INOUYE ENRYO'S 1887 POSITION STATEMENT ON PHILOSOPHICAL STUDIES IN JAPAN

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1. Inoue Enryō: The Society and the Journal of Philosophy

INOUYE Enryō 井上円了 was a leading figure in the formation of the Society of Philosophy 哲学会 (hereafter "the Society"). While he was still an undergraduate student in the philosophy department at Tokyo University (1882–85) he managed to obtain the crucial support of NISHI Amane 西周, along with other colleagues, in order to organize the Society and promote philosophical studies in Japan. Enryō's personal recollection of establishing contact with Nishi Amane is as follows:

The late Professor Nishi Amane was the person who introduced philosophy to Japan for the first time and explained the outline of logic, psychology, and

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ethics. He not only coined the term tetsugaku [哲学] for philosophy but also fixed technical terms, such as shukan [主観] for subject, kyakkān [客観] for object, en'eki [演繹] for deduction, and kinō [帰納] for induction. [...] I first saw Professor Nishi around 1879 or 1880, at a public seminar held at Asakusa Ibumurarō [浅草 井生村楼], where he lectured on the theory of evolution. [...] But the first time I personally got to know him was at the beginning of 1884, when I wished to consult him about establishing a philosophy society. With his calling card in hand and without following the usual protocol of having had someone introduce me to him, I showed up at his house at Kyōbashi Sanjukken-bori [京橋三十間堀, present-day Ginza 銀座 area]. He warmly received this unannounced guest, however, and we were befriended ever since. On the other hand, he did not know Dr. Inoue Tetsujirō [伊藤哲次郎] as yet. In fact, it was at the second monthly meeting of the Society that Professor Nishi asked me to introduce him to Mr. Inoue Tetsujirō, and the two met for the first time.¹

In the beginning "philosophy" was broadly defined, overarching a wide range of academic disciplines from natural sciences to humanities, which opened the door of the Society to everyone of the university community. The first meeting took place on January 26, 1884, with the initial membership of twenty-nine.² The group met monthly, where a member would make a presentation to be followed by lively discussion. The Society soon doubled in size, as new students and faculty members actively sought to join.³ Two years into its founding, the Society opted to formalize itself by establishing bylaws and a board of directors. They elected KATO Hiroyuki 加藤弘之, a professor of political science, as the founding president, and TOYAMA Masakazu 外山正一, a professor of sociology and President of the College of Humanities, as the vice president.

The idea of publishing the Society's journal came about at the monthly meeting of October, 1886; an "extraordinary meeting" 臨時会 was held on December 18, 1886, and an executive committee was formed.⁴ In January 1887, INOUE Enryō founded at Hongō 本郷 Yumimachi 弓町 (today's Hongō ichōme 本郷一丁目, Bunkyō Ward 文京区, Tokyo) the editorial headquarters of the journal, Tetsugaku Shoin 哲学書院, which also served as the publisher. Two founding secretaries chosen from among the undergraduate students

¹ INOUE Enryō's personal communication to ITO Kichinosuke 伊藤吉之助, editor of 『哲学雑誌』 [Journal of philosophy], JP 27.301 (1912): 121.
² ITO Kichinosuke 伊藤吉之助, 『哲学会資料』 [Records of the Society of Philosophy], Part 1, JP 27.300 (1912): 196. See also 『東京大学百年史 一部局史』 [Centennial history of the University of Tokyo: History of colleges and departments], vol. 1 (Tokyo Daigaku, 1986), 500.
³ The number of memberships increased to sixty-six by the end of 1886, see JP 1.1 (1887): 39–40.
⁴ 「故井上博士の経歴及び著書」 [Major activities and publications of the late Dr. Inoue], JP 34.389 (1919): 705.
were OKADA Ryōhei 岡田良平 and KIYOZAWA Mitsuyuki 清沢満之 (i.e., Manshi). In those days a publisher had an organic connection with major bookstores, such as Maruzen 丸善 and Kōmeisha 鴻盟社, which took care of the distribution and sales of books and journals. The first issue of the Journal of Philosophy 『哲学学会雑誌』, (later renamed as 『哲学雑誌』) was published on February 5, 1887 (Meiji 20). Enryō was then an energetic twenty-eight years old, full of new ideas, organizational skills, and a vigorous entrepreneurial spirit. He had already distinguished himself as a public intellectual in the academic world.

2. Philosophy Broadly Defined

As mentioned above, the success of the Society of Philosophy owed much to the broad definition of philosophy it set forth, which welcomed colleagues and independent thinkers from diverse disciplines. For one thing, in those days, the number of students in the College of Humanities was extremely small. Students who were admitted to study at the University of Tokyo were a select group of independent minds, regardless of their specialized field of study. Also, academic areas were not yet rigidly compartmentalized into highly technical fields. The organic unity of learning, acknowledged by the members of the Society, afforded them to have a bigger picture of scholarship. We find the definition of philosophy printed on the inner cover of the journal, which is written in Chinese (漢文 kanbun) style. It was no doubt penned by Enryō, as the content is identical with his "position statement," which is translated here below. He defined philosophy to include the philosophy of such disciplines as political science,

5 The original name, 『哲学会雑誌』 [Journal of the Society of Philosophy], was renamed 『哲学雑誌』 [Journal of philosophy] by the vote of the monthly meeting of April 20, 1892 (Meiji 25). See JP 63.18.
6 For instance, the year Enryō graduated from the university, there were six graduates from the College of Humanities, and he was the only one who majored in philosophy. The number of Bachelor of Arts in philosophy continues to be small until 1896, when it jumped to fifteen. 『東京帝国大学一覧』 [Handbook of the Imperial University of Tokyo] (1914), 186–87.
7 Interestingly, NISHIDA Kitarō 西田幾多郎 mentions this piece in his essay, 「初めて口語体の文章を書き出した頃」 [Around the time when I started to write in the colloquial style] (1938), 『西田幾多郎全集』 [Collected works of Nishida Kitarō], vol. 11 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2005), 183. (Older edition 『西田幾多郎全集』13: 153.)
natural sciences, sociology, psychology, religious studies, history, literature, and education. His conviction was that any scholarly discipline had a philosophical dimension. This did not preclude a more astringently defined philosophy or metaphysics, which was called *junsei tetsugaku* 純正哲學, often abbreviated as *juntetsu* 純哲. According to Enryō, metaphysics comprised the investigation into the laws of thinking and the principles of things; ethics, aesthetics, and logic were considered the sub-areas of metaphysics.

In the early years of the Society, their monthly meetings must have been quite colorful occasions, as famous scholars and students who were later to make names for themselves attended. For instance, among the editorial staff of 1891, we find the name NATSUME Kinnosuke 夏目金之助, that is, NATSUME Sōseki 夏目漱石, along with FUJISHIRO Teisuke 藤代祐助, HAGA Yaichi 芳賀矢一, and MATUMOTO Matatarō 松本亦太郎. Notable Buddhist thinkers, such as HARA Tanzō 原坦山 gave presentations at the monthly meetings and contributed to the journal as well. It was not surprising, then, that an article by FUJIOKA Sakutarō 藤岡作太郎, a specialist of Japanese literature, was carried in two installments in the journal under the "Miscellaneous section." (Fujioka was a close friend of NISHIDA Kitaro 西田幾多郎, who was to establish a unique philosophical system.) The regular, or main track, students of the university were automatically accepted into the Society. But for those outside the regular track, they needed a member’s recommendation and the approval of the membership at the monthly meeting before they were granted permission to join. NISHIDA Kitaro, for instance, was a student of the "limited track" 選科, therefore, his higher school friend MATUMOTO Bunzaburō 松本文三郎 sponsored his application, which was accepted at the monthly meeting of November 5, 1891.

3. Japan's Political Situation in Global Perspective and the Role of Philosophy

The motive for the formation of the Society of Philosophy mirrored the international political realities of the day, to which Japan was a relative newcomer. The policy makers of the Meiji government consorted their diplomatic efforts to revise the "unequal treaty" 不平等条約 known as the Ansei Treaty 安政条約 that the Tokugawa Shogunate had signed in 1858, which did not accord Japan the status of an independent

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8 「記事」 [Editors’ notes], JP 5.54 (1891): 1114.
10 「記事」 [Editors’ notes], JP 6.57 (1891): 1300.
An awareness was growing among the youth of Japan of being a member of the unified country of Japan, and this sense of nationalism motivated them to work towards elevating the status of Japan to a full-fledged independent nation, worthy of winning the respect of the international community. What Enryō had in mind, when he referred to "civilization" in his position statement, is to be taken in this context. Japanese intellectuals, who had toured North American and European countries, also knew the plight of the colonized Asian countries. In this environment of "to be or not to be colonized," it was urgent for Japan to raise its standard of "civilization" domestically. In the Eurocentric view of things this meant "modernize" the Japanese political and legal system and reach the Western standard, over against which the Western countries measured themselves. Rightly or wrongly, this "standard" consisted in building up of a strong military, development of heavy industry, education of citizenry, and a centralized government that handled domestic as well as international affairs in an orderly and effective manner. Japan poured its efforts into these areas to elevate its standards to meet Western demands.

For Enryō and his colleagues, it was an urgent task, then, that they contributed to this national agenda through their academic studies. This was one of the reasons why it did not make sense to define philosophy narrowly, because by doing so they would have denied philosophical studies of the potential to modernize the mentality of the people. Enryō and his group, which constituted the crème de la crème of the young intellectual brains, saw that the proper development and use of reason was paramount in promoting the agenda of Japan as a modern nation. For Enryō, personally, this went hand in hand with the dissemination of moral education among the masses. In any case, Enryō's special reference to political science and law in the position statement reflected the area of diplomatic efforts that the Japanese government leaders considered essential to Japan.

In fact, the Meiji Imperial Constitution was promulgated in 1889 in preparation for achieving equal status with western nations. This was followed by the establishment of the parliamentary system in 1890 and the system of popular election, albeit with many restrictions in practice. The dearest wish of the leaders of the Meiji government was finally realized on 16 July, 1894 (that is, ten years after the formation of the Society of Philosophy), when the Anglo-Japanese Treaty of Commerce and Navigation was signed in London. Commenting on the significance of this document, the British

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Foreign Secretary, John Wodehouse, the First Earl of Kimberley, said—most likely after the conclusion of the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–95: "Japan's acquisition of equal status with the Western Powers was of far more significance and value than her military victory over the numerically superior Chinese army in Korea."\(^{12}\) This treaty went into effect five years later in July 1899, but it was not until 1911 that the equal treaty concerning tariffs was finally signed by the Western countries, thus making the redressing of the international relations a half-century of diplomatic struggle. Meanwhile, Japan fought another war with Russia, 1904–05, with a victory over one of the European powers, which took the Western world by surprise.

In view of the national goal of modernization, Enryō saw that the study of philosophy was indispensable, as it could transform the Japanese mentality from within. The practical utilitarian view of philosophy (and learning in general) as something useful was widely shared by the Meiji intellectuals, many of whom rendered their service to the central government. For instance, notable members of the Society of Philosophy, KATÔ Hiroyuki and NISHI Amane were both appointed to the Chamber of Elders or the Senate 元老院議官, and NISHIMURA Shigeki 西村茂樹 was a Councilor of the Imperial Household 宮中顧問官. These early Meiji thinkers were typically sought after by the government for their service outside the academic world. Enryō, for one, however, was convinced of the power of the people, and chose to spread higher education among the ordinary people, who could not afford the tuition to study at the Imperial University. This led him to establish Tetsugaku-kan 哲学館, or the Academy of Philosophy, the predecessor of today's Tōyō University, in 1887—the same year he launched the Journal of Philosophy.

4. Enryo's Position Statement

Enryō's position statement, "The Essential Importance of Philosophy and the Establishment of the Society of Philosophy" 「哲学の必要を論じて本会の成立に及ぶ」, appeared in the inaugural issue of the Journal of Philosophy, following the congratulatory address by the president of the Society, KATÔ Hiroyuki.\(^{13}\)

Apart from the points already mentioned above, it is also clear in this document that Enryō was not a mere advocate of Western learning. He rather saw the potential of mutual philosophical enrichment, as the study of Western philosophy would shed new

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\(^{12}\) KAJIMA. Diplomatic History (see note 11), 23.

\(^{13}\) JP 1.1 (1887), KATÔ Hiroyuki's address pp. 1–4, Enryō's position statement pp. 4–9.
light on the Buddhist, Confucian and native traditions of thought familiar to the Japanese people. Underlying his conviction was that philosophy was a universal human activity found throughout cultures and religious traditions of the world, and not just a Western enterprise. Today, as we read Enryō’s statement, we are struck by the fact that the spirit of "intercultural philosophy" was already present in nascent form. This is remarkable because it is only the last decade or two that effort of this kind is finally becoming a contestable stream of philosophical studies in North American and European academia. Enryō can be credited with having had certain foresight in this area.

Notes on the text: The Japanese text was published in two parts in the first and the second issue of the Journal of Philosophy (JP 1.1 (1887): 4–9 and JP 1.2 (1887): 41–44). The second part is a record of the Society's first meetings since its establishment in 1884 until the publication of its journal in 1887. This part has not been translated here. The entire Japanese text is reprinted in volume 25 of the Inoue Enryō Selected Writings (pp. 745–749). Given the historical importance of Enryō's text, the position statement is reproduced here in modern Japanese writing style, accompanied by an English translation. The Japanese text is divided into paragraphs, readings and punctuation are added. Subheadings are supplied to the English translation for the sake of clarity.
A Position Statement: "The Essential Importance of Philosophy and the Establishment of the Society of Philosophy"

By Inoue Enryō

Introductory Remark

If we were to stand on the moon and look at the earth, we would see that two-thirds of the surface is covered by a body of water, and the land mass is only one third of it. However, this is a superficial view of things. If we dive below the water to the bottom of the body of water, we realize that it is all land. Moreover, what distinguishes the land from the oceans, seas, rivers, lakes, and the like, and secures their borders, is the land.

Similar is the contour of the world of scholarship. If we view the scholarly world from the vantage point of the ordinary world, philosophy appears to occupy a small part of the scholarly world, and the majority of it appears to be made up of such disciplines as natural sciences, engineering, literature, history, law, political science, etc. This, however, is a superficial view. If we delve deeply into the bottom of these disciplines, we realize that what forms the foundation of natural, humanistic, and political sciences, and what defines their scope and secures their place within the world of learning, is philosophy.

Philosophy Broadly Defined

Fields related to philosophy are indeed diverse and extensive. Although philosophy

月界に立ちて地球の全面を一瞰(かん)するにその三分の二以上は海洋江湖(こうこ)等の水体にして陆地は纔(わず)かにその三分の一に過ぎざるを見るべし。然るに是れ唯水面の観のみ。若しその水底に入りてこれを験ずれば渾(すべ)てこれ陆地なるを知るべし。果たして然らば海洋江湖の根拠となりてこれをしてその区域を保ちこれをしてその位置に安んぜしむるものは、陸地なり。

今学問世界も亦これに類するある。人若し世俗社會にありて学界の全面を望観すれば、哲学はそれ一小部分を占有するに過ぎず、その大部分は理学、工学、文学、史学、法学、政学、等の諸学科より成るを見る。然れどもこれ亦表面の浅見のみ。若しその深底に入りてこれを験すれば、理文政等の諸学の根拠となりてこれをしてその区域を保ち、これををしてその位置に安んぜしむるものは哲学なり。

哲学の関係実に大なりと謂うべし。夫れ哲学は通常、理論と実用との二科に分
is conventionally divided into theoretical and practical, it is in essence a study of theories, with an intent to clarify the laws of thought and the principles of things. For this reason, as far as our thought extends and insofar as things exist, there is philosophy. Political and legal philosophies deal with the principles of politics and law. Similarly, that which discusses the principle of society is social philosophy; the principle of morality, ethics; the principle of art, aesthetics; and the principle of religion, the philosophy of religion. That which lays down the laws of logic is logic, and that which lays down the laws of psychology is the philosophy of psychology. To history, there is a philosophy of history, and to literature, a philosophy of literature. Pedagogy also relies upon philosophical principles, just as numerous natural sciences stand on philosophical principles.

This prompts me to say that only after having a sufficient understanding of philosophical discipline can actual progress follow in the various fields of learning. The essential importance of philosophy can be thus surmised.

**The Unique Place of Philosophy among All Learning**

The nature of today's philosophy, however, differs greatly from that of the ancient period in that today, in order to substantiate any philosophical theory or principle concerning things, it has to be verified by scientific proof. For this reason, it may be argued that
理学はその目的とする所事物の一部を実験するにありて、その全体を論究するにあらず。且つ、その力、事々物々、宇宙天神神霊の如何に至る迄（ことごとく）究明すること、能わざるは、必然なり。これその学の哲学を待たざるベかからざる所以（ゆえん）にして、古来哲学の義、解を下して、或は、理学の諸規則を統合する学なりと云い、或は理学の原理原則を論定する学なりと云う所なり。而して、又哲学中にもその原理の原則、その原則の原則を論究する一学科あり。これを、純正哲学と称す。

余、曾（かつ）て、学問世界の諸科を政府の組織に比して、百科の理学は地方政府なり。哲学は中央政府なり。哲学中の諸科は中央政府中の諸省なり。純正哲学は中央政府中の内閣なりと定めたすることあり。この比較は因より能くその意を尽くすものにあらずと謂えども、亦全くその関係なきにあらず。純正哲学に於いて、論定せるものは倫理、論理、その他諸哲学の原理原則となり。哲学諸科の論定せるものは、理学法学その他の諸学科の原理原則となって、学問世界の中央政只

only after we understand the natural sciences can philosophy make progress. But, the aim of the natural sciences is directed towards conducting experiments on severely limited segments of what they consider to be the objects of study, and they do not investigate into the totality of their objects. It is obvious that for the natural sciences it is impossible to investigate every single thing and every single matter, extending from the nature of the universe to God and spiritual reality. This is why natural sciences need philosophy. Indeed, since times of old, philosophy has been regarded as the discipline that unifies the laws of the natural sciences and lays out their fundamental principles and laws. Moreover, among various philosophical disciplines there is one branch that studies the principle of principles and the law of laws. This is called metaphysics.

**Philosophy in the World of Learning as Compared to a Central Government**

Describing various disciplines of scholarship, I once likened them to the organization of the government and said that the various natural sciences correspond to local government, while philosophy corresponds to the central government. Also I stated that while various philosophical fields are the ministries and bureaus of the central government, metaphysics corresponds to the cabinet. Although this comparison is far from rigorous, it is not totally off the mark, either. Metaphysics deals with ethics, logic, and all
府はすなわち、哲学なり。

今、地方の人民中、その最も無学無知なるものに至りては、殆ど全く地方政治のその上に存するを知らずるものあり。僅かに地方政府の存するを知るも、中央政府のその上に存するを知らずるものあり。而して、自ずからその日夜独立生存することを得るは独り自身の力によるものにして、毫も政府の力を待つにあらずと信ず。

世人の哲学を視る、恰（あたか）もこれに異ならず。その最も学識なきものに至りては、更に利するを知らず。而して自ら謂、世の文明は独り国力を養成し兵力を拡張するにあり、然らざれば独り政治法律を講ずるにありと。これ世間一般に唱る所にして、未だ一人的哲学は、諸学諸芸の中央政府にして国家に実益ある所以を知るものを見ず。

the fundamental principles and laws of other philosophical fields. They, in turn, deal with the fundamental principles and laws of natural sciences, jurisprudence, and so forth. The central government in the world of learning is philosophy.

Now, among the inhabitants of local regions and especially among those who are least educated, there are people who have no idea that the local politics depends on the policies of the central government above. A few of them may know that a local government exists, but they have no knowledge of the central government that oversees local governments. Naturally, they believe that it is their own efforts that enable them to lead their daily lives in a self-sufficient manner, and consequently they believe that they do not need the assistance of a central government.

This is no different from how uninformed people perceive philosophy. Among them, those who are least erudite, do not even know that philosophy can actually benefit the lives of the people. Therefore they claim that civilization consists in nurturing national strength and expanding its military capability, and if scholars do not contribute to augmenting national strength, they are merely professing politics and law. Such is in fact the prevailing opinion of the day and scarcely a soul has seen that philosophy is actually the central government of the academic disciplines, and that it can actually benefit the nation.
The Necessity of Philosophy as the Backbone of a Prosperous Modern Society

How can I not but lament over the lack of understanding concerning philosophy? In order to promote Japan's civilization, it is not enough for politics and law to assume the burden, nor is it enough for natural sciences and arts to carry out their work. It demands the study and promotion of philosophy, which is the foundation of all other learning, and which oversees other academic disciplines and maintains the scope of each of them and secures their place.

I beg you to think about the following: consider the reason why European civilization arose and developed into what it is today. The reason why their national powers rose in the recent period is not merely due to the progress of their politics, law, natural sciences, and arts. It is due to the robust presence of philosophy that inquires into the principles and laws of those other disciplines. This ought to be obvious to everyone. Today, European scholars vie to engage in the study of philosophical principles and apply their understanding to the day-to-day lives of the people, and thereby develop their civilization to benefit society. With the deep implication of this fact eluding us, we are left merely to admire how robust their efforts have been.

When I look at the current situation of Japan, not only are we lacking able minds who choose to study philosophy but also few
know what philosophy is, and even if there may be a select few who have some idea of what philosophy is, they consider it a superfluous learning devoid of practical benefit to society. A majority of them will not take a second look at it. With this kind of attitude prevailing, how are we to stimulate and develop our country's civilization?

**Recognition of the Eastern Philosophical Heritage and the Possibility of Forming a New Kind of Philosophy**

This especially is a shame, when in the East we have various traditions of native philosophical thought, which Westerners have yet to explore. I find fresh ideas contained in the Eastern thought. If we study these points, and compare and contrast our findings with Western philosophy, and if in due course we select good points from both traditions and formulate a new philosophical thought, not only would it gratify us, but it would also be a great honor to the entire country of Japan. Shouldn’t we scholars dispel our lethargy and servitude to old mental habits and vigorously promote philosophical learning?

**Concluding Remarks**

Driven by these thoughts, I spoke to my colleagues, Inoue Tetsujirō, Ariga Nagao, Miyake Yūjirō, Tanahashi Ichirō, et al., and also consulted our professors, such as Katō Hiroyuki, Nishi Amane, Nishimura Shigeki, and Toyama Masakazu. With their enthusiastic support, the Society of Philosophy was
会を創立するに至れり。蓋（けだ）し、東洋に哲学研究会ある。これを濫觴（らんしょう）とす。
その将来我邦の文明を進め富強を助くるの益ある已に当時にありて予めこれを卜（ぼく）することを得たり。豈、賀すべきことならずや。

launched. Thus, now in the East we have the Society dedicated to the study of philosophy. May this be the humble beginning of a wonderful flourishing of philosophy in the East.

It bodes well that by having established the Society of Philosophy we have actually affirmed the positive benefit of philosophy in promoting our civilization and enriching and strengthening our nation. Isn't it something to celebrate?