

for it contains the poetry of those who witnessed the most stunning changes in Japanese history: the downfall of the imperial and Fujiwara aristocracy before the rise of the military clans.

Unfriendly critics of Motoori have insinuated that he took up the study of National Learning because it offered easier chances of recognition than the already overcrowded field of Confucian studies, but this seems clearly untrue. His work represented at once a continuation of the Shinto revival initiated by such men as Kamo Mabuchi, and a sharp reaction to the Confucian thought prevalent in Japan during the eighteenth century. The work of earlier scholars of National Learning led Motoori to devote years of his life to an intensive study of the Japanese classics, just as the very different activities of Confucianists (some of whom tried to explode on rational grounds the mythology of Shinto) led him to seek refuge in a kind of sublime irrationalism. He managed on both scores to touch upon certain aspects of the Japanese temperament, as revealed in the literature and in popular worship, which had never been satisfied by Confucianism. The preference of the Japanese for love poetry rather than didactic verse, and for gentle reflections on the evanescence of beauty rather than speculations on the nature of good and evil, was not only justified but exalted by Motoori, as demonstrating the inadequacy of rationalism. It remained, however, for later men with fewer scruples than Motoori to make of this combination of irrationality and National Learning the instrument of fanatical nationalism.

KADA AZUMAMARO

Petition for the Establishment of a School of National Learning

This memorial submitted to the Shogun Yoshimune in 1728, without contesting the position of the orthodox Neo-Confucian school, appeals for the creation of a school which would rescue traditional Japanese literature from oblivion. The unquestioned prestige of Chinese learning at the time is attested by the very form of the memorial itself: it is in an extremely ornate style of classical Chinese, surfeited with obscure allusions to the Chinese classics—the farthest thing from the native language and literature Kada wished to revive. Even more significant is his adaptation of Neo-Confucianism principles to his own purpose. Thus he uses the slogan of the Confucian revival in the Sung dynasty, "Restore the Ancient Order (or Way)" (Ch. *fu-t'u*, Jap. *fu-kko*) to justify a kind of Japanese neo-classicism. In Kada's mind, however, it is

clear that these classical studies must be literary and philological in nature, for the Ancient Way can only be rediscovered through textual research.

It is important to note, incidentally, how this text reflects the prevailing view that loyalty to the shogun and to the emperor go hand-in-hand. There is no suggestion of a conflict of interests or authority such as arose in the nineteenth century.

[From *Kada zenjūhū*, I, 1-6]

Respectfully submitted, craving your bountiful favor in promoting the creation of a school of National Learning, I bow my head in awe and veneration; vile and base as I am, I abjectly offer my words.

Tokugawa Ieyasu rose in Mikawa Province and soon succeeded in assuming command of the various daimyo to bring peace to the nation. All were as grass before the wind; who could surpass him? Changes brought about by his renewing of the country first led to the establishment of the Kōbunkan,¹ which has grown and prospered. What could be added to it?

Enlightened rulers have successively ascended to power, and the literary pursuits have grown increasingly splendid; their refulgence shines ever farther. The military arts are more perfected than ever; how noble and accomplished they are! Could the love of the Kamakura rulers for sobriety compare to this? Could the respect of the Muromachi family for literature be mentioned on the same day? In keeping with this age of great peace, Heaven has sent us a generous and benevolent ruler.² The country has witnessed the mild rule vouchsafed by his innate gifts. No talented men are without employ; the court is thronged with upright men. Above he respects the emperor and devotes himself to effecting a government without deceit. Below he cherishes the daimyo, who offer him tribute. Because his policies are perfected and he has leisure for other pursuits, he has turned his mind to ancient studies; when the teachings in them are not complete he gives profound study to the rule of the men of old. He buys rare books for a thousand pieces of gold. The celebrated scholars of the nation, following his example, search for rare and forgotten books. Visitors of unusual talent from all over the world flock to his court. . . .

Everywhere now Confucian studies are followed, and every day the

¹The official Hayashi school of Neo-Confucianism founded in 1630 by a grant of land in Edo from the Shogun Iemitsu.

²The Shogun Yoshimune (1684-1751)

Buddhist teachings flourish more. "Humanity" and "righteousness" have become household words; even common soldiers and menials know what is meant by the *Book of Songs*. In every family they read the sutras; porters and scullery-maids can discuss Emptiness (*shūnyatā*). The people's manner of living has benefited by great advances, but our National Learning is gradually falling into desuetude. Cultivated fields are being abandoned steadily and possessions are being exhausted by contributions to Buddhism. Most lamentably, however, the teachings of our Divine Emperors are steadily melting away, each year more conspicuously than the last. Japanese learning is falling into ruin and is a bare tenth of what it once was. The books of law are disappearing: who is there to ask about studies of the old learning? The way of the *waka* [poetry] is falling into oblivion; what can revive the great refinement of the old styles?

Those who now treat Shinto all follow theories of yin-yang or of the Five Elements.⁸ Those who consider the *waka* tend to adopt the explanations of Tendai doctrines or of the Four Disciplines of Chinese poetry. If these scholars are not the dregs of T'ang and Sung Confucianists, they are exudations from the Womb and Diamond Mandalas. If their writings are not fabrications composed of vain theories and idle hair-splitting, they are eccentricities devoid of foundation or thought. They speak of "secrets" and "traditions," but of the true traditions of the wise men of old, what knowledge have they? They speak of "depths" and "recondite meanings," but how many are the forgeries of recent men!

From the time when I was young I went without sleep or food in order to combat such heterodox ideas. When I grew to maturity, I tried ceaselessly, with learning and with thought, to revive the Ancient Way. If now I do not besir myself and strive to explain the rights and wrongs, it will certainly later come about that people will confound the true and the false, for their ears will be stopped and their hearts shut. If I try to keep aloof, the old writings will become vague and obscure. If I try to pursue the matter I will find how old and weary I am. In this state of doubt, I cannot make a decision. Uncertain, I fail to do what I should.

Prostrate, I here make my humble request: that I be given a quiet tract of land in Kyoto where I can open a school for studies of the Imperial Land. I have collected since my youth many secret and obscure writings, and have corrected since becoming aged numerous old records and ac-

⁸ For example, the school of Yamazaki Anzai.

counts. I propose to store them at this school to provide for the researches of future days. There must be persons living in remote villages who experience great difficulty in getting hold of such books. There must also be many scholars in forsaken hamlets who cannot realize their ambitions to study the Japanese classics. We should lend the necessary texts throughout the country and enable scholars to read them. A familiarity with only a single volume permits one to know of the downfall of many kings; a careful study of antiquity can save the people from countless sufferings. If by great good fortune some extraordinary man of talent arises, the way of Prince Toneri⁴ will not perish. If there are men who polish the gems of poetry, the teachings of Kakinomoto Hitomaro⁵ will again flourish. If the Six Dynastic Histories are clear, it will be of no small aid to the officials in improving the people. If the laws of the three reigns⁶ are given new life, this will also prove of great benefit to the prestige and permanence of the nation. The *Manyōshū* is [the *Shih Ching* of the East and]⁷ the pure essence of our national temperament. He who studies it will not be slandered as an ignoramus. The *Kokinshū* is the finest flower of the anthologies. He who is unfamiliar with it will be admonished as being unfit to converse with.

The first school established in our country was at the Ōmi⁸ court. The first teaching of the Way of Letters originated at the time of the Emperor Saga. The Sugawara and Ōe families⁹ had academies of learning. The Minamoto, Fujiwara, Tachibana, and Wake families followed them. At the Dazaifu in Kyushu there was a school; in Ashikaga and Kanazawa education was furthered. However, they taught Chinese history and the Chinese classics in these schools, even in those for the imperial family. Offerings were made to the spirit of Confucius. Alas, how ignorant the Confucian scholars were of the past, not knowing a single thing about the imperial Japanese learning. How painful, the stupidity of later scholars—who cannot bewail the destruction of the ancient learning? This is

⁴ Compiler of the *Nihongi* (*Chronicles of Japan*), died A.D. 735.

⁵ Greatest of the poets of the *Manyōshū*.

⁶ The codes of the Kōnin, Jōkan, and Engi eras. Used here, however, to balance the "six dynastic histories" in the preceding sentence, and meaning more generally the laws of the Heian times.

⁷ The phrase in brackets is found in the rough draft of this petition, but was deleted by Kado in the final version. It is restored here because of its interest.

⁸ Site of the court, near the modern city of Ōtsu, during the reign of Emperor Tenchi.

⁹ The following are all important families with literary traditions.

why foreign teachings have prevailed, and one meets them in street conversations and corner gossip. This is why too our teachings have so declined. False doctrines are rampant, taking advantage of our weakness. . . .

I am an exceedingly ignorant man. What can I claim to know? If, indeed, there is one thing I dare claim for myself some acquaintance, it is the explanation of words. There are many misconceptions about our national writings. The fact that there still seem to be some people aware of them today is probably because the books survive. There are few explanations for the old Japanese words. The fact that one does not hear of anyone who has been thoroughly versant in them must be because the documents and men are insufficient. It has indeed been several hundred years since the old learning was taught. There are only a bare three or four books which offer explanations for the words, and these books vie with one another in claiming to be the authority, advancing new and outlandish theories in support of their claims. Such books are exceedingly superficial; how can they hope to attain the true meanings? If the old words are not understood the old meanings will not be clear. If the old meanings are not clear, the old learning will not revive. The way of the former kings is disappearing; the ideas of the wise men of antiquity have almost been abandoned. The loss will not be a slight one if we fail now to teach philology. We must devote ourselves to this project. I have given my life's energies to the study of the old words. I humbly believe that the rise or fall of Japanese learning depends on whether or not my plan is accepted. I pray that Your Excellency will grant it your attention and consider it favorably.

Your servant Kada submits the above in awe and trepidation.

KAMO MABUCHI

A Study of the Idea of the Nation

Unlike Kada Azumamaro, who presented in ornamental Chinese his petition for the establishment of a school for national learning, Kamo Mabuchi wrote this work in almost pure Japanese. It was composed in 1765. Although this is an attack on Chinese thought, particularly Confucian, it is conceived largely in Taoist terms, and there are numerous direct or indirect references to Lao Tzu. The anti-intellectual, intuitive teachings of Taoism were to prove congenial to later Shinto scholars as well, and in many instances we find in this

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work of Kamo Mabuchi the arguments which Hirata Atsutane and other men were to voice with even greater intemperance.

[From *Sekai Daishisō Zenshū*, Vol. 54, pp. 2-10; cf. Dumoulin, *Monumenta Nipponica*, II, 165-92]

Someone remarked to me, "I pay no heed to such petty trifles as Japanese poetry; what interests me is the Chinese Way of governing a nation."

I smiled at this and did not answer. Later, when I met the same man he asked, "You seem to have an opinion on every subject—why did you merely keep smiling when I spoke to you?"

I answered, "You mean when you were talking about the Chinese Confucian teachings or whatever you call them? They are no more than a human invention which reduces the heart of Heaven and Earth to something trivial."

At these words he became enraged. "How dare you call our Great Way trivial?"

I answered, "I would be interested in hearing whether or not the Chinese Confucian learning has actually helped to govern a country successfully." He immediately cited the instances of Yao, Shun, Hsia, Yin, Chou, and so on. I asked if there were no later examples, but he informed me that there were not.

I pursued the matter, asking this time about how far back Chinese traditions went. He answered that thousands of years had passed from Yao's day to the present. I then asked, "Why then did the Way of Yao continue only until the Chou and afterwards cease? I am sure that it is because you restrict yourself to citing events which took place thousands of years ago that the Way seems so good. But those are merely ancient legends. It takes more than such specious ideas to run a country!"

When I said this he grew all the more furious, and ranted on about ancient matters. I said, "You are utterly prejudiced. You say that Yao yielded the throne to that rascal Shun? That sounds as if it must have been a good thing for the country, but that is the sort of thing we avoid in Japan as being 'too good.'¹ In China there were also ruffians who, far from yielding the throne, sprang up from nowhere to kill their sovereigns and seize control of the country. That is what we find 'too bad' and equally avoid. An excess of good can thus lead to excess of evil. [Kamo goes on to cite many other similar instances in Chinese history.]

¹That is, something which though good in itself can lead to unfortunate consequences.

at Nara, the palace, dress, and ceremonies were Chinesified, and everything took on a superficial elegance; under the surface, however, contentiousness and dishonesty became more prevalent.

"Confucianism made men crafty, and led them to worship the ruler to such an excessive degree that the whole country acquired a servant's mentality. Later it even came about that an emperor was sacrilegiously driven to an island exile. This occurred because the country had become infected with Chinese ideas. Some people speak ill of Buddhism, but since it is a teaching which makes men stupid, it does not represent a grave evil; after all, rulers do not prosper unless the people are stupid."

"Just as roads are naturally created when people live in uncultivated woodlands or fields, so the Way of the Age of the Gods spontaneously took hold in Japan. Because it was a Way indigenous to the country it caused our emperors to wax increasingly in prosperity. However, the Confucian teachings had not only repeatedly thrown China into disorder, but they now had the same effect in Japan. Yet there are those unwitting of these facts who reverence Confucianism and think that it is the Way to govern the country! This is a deplorable attitude.

"Japanese poetry has as its subject the human heart. It may seem to be of no practical use and just as well left uncomposed, but when one knows poetry well, one understands also without explanation the reasons governing order and disorder in the world. They say that Confucius himself did not reject poetry, but placed the *Book of Songs* at the head of the classics. Things which are explained in terms of theories are as dead. Those which operate together with Heaven and earth spontaneously are alive and active. I do not mean to say that it is a bad idea to have a general knowledge of all things, but it is a common human failing to tend to lean excessively in that direction. It is advisable not to cling too tenaciously to things once one has learned them. Even though some Japanese poems have as their themes evil desires, the poems do not corrupt the reader's heart, but instead make it more gentle and more understanding of all things.

"When ruling the country a knowledge of Chinese things is of no help in the face of an emergency. In such a situation some men will spontaneously come forth to propose things which are wise and true. In the same way, doctors often study and master Chinese texts, but very seldom

*On the Taoist principle that knowledge leads to greed and ambition, craftiness and sullenness.

"Things in China grew more and more chaotic, although in the time of the Emperor Wen of the Han dynasty, there seems to have been a short interval of good government because the Emperor took to heart what Lao Tzu had said. As you can see, whenever some base-born individual appeared to slay his lord and proclaim himself emperor, everyone bowed his head and served this upstart obediently. That is not the worst of it. Although the Chinese despise all foreign countries as 'barbarian,' when someone from one of the 'barbarian' countries became emperor, they all prostrated themselves before him. Wouldn't you say, then, that to despise others as 'barbarian' was irresponsible? It is not a word to be applied indiscriminately.

"Thus, despite the fact that their country has been torn for centuries by disturbances and has never really been well administered, they think that they can explain with their Way of Confucius the principles governing the whole world. Indeed, when one has heard them through, there is nothing to be said: anyone can quickly grasp their doctrines because they consist of mere quibbling. What they value the most and insist on is the establishment and maintenance of good government. Everybody in China would seem to have been in agreement on this point, but belief in it did not in fact lie very deep. It is obvious that many gave superficial assent who did not assent in their hearts. Yet when these principles were introduced to this country it was stated that China had obtained good government through the adoption of them. This was a complete fabrication. I wish it were possible to send to China anyone who clung to such a belief! He would discover like Urashima Tarō² when he returned to his home, what an illusion he had been suffering from!

"Japan in ancient days was governed in accordance with the natural laws of Heaven and earth. There was never any indulgence in such petty rationalizing as marked China, but when suddenly these teachings were transmitted here from abroad, they quickly spread, for the men of old in their simplicity took them for the truth. In Japan there had been generation after generation, extending back to the remote past, which had known prosperity, but no sooner were these Confucian teachings propagated here than in the time of Temmu³ a great rebellion occurred. Later,

² The hero of a Japanese fairy tale who returns to his village after extraordinary adventures in a dragon's palace to discover, like Rip Van Winkle, that many years have elapsed and he himself is an old man.

³ The Emperor Temmu (631-686) ascended the throne only after a struggle with Prince Ōtomo, the appointed successor of Tenchi.

do they cure any sickness. On the other hand, medicines which have been transmitted naturally in this country with no reasons or theoretical knowledge behind them, infallibly cure all maladies. It is good when a man spontaneously devotes himself to these things. It is unwise to become obsessed with them. I would like to show people even once what is good in our Way. The fact that the Confucian scholars know very little about government is obvious from the frequent disorders which arise in China whenever the government is left to them. . . .

"It is another bad habit of the Chinese to distinguish men from beasts, by way of self-praise for being men and dispraise for the rest. It is like their custom of despising all other countries as 'barbarian,' a meaningless expression. Are not all creatures which live between Heaven and earth so many insects? Why should only man be considered precious? What is so exceptional about man? In China they venerate man as 'the soul of all things' or some such, but I wonder if man should not rather be called 'the most evil of all things'? By this I mean that, just as the sun and moon have not changed, birds, beasts, fish and plants are all exactly as they were in ancient days, but ever since man impetuously decided that knowledge would be of use to him, evil motives of every kind have sprung up among people, and have finally thrown the world into turmoil. Even when they enjoy peaceful rule men deceive one another. It might be desirable if just one or two men in the world had knowledge, but when everyone possesses it, what a dreadful chaos ensues, and in the end the knowledge itself is useless. If one looked through the eyes of a bird or a beast, one would say, 'Man is evil. His ways should not be followed.'"

People also tell me, "We had no writing in this country and therefore had to use Chinese characters. From this one fact you can know everything about the relative importance of our countries." I answer, "I need not recite again how troublesome, evil, turbulent a country China is. To mention just one instance—there is the matter of their picture-writing. There are about 38,000 characters in common use,⁵ as someone has determined. . . . Every place name and plant name has a separate character for it which has no other use but to designate that particular place or plant. Can any man, even one who devotes himself to the task earnestly,

⁵ An extraordinary exaggeration. Even in Kamo's day not more than 2,500 characters could have been in common use.

learn all these many characters? Sometimes people miswrite characters, sometimes the characters themselves change from one generation to the next. What a nuisance, a waste of effort, and a bother! In India, on the other hand, fifty letters suffice for the writing of the more than 5,000 volumes of the Buddhist scriptures. A knowledge of a mere fifty letters permits one to know and transmit innumerable words of past and present alike. This is not simply a matter of writing—the fifty sounds are the sounds of Heaven and earth, and words conceived from them are naturally different from the Chinese characters. Whatever kind of writing we may originally have had, ever since Chinese writing was introduced we have mistakenly become enmeshed in it. Now only the old words, but not their writing are preserved. These words are not identical with the fifty Indian sounds . . . but the fifty sounds suffice to express all words without the nuisance of characters. In Holland, I understand, they use twenty-five letters. In this country there should be fifty. The appearance of letters used in all countries is in general the same, except for China where they invented their bothersome system. . . . The opinion that the characters are precious is not worth discussing further."

What do we know of China in most ancient days? Because the Chinese of later generations invented things, does it follow that here in Japan we too must have invented history? There are bound to be many mistakes in what human minds invent. When we look at things recorded in China by the learned men, we see that the country never profited by any Way unless it was in accord with Heaven and earth. Therefore the sayings of Lao Tzu derived from the Will of Heaven and earth were in consonance with the proper Way of the country. In ancient days China was also a decent country. . . . In ancient times words and things were few. When things are few the heart is sincere, and there is no need for difficult teachings. All will go satisfactorily even without teachings because men are honest. It is true that since men's hearts are manifold there is always some evil in them, but evil itself cannot remain hidden in an honest heart. If it is not hidden, it will not develop into anything serious, but will remain no more than a moment's aberration. Thus, in ancient days though the land was not absolutely devoid of the teachings of good men, a few easy ones sufficed. However, since China is a country of wicked-heartedness, no amount of profound instruction could keep the innate evil

from overwhelming the country, despite the surface appearance. Japan has always been a country where the people are honest. As long as a few teachings were carefully observed and we worked in accordance with the Will of Heaven and earth, the country would be well off without any special instruction. Nevertheless, Chinese doctrines were introduced and corrupted men's hearts. Even though these teachings resembled those of China itself, they were of the kind which heard in the morning are forgotten by evening. Our country in ancient times was not like that. It obeyed the laws of Heaven and earth. The emperor was the sun and moon and the subjects the stars. If the subjects as stars protect the sun and moon, they will not hide it as is now the case. Just as the sun, moon, and stars have always been in Heaven, so our imperial sun and moon, and the stars his vassals, have existed without change from ancient days, and have ruled the world fairly. However, some knaves appeared,^a and as a result the emperor is diminished in power, and his subjects too have fallen off. The *Age of the Gods* is where we may gain a knowledge of this. To discover it, we should carefully examine the words and thoughts in the ancient poetry, and thereby see clearly into the oldest writings.

MOTOORI NORINAGA

The True Tradition of the Sun Goddess

This excerpt is from Motoori's *Precious Comb-box* (*Tama kushige*), the contents of which are meant to "comb" out the snarls of intellectual confusion. In it he upholds the traditional account of the divine creation in all its unembellished simplicity while rejecting the rationalistic cosmogony of the Chinese. The Sun Goddess is a universal deity as well as a national one, but she has shown special favor to the Japanese and guides them to a special destiny.

[From *Motoori Norinaga Zenshū*, VI, 3-6]

The True Way is one and the same, in every country and throughout heaven and earth. This Way, however, has been correctly transmitted only in our Imperial Land. Its transmission in all foreign countries was lost long ago in early antiquity, and many and varied ways have been expounded, each country representing its own way as the Right Way. But the ways of foreign countries are no more the original Right Way

^a Not identified; refers perhaps to the Fujiwara family and all others who have usurped power from the emperor.

than end-branches of a tree are the same as its root. They may have resemblances here and there to the Right Way, but because the original truth has been corrupted with the passage of time, they can scarcely be likened to the original Right Way. Let me state briefly what that one original Way is. One must understand, first of all, the universal principle of the world. The principle is that Heaven and earth, all the gods and all phenomena, were brought into existence by the creative spirits of two deities—Takami-musubi and Kami-musubi. The birth of all humankind in all ages and the existence of all things and all matter have been the result of that creative spirit. It was the original creativity of these two august deities which caused the deities Izanagi and Izanami to create the land, all kinds of phenomena, and numerous gods and goddesses at the beginning of the Divine Age. This spirit of creativity [*musubi*, lit., "union"] is a miraculously divine act the reason for which is beyond the comprehension of the human intellect.

But in the foreign countries where the Right Way has not been transmitted this act of divine creativity is not known. Men there have tried to explain the principle of Heaven and earth and all phenomena by such theories as the yin and yang, the hexagrams of the Book of Changes, and the Five Elements. But all of these are fallacious theories stemming from the assumptions of the human intellect and they in no wise represent the true principle.

Izanagi, in deep sorrow at the passing of his goddess, journeyed after her to the land of death. Upon his return to the upper world he bathed himself at Abagiwara in Tachibana Bay in Tsukushi in order to purify himself of the pollution of the land of death, and while thus cleansing himself, he gave birth to the Heaven-Shining Goddess who by the explicit command of her father-God, came to rule the Heavenly Plain for all time to come. This Heaven-Shining Goddess is none other than the sun in heaven which today casts its gracious light over the world. Then, an Imperial Prince of the Heaven-Shining Goddess was sent down from heaven to the middle kingdom of Ashihara. In the Goddess' mandate to the Prince at that time it was stated that his dynasty should be coeval with Heaven and earth. It is this mandate which is the very origin and basis of the Way. Thus, all the principles of the world and the way of humankind are represented in the different stages of the Divine Age. Those who seek to know the Right Way must therefore pay careful attention to the

stages of the Divine Age and learn the truths of existence. These aspects of the various stages are embodied in the ancient traditions of the Divine Age. No one knows with whom these ancient traditions began, but they were handed down orally from the very earliest times and they refer to the accounts which have since been recorded in the *Kojiki* and the *Nihongi*. The accounts recorded in these two scriptures are clear and explicit and present no cause for doubt. Those who have interpreted these scriptures in a later age have contrived oracular formulae and have expounded theories which have no real basis. Some have become addicts of foreign doctrines and have no faith in the wonders of the Divine Age. Unable to understand that the truths of the world are contained in the evolution of the Divine Age, they fail to ascertain the true meaning of our ancient tradition. As they base their judgment on the strength of foreign beliefs, they always interpret at their own discretion and twist to their own liking anything they encounter which may not be in accord with their alien teachings. Thus, they say that the High Heavenly Plain refers to the Imperial Capital and not to Heaven, and that the Sun Goddess herself was not a goddess nor the sun shining in the heavens but an earthly person and the forbear of the nation. These are arbitrary interpretations purposely contrived to flatter foreign ideologies. In this way the ancient tradition is made to appear narrow and petty, by depriving it of its comprehensive and primal character. This is counter to the meaning of the scriptures.

Heaven and earth are one; there is no barrier between them. The High Heavenly Plain is the high heavenly plain which covers all the countries of the world, and the Sun Goddess is the goddess who reigns in that heaven. Thus, she is without a peer in the whole universe, casting her light to the very ends of heaven and earth and for all time. There is not a single country in the world which does not receive her beneficent illuminations, and no country can exist even for a day or an hour bereft of her grace. This goddess is the splendor of all splendors. However, foreign countries, having lost the ancient tradition of the Divine Age, do not know the meaning of revering this goddess. Only through the speculations of the human intelligence have they come to call the sun and the moon the spirit of yang and yin. In China and other countries the "Heavenly Emperor" is worshiped as the supreme divinity. In other countries there are other objects of reverence, each according to its own

way, but their teachings are based, some on the logic of inference, and some on arbitrary personal opinions. At any rate, they are merely man-made designations and the "Heavenly Ruler" or the "Heavenly Way" have no real existence at all. That foreign countries revere such non-existent beings and remain unaware of the grace of the Sun Goddess is a matter of profound regret. However, because of the special dispensation of our Imperial Land, the ancient tradition of the Divine Age has been correctly and clearly transmitted in our country, telling us of the genesis of the great goddess and the reason for her adoration. The "special dispensation of our Imperial Land" means that ours is the native land of the Heaven-Shining Goddess who casts her light over all countries in the four seas. Thus our country is the source and fountainhead of all other countries, and in all matters it excels all the others. It would be impossible to list all the products in which our country excels, but foremost among them is rice, which sustains the life of man, for whom there is no product more important. Our country's rice has no peer in foreign countries, from which fact it may be seen why our other products are also superior. Those who were born in this country have long been accustomed to our rice and take it for granted, unaware of its excellence. They can enjoy such excellent rice morning and night to their heart's content because they have been fortunate enough to be born in this country. This is a matter for which they should give thanks to our shining deities, but to my great dismay they seem to be unmindful of it.

Our country's Imperial Line, which casts its light over this world, represents the descendants of the Sky-Shining Goddess. And in accordance with that Goddess' mandate of reigning "forever and ever, coeval with Heaven and earth," the Imperial Line is destined to rule the nation for eons until the end of time and as long as the universe exists. That is the very basis of our Way. That our history has not deviated from the instructions of the divine mandate bears testimony to the infallibility of our ancient tradition. It can also be seen why foreign countries cannot match ours and what is meant by the special dispensation of our country. Foreign countries expound their own ways, each as if its way alone were true. But their dynastic lines, basic to their existence, do not continue; they change frequently and are quite corrupt. Thus one can surmise that in everything they say there are falsehoods and that there is no basis in fact for them.

Wonder

This passage explains the inadequacy of human reason to comprehend the wondrous manifestations of the power of the gods, and mocks at the Confucian pretention to have found a rational answer to every problem. It is taken from the *Araruroot* (*Kuzubana*), so entitled because this plant creeps humbly along the ground but yields a pretty blossom and a nutritious starch, which, when fermented, produces a stimulating liquor. Motoori suggests that his ideas, simple and unpretentious though they may be, are nevertheless food and stimulus for thought. This dialogue was written in answer to an attack on the Shinto revival by the Confucianist, Ichikawa Tatsumaro (d. 1795).

[From *Motoori Norinaga Zenshū*, V, 459-62]

Objection: You are obstinate in insisting that the Sun Goddess is the sun in heaven. If this is so, perpetual darkness must have reigned everywhere before her birth. The sun must have been in heaven since the beginning of the universe [before the birth of the Goddess].

Motoori: First of all, I cannot understand why you say that I am obstinate. That the Sun Goddess is the sun in heaven is clear from the records of the *Kojiki* and the *Nihongi*. If it is so beyond any doubt, is not the person who raises an objection the one who is obstinate? This Sun Goddess casts her light to the very extremities of the universe, but in the beginning it was in our Imperial Land that she made her appearance, and as the sovereign of the Imperial Line, that is, of the Imperial Land, she has reigned supreme over the Four Seas until now. When this Goddess hid herself in a cave in heaven, closing its doors, darkness fell over the countries of the world. You ask why darkness did not reign everywhere before her birth, a question a child might well ask. It seems childish indeed when a question which might spring from the doubts of a child is asked with such insistence by you. But this very point proves that the ancient happenings of the Divine Age are facts and not fabrications. Some say that the records are the fabrication of later sovereigns, but who would fabricate such shallow sounding, incredible things? This is a point you should reflect upon seriously.

The acts of the gods cannot be measured by ordinary human reasoning. Man's intellect, however wise, has its limits. It is small, and what is beyond its confines it cannot know. The acts of the gods are straightforward. That they appear to be shallow and untrue is due to the limitation

of what man can know. To the human mind these acts appear to be remote, inaccessible, and difficult of comprehension and belief. Chinese teachings, on the other hand, were established within the reach of human intelligence; thus, to the mind of the listener, they are familiar and intimate and easy of comprehension and belief. The Chinese, because they believe that the wisdom of the Sage [Confucius] was capable of comprehending all the truths of the universe and of its phenomena, pretend to the wisdom of the Sage and insist, despite their small and limited minds, that they know what their minds are really incapable of knowing. But at the same time they refuse to believe in the inscrutability of the truth, for this, they conclude, is irrational. This sounds clever, but on the contrary, it betrays the pettiness of their intelligence. If my objector would rid himself of such a habit and reflect seriously, such a doubt as he has just expressed would disappear of itself.

It will be recalled that when Izanagi made his way to the nether region, he carried a light because of the darkness there, but while he lived in the actual world, he did not. The nether world is dark because it has to be dark; the actual world is clear because it has to be clear. Thus, there was light in the actual world before the birth of the Sun Goddess, although the reason why it is so cannot be fathomed. In the commentaries on the *Nihongi* there are references to luminous human beings of the days of creation who cast light about them, but these references were derived from the Buddhist scriptures. There is also mention of a deity of fiery light, but this was an evil deity, and his case cannot be taken as a typical one. There are otherwise no traditions about deities of light, and thus we have no way of knowing what light there was for illumination. But presumably there was light for reasons beyond the reach of human intelligence. Why then did darkness prevail when the Sun Goddess hid herself behind the door of the rocky cave? It was because it had been determined that with the birth of the Sun Goddess the whole space of the universe should come within her illumination, and that henceforth there would be no light without her illumination. This is the same sort of inscrutable truth as the case of the descent of the Imperial Grandchild from Heaven after which communication between Heaven and earth was completely severed. There are many other strange and inscrutable happenings in the Divine Age, which should be accepted in the same way. The people of antiquity never attempted to reason out the acts of the

gods with their own intelligence, but the people of a later age, influenced by the Chinese, have become addicts of rationalism. Such people appear wise, but in reality are quite foolish in their suspicion and skepticism about the strange happenings of the Divine Age which are quite different from the happenings of the human age. The fact is that even the things of the human age are, in reality, strange and wondrous, but because we are accustomed to their present form and have always lived in their midst, we cease to be aware of their wondrous quality. Consider, for example, how this universe goes on. Is the earth suspended in the sky or attached to something else? In either instance it is a wondrous thing. Suppose it is attached to something else, what is there under it to support it? This is something which cannot be understood. Thus in China, although there are many theories, they all end in wonder. Among them is a theory called the global theory which says that the earth is round and that it is enveloped in space and hangs in the sky. It sounds most plausible but ordinary reasoning tells us that despite the fullness of the ether in the sky this land and the great oceans cannot remain suspended and motionless in the sky. Thus, this theory too is nothing more than an expression of wonderment. Another theory says that space consists of ether only and that it has no form of its own. This too sounds plausible, but if ether fills the outer space, is there a limit to its extension or not? If it has no limit there is no way of determining its circumference or its center or where in it the earth is situated. The earth cannot stop except at the dead center of space. If, on the other hand, the extension of ether is limited, then it must assume the shape of a ball, raising the question about the definite point around which it condenses itself. Then again, what is there to cause it to condense? Thus we see that this theory too is an expression of the strange and the wondrous.

Man, living in such a strange and wondrous universe, wonders not about its mysteries but only about the wonders of the Divine Age, saying there is no reason for them. If this is not senseless, what is?

Consider also the human body: it has eyes to see, ears to hear, a mouth to speak, feet to walk, and hands to do a thousand things. Are they not truly wonderful? Birds and insects fly in the sky, plants and trees bloom and bear fruit—they are all wonderful. When insentient beings change into sentient beings such as birds and insects, or when foxes and badgers

take on human form—are these not the strangest of all strange things? Thus, the universe and all things therein are without a single exception strange and wondrous when examined carefully. Even the Sage would be incapable of explaining these phenomena. Thus, one must acknowledge that human intelligence is limited and puny while the acts of the gods are illimitable and wondrous. But it is indeed amusing that there are people who respect and believe in this Sage as one who had illuminated every truth of the universe and its phenomena, when in fact he explained only those things within the boundaries of his own intelligence.

The beginnings of such a vastly wondrous universe and all its phenomena must be even more wonderful. The Chinese explain it in terms of yin and yang, but they have failed to explain why yin and yang operate in such a manner—which only adds to the wonder of the beginnings of the universe. Or one might say that the universe had no beginning, just as it will have no end; but if things existed which had no beginning, just as it would be even more strange and wondrous. If my objector would reflect upon the above things, his doubts would disappear of themselves. If his doubts are still insoluble, I shall cite examples nearer to him. Mice and martens can see in darkness as well as in broad daylight. By what manner of light do they see? There are also birds which see things well at night but cannot see them in daylight. Such things cannot be explained by the usual reasoning. The objector has said that there was no reason for light to exist in the Divine Age, but can he say that there was a reason for such light not to exist? What is your answer? Even in the case of lowly birds and animals there is a reason beyond reason. Is there any need to say more about our imperial forebears at the beginning of the universe?

The Error of Rationalism

[From *Kuzubana* in *Motoori Norinaga Zenshū*, V, 463-66]

Objection: The scholar [Motoori] treats this country as if it were different from other countries.

Motoori: The objector also says at the end of the book that I want "to put our country outside the universe." I cannot understand what he means, but I surmise from what he says before and after that he is