Foreword
What Should We Do Now?

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The Center has completed its third year. There is a Japanese saying to the effect that if one sits for three years on a cold stone, the stone will eventually become warm; in other words, perseverance will prevail. A period of three years is on the one hand a mere flash in time, but it is also a length of time in which steadily dripping water can wear away stone. Three years have passed since the Center was established in 2011. I have heard that a Greek sage said, "The first step is half the journey." Three of the five years granted to the Center have passed. The teeter-totter has long lost its balance and teetered towards one side. Condensing the results of the past three years into the remaining two years, we will endeavour to return to the public a surplus of abundant value.

Currently, the staff number fifty-five in all, made up of twenty-two researchers, twenty-seven visiting researchers, three research associates, one postdoctoral fellow, and two project research assistants. Our activities during the past year have included study group sessions, study meetings, symposiums, and international Web conferences, numbering more than twenty in all. The core focus of the 1st Unit is the International Association for Inoue Enryo Research, and since its inaugural conference in 2012 it has achieved steady growth, holding a successful study meeting in the United States in May 2013 and its second conference in September, launching the journal International Inoue Enryo Studies, and also holding five study group sessions. The 2nd Unit has held four study group sessions, one international Web conference, and one symposium on research on methodology, and also five study group sessions on "A Philosophy of Post-Fukushima." In the Center’s final year it is planned to publish the results of these activities in the form of two books provisionally titled Methods Crossing Borders and A Philosophy of Post-Fukushima. The 3rd Unit has been undertaking diverse activities centered on the subject of multicultural coexistence. In particular, the holding of a study meeting in Iran will, together with the study meeting held last year in Japan, become an important basis for future collaboration between our two countries. Several symposiums and study group sessions on coexistence between religions and on other topics were also held. Reflecting all of these activities, the Journal of International Philosophy has been growing in volume year by year and has flowed over into extra issues. For further information on these activities, I refer readers to our Web site. Making these results available to the public is one of the most important tasks for us.

When the Center was established, its aims were set out as follows: "One feature of modern society lies in the fact that the globalization of every aspect of society and the diversification of values are forcing people to be unable to determine the direction where they are heading. Living in this modern society, we need to pursue philosophical inquiry that fundamentally reexamines the current state of people and society. In order to address this challenge, we have formed an international network of philosophical research—on the one hand presenting to the world the contemporary significance of the philosophy of Enryo Inoue as the thoughts of a citizen of the earth, and on the other hand researching the formation of a universal philosophical foundation that goes beyond the distinctions between Eastern and Western thought."
However, it has become clear that because globalism nullifies spatial expanse, it will end in the disappearance of a society fit for human beings. At the same time, there is also a tendency for people to lose sight of the diversity of values. What people conceive of as the future direction of humanity would seem to be heading towards a disregard for human dignity. The sun has already begun to go down and the times, with a clatter like a bucket being dropped down a well, have begun to degenerate. Using this as a springboard, what degree of internationalism will we be able to create? That is to say, what sort of loose world community will we be able to build after having tried out the possibilities of various combinations while enriching the singularities of small communities? Shouldering this heavy burden, philosophy cherishes the hope of discovering a way to invert this world. The issue is not what to do “next,” but what to do “now.” At the Center we have, I believe, been making preparations for this. We have continually engaged in discussion, regardless of differences between East and West. In the course of doing so, we have created a venue where researchers of Eastern philosophy and researchers of Western philosophy can cooperate in carrying out various projects. We are convinced that this has given us experiences that could not have been gained by simply exchanging research results among researchers. Constantly bearing in mind the inaccessibility of the other party, be it another culture or other people, we hope to continue our international activities and progress towards an ending that will also be a new beginning. I ask you for your continuing warm support.

About the contents:

The first part of this volume constitutes articles written in Japanese and Japanese translations of the texts written in English, German, French and Chinese. The latter part is comprised of the translations of the Japanese articles (into English, German, French and Persian) and the original texts of the English, German, French and Chinese articles that appear in the first part. The articles follow the same order in both parts of the volume.