

INOUE ENRYO WITH HIS MYSTIC NATIONALISM

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Abstract:

INOUE Enryō's 1902 *The Hidden Meaning of the Rescript* presents to the public his mystic interpretation (the "absolute interpretation," he proudly declares) of the Imperial Rescript on Education (1890). He argues that the aim of the Rescript's promulgation was to show and make known Japan's unique morality of absolute loyalty and filial piety, which appeared amidst its unique founding conditions (the "primeval" or "a priori" Imperial Household and a family-like organization). This is to say, according to Enryō, Japan is a country comprised of a single family with the same bloodline. There was first the Imperial Household, and then appeared the imperial subjects who are its descendants.

In *The Hidden Meaning*, Enryō informs readers that absolute loyalty and filial piety is what *develops* the Imperial Household and national polity. At the time, it was common sense in Japan that Amaterasu's divine decree ensured the eternal and unbroken Imperial Household and national polity. However, Enryō does not stop his discussion here. He argues that the Rescript, which begins by addressing imperial subjects ("Ye, Our subjects"), seeks their help and protection in not only emergencies but also normal times because the Imperial Fortune is unsteady without their constant aid. If this is the case, the true foundation for the Imperial Fortune being eternal is not Amaterasu's divine decree, but the help and protection of imperial subjects. Absolute loyalty and filial piety ensures that they will carry out this duty. *The Hidden Meaning* does not really stand alone as a commentary on the Imperial Rescript, but is rather a book presenting Enryō's own thought that borrows its authority from the Emperor's words and direct orders.

The Hidden Meaning was not educational endeavor but part of Enryō's mystery studies project. In 1893, he published *Introduction to Lectures on Mystery Studies*. Therein, he states that the aim of mystery studies is to connect the Imperial Household with loyalty and filial piety in order to give rise to an ideal national polity. Enryō is confident that doing away with "alleged mysteries" and expressing the True Mystery will reveal this ideal. For Enryō, "protecting the country and loving the truth" is nothing other than lamenting the decline of this ideal (the national polity and loyalty / filial piety), eliminating alleged mysteries, and revealing the True Mystery. He sees this as not being for the pursuit of truth itself but rather something that must be immediately carried out for the sake of Japan.

Enryō's nationalism in *The Hidden Meaning* could be described as a non-state-centric ideology of the Japanese national polity that is based on absolute subjects formed out of the unity of subordinate subjects and agential subjects. In other words, it emphasizes the sovereignty of imperial subjects. Such a nationalism can only exist if imperial subjects have an active awareness of themselves as the country's sovereigns. This nationalism rejects both Amaterasu's divine decree as an "alleged mystery" that controls people's minds as a part of Japanese tradition and culture as well as a state-centric understanding of "belonging." Enryō conceived of a curious nationalism that was completely unrelated to an aggressive expansionism.

(Keywords: hidden meaning 玄義, Imperial Rescript on Education 教育勅語, absolute loyalty and filial piety 絶対的忠孝, True Mystery / alleged mysteries 真怪 / 仮怪, absolute subjects 絶対的臣民, sovereignty of imperial subjects 臣民主権)