

ON INOUE ENRYO'S REFORM OF BUDDHISM

ITS INTELLECTUAL HISTORY CONTEXT

HASEGAWA Takuya 長谷川琢哉

Abstract

At the basis of INOUE Enryō's thought and real-world undertakings lay the idea of revitalizing Buddhism through philosophy. Enryō famously recalls in *Prolegomena to a Living Discourse on Buddhism* his joy in finding philosophical truth in Buddhism and how he thus became determined to reform it into a "religion of the civilized world." 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.

His attempt to reform Buddhism is sometimes seen as a rationalist revitalization that is inadequate for its lack of true "modern Buddhist faith." 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.