Prolegomena to a Living Discourse on Buddhism* 『仏教活論序論』.

Enryō says that in the midst of the "civilization and enlightenment" 文明開化 program of the early Meiji period, he made up his mind to see what it would be like to take a step away from Buddhism, and decided to read various doctrines and academic theories—including those of Buddhism—while "using impartial and disinterested truth

2 This assessment of Enryō's place in Meiji Buddhist history was established by leading scholars in post-World War II research on modern Buddhism, such as YOSHIDA Kyūichi 吉田久一 and IKEDA Eishun 池田英俊. A representative example of such a view can be found in IKEDA Ieshun 池田英俊, 『明治の仏教：その行動と思想』 [Meiji Buddhism: Its activities and thought] (Tokyo: 評論社, 1976). MIURA Setsuo 三浦節夫 has discussed the issue of Enryō's evaluation in post-war scholarship on modern Buddhism in 『井上門了：日本近代の先駆者の生涯と思想』 [Inoue Enryō: Life and thought of a pioneer of modern Japan] (Tokyo: 教育評論社, 2016).

as a standard" 公平無私の真理を標準として. When doing so, he considered Confucianism, Western science ("the empirical study of the material" 有形の実験学), and Christianity. However, he was unable to find truth in any of them. He thus decided that "traditional religions and theories don't have anything that should be believed as truth" and "secretly vowed in my heart to one day establish a kind of new religion." During this time, Enryō had been spending considerable energy studying philosophy. At some point, he realized that the truth he had long sought "exists in the philosophy that is taught in the West." Then, when he reconsidered Buddhism with this philosophical truth in mind, he discovered that unlike Christianity and the like, Buddhism's teachings "were considerably in accordance with philosophical truth." In *Prolegomena to a Living Discourse on Buddhism* he vividly depicts the joy of this moment, and explains that he did away with his "desire to create a new religion and decided to reform Buddhism to make it into a religion of the civilized world." Enryō declares the year of this dramatic discovery (1885) to be the first year of his Buddhist reformation, and he would subsequently work on this project.

In this way Enryō's reformation of Buddhism clearly had "truth" at its center. However, what was this "truth" that he was speaking of? In order to answer this question, let us investigate the background to the process that led to this discovery.

First, there was the conflict between religion and science during the nineteenth century. This also directly shaped Enryō's Buddhist reformation itself. Enryō himself stated the following regarding this conflict in his piece "Religion in the Nineteenth Century" 「一九世紀に於ける宗教」:

No one can deny that religion is changing enormously in this century [the nineteenth century] [...]. Thinking about why this is, [it appears that] above all the cause is the progress of material civilization bringing about considerable change in society's thought and beliefs regarding religion [...]. Research on material things advancing more and more and its applications also rapidly progressing result in a great change in thought in general. Looking at this with regard to philosophy, while at the beginning of the nineteenth century it described a vague philosophical truth, in the end it came to carry out sound research. A good example that proves this is the rise and spread of empirical philosophy. I think that it is clear and does not require much explanation that when the so-called mysterious things of a time in which scientific research was in its infancy come to be steadily explained by research on material things, human thought will thus change.<sup>3</sup>

3 INOUE Enryō. 「一九世紀に於ける宗教」 [Religion in the nineteenth century], 『太陽』 [The sun] 6.8 (1900), 5.

In other words, the "progress of material civilization" encourages the rise and spread of "empirical philosophy" (positivism, evolutionary theory, and other kinds of philosophy based on empirical knowledge). In turn, this drove away old religion-like "mysteries." As is well-known, during the nineteenth century Christian faith was facing a crisis, a major source of which was Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*. Evolutionary theory rejected the traditional Christian view of the world and humans that is based on the idea of God's creation, and showed that humans emerged in the long-term process that is the evolution of life. It replaced the teaching of God's design with the heartless mechanisms of "natural selection" and the "struggle for survival." As Enryō states, this evolutionary theory-based explanation is based on "reliable" procedures, and as a result a traditional Christian worldview came to be seen as non-scientific. At the very least until a certain time in the nineteenth century religions had to take on directly the principles of such scientific explanations, leading traditional forms of belief to be considerably shaken. This was especially pronounced in England, which during the nineteenth century had taken to modernization and industrialization at an early stage. This is often referred to as the "Victorian crisis of faith."<sup>4</sup>

Enlightenment intellectuals—primarily those affiliated with Meiroku Society 明六社—brought this Euro-American discourse surrounding science and religion into Japan at the beginning of the Meiji period. The Meiroku Society-affiliated FUKUZAWA Yukichi 福沢諭吉 and KATŌ Hiroyuki 加藤弘之 took it as their mission to introduce into Japan new western "academic fields" 学問, and in doing so many of them also brought views critical of religion into the country. Their activities formed the context of a young Enryō examining various academic theories and teachings (including Buddhism) while using "impartial and disinterested truth as a standard."<sup>5</sup> Thus, let us next turn to the anti-religion tendency of European and American intellectuals that Meiroku Society members ended up introducing, as well as their view of "truth."

## 2. Meiroku Society's Anti-Religion Tendencies

As FUNAYAMA Shin'ichi 船山信一 notes, during the first half of the Meiji period, the core of the philosophy and science first introduced into Japan was positivism, utilitarianism,

<sup>4</sup> David L. McMAHAN. *The Making of Buddhist Modernism* (Oxford University Press, 2008).

<sup>5</sup> From Enryō's 「履歴書・読書録」 [Personal history / Reading record] (1875), we can see that during his adolescent days in his hometown, he read many works and translations by Meiroku Society enlightenment intellectuals, such as FUKUZAWA Yukichi, MITSUKURI Rinshō 箕作麟祥, and NAKAMURA Masanao 中村正直.

evolutionary theory, and so on.<sup>6</sup> Victorian academic fields—which had given rise to Darwin and Spencer's theories of evolution—formed part of Japanese intellectuals' foundational education during this time, along with Comte's positivism.<sup>7</sup> The core of this trend was the group of intellectuals called "X Club" that had formed in Victorian London. As Rainer SCHULZER has pointed out, the writings of the club's members were actively brought into Tokyo University during the first half of the Meiji period.<sup>8</sup>

While there were only around nine members of the club, they promoted a new evolutionary theory-based paradigm and academic freedom, and had considerable power in the intellectual world in England at the time. They all adopted the position of scientific naturalism,<sup>9</sup> and were skeptical or agnostic with regard to claims of religions like Christianity that transcended experiential awareness (such as God creating the universe out of nothing). Based on this anti-religious theoretical perspective, they engaged in activities to maintain the independence of science vis-à-vis the Church and theology. In the background of their activities was the wish to, in resistance against the cultural hegemony of the existing intellectual elite that had been connected with the royal family and the Church of England, show the superiority of the masses' culture in modern industrial society.<sup>10</sup> In this way the aforementioned Victorian crisis of faith was propelled by anti-religion intellectuals, primarily X Club members.

This "scientific naturalism"-based anti-religion trend was brought into Meiji Japan primarily by Meiroku Society enlightenment intellectuals. For example, TSUDA Masamichi 津田真道 wrote the following in *Meiroku Journal* 『明六雜誌』:

I think that academic fields can be roughly divided into two types: "empty learning"—the likes of theories of nothingness and extinction [虚無寂滅] that discuss the lofty principle of emptiness, of the five [constant] virtues, [human] nature, and the principle [of the universe] [五行性理], and of innate knowing and innate capacity [良知良能]—and "practical learning"—the likes of recent Western astronomy, physics, chemistry, medicine, economics, and philosophy,

6 FUNAYAMA Shin'ichi 船山信一. 『明治哲学史研究』 [Research on the history of Meiji philosophy], vol. 6 of 『船山信一著作集』 [Collected works of Funayama Shin'ichi] (Tokyo: こぶし書房, 1998).

7 For example, Smiles' *Self Help* and Buckle's *History of Civilization in England*, both widely read during the Meiji period, were from Victorian England.

8 Representative members of the club included the biologist Thomas HUXLEY, the archaeologist John LUBBOCK, the physicist John TYNDALL, and the evolutionary philosopher Herbert SPENCER. The newly opened Tokyo University Library held a considerable number of their works. See Rainer SCHULZER. *Inoue Enryo: A Philosophical Portrait*, Ph.D. Dissertation (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, 2012).

9 Frank Miller TURNER. *Between Science and Religion: The Reaction to Scientific Naturalism in Late Victorian England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1974).

10 TURNER. *Between Science and Religion* (see note 9).

which seek proof in actual things, look into their actual forms, and solely discuss certain principles. This practical learning spreading on a general level throughout the country and people comprehending its principles is what is called a real civilized world.<sup>11</sup>

According to Tsuda, the likes of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Neo-Confucianism all discuss the "lofty principle of emptiness," and, in contrast, the West's academic fields are "practical learning" that describe "certain principles." Through *Meiroku Journal* and other mediums it was asserted that Japan's civilizing project would advance by doing away with religion and metaphysics (empty learning) and spreading empirical "practical learning" (certain and functional knowledge). In this way, the same kind of anti-religious tendency as X Club members can be seen in Meiroku Society enlightenment intellectuals. "Practical study" 実学 and "experience" or "experiment" 実験 became keywords for early Meiji enlightenment intellectuals, and were frequently used to express a new modern-rationalist set of values that were connected to an anti-religion discourse. In modern times, which seeks "practical effectiveness regarding the handling of actual problems,"<sup>12</sup> it was claimed that Confucianism and Buddhism—which teach "the likes of theories of nothingness and extinction [...] of the five constant virtues, human nature, and the principle of the universe"—were unnecessary. Furthermore, even in cases in which religion's necessity was accepted, it was only done so provisionally as a tool for the moral education of "foolish people" who are unable to acquire academic knowledge.<sup>13</sup>

The most thoroughly anti-religion and anti-metaphysical individual during the Meiji period was a member of Meiroku Society and the first president of Tokyo University: KATŌ Hiroyuki. He adopted a fundamentalist naturalism and evolutionary theory perspective<sup>14</sup> that eliminated anything transcendental, seeing all phenomena in the universe as the product of natural evolution and explaining them in an empirical fash-

11 TSUDA Masamichi 津田真道. 「開化を進むる方法を論ず」 [Discussing how to promote civilization], 『明六雑誌』 [Meiroku journal] 3. Reprinted in YAMAMURO Shin'ichi 山室信一 and NAKANOME Tōru 中野目徹, ed. 『明六雑誌』 vol. 1 (Tokyo: 岩波書店, 1999), 117–118.

12 MATSUMOTO Sannosuke 松本三之介. 『明治思想史』 [Meiji period intellectual history] (Tokyo: 新曜社, 1996), 10.

13 After the above-quoted passage, TSUDA continues as follows: "What should be used to educate those in the nation who have not reached this level? Religion. The aim of religion is, in short, to guide uncivilized people to the proper path" (see note 11, p. 118). He also says that Christianity should also be introduced into Japan in order to help civilize the nation. While FUKUZAWA Yukichi also at first adopted an anti-religion / anti-Buddhist position, later he would gradually grow closer to Buddhism. Cf. Hikaku Shisōshi Kenkyūkai 比較思想史研究会, ed. 『明治思想家の宗教観』 [Meiji intellectuals' views of religion] (Tōkyō: 大倉出版, 1975).

14 KATŌ Hiroyuki 加藤引之. 『自然と倫理』 [Nature and ethics] (1912), in 『加藤弘之文書』 [Works by Katō Hiroyuki] vol. 3 (Kyoto: 同朋舎出版, 1990).

ion. He exhibited a critical attitude towards religious teachings that went against this, describing them as "empty principles and empty theories" 空理空論. While working to spread his views, Katō engaged in many debates with Christian and Buddhist thinkers, and, also due to his status as the president of Tokyo University, exerted a considerable influence over the Meiji intellectual world. One could even say that in his role as a critic he contributed greatly to the development of Meiji period religious thought.<sup>15</sup> In this sense, Katō's position can be seen as close to the "scientific naturalism" of Victorian British intellectuals.

### 3. Buddhism and Modern Science

Enryō studied philosophy at the very school headed by this anti-religion intellectual: Tokyo University. With the university's culture at the time emphasizing empirical, modern academic knowledge, Enryō also was considerably influenced by an anti-Christian discourse like that of X Club intellectuals.<sup>16</sup> In fact, Enryō criticized Christianity's creation theory and the like from the perspective of evolutionary theory and other empirical schools of thought in *The Golden Needle of Truth* 『真理金針』 and his *Living Discourse on Buddhism* series.<sup>17</sup> His claims greatly overlapped with vigorous debates that were taking place in Europe and the United States at the time. While using such empirical knowledge, he argued that Buddhism—in contrast to Christianity—did not necessarily go against natural science. To do so, he focused on ideas advocated in nineteenth century physics and evolutionary theory, such as the "law of the conservation of mass" 物質不滅, the "law of the conservation of energy" 勢力恒存, and the "laws of evolution" 進化の規則. Enryō asserted in his works that such scientific theories do not

15 The biggest debate Katō had with the Buddhist camp began in 1895 and was on good and bad deeds and their retribution. Katō's article in 『哲学雑誌』 [Philosophy journal] (vol. 10, no. 100) entitled 「仏教に所謂善悪の因果応報は真理にあらず」 [Buddhism's good and bad causes producing the concomitant retribution of good and bad effects is not truth] provoked a considerable response, including counter-arguments by INOUE Enryō (such as 「仏教因果論に就きて」 [On Buddhism's theory of cause and effect], 『東洋哲学』 [Eastern philosophy] 3.1, 1896) and KIYOZAWA Manshi 清沢満之. Enryō and Katō also had a series of debates surrounding the former's 『破唯物論』 [Refuting materialism] (1898).

16 "Fenollosa, Toyama, and Katō acted jointly in introducing the current state of Western science, as represented by the leading scholars of the British Empire. Under the strong influence of X-club, Tokyo University became an intellectual stronghold of the growing anti-Christian trend during the Meiji period. A religion outdated in the West was not to be admitted to strike roots in Japan. In particular, Enryō became famous in the late 1880s by using evolutionary and other scientific arguments to criticize Christianity and compare it unfavorably with Buddhism." SCHULZER. *Inoue Enryō* (see note 8), 44.

17 "When I read the Bible, it's fine for me to completely throw out any of its teachings that are not in accordance with empirical thought. This is the duty of scholars to serve the truth." INOUE Enryō. 『真理金針』 [The golden needle of truth], in 『井上円了選集』, vol. 3 (Tokyo: 東洋大学, 1987), 69.

contradict Buddhism, which is based on the "law of cause and effect."<sup>18</sup> In this sense, the "truth" that was central to Enryō's reformation of Buddhism included (scientific) truth that was demonstrable via experiments and experience.

However, this motif of defending Buddhism with scientific thought was certainly not unique to Enryō. The above-described distrust of traditional Christian faith shaped by the conflict between science and religion had given rise to a desire for a religion that could replace it. This led to efforts to rationalize Christian belief (such as Unitarianism) on the Christian side, as well as attempts to construct religions completely independent of traditional religion (such as Comte's Religion of Humanity). Parallel to all of this ran hopes that Buddhism—which had been "discovered" by European and American Orientalists along with Sanskrit and Pali texts—could become a new modern religion that replaces Christianity due to its rational and ethical nature.<sup>19</sup> In this context a discourse spread that presented Buddhism as the only religion that is compatible with modern science, and Buddhism began to be looked upon very positively by intellectuals.

Let us go through some of these developments. The modern Buddhism scholar David McMAHAN lists Anagarika DHARMAPALA, Henry Steel OLCOTT, and Paul CARUS, as individuals who tried to use scientific thought to defend Buddhism in a rationalist fashion.<sup>20</sup> They were deeply involved with the world of Japanese Buddhism, and in recent years have been discussed from a variety of angles.<sup>21</sup> As is well known, in the late 1880s and into the 1890s, the Theosophist Olcott as well as Dharmapala, who greatly contributed to Sri Lanka's Buddhist revival, came to Japan, and were eagerly welcomed by Buddhists in the country.<sup>22</sup> While these two individuals had different motivations for their attempts to modernize Buddhism, they saw its scientific and moral nature as keys to its protection. As McMahan argues, Dharmapala, who studied at British schools in Ceylon, redefined Buddhism using the two terms of "cause and effect" and "evolution." His intention in doing so was to re-represent the Eastern religion of Buddhism—which was seen as being at a low stage—as the most-evolved higher re-

18 For details see my article 「ラフカディオ・ハーンの〈高等仏教〉と井上円了」 [Lafcadio Hearn's 'Higher Buddhism' and Inoue Enryō], *Annual Report of the Inoue Enryō Center* 『井上円了センター年報』 23 (2014).

19 Philip C. ALMOND, *The British Discovery of Buddhism* (Cambridge University Press, 1988).

20 McMAHAN. *Buddhist Modernism* (see note 4).

21 SUEKI Fumihiko 末木文美士, HAYASHI Makoto 林淳, YOSHINAGA Shin'ichi 吉永進一, ŌTANI Eiichi 大谷栄一, eds. 『ブッダの変貌』 [Transformations of the Buddha] (Kyōto: 法蔵館, 2014).

22 SATŌ Tetsurō 佐藤哲朗. 『大アジア思想活劇』 [The great Asian drama of thought] (Tōkyō: サンガ, 2008); YOSHINAGA Shin'ichi 吉永進一. 「オルコット去りし後」 [After Olcott left], in 『近代と仏教』 [Modernity and Buddhism] (Kyōto: 国際日本文化研究センター, 2013).

ligion by relocating it in the evolutionary model of religion that was influential at the time.<sup>23</sup> In other words, he was re-articulating Buddhism as a scientifically and morally evolved religion. Dharmapala was trying to revitalize Buddhism in Ceylon under colonial rule, and his presentation also served as a protest against this rule. This strategy of reconstructing Buddhism—frequently referred to as "Protestant Buddhism"—was contemporaneous with that of Enryō.<sup>24</sup> As we have seen above, Enryō's articulation of a Buddhism that was the only religion that could co-exist with modern science was primarily directed towards a domestic audience. We should also remember that before Enryō used it against those within Japan who were proponents of Christianity, he had used it to resist the anti-religion discourse of KATŌ Hiroyuki and other enlightenment intellectuals. For this reason, first it was necessary for him to assert that Buddhism was a religion based on the empiricism of the likes of physics and evolutionary theory. At any rate, Enryō perceived the relationship between science and religion based on the perspective found in his aforementioned "Religion in the Nineteenth Century," and it was such a context that he tried to reform Buddhism.

However, on the other hand, for Enryō, just defending Buddhism based on modern science was alone inadequate. If we look at Enryō's arguments in detail, we can see that while he certainly does assert the compatibility of the two, in his systematization of Buddhism, this was the stage of the "Hīnayāna." In other words, this also relates to his redefinition of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

As we have seen above, in the late 1880s and into the 1890s, Olcott and Dharmapala were enthusiastically welcomed in the Japanese Buddhist world. However, they were firmly rooted in the southern Theravāda tradition. Therefore, the scientific Buddhism that they presented was, naturally, Theravāda in nature.<sup>25</sup> In the same way, the Buddhism "discovered" by European and American Orientalists was the early Buddhism left behind in Pāli texts; they saw a rational and moral quality only in Śākyamuni's "pure" Buddhism, and, in contrast, considered the Mahāyāna Buddhism transmitted to China and Japan as a degenerate religion developed based on people's irrational imaginations. From this modern scholarship on Buddhism in Europe and the United States, the idea that Mahāyāna was not the Buddha's teachings emerged, which repeatedly became a problem during the Meiji period. Enryō precisely grasped these

<sup>23</sup> MCMAHAN. *Buddhist Modernism* (see note 4), 92–94.

<sup>24</sup> Richard GOMBRICH and Gananath OBEYESEKERE. *Buddhism Transformed: Religious Change in Sri Lanka* (Princeton University Press, 1990).

<sup>25</sup> This can be seen as one of the reasons that the Japanese Buddhist world would gradually pull away from Olcott and Dharmapala, whom they had at first welcomed.

debates taking place inside and outside of Japan,<sup>26</sup> and thought that Mahāyāna Buddhism was what needed to be re-articulated in this context. His construction of it was not only for making clear Buddhism's truth, but also defending the Mahāyāna, which had received a low appraisal in Europe and the United States. This was in turn connected to his lifelong motto of "defending the nation and loving the truth" 護国愛理.

#### 4. Absolute Truth and the Religion of the Future

First, let us begin with a passage in which Enryō discusses academic fields based on modern science, that is, "experience."

When it comes to establishing truth in the academic world, these various fields [physics, chemistry, astronomy, etc.] are all opposed to religion. Rather, they reject religion [...]. Their theories all come from experience [実験]. Do Buddhists have any such experiences that can contend with them? When trying to present Buddhism's truth to these various empirical fields, if we don't rely on philosophy, then what field should we use? While the empiricism of these fields is limited to the material, this philosophical research extends to the immaterial. It is clear that immaterial truth like that of Buddhism must be proven with philosophy.<sup>27</sup>

According to Enryō, the objects of the various empirical fields are material things and phenomena. In other words, they present knowledge regarding things that can be experienced by the five senses, and insofar as this is the case this knowledge is limited knowledge relative the five sense organs. Many of the intellectuals belonging to X Club (as well as Comte's positivism) held that such experiential knowledge was the only kind of knowledge valid in the realm of academic study, and that even if one provisionally allows for the existence of something that transcends experience, it is basically impossible to perceive. In many cases they emphasized the relative nature of human's perceptual abilities, and adopted an agnostic or skeptical position regarding absolute truth.<sup>28</sup> Enryō, on the other hand, thought that in order to truly protect Buddhism, philosophy, which elucidates absolute truth (an immaterial truth that transcends relative empirical truth), was necessary. In order to make clear this truth, Enryō crafted

26 In Enryō's book collection that is held at Toyo University ("The Enryō Library" 「円了文庫」) one finds, for example, works by Paul CARUS, who interpreted Buddhist thought from a rational and philosophical perspective, as well as Rhys DAVIS, a leading researcher on Pāli Buddhist texts.

27 INOUE Enryō. 『仏教活論本論顕正活論』 [Living discourse on Buddhism: Disclosing the right], in 『井上円了選集』 vol 4, 208.

28 Bernard LIGHTMAN. *The Origins of Agnosticism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987).

a Buddhist metaphysics or "pure philosophy" 純正哲学. The absolute truth that can be found in this pure philosophy became the core of Enryō's reform of Buddhism.

The historical circumstances by which Enryō came up with the idea of Buddhism being philosophy and containing absolute truth are unclear. However, there is no doubt that Ernest FENOLLOSA, who was a lecturer in Tokyo University's Department of Philosophy, played a role. In June 1885 at a set of lectures hosted by the Kangakai 鑑画会, (Society for the Appreciation of Paintings) Fenollosa spoke on the revival of Buddhist paintings. When doing so, he problematized the chaotic and weak world of Meiji Japanese religious thought, and discussed what the next religion that would overcome this would be. As a basis for this discussion, he first points out that the agnostic tendency that had spread in nineteenth century Europe was also affecting Japan's intellectuals.

In the past forty years European philosophy has suffered from a miserable illness, namely, the theory that absolute truth cannot be known. The germs of this disease have recently got into the intellectual class of Japan. In other words, in the world of science and philosophy, it is fashionable to say that even if truth exists it cannot be known [...]. However, the end of this era of unhealthy thought is rapidly approaching.<sup>29</sup>

While Fenollosa, who subscribed to the thought of Herbert SPENCER, was the one who introduced evolutionary theory philosophy into Japan, he thought that the agnosticism and skepticism brought about by empirical fields was a European sickness and eroding the Japanese religious world. He also asserted that Buddhism, being much more philosophical than Christianity and including a systematization of absolute truth, could be the next religion of Japan. However, according to Fenollosa, since compared to Christianity Buddhism lacked ethical efficacy, improvements in this area would be indispensable. Thus the coming religion that Fenollosa had in mind was an improved Buddhism that included appropriate forms which could apply absolute truth to everyday needs.

Fenollosa's discovery of Buddhism's philosophical nature can be traced back to a discussion he had with AKAMATSU Renjō 赤松連城 in November 1884.<sup>30</sup> When Akamatsu visited Fenollosa's friend Bigelow, Fenollosa happened to pass by and joined

<sup>29</sup> Ernest F. FENOLLOSA. 「仏画の復興」 [The revival of Buddhist paintings], ed. and trans. by MURAKATA Akiko 村形明子, in 『フェノロサ資料』 [Fenollosa materials] vol. 2 (Tokyo: ミュージアム出版, 1984), 205–206. Translator's note: The original English for this lecture was unavailable at the time of translation.

<sup>30</sup> This is described in 「教学対話」 [A discussion of religion and academics], 『万報一覽』 [Miscellaneous news] 54, 1884. This article is reprinted in YAMAGUCHI Seiichi 山口静一 『フェノロサ』 [Fenollosa], vol. 1 (Tokyo: 三省堂, 1982). I have used this reprint.

their conservation, which turned to Buddhism and philosophy. It particularly focused on the similarity between Hegelian dialectics ("the theory that everything comes into existence through three moments" 物みな三箇相依りて成るの説) and Buddhism's "three truths of existence, emptiness, and the middle way" 有空中の三諦. In this way Fenollosa found out that Buddhism contained logic that was similar to that of Hegel, and his eyes were opened to the philosophical nature of its truth. The aforementioned lecture he gave in the following year was based on this understanding of Buddhism.

## 5. Buddhism's Philosophical System

1885, the year in which Fenollosa suggested Buddhism, with its systematization of absolute truth, could be Japan's next religion, was also the year that Enryō deemed the "first year of my Buddhist reformation." In fact, right around this time, Enryō had begun presenting a philosophical theory that could be called Japan's first Buddhist philosophical system. Defining Buddhism as "a religion entirely possessing both the intellectual and the emotional," Enryō tried to systematize Buddhism in its entirety. This first appears in volumes one and two of his *The Golden Needle of Truth* (1886). Subsequently he would continue to publish one work after another on the topic, including a third volume (1887) as well as *Prolegomena to a Living Discourse on Buddhism* (1887).<sup>31</sup> His attempt to revitalize Buddhism under the banner of philosophy had quite an impact in society.<sup>32</sup>

Next, let us turn to the characteristics of Enryō's systematization of Buddhist philosophy, through an examination of his view of "truth" and his conception of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

As we have seen, the aim of Enryō's Buddhist philosophy was to show that Buddhism did not contradict modern science, and uncover an "absolute truth" within Buddhism that transcends relative scientific knowledge. In this project, the Buddhist texts

<sup>31</sup> Regarding the years in which Enryō wrote and published his "early period thought," see MIURA 三浦. 『井上門了』 (see note 2).

<sup>32</sup> The scholar of Buddhism TOKIWA Daijō 常磐大定 describes the impact that Enryō had on world of Buddhism as follows: "Anyone would point to the *Golden Needle of Truth* and *Prolegomena to a Living Discourse on Buddhism* as things that in early Meiji Buddhism—about the first twenty years or so—sold like hot cakes, particularly gave Buddhism strength, and let Buddhists know the direction in which to go. They were influential to the extent that we could say that because they existed, Meiji Buddhism shone, and that because they existed, today's world of Buddhism exists. Both works were by Mr. Enryō Inoue Hosui. Or, if during this time in the Meiji [period], we had not had this person, perhaps we wouldn't have been able to imagine today's Buddhist world." TOKIWA Daijō 常磐大定. 「真理金針（初編）解題」 [The golden needle of truth (vol. 1): Explanatory notes], in 『明治文化全集：宗教編』 [Complete collection of Meiji culture: Religion volume] (Tokyo: 岩波書店, 1928).

*Essentials of the Eight Sects* 『八宗綱要』 and *The Awakening of Mahāyāna Faith* 『大乘起信論』, as well as the writings of the Western philosophers Hegel and Spencer, occupied privileged position as points of reference.<sup>33</sup>

Enryō states that modern science is empirical academic knowledge, describing it as being at the stage of five sense-based empirical objectivity. Notably, he superimposes the knowledge at this stage on Hīnayāna Buddhism. This is justified by grounding the developmental stages of Western philosophy and Buddhism using a Hegelian dialectic.

According to Enryō, Western philosophy and the human intellect's development first begins via an awareness of visible and tangible external entities (objectivism / materialism). However, such understandings hit a roadblock when confronted with the question of the true nature of things in the material world. Therefore, one must next reflect upon the subject that perceives the objective. In other words, Enryō says, thought progresses from the objective to the subjective, that is, from matter to the mind. This is a dialectical process expressing the logical inevitability of progressing from materialism, or simple belief in the outside objective world, to the nature of the subject that perceives it. However, according to Enryō, such spiritualism is also just another mistaken theory. Insofar as the mind exists, material things must also exist, and insofar as the material things and the mind are only relative entities, the Absolute—their essence—must also exist. In this way, after human perception goes through the stage of moving from objective knowledge to subjective knowledge, it progresses to absolute knowledge. Using the Hegelian dialectical logic of "thesis, antithesis, and synthesis" 正反合, Enryō explains the developmental stages of the logic of Western philosophy as "materialism → spiritualism → panlogism," or, "objective → subjective → ideal."

Enryō then says that such development in awareness can also be found within Buddhism. As SATŌ Atushi 佐藤厚 has made clear, Enryō's "Buddhism-philosophy concordance theory" superimposes the logical development of "materialism → spiritualism → panlogism" upon the logical / historical development of the various schools of Buddhism.<sup>34</sup> In doing so Enryō refers to the *Essentials of the Eight Sects*. Guided by

33 These were all lectured upon at Tokyo University's Department of Philosophy. Hegel and Spencer served as pillars in Fenollosa's history of Western philosophy, and *The Awakening of Mahāyāna Faith* was covered by HARA Tanzan 原坦山 and *Essentials of the Eight Sects* by YOSHITANI Kakuju 吉谷覚寿.

34 SATŌ Atushi 佐藤厚, 「井上円了『八宗綱要ノート』の思想的意義」 [The meaning of Inoue Enryō's "Notes regarding essentials of the eight sects" in intellectual history terms], *Annual Report of the Inoue Enryō Center* 『井上円了センター年報』 22 (2013).

YOSHITANI Kakuju's lectures, Enryō tries to re-portray the logical development of Buddhism's schools presented by this text using a dialectical method.

Enryō explains the development from Abhidharma to Yogācāra and then Huāyán 華嚴 / Tiāntái 天台 as the development from materialism to spiritualism and then rationalism. According to Enryō, Abhidharma thought holds that the world comes into existence via the dispersal and aggregation of various elements (the five aggregates), and insofar as it recognizes that elements actually exist, it is objectivist / materialist. This "Hīnayāna" school thus is compatible with modern scientific theories due to this objectivist position. However, as we have seen, since objectivism cannot exist solely on its own, Buddhism advanced to Yogācāra consciousness-only thought, which holds that the world comes into exist based on "seeds" 種子 in the "store consciousness" 阿頼耶識. However, in the end, Enryō says, consciousness-only thought / spiritualism is inadequate, and Buddhism moves to Huāyán / Tiāntái, which holds that the world's phenomena arise from the "causal activities of suchness" 真如縁起.<sup>35</sup>

In this way, Enryō asserts, Western philosophy's developmental stages of materialism, spiritualism, and panlogism can be found in Buddhist history in the progression from Abhidharma to Yogācāra and then Huāyán / Tiāntái. He shows the similarity of the "three truths of existence, emptiness, and the middle way" that Fenollosa uncovered in Buddhism with the Hegelian dialectic of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis.<sup>36</sup> Positioning the Mahāyāna doctrines of Huāyán / Tiāntái as Buddhism's logical / historical apex, he argues that they matured in Japan as a middle position that transcends the opposition between the objective and the subjective. By doing so Enryō presents the transmission process of Buddhism from India to China and then Japan as a single set of logical / historical developments by which its doctrines are gradually deepened.

Another important part of Enryō's reformulation of Mahāyāna Buddhism is his claim that it is a doctrine regarding "absolute truth" that includes within itself relative knowledge of science. To show this, Enryō relies upon Spencer's *First Principles* and *The Awakening of Mahāyāna Faith*. He overlays the concept of "suchness" 真如 found in the latter text with that of the "Unknown Reality" from the former.<sup>37</sup>

35 In addition to SATŌ's (see note 34) detailed studies on the Enryō's view of Buddhism's logical development, see Gerard Clinton GODART. "Tracing the Circle of Truth: Inoue Enryō on the History of Philosophy and Buddhism," *The Eastern Buddhist* 36 (2004).

36 While this superimposition of a Hegelian dialectic and the three truths of existence, emptiness, and the middle way was repeated throughout the history of modern Japanese philosophy, there is no doubt that this is first developed in the writings of Enryō. Cf. TAKEUCHI Yoshinori 武内義範. 『教行信証の哲学』 [The philosophy of the *Kyōgyōshinshō*], in 『武内義範著作集』 [Collected works of Takeuchi Yoshinori], vol. 1 (Kyōto: 法蔵館, 2000).

37 HASEGAWA. 「ラフカディオ・ハーンの〈高等仏教〉と井上円了」 (see note 18).

Spencer explains all phenomena in the universe based on the law of evolution that simple things transit to complicated things, and in this sense defined phenomena as knowable. Therefore, within Spencer's system, all phenomena are covered by objective knowledge. However, *First Principles* affirms the existence of a "first cause" that in the background gives rise to and develops such evolutionary phenomena. Since this first cause does not appear as a phenomenon, it is unknowable: the "Unknown Reality." Spencer thus crafts a metaphysics in which all knowable phenomena arise due to the power of this reality. Based on this metaphysics, he argues that objective, relative perception co-exists (or reconciles) with the existence of something that is absolute and transcends this perception.

Enryō adopted Spencerian metaphysics by superimposing this Unknown Reality upon "unexplainable, un-nameable" 不可説不可称 suchness, as well as knowable phenomena upon Buddhism's notion of "all dharmas" 万法. However, while Spencer held that it was ultimately impossible to perceive this "Unknown Reality," Enryō went beyond this theory of the unknowable to discuss the perception of absolute truth.<sup>38</sup>

In this way Enryō presented the Mahāyāna Buddhist philosophy of the arising of phenomena through suchness from causation as Middle-Path thought that, transcending the opposition between materialism and spiritualism as well as the objective and subjective, included both "Hīnayāna" Buddhist-like relative knowledge and Mahāyāna Buddhist-like absolute knowledge. He did not completely do away with the positions of objectivism and subjectivism; they were included under the broader category of Buddhism. For this reason, Enryō described his systematization of Buddhist philosophy as a "complete and fully equipped" system that includes Buddhism's various sects and schools. At any rate, Enryō presented Mahāyāna Buddhism as the most rational and all-encompassing set of doctrines that harmonizes and unites relative scientific truth and absolute philosophical truth ("all dharmas are suchness / suchness is all dharmas" 万法是真如、真如是万法). By claiming that the Huayan / Tiantai Buddhism that developed in Japan was the most evolved form of Buddhism, he also succeeded in connecting Buddhism with a nationalist discourse.

At the very least, Enryō, who had studied in Tokyo University's Department of Philosophy, understood through Fenollosa the kind of Buddhism that could serve as the religion of the future. In other words, Enryō firmly grasped the problem faced by modern philosophy and modern religion in the West. In light of this he reinterpreted Bud-

38 I have discussed this in my article 「ヴィクトリア時代英国における不可知論と井上円了」 [The theory of the unknowable in Victorian England and Inoue Enryō], *Annual Report of the Inoue Enryō Center* 『井上円了センター年報』 25 (2017).

dhism, particularly Mahāyāna Buddhism, from a philosophical perspective. Here we can find Enryō's distinctiveness.

## 6. Conclusion

In summary, Enryō's Buddhist philosophy, which reached its initial completion around the late 1880s and 1890s, reacted directly to the anti-religious tendencies of Meiroku Society intellectuals during the early Meiji period as well as the skepticism and agnosticism-induced crisis of faith in Victorian England that formed their background, and presented Buddhism as the religion of the future.

On the other hand, Enryō also turned around X Club intellectuals' critique of Christianity to portray Buddhism as the only religion that could coexist with modern science. This took the same path as worldwide nineteenth century religion-related developments: the challenge that the nineteenth century progress of material civilization presented to traditional religion as well as the simultaneous search for a replacement or new religion. However, on the other hand, Enryō constructed a metaphysics of an absolute truth-based Buddhism that did not contradict science. As is shown by Fenollosa, this was also an attempt to revive metaphysics in response to the agnostic and skeptical tendencies that had spread in nineteenth century Europe (as well as the United States). By theoretically arranging Mahāyāna Buddhism as a single metaphysics, Enryō presented at the very least something completely new to Meiji Japan as well as took a different path from the Theravāda Buddhism-centric efforts to modernize the religion found in other countries. This Buddhist philosophy of Enryō would have a decisive influence on Buddhist thought in modern Japan, serve as the basic framework for the "Eastern Buddhism" 東方仏教 proposed by the Japanese Buddhist delegation at the Chicago World's Parliament of Religions, and then spread to the West as well as East Asia.<sup>39</sup>

When reconsidered in this global context of modernization, Enryō's Buddhism reformation appears to show elements that were indispensable in the search for the form that modern religion should take, even if it was something to be overcome by succeeding generations. In order to elucidate the influence of Enryō's ideas regarding improving Buddhism on later thought and practice, a more detailed intellectual history analy-

39 Cf. Judith M. SNODGRASS. 「近代グローバル仏教への日本の貢献：世界宗教会議再考」 [Japan's contribution to modern global Buddhism: The World's Parliament of Religions revisited], trans. HORI Masahiko 堀雅彦, in 『近代と仏教』 [Modernity and Buddhism] (Kyoto: 国際日本文化研究センター, 2013).

sis is necessary. It is my hope that the contextualization of Enryō presented in this paper can serve as an aid to such future work.

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