Words Endowed with Spirit: The Theories of Igarashi Atsuyoshi

Roger Thomas
Illinois State University

> "*Les mots ont une âme; la plupart des lecteurs, et même des écrivains, ne leur demandent qu'un sens. Il faut trouver cette âme qui apparaît au contact d'autres mots …* [Words have a soul. The majority of readers—and even of writers—insist only that they have a meaning. One needs to find that soul which appears in contact with other words …]"[1]
>
> Guy de Maupassant

A trend toward decentralization of cultural and intellectual activity during the last several decades of Japan's early modern period has long been recognized. Itō Tasaburō's groundbreaking study documents the growing pervasiveness of *kokugaku* in the provinces, while Tsukamoto Manabu's work focuses on the significant contributions of rural literati (*bunjin*).[2] A few others—too few—have described the growth of such activity outside the administrative and samurai classes.[3] One frequently-cited common characteristic of provincial intellectuals and artists is that, unlike many of their urban counterparts, they typically found it necessary to combine their cultural pursuits with mundane occupations, in most cases a hereditary one.

While the intellectual climate of the Kaga and Toyama domains had much in common with the rest of the country, there were significant peculiarities as well. Under Oda Nobunaga (1534-1582), Maeda Toshiie (1539-1599) had been enfeoffed in the area that comprised these domains, territory that was expanded under Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537-1598). The Maeda rulers proved to be important patrons of the arts and learning, including several noteworthy poets among their members, and this patronage typified both domains following their division in 1639.

What kinds of obstacles stood in the way of rural aspirants to intellectual activity in early modern Japan, and how did they cope with those limitations? Some answers are provided by an examination of the life and writings of Igarashi Atsuyoshi (1794-1861), a scion of the *shōya* (village headman) class in the Tonami region of Etchū who made lasting contributions to the agricultural development of the area, whose interests in *kokugaku* brought him into correspondence with Tanaka Ōhide (1777-1847) and Ajiro Hironori (1784-1856), both disciples of Motoori Norinaga (1730-1801). Atsuyoshi was at one time posed to succeed as head of Fujitani Mitsue's (1768-1823) school, and eventually developed a theory of word spirit

[1] *Lettres de Gustave Flaubert à George Sand* (Paris: G. Charpentier, 1884), lix.
[2] Itō Tasaburō, *Sōmō no kokugaku* (Tokyo: Masago Shoten, 1966); Tsukamoto Manabu, *Chihō bunjin*, Kyōikusha rekishi shinsho (Nihonshi) 84 (Tokyo: Kyōikusha, 1977). See also: Aoki Michio, "Chiiki bunka no seisei," in *Iwanami kōza Nihon tsūshi*, vol. 15, ed. Asao Naohiro et al. (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1995), 255-295; Tazaki Tetsurō, *Chihō chishikijin no keisei* (Tokyo: Meicho Shuppan, 1990).
[3] See especially Shibata Hajime, *Kinsei gōnō no gakumon to shisō* (Tokyo: Shinseisha, 1966).

(*kotodama*) that is an intriguing synthesis of Mitsue's ideas and those of Nakamura Takamichi (d. 1844, name also read Kōdō).[4]

Igarashi Atsuyoshi: Early Years

Igarashi Atsuyoshi was born on the sixteenth day of the twelfth month, Kansei 5 (1794) in Uchijima Village in the Tonami region of Etchū province (present-day Toyama prefecture) to a family that had held the hereditary title of *tomura* (agricultural administrator) since its institution at the beginning of the seventeenth century.[5] At that time, the Kaga domain was encouraging development of new land, and to that end declared all newly reclaimed land tax-free for the first two years of its use, with half-rate taxation for the following three years and full taxation beginning with the fifth year. This renewed emphasis on support of agriculture (*kannō*) greatly increased both the status and the responsibilities of administrators such as *tomura*. Atsuyoshi first began official work in agricultural supervision in Bunka 5 (1808) at the age of sixteen and was appointed *tomura* three years later.

Atsuyoshi's diligence and native intelligence would appear to have pointed him toward a successful career in public works, but he and his father encountered an unexpected setback in the second year of Bunsei (1819). In a contemporary document, Maeda Narinaga (1782-1824) attributed the continuing poverty of the peasantry to "profits made by magistrates of [policy] implementation (*kaisaku bugyō*)," and argued that such administrators "should observe [the principles] of their office and devote themselves to agricultural policy, and not bring the populace into poverty."[6] As a result, twenty-eight *tomura* including Atsuyoshi and his father were indicted.

Sumptuary laws were common in early modern Japan, both at the national and local levels, and were enforced with varying degrees of vigilance. Some historians have noted the problems that arose from the Maeda lords' unwillingness to adapt to economic realities in the latter part of the Edo period (including the spread of a monetary economy among the peasantry), and it is conceivable that the domain was merely seeking scapegoats for its own policy failures.[7] The alleged abusers were banished to Notojima, an island off the coast of the Noto peninsula near Nanao. At the time, Atsuyoshi wrote that "there was a faint haze of smoke from salt kilns, and the roar of the waves was deafening," producing "a sensation as if the floorboards were

[4] On the significance of *kotodama* in Japanese cultural history, see: Jin'ichi Konishi, *A History of Japanese Literature: Volume One, the Archaic and Ancient Ages*, trans. by Aileen Gatten and Nicholas Teele (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 107-110.

[5] This biographical sketch is taken from various sources, including especially: Inagaki Minato, *Igarashi Atsuyoshi* (Tsuzawa-chō, Toyama-ken: Kyōdo Kenkyūshitsu, 1941); Hirai Takeo, "Kokugakusha Igarashi Atsuyoshi no shōgai to sono chosaku," *Kokugakuin zasshi* 24:9 (Sept. 1918), 608-625 and 24:10 (Oct. 1918), 679-707. The *tomura* system was employed in the Kaga, Toyama, and Daishōji domains. It began under the third lord of the Kaga domain, Maeda Toshitsune (1594-1658), by appointing powerful peasants to an administrative position as a sort of appeasement.

[6] From *Maeda Kanazawa kafu*, as quoted by Inagaki, 20. *Kaisaku bugyō* was an office in the Kanazawa domain whose responsibility was implementation of the policy of agricultural development (*kannō*).

[7] See, for example, *Toyama-ken no rekishi to bunka*, ed. Toyama Kenshi Hensan Iinkai (Tokyo: Seirin Shoin, 1958), 140-153, which also describes many of the excessive sumptuary edicts imposed on the peasantry.

pitching and rolling like a boat," leaving him "unable to get any sleep."[8] His father soon passed away as they lay side-by-side in the crude hut, which inspired a later verse:

> *Unohana mo ukiyo no kaki ni yuwarete wa shiroki mo nani mo kai nakarikeri*
> Even maidenflowers, if entwined on the fence of the transient world—
> neither whiteness nor aught else to any avail.[9]

Atsuyoshi's exile in Noto would prove to have a profound influence on the direction of his life and career, yielding one important outcome: his acquaintance with and tutelage under Funaki Masa, priest at the Iyahime Shrine on Notojima and a disciple of Motoori Norinaga. It appears to have been at that point that Atsuyoshi determined to pursue *kokugaku*. He writes that he "was officially pardoned and returned home," after which he attempted "to enter Motoori Ōhira's [1756-1833] school," sending "a message through one Kojimaya Heishichi of Osaka." But he was discouraged by Kojimaya who told him "that [Ōhira] had passed away." Atsuyoshi thereupon "became a disciple of Master Fujitani Mitsue, who had been his father's teacher."[10] In reality, Ōhira remained alive more than a decade after this exchange, though Atsuyoshi appeared to have believed the falsehood at the time. But this prevarication possibly resulted in an even more profound effect on his future course than would likely have been the case with discipleship under Ōhira, whose students were legion and whose teachings had by that time become somewhat conventional.

One cannot help but wonder why the tutelage of his own father had not led him to Mitsue much earlier. What is even more surprising is that such a close connection evolved between Mitsue and his new disciple in spite of the fact that the two apparently never met face-to-face.[11] Though his formal discipleship lasted only two years—from Bunsei 4 (1822) until Mitsue's death in Bunsei 6 (1824)—a strong bond developed between them.

The *tomura* system was abolished in the same year that Atsuyoshi returned from exile, its duties taken over by the magistrate of the *gun* (*gun-bugyō*), but Atsuyoshi was appointed advisor (*sōtoshiyori*) to the magistrate. During the years that followed his return, his responsibilities in agricultural administration left him little time to pursue scholarship, but his interest in *kokugaku* nevertheless became more intense. In the twelfth year of Bunsei (1829), a disciple of Nakamura Takamichi, Mochizuki Kōchi, delivered lectures in Toyama on *kotodama* theory, and some years later, in Tenpō 5 (1834), Atsuyoshi obtained a copy of Nakamura's *Kotodama wakumon*, which greatly influenced the development of his own theories. Atsuyoshi's chagrin at his lack of freedom to pursue study under Nakamura is reflected in the following verse written in Tenpō 6 (1835):

> I received an invitation from Master Nakamura to study in Edo. Lamenting my helpless lot, [I wrote]
> *Ika ni shite ika ni shitemashi mi o wakuru koto no naraneba ika ni shitemashi*

[8] From Atsuyoshi's *Aratae no ki*, as quoted by Inagaki, 23-24.
[9] From vol. 11 of Atsuyoshi's *Fusushinoya eisō*. See: http://www.lib.pref.toyama.jp/gallery/collection/contents/00/01/16/011/000116_011_026_L.jpg.
[10] From *Kojiki shinten hikkai*, as quoted by Inagaki, 27.
[11] As noted by Miyake Kiyoshi: "Atsuyoshi actually never once had a personal meeting with Mitsue, but the latter had been his father Yukiyoshi's poetry teacher …" *Shinpen Fujitani Mitsue zenshū*, vol. 5, ed. Miyake Kiyoshi (Kyoto: Shibunkaku, 1981), 26.

What, oh what should I do?-
Unable to divide myself in two—what should I do?[12]

Atsuyoshi eventually ran into trouble with the authorities a second time. In both the Kanazawa and Toyama domains—as in domains throughout the country—the land was owned by the lord, and peasants were allowed to use it after paying the requisite tax (*nengu*). Buying and selling of land was not permitted, but the practice had been in place since the seventeenth century of allowing peasant families to sell a portion of the land use rights calculated in terms of *mochidaka*, or the sum of their landholding according to taxation in *koku*. *Mochidaka* was adjusted every twenty years when redistribution of land was carried out. Sale of rights—known as *kiridaka*—was permitted only to other peasants; *mochidaka* was not allowed for non-peasants such as townspeople or priests. The famine following the great crop failure of Tenpō 4 (1833) resulted in impoverished peasants attempting to circumvent this law. During this time, Atsuyoshi used his own money to construct a communal granary to alleviate the suffering of the people, and this became a focal point of the investigation. Where had the money come from? Had he extorted it from the villages? Had he lent *mochidaka* to merchants in Takaoka for interest? He responded that the village in question had no *mochidaka* to lend, and that moreover, permission for the construction was included along with funds he had received from the domain. His appeal was to no avail. Thus, in the seventh month of Tenpō 9 (1838), he came under condemnation a second time and was again stripped of his position.

Atsuyoshi used the unstructured two years between then and his pardon on the eighth month of Tenpō 11 (1840) to devote himself to study and poetry. The Kaga domain had restored the *tomura* system in 1840, and in the fourteenth year of Tenpō (1843), he was reappointed to that position.

As it turned out, Atsuyoshi's difficulties with the domain authorities had not yet ended, and he ended up being censured a third time in Ansei 5 (1858). He relates that "a man named Kaiyō Wataru[13] from Fukuyama in Bingo province had been staying in Takiura," where "he was giving instruction in such things as cultivation of cotton." Atsuyoshi invited him to stay at his place, and when "the authorities heard" of it they demanded to know why he was "giving accommodation to someone from another province?" Atsuyoshi wrote a formal letter of apology, but to no avail. He later wrote of this:

> Though it was for the benefit of our province and of its people that I gave accommodation to Master Kaiyō, it is mortifying that they should banish me for that. As such thoughts continued to weigh on me,
> …
> *Tanahira no tama o tobashitsu tanasue no tada isasakeki chiri harau tote*
> Sent flying: a gem in the palm of the hand

[12] In vol. 5 of *Fusushinoya eisō*. See: http://www.lib.pref.toyama.jp/gallery/collection/contents/00/01/16/005/000116_005_017_L.jpg.
[13] Kaiyō Wataru 海養亘 is known in most sources as Senjū Kōdayū.

in an attempt to remove a speck of dust on the fingertip.[14]

The discarded gem is, of course, Atsuyoshi himself and the contributions he was eager to make, while the speck of dust was his alleged offense.

We may agree with Atsuyoshi's poetic protest and regard this as an unreasonably harsh punishment for something so minor, but as Itagaki points out, it was a time when numerous unauthorized vagrants from other domains (*dappansha*)—as well as masterless samurai (*rōnin*) and restorationist zealots (*shishi*)—were traveling throughout the country, and domain officials were unnerved by the potential spread of ideologies they regarded as dangerous.[15] Atsuyoshi was pardoned a year later, and his confinement was lifted.

Not long before that, Atsuyoshi experience what was apparently his first bout with a recurring illness which he describes as uncontrollable cramps. He sought medication which brought some relief, but the following year the illness—apparently palsy—returned.[16]

Though beset by advancing illness, Atsuyoshi continued to pursue scholarly activities. It was during a stay in Kanazawa early in 1860 that he composed *Word Spirit: At Daybreak on a Journey* (*Kotodama no tabi akatsuki*), a translation of which appears as an appendix to this study. He died on the twenty-fourth of the first month of Bunkyū 1 (1861).

Atsuyoshi's Discipleship under Fujitani Mitsue

The past few decades have witnessed much scholarly attention to Fujitani Mitsue, who was little known until after the Pacific War. Perhaps his skepticism regarding the historicity of the earliest layer of Japan's founding myths accounts for some of his appeal to modern sensibilities. Moreover, he is representative of the generation between Motoori Norinaga and Hirata Atsutane (1776-1843), and he both responds to the arguments of the former and anticipates those of the latter in ways that make him an important link. His theories have been treated competently by others, and a full examination of them need not be rehearsed here.[17]

One characteristic of the theories of both Mitsue and Atsuyoshi is the emphasis they place on the *Kojiki* as a source of "teaching." This ran counter to the thought of Hirata Atsutane (1776-1843) that, unlike China or India, ancient Japan possessed nothing that could be called a "teaching" because it did not need one; its people were naturally virtuous. Mitsue begins his *Kojiki tomoshibi ōmune* by crediting Motoori Norinaga with not establishing a "teaching" the way some other *kokugakusha* had done, who sought to "contrive and embellish" explications of the same that were nothing but "private interpretations." Norinaga, in contrast, "recognized that

[14] In vol. 11 of *Fusushinoya eisō*. See:
http://www.lib.pref.toyama.jp/gallery/collection/contents/00/01/16/011/000116_011_029_L.jpg through
http://www.lib.pref.toyama.jp/gallery/collection/contents/00/01/16/011/000116_011_031_L.jpg.
[15] Inagaki, 34.
[16] See vol. 11 of *Fusushinoya eisō* :
http://www.lib.pref.toyama.jp/gallery/collection/contents/00/01/16/011/000116_011_077_L.jpg.
[17] Widely cited studies include: Tada Junten, *Ishoku no kokugakusha Fujitani Mitsue no shōgai* (Kyoto: Shibunkaku, 1990) and Suga Shūji, *Fujitani Mitsue no monjintachi* (Kyoto: Rinsen Shoten, 2001). The best treatment in English is that of Susan L. Burns, *Before the Nation: Kokugaku and the Imagining of Community in Early Modern Japan* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 131-157.

the *Kojiki* was superior to the *Nihon shoki*," and Mitsue acknowledged that he was "greatly indebted to this master for effortless understanding of what is correct" about the former."[18] Praise of Norinaga ends there, however, and he is faulted with not making "word spirit (*kotodama*) the center of the language of our divine country, but only thinking and speaking about elegance (*miyabi*) as its center." He also condemns his tendency toward "theorizing."[19] Moreover, Norinaga saw the *Kojiki* "as only the beginning of the emperors and not as a book of teaching (*oshie no fumi*)," believing that "teaching was something belonging [only] to countries with bad manners."[20] In contrast, Mitsue dismissed the historical existence of the deities preceding Jinmu, arguing rather that they were a part of Jinmu himself, and that "in making [people] understand that the deities within him [related] to human affairs (*jinji*), Emperor Jinmu bestowed a teaching to the world."[21] Later Mitsue elaborates: "To begin with, 'human' is the name of something that embodies within itself the divine, and the 'divine' is something that embodies within itself the human. Thus, one should understand the teaching that even as the divine is main (*shu*), the human is essential (*yō*)."[22] Mitsue argued that "the *Kojiki* was not a record of actual events" but rather "a 'teaching'" written for the purpose of establishing and unifying the country.[23] Mitsue made this the claim as a protest against Norinaga, but Atsuyoshi, as we shall see, employed this argument against Atsutane.

Indirect expression was also the central ideal of language for both Mitsue and Atsuyoshi, the former using the term *tōgo*—a term taken from the *Nihon shoki*—while the latter spoke of *kotoage senu*. Indeed, few thinkers match the skepticism toward language found in Mitsue, who famously proclaimed that "generally speaking, this thing called language kills the gods."[24] He continues by qualifying the fatal sort of language as "direct expression (*chokugen*)." Parts of our minds are not amenable to direct examination or expression, but "when one employs *tōgo*, the gods are present. … For this reason, *tōgo* lies between what is spoken and what is not spoken."[25]

Though Mitsue and Atsuyoshi preferred to refer to this quality of language with different terms, they both regarded it as an application of *kotodama*, a quality of human speech which endowed the Japanese language with privileged status. Moreover, Mitsue regarded it as indispensable for an understanding of the *Kojiki* and "central to its writing." If one "applies *kotodama* to put things in context, contrasting heaven and earth, gods and humans, then this book which seems written in so doubtful a manner will not have a single uncertain passage."[26] Unfortunately, while *kotodama* was readily accessible to the ancients, its power had waned in later ages.

---

[18] Fujitani Mitsue, *Kojiki tomoshibi ōmune*, in *Fujitani Mitsue shū*, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Kokumin Seishin Bunka Kenkyujo, 1939), 6-7.
[19] Kamata Tōji, "Shinsōteki jigen toshite no kotodama: Fujitani Mitsue no kotodama-ron," *Shintō shūkyō* 114 (March 1984), 55-56 discusses this.
[20] *Ibid*., 7-8.
[21] *Ibid*., 19.
[22] *Ibid.*, 33.
[23] Burns, 133.
[24] *Kojiki tomoshibi ōmune*, 21.
[25] *Ibid.*, 21-22.
[26] *Ibid.*, 10.

In the sixth month of Bunsei 4 (1821), Mitsue set out on a journey to spread his teachings on poetry and gain new disciples, his destination being Etchū. He spent most of his time in Kanazawa, but did make brief visits to Toyama. It is unlikely that Mitsue and Atsuyoshi met in person.[27] The connection seems to have occurred via people who did have meetings with Mitsue. Atsuyoshi's formal acceptance into Mitsue's school took place through correspondence on the seventh of the eighth month, Bunsei 5 (1822). Remarkably for a new disciple, Atsuyoshi was immediately given the responsibility of editing a collection of Mitsue's writings, to which he contributed a preface.

In the fourth year of Bunsei (1821) Mitsue's stipend had been suspended by his native domain Yanagawa. To add to his difficulties, not long after his return he contracted an illness leaving him bedridden. He appealed to Atsuyoshi for financial assistance and received an unstinting response. That Mitsue would reveal his impecunious circumstances so candidly to this new devotee—and that Atsuyoshi would respond so generously without any firm guarantee of repayment—bespeaks the deep level of trust that had rapidly grown between them.[28] The confidence Mitsue obviously had in his new recruit made Atsuyoshi a strong candidate to succeed him as head of the school,[29] but a number of factors militated against such an outcome. Most significant was Mitsue's death in the twelfth month of Bunsei 6 before formally declaring a successor and limiting the length of Atsuyoshi's discipleship to less than two years. Atsuyoshi's onerous responsibilities in agricultural administration and his limited mobility no doubt also made it unlikely that he could have accepted such a position. Moreover, Mitsue's school appeared already to be in a state of gradual dissolution.[30]

Atsuyoshi's Discipleship under Nakamura Takamichi

The second major source of influence in the development of Atsuyoshi's theories was Nakamura Takamichi, a somewhat elusive figure in the history of *kotodama* thought. As was the case with his tutelage under Mitsue, Atsuyoshi never met Takamichi in person, but rather became aware of his teaching second-hand—through Mochizuki Kōchi—and later established correspondence with Takamichi himself. Atsuyoshi's son Igarashi Masao gives an account of how Takamichi acquired the teachings of *kotodama*. He relates that in 1818 a man from Hyūga province arrived in Kyoto, where he conveyed to one Noyama Motomori allegedly ancient teachings regarding *kotodama*: each syllable possesses a spirit, and there are three types of words, those being noun (*na*), predicate (*koto*), and particle (*musubi*). Nakamura was present at this meeting and subsequently shared these teachings with Mochizuki Kōchi. The man from Hyūga did not put anything in writing, believing that to do so would destroy its qualities. Thus, his teachings were slighted as mere oral traditions. "This is truly regrettable …"[31]

[27] Miyake Kiyoshi, the editor of *Shinpen Fujitani Mitsue zenshū*, states categorically (vol. 5, p. 26) that they did not. Suga Shūji, "Fujitani Mitsue to Igarashi Atsuyoshi," *Mukogawa Joshidai kiyō. Jinbun, shakai kagaku* 47 (1999), 97, assumes that they did. Though there is no documentation to back either claim, Atsuyoshi's official duties at the time would probably have precluded a formal meeting.

[28] See Tada Junten, 171-172.

[29] Suga, 94.

[30] See Suga Shūji, *Fujitani Mitsue no monjin-tachi* (Kyoto: Rinsen Shoten, 2001), 85-88.

[31] From the preface to volume 2 of Igarashi Masao, *Kotodama no masukagami* (Uchijima-mura, Toyama-ken: Igarashi Masao, 1880). Kamata Tōji, *Kotodama no shisō* (Tokyo: Seidosha, 2017), 143-4, also cites this passage, but misidentifies "Masao" as Atsuyoshi himself rather than his son.

It was years after Atsuyoshi's first exposure to Takamichi's teachings that he was able to obtain a copy of the latter's *Kotodama wakumon*, a work that systematically lays out a theory of the spiritual structure of the Japanese language and its relation to concepts of the divine. Takamichi writes that "this teaching of *kotodama* is the law that opened the way of language of our imperial land in ancient times, and it is none other than its foundational sacred teaching," and that its law "is the *kotodama* and the True Mirror (*Masukagami*) …" Moreover, *kotodama* "is the spirit of the human voice (*koe*). That is, a person produces seventy-five syllables, and each is endowed with a principle of signification. That signification is called *kotodama*," and "that which teaches the functioning of *kotodama* is the True Mirror."[32]

One claim that Mitsue and Takamichi both make is that ancient Japan did in fact have a "teaching." Later in the exchange, Takamichi asserts that "those of the present age are ignorant of *kotodama*" and rely on such explanations as "the Chinese five elements." But the ancient "texts elucidate all names of deities by means of *kotodama*."[33] Upon analysis it becomes clear that Mitsue and Takamichi understood that concept very differently. For Mitsue it resides in the interstices between what is said and what is left unsaid, facilitating mutual understanding almost telepathically, but for Takamichi, it is to be found in the language itself, each syllable endowed with a spirit, as is explained graphically in the True Mirror (*Masukagami*), defined as "a mirror of the human voice … each syllable having a division between initial sound and final rhyme." Moreover, "sounds have three ranks: light, medium, and heavy," while "rhymes are of five types ranging in height. These sounds and rhymes combine to form the seventy-five syllables." This arrangement constitutes the "True Mirror," which "bears within itself the law of [all] things in the universe …"[34]

Takamichi relates that "there was an elderly man from a western province who instructed [him] in this way of *kotodama* when [he] was a young man in Kyoto." He found the teaching incoherent, and referring to it as a gem in the rough, determined to polish it. He insists that he "did not add any of [his] own suppositions to the reasoning of that teaching." He faults contemporary *kokugaku* with obsession with Confucianism and Buddhism to the point of denying the existence of "a noble teaching of our imperial land."[35]

Atsuyoshi's mature theory of *kotodama* attempts to combine two very different approaches: Mitsue's, with its emphasis on word spirit as the quality that conveys the intended meaning of indirect expression, and Takamichi's, which views that faculty as embedded in the very sounds of the Japanese language.

[32] See the manuscript at: https://archive.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kosho/ho02/ho02_04747/ho02_04747_p0004.jpg through https://archive.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kosho/ho02/ho02_04747/ho02_04747_p0005.jpg.
[33] *Ibid.*, https://archive.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kosho/ho02/ho02_04747/ho02_04747_p0009.jpg.
[34] *Ibid.*, https://archive.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kosho/ho02/ho02_04747/ho02_04747_p0005.jpg. Takamichi provides a chart illustrating the *Kotodama masukagami* in his *Kotodama kikigaki*. See: https://archive.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kosho/ho02/ho02_00666/ho02_00666_p0003.jpg.
[35] *Ibid.*, https://archive.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kosho/ho02/ho02_04747/ho02_04747_p0017.jpg and https://archive.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kosho/ho02/ho02_04747/ho02_04747_p0018.jpg.

Atsuyoshi's Poetics

Atsuyoshi's prodigious output of *waka* poetry appears in in many of his works, but the bulk of it is found in *Fusushinoya eisō*, a massive collection of compositions from Bunsei 3 (1820) through Bunkyū 2 (1861) including 5,752 verses of *waka* and 71 prose selections. His manuscript contains numerous corrections and deletions, which complicates attempts at transcription. Comments on theory are scattered throughout this collection, but his most systematic treatment is found in three treatises known as *Kagaku shokun*, *Kagaku jikun*, and *Kagaku sankun*, one composed each year between Tenpō 10-12 (1839-1841), a period during his second censure. He opens the *Shokun* with an avowal of the great importance of *waka* poetry, maintaining that "nothing will amount to anything without considering its origins," and that this is especially true of Japanese poetry, which employs "the language of deities," and "each syllable bears a spirit, to which one's own countenance is added. One must never view it lightly."[36]

The connection between his poetic ideals and his theory of *kotodama* becomes even more apparent where he claims that "the *mikoto* appearing in the names of deities refers to words (御言)," and thus our words "are all deities." It follows that "needless prolixity … will be met with divine punishment," and this is especially true "when composing poetry," which must be done "with utter reverence." He cites the *Man'yōshū*'s description of a "country that does not lift up words (*kotoage senu*)" and is thus "blessed by word spirit" to claim that Japanese poetry ideally answers such qualifications.[37]

He also speaks of various predecessors, including Norinaga, of whom he writes that "we are vastly indebted to this master," and that "whoever slanders him may be considered base." Echoing Mitsue's concept of *tōgo*, he claims that the "theory of the feel [engendered by] the sequencing of tempo in use of words is without equal." He also mentions "Master Nakamura," whose "teachings on *kotodama* reveal the delicate and mysterious aspect of language and are truly precious."[38]

Some sections of the treatises address application of *kotodama* to specific techniques. Speaking of the practice of *kuchibyōshi*, or "singing the rhythm" when reciting poetry, Atsuyoshi writes that "unless one has received the teaching of *kotodama*," this practice should be avoided, and that since "*kotodama* is the spirit [residing] in each and every syllable," when a verse "accords well with the spirit … [in those syllables], then singing the rhythm will produce a felicitous effect."[39]

Conclusion

The concept of word spirit, or *kotodama*, which is prominent in Atsuyoshi's later writings, has a long and complex history in Japan. Its revival in the seventeenth century paralleled the growth of philological studies and especially of phonetics and a preoccupation with the sounds of

[36] *Kagaku shokun*, ms (1r) in Toyama Prefectural Library.
[37] *Ibid*., 3r-3v.
[38] *Ibid.*, 11v-12r.
[39] *Ibid.*, 16r-16v.

yamatokotoba, the "native" language free from foreign borrowings.[40] One common characteristic of the various theories of *kotodama* in early modern Japan was their tendency toward what Peter Nosco has described as "nostalgia"; that is, an orientation toward an idealized—and imagined—past state of society.[41] This was perhaps less true of those theories that connected *kotodama* with "indirect expression," although they likewise posited this quality as being stronger in antiquity.

In spite of Mitsue's skepticism regarding the historicity of the "age of the gods" his approach could not be called empirical, since it assumed many of the same cultural essentialisms as did the work of *kokugakusha* of other schools. Takamichi's teaching on *kotodama*—with its systematized phono-semanticism and its claim to the authority of a privileged transmission—would appear to contrast sharply with that of Mitsue. Did Atsuyoshi achieve a synthesis of these two seemingly very different approaches?

To the extent that he did achieve a synthesis, it is most apparent in his poetics. He argued that, by its very nature, *waka* was a form of indirect expression, a rejection of *kotoage*, thus allowing for the "blessing of *kotodama*." At the same time, his views on grammar as seen in *Kagaku shokun* echo the analysis of noun (*na*), predicate (*koto*), and particle (*musubi*) found in the True Mirror.

Appendix: *Kotodama no tabi Akatsuki*

A certain person recently posed a question about the divine teaching of our land, and this is a draft of my response in which I offer an explanation according to the general principles of word spirit (*kotodama*). I was traveling at the time on official business and had few books with me, so relying on my imperfect memory I cannot say that my citations are completely free of error. Words that should be written with *kanji* are in places written with *kana* because I could not recall the characters. I thought to rewrite this reply later, but the demands of my work have ultimately prevented me from doing so. The idea came to me to demonstrate only the general principles, and since it was written during the time after I awoke at daybreak and before the others arose—when moreover it had become unseasonably chilly again—it has turned out rather haphazard. Thus, it is not something I ought yet to show to anyone, but someone is likely to make the same inquiry again, and thus I have decided not to discard it. Accordingly, I have titled it *Word Spirit: At Daybreak on a Journey*.[42] This recalls a verse by Master Mitsue:

Akatsuki wa umashi toki nari monomoi no chiji no hitotsu mo magirenu toki zo

[40] I treat the revival in my "A Land Blessed by Word Spirit: Kamochi Masazumi and Early Modern Constructs of *Kotodama*," *Early Modern Japan* (2012): 6-32.

[41] See Peter Nosco, *Remembering Paradise: Nativism and Nostalgia in Eighteen-Century Japan* (Cambridge, Mass.: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1990).

[42] This translation is made from a manuscript in the Toyama Prefectural Library, available online at: http://www.lib.pref.toyama.jp/gallery/collection/contents/00/01/03/000/000103_000_001_L.jpg through http://www.lib.pref.toyama.jp/gallery/collection/contents/00/01/03/000/000103_000_027_L.jpg. Special thanks to Professor Kansaku Ken'ichi of the National Institute for Japanese Literature, who kindly corrected my numerous errors of transcription. It was only after completing the transcription and translation that I discovered a citation of an earlier transcription by Ozawa Akimi and Sasaki Toshio, "Honkoku, kaidai Izaragi Atsuyoshi *Kotodama no tabi akatsuki*," *Takaoka-shi Man'yō Rekishikan kiyō* 7 (1997):70-75. I have not been able to examine this this transcription or determine which manuscript it was based on.

Daybreak, a most pleasant time:
sundry objects of reflection, each appearing undisguised.

Ansei 7 [1860], second month, at my lodgings in Kanazawa

Word Spirit: At Daybreak on a Journey

draft by Igarashi Atsuyoshi of Etchū

A certain person remarked: "I know of nothing prior to the Tenryaku era [947-957], but since then Shinto has declined until now no one knows that it is the Way of our land. It has come to the point that one person who is called an 'island Sinologist' even referred to himself as an 'Eastern barbarian.'[43] As Master Motoori noted, [such a view] gets things backward and reverses self and other. It has been reviled by many, and having been startled and gradually awakened, many disciples of ancient studies have appeared and are correcting by reproof the errors [commonly] held in the world. Since the time of Hirata Atsutane, even Sinologists have been subjected to loud criticism and, now cognizant of the precious things of our country, have come to speak of 'our divine land.' According to the theory of these students of ancient studies, since no one in our land committed evil deeds, there was no doctrine either. Among them are those who, in explicating the chapter on the Age of the Gods claim that this constitutes our country's Way; making this their theory, they eschew all others. Hence, they are ridiculed by Confucianists and Buddhists. Is this not regrettable? You claim to expound word spirit (*kotodama*) as a sacred teaching from antiquity. What do you mean by that? Are [your ideas] in any way better that the theories of those now known as scholars of ancient studies? As a rustic commoner employed to implement [the domain's policy of] promotion of agriculture, what do you propose to accomplish? Moreover, you criticize the theories of famous scholars as being in error, which seems presumptuous. If you have a theory, please explain it in detail."

My reply: What you say is all true. Though I have now reached my seventieth year I depend on neither cane nor eyeglasses. I have become rather hard of hearing, but that spares me from listening to useless talk, giving me peace of mind with fewer distractions. Thus, in the work of promotion of agriculture I do as much as men half my age. In my spare moments my mind turns to *kokugaku*, and I spend more time practicing calligraphy and reading than I did when I was young. Of course I am a rustic commoner incapable of much, but I have attained a few insights. I shall begin with a personal narrative. The fifty years I have served in this capacity have seen many vicissitudes and have passed as if in a dream. In my twenty-seventh year I roamed the mountains of Noto and lived there for a time in a place described in an ancient verse:

Tobusa tate funagi kiru tō Noto no shimayama
kyō mireba kodachi shigeshi mo ikuyo kamubi so
On a mountain in Noto where they cut wood for boats and make offerings—

[43] Atsuyoshi may be referring here to Kumazawa Banzan (1619-1691), who used the term "Eastern barbarians" (*tōi*) to refer to the Japanese in his *Shūgi washo*. See *Kumazawa Banzan*, ed. Gotō Yōichi and Tomoeda Ryūtarō, Nihon shisō taikei 30 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1971), 137. Other Sinologists used similar denigrating terms to refer to their countrymen.

gazing on the thick stand of trees today: divine solemnity for ages yet to come.[44]

The Iyohime Shrine[45] is there, and its priest—an elderly man named Funaki no Muraji—showed much kindness. He was a poet and allowed me to borrow any books he had. As I whiled away my time reading them, I came across a verse by the great priest Keichū and was so moved by it that I committed it to memory:

Waga mi ima misoji mo chika no shiogama ni keburi bakari mo tatsu koto no naki
Like my present self—the nearby salt kiln,
no sign of smoke in thirty years.[46]

Thus Keichū, who [at the time he wrote that verse] was close to the same age I was, had attained great knowledge of Buddhism and at the same time had become adept at poetry, and yet he composed such a poem of self-reflection. I could not help feeling ashamed and chagrinned that I had accomplished so little.

From my youth I aspired to proficiency in mathematics, and under the tutelage of Master Ishiguro[47] plumbed its depths. And yet in my work a general knowledge of multiplication, division, and square measures has been sufficient. As one of the Six Arts,[48] mathematics is a thing of many wonders, but it has nothing to do with the affective; even if it is passed on to future generations, no one is moved by it to shed tears or anything like that. And so I determined that it was not worth expending more effort on and set it aside in order to make a name for myself in *kokugaku*.

Now then, as I perused various books I came across Ōtomo no Yakamochi, who served as governor of our Etchū province. He wrote this admonitory verse:

Masurao wa na o shi tatsubeshi nochi no yo ni kikitsugu hito mo kataritsugu ga ne
A manly man should make a name for himself
to be heard and passed down to later generations.[49]

With the joy of receiving this admonition a thousand years after it was given—and with the thought that if it were not for these words, these thousand years later we would have no way to know his intent—tears welled up [in my eyes] and I strengthened my resolve. After returning home I sought instruction in poetry from Master Ōhira in the province of Kii, but because communication [between us] was not good, I came [instead] under the tutelage of Master Fujitani Mitsue. Even as I studied the Way of our land, the demands of my work in promotion of agriculture left me little time, and I had made no real progress when Master Mitsue departed this life. I seemed to stagnate as time passed, but around the beginning of the Tenpō era [1830-1844],

[44] MYS no. 4026. *Sedōka*. *Tobusa* refers to the tops of trees which loggers would set upright (*tate*) on stumps as offerings to the gods.
[45] In Nanao City. It is dedicated to Ōyatsu-hime, the patron deity of shipwrights and boat lumber.
[46] From Keichū's *Jisen Manginshū*, where its final line appears as *... tatsu koto zo naki*. See *Keichū zenshū*, vol. 13, ed. Hisamatsu Sen'ichi (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1973), 485.
[47] Ishiguro Nobuyoshi (1760-1837), surveyor, mathematician, and astronomer in the Toyama domain.
[48] In ancient China, the Six Arts included rites, music, archery, charioteering, calligraphy, and mathematics.
[49] MYS no. 4165. Ōtomo no Yakamochi (718-785) was governor of Etchū for five years beginning in 746, and during that period composed some 330 verses appearing in the *Man'yōshū*.

Mochizuki Kōchi[50] came from Edo and spread teachings about *kotodama*. I found spare moments to go listen to him and discovered his teachings to be both simple and exalted. *This* was the divine, ancient teaching of our [land]; it was what I had always said it to be. Examined in the light of this teaching, of the myriad things in heaven and earth there is nothing whose reason cannot be thoroughly investigated.

Yet having no free time I was unable to think anything through, and as the years passed my mother's illness became grave. I took leave from service and saw to her needs day and night. But I continued to ponder these teachings on word spirit, and never forgot them. Eight years later my mother passed away and I returned to my work supervising promotion of agriculture. It was very demanding, but at night I would ponder [things] after going to bed or at daybreak as I awoke and attained various insights. More than ten years passed in that manner. Then, in the second month of the year before last I was unexpectedly given leave, and since then have devoted myself here to writing. They are not likely to amount to much, but I have completed several manuscripts, including *Yutsu tsumagushi*. Then in summer of last year I returned to my former work. The path I have traversed feels like one night's dream, but when I reflect on former times, it is indeed very distant. Though I am only on the foothills on this mountain path to which I have aspired, I am already advanced in years. Be that as it may, I have not neglected my hereditary position in agricultural promotion, nor have I given up [on writing], but have gone on in this dreamlike state.

Yume to iu mono zo okashiki kakete shi mo omowanu koto o hito ni misetsuru
What strange things dreams are—
revealing to us things we never in the least thought of.[51]

With such thoughts, I fell into such a deep sleep that it seemed I would never awaken.

Now, this word spirit was the ancient, divine teaching of our land, but at some point in time it became hidden, and eventually there was no one who knew of it. (When one considers that the Preface to the *Kokinshū* explicitly teaches against *kotoage*, the blessings of word spirit must have been known up to that time. I have described this in detail in my *Yutsu tsumagushi*.[52]

During the Kyōhō era [1716-1736], when the Ōhama Shrine in the Hekikai district of Mikawa province was under renovation,[53] they discovered in the ceiling seventeen pieces of bark carved with undecipherable characters. The priest copied the characters and then returned [the pieces] to their hiding place in the ceiling. A man by the name of Noyama Motomori again copied [the priest's copy], and his children and grandchildren moved to the capital and lived there. In the thirteenth year of Bunka [1816], there was an old man who moved to the capital,

[50] Mochizuki Kōchi (dates unknown), *kokugaku* scholar from Ōmi and grandfather of Ōishigori Masumi (1832-1913), whose theories of *kotodama* were influential in Ōmoto-kyō.
[51] This verse also appears in vol. 12 of Atsuyoshi's *Fusushinoya eisō*. The original manuscript may be seen at: http://www.lib.pref.toyama.jp/gallery/collection/contents/00/01/16/012/000116_012_018_L.jpg.
[52] Since the word *kotoage* does not appear in either of the *Kokinshū* prefaces, it is apparent that Atsuyoshi believes that the ideals these prefaces espouse do not permit *kotoage*, which he defines as unmediated and unbridled expression, lacking suggestion and subtlety. He thus posits *kotoage* as inimical to word spirit (*kotodama*), a point which his *Yutsu tsumagushi* is devoted to demonstrating. See Igarashi Atsuyoshi, *Kokinshūjo tsumagushi*, ed. Kanai Toshihiro (Toyama: Katsura Shobō, 2013), 67.
[53] This would appear to be the Ōhama Kumano Daijinja in present-day Hekinan City, Aichi Prefecture.

saying he was from the province of Hyūga. When this Mr. Noyama showed him the copy he had made, [the old man] claimed that these were ancient characters and read them fluently. It was a *kana* copy of the "Age of the Gods" chapter. Now this is what the old man passed down as a divine teaching of word spirit from antiquity. That was in turn passed on to Master Nakamura Takamichi, who found it regrettable that such noble teaching had lain hidden. Now then, he [Takamichi] thought that he might secretly spread these teachings in the world, and went to Izumo. Having called upon the [hereditary] local headman, Toshizane,[54] he was then privileged to discuss things privately with the Senior Office Sagusa Harunushi,[55] who gave permission to spread [the teachings] in the world. It was thus through Master Nakamura that [these things] were transmitted, and Mochizuki Kōchi—who traveled about through various provinces teaching—was his disciple.

The reason for calling that divine teaching "the Way of our land" is that it is completely provided for in the Shinto classics which, in instructing about the generative force (*musubi*), use sounds to establish their teaching. A spirit resides in each of the human sounds, and the [power] of these to bless and aid is called word spirit. I shall speak of these things in order. Is it right that [people] remain ignorant of the existence of this precious divine teaching? Now it is a great thing that *kokugakusha* of this generation have become able to speak of our divine land after the manner of Sinologists. One must say that they have been so thorough that, to give a specific example, even calligraphers labeling pharmaceutical products do not make errors in *kana* usage.

In approaching a text, one should strive to polish one's mind so that it can be illuminated, but it is ridiculous that people who aspire to *kokugaku*, upon doing a bit of reading, end up making it a point to strike a bold pose slandering Confucianism and Buddhism. Nevertheless there are among them those who have established their theories on the Shinto classics, and claim that this is our country's Way, but whose [theories] represent only their limited knowledge and are not rooted in anything. Hence, some neglect theories of language. Some are minor, some are incomplete. Each [scholar] goes in his own favorite direction, but none of them encompasses what Heaven and Earth teach. You shall see this as I explain [their errors] one by one. Perhaps this appears to be both impertinent and simplistic on my part, but [my arguments] are for the sake of the Way rather than for personal advantage. In what follows I shall critique the theories of various people. I have no books with me, so I shall only describe the general purport [of each].

It is Master Hirata Atsutane who can best speak of Master Motoori in detail. Thus I shall not address Motoori's theories separately here but shall [rather] critique those of Hirata. Calling it a "study of the ancient way (*kodōgaku)*," he authored a work titled *True Meaning of the Ancient Way* (*Kodō taii*), whose fundamental thesis is that our land [originally] had nothing that could be called a "teaching." But I cannot explain it in detail and, without the book at hand, am unable to offer a critique. Fortunately, a certain gentleman recently gave me a copy of Atsutane's *A Lamentation of Chinese Books* (*Seiseki gairon*) with a recommendation that I read

[54] Senge Toshizane (1764-1831), noted *kokugakusha* and poet, was not the *kuni no miyatsuko*, but was the younger brother of Senge Toshihide, who was in fact the 76th holder of that title.

[55] It is unclear who this is. Both the Senge and the Sagusa families held hereditary positions at the Izumo Shrine, but no one by that name appears in the pedigrees.

it. Upon perusing it, I found that it relies exclusively on examples from China.[56] Since those are not relevant [to the present discussion], I shall not address them, but [rather] shall select those sections in this book that speak of our country according to the general purport of "study of the ancient way," and offer my analysis of those.

A Lamentation of Chinese Books, vol. 4, 14v

> Scholars who are partial to China tend to boast that in that country there is a teaching; they look down upon our country, arguing that anciently it had no teaching. But this is a grave misunderstanding. Thus, [they say], in China the so-called [virtues of] *jin* (benevolence), *gi* (righteousness), *kō* (filial piety), *tei* (obedience), *chū* (loyalty), and *shin* (fidelity) are supposed to be practiced by all people with sincerity, and they refrain from doing what is forbidden. If that were the constant situation, then for which people would a "way" [consisting] of a teaching be relevant? … When one considers it carefully, one realizes that it was [rather] noble that there was no such thing as a way of teaching in our divine land anciently. One also realizes that the fact that a way of teaching was devised there to lead people in that country bespeaks disgracefulness. Without incidents, anciently in our land there were no particularly evil deeds that required prohibition, and so no way of teaching was established …[57]

Ignorant of the fact that anciently there [indeed] was a divine teaching in our land, he claims [not only] that there was none but also that its absence was noble. This is an outrageous falsehood. To begin with, how should we understand [the claim] that there were no evil deeds to forbid? Reason dictates that good and evil are [part of] the nature of Heaven and Earth, and thus good and evil cannot be separated from each other. Hence, where the good is strong, so will the bad also be strong. For example, in our land even as the rice that nourishes and supports human life is both abundant and of fine flavor, the swords that slaughter people here are also unusually sharp. Thus, the logic of good and evil needs to be explained. Depending on its use, good may also turn out to be evil. For example, to let live is good, while to kill is evil. Let us say, then, that it is good that a robber who has frequently tormented the people is caught and the governor has him executed. To lament the death of this thief and rescue him though he was meant to die would be an evil. We could also say that good and evil accompany one another. If we say that granting life is good while killing is evil, then if only birth took place and there were no death, then [the troubles] of this world would never be corrected. It is because both birth and death occur in succession that the world has order. Birth is Heaven and Earth giving life, while death is Heaven and Earth taking life. Thus, both giving and taking of life are acts of Heaven and Earth, and the Shinto classics teach that this is a constant law. Further, [we might say that] the light of daytime is good, and the dark of night is bad. But if, claiming that dark is bad, night were done away with and we had only daytime, life could not go on. It is because there are both day and night that the world is able to continue. Thus, taking life is the source of giving life, and night is the source of day. All things have a beginning and an end, and one should know the principle that ends soon become beginnings.

---

[56] The "west" (*sei*) in this case obviously refers to China ("west" of Japan) rather than to the occident. It should be noted that *gairon* is 慨論 rather than the more usual 概論.

[57] *Shinshū Hirata Atsutane zenshū*, vol. 10, 119-120.

Now in summer daytime is six tenths and nighttime is four tenths, while in winter daytime is four tenths and nighttime is six tenths. This is because in our land the times (*shiroku*), in following the course of the sun, accord with the law of Heaven and Earth. Good and evil must not be separated from the times of the day, and that is why the Shinto classics speak of "purification of the good" and "purification of the evil."[58] If both good and evil are separated from the times of the day, then lustration is for naught. The combination of good and evil with the times of the day and the description of both purity and impurity as qualities of Heaven and Earth, expressed in words and deeds, are explicated clearly in *The Bright Mirror* (*Masumi no kagami*). (*The Masumi no kagami*[59] is what is known in the world as the "fifty sounds." There are seventy-five voices. This will be explained in detail below.) Thus, all things are endowed with both [qualities].

This is what is meant by the ancient verse which speaks of keeping even the beginning and end of the "splendid halberd, held in the middle."[60] This is also what is meant by referring to dying as "heading down the one-way path,"[61] and it includes both [aspects] because it means "not living." Thus, all things are endowed with good and evil. When the good of something is great, so will be its evil. Both fire and water are used to prepare food, and among swords, clothing, and precious metals among other things there is none that is produced without using the power of fire and water. And yet fire has no equal in its violent ability to destroy by burning, and water can also wreak extreme damage.

And then there is the conjugal relationship which, though a means to continue the family line, have posterity, and expand one's clan, may also for that very reason cause the destruction of an individual or lead to the discontinuation of a family name. All things are like that. Thus, since good and evil are in the nature of Heaven and Earth, it becomes rather impossible to say that "there were no evil deeds." Accordingly, there is a need for a teaching in order to turn the evil into good. One should understand the reasoning behind this.

Also, speaking from facts the age of the gods had its own separate reasoning, but when Susa-no-o, exulted in triumph and committed various bad acts, finally causing Amaterasu-ō-mi-kami to conceal herself in the cave, plunging the world into darkness, that was an evil deed. Also, when the brother deities of Ōnamuchika no kami[62] plotted to burn him to death by lying about a red boar on Mount Tema, this was an evil deed.

---

[58] Or *yoshi-harae* and *ashi-harae*, the former referring to a rite of lustration performed to bring about something felicitous.

[59] This refers here to a conceptualization of the seventy-five "voices" by Nakamura Takamichi, author of *Kotodama wakumon* and *Kotodama kikigaki*.

[60] The "ancient verse" is actually a Shinto prayer (*norito*) which includes the phrase *ikashi-hoko no nakatori mochite*, in which the "splendid halberd" is used as a guide phrase (*jokotoba*) to introduce *naka* ("middle," but also "mediation"). In other words, the "middle" of the halberd is a metaphor for the "mediation" through the priest who recites the prayer.

[61] This phrase is found in Book Two of the *Kojiki*, where Emperor Chūai's (r. ca. 355-362) consort—Empress Jingū—in a trance proclaims an oracle according to which a land to the west was full of all kinds of treasures, commanding that it should be conquered. The emperor slighted the oracle, countering that he saw nothing to the west but ocean, whereupon the deity commanded him to "head down the one-way path." The emperor was then found dead. The "one-way path" is one that leads to the realm of Yomi.

[62] More commonly known as Ōkuninushi. This episode appears in the *Kojiki*.

Then too, during the reign of Emperor Jinmu, when E-ukashi was to have come out against him in battle but [instead] lied and, saying that he had prepare a banquet for him, set a trap meant to kill him.[63] This was an evil trick. And yet, if Oto-ukashi thought it was wrong not only to oppose the divine personage [Jinmu] sent by the deities of heaven but also to resort to such a trick, he ought to have remonstrated [with his older brother] and together served the emperor. Even if E-ukashi had paid no heed to his remonstration, he should then have appealed to Michi no omi and pleaded for his brother's life, that he might be spared. And if Michi no omi were unwilling to pardon his brother, then he ought to have [willingly] entered the trap and died together with him. However, instead the older brother revealed the plan to the younger, who then revealed the failed scheme to the enemy, having his older brother killed, and then served [the enemy]. What could one call that but an evil deed? There are many more such incidents, but I do not recall them now. Since only a minute fraction [of happenings] are recorded in the national histories, the number of such evil deeds is certainly very great. How, then, can one say that there were no evil deeds to forbid?

Also, [Atsutane] makes it sound as if forbidding evil deeds were the only [purpose] of a teaching. What kind [of claim] is that? In ancient times, the divine teaching of Shinto was something that instructed about the reasoning of Heaven and Earth. And when [people] considered the reasoning of this divine teaching and took to heart the way of the gods of Heaven and Earth, then they could clearly know the way of the sovereign to be a sovereign, the way of a minister to be a minister, and the way of subjects to be subjects. Even if there is a rebellious minister and the land is thrown into confusion, when the darkening of the storm clears, things will be as they were anciently: Heaven will be Heaven and Earth will be Earth. Heaven will not descend to become Earth, neither will Earth ascend to become Heaven. Just as the positions of Heaven and Earth will not move, when the [political] disturbance is settled, sovereign and minister will be as before; we may discern the reasoning that sovereign will be sovereign and minister will be minister, that nothing will have changed even slightly and there will be no confusion.

Now the *kami* are straightforward and correct, and we may understand through word spirit the reasoning that whatever is bent or twisted is contrary to the *kami*.[64] This is the great way of the divine teaching, and through that one can make distinctions even down to minute things, and [eventually] come to an exhaustive knowledge of the reasoning behind all things between Heaven and Earth. This is what is called the divine teaching. Though it is a way of teaching, it eschews expressing things in an aggressively overt manner, calling that *kotoage*. Thus, even in forbidding evil deeds it does not enumerate them, saying "you must not do this or that," but rather leads [people] to a stance where they think, of their own accord, that they will not do such things. This is the traditional way in our land. Where it says in the *Man'yōshū* "In the *Shikishima* land of Yamato—a land where, by divine will, *kotoage* is not done … (*Shikishima Yamato no kuni wa kami kara to kotoage senu kuni …*)," [65] this means that, by the will of the gods, it is a custom in our land that we do not express ourselves in an aggressively overt manner.

[63] This account appears in Book Two of the *Kojiki*.
[64] Here, *kami* is written 加美, implying an overlay of *kotodama* phono-semantics on the usual meaning "deity."
[65] Atsuyoshi misquotes MYS no. 3250, which begins with *Akitsushima* (Dragonfly Island) rather than *Shikishima*.

> Moreover, in the same book [the *Man'yōshū*] is the verse:
> *Chiyorozu no ikusa nari to mo kotoage sezu torite kinu beki onoko to so omou*
> Though facing a host of thousands I shall not say a word (*kotoage sezu*),
> but rather think of them as men who have come to capture me.[66]

I explain this in detail in *Yutsu tsumagushi*, but shall again touch on it in the conclusion.

The foundation of this teaching appears at the beginning of the Shinto classics where, as the male and female deities come together in physical union and pronounce divination, the female deity improperly speaks first. It is the foundation of this divine teaching that the heavenly deities told them to repeat the act. [This] expresses the function of Heaven and Earth in the four syllables of *futomani* (divination). With word spirit it is like that. Thus, when attempting to pronounce divination according to the laws of Heaven and Earth, one may say that it is improper for the one who is a maiden to speak first. This is a command to follow the laws of Heaven and Earth, and is the foundation for the divine teaching. That which instructs in detail how to follow the laws of Heaven and Earth is the divine teaching of word spirit.

Now one cannot know the divine instructions of word spirit without receiving a transmission of them. Is it not therefore regrettable that there are those who, though familiar with the Shinto classics, are ignorant of this precious divine teaching and fancy that there is no such thing as a teaching in our land? Now then, this maiden deity erred, unable to restrain her ardent passion. It may happen that, caught up in sensual desires, one unintentionally errs, and so it is clear from this passage in the Shinto classics that there must be a teaching. It is bad [of course] to be caught up in passions and transgress, but there is also the reasoning that there should be [such things] within Heaven and Earth, and if the error is amended, then there can be a most excellent outcome. Here, too, the error of speaking first was amended and one should note that she gave birth to the land and also to water and fire.

Now after the deity Izanami had given birth to all things, she gave birth to the deity Kagutsuchi and was burned to death. It was an error of being caught up in passion that led the deity Izanagi to grieve and go to the land of Yomi, where he was sorely tormented. But considering that he had been to a land of pollution, he purified himself and amended his error whereupon the three noble children were born.[67] Thus, considered together, pollution and purification were put in order and an evil thing became the basis of a good thing. One should know the reasoning of Heaven and Earth, and since things are like that, one ought not to say that there were no evil things to forbid. One should also recognize that there must be a way of teaching. (I recall that, in one of his books, Master Hirata advances the theory that there is no pardon in Yomi. Since I cannot recall it clearly, I should not mention it, but is it right that there should be no pardon in Yomi?)[68]

Ibid. [i.e., *A Lamentation of Chinese Books*], (continuation of the previous)

---

[66] MYS no. 972, an envoy (*hanka*) to a poem dated 732 by Takahashi no Mushimaro.
[67] These were Amaterasu-ō-mi-kami, Tsukuyomi no mikoto, and Susa-no-o no mikoto.
[68] The book Atsuyoshi obviously has in mind is Atsutane's *Tama no mihashira* (in *Shinshū Hirata Atsutane zenshū*, 7:88-190), a work that poses a theory about the destination of the spirit after death. Atsuyoshi mischaracterizes Atsutane's theory; the latter acknowledges the existence of Yomi, but claims that it is not the destination of the spirit, that place being *Yūmei no kuni* 幽冥国 (170-171). Atsutane also argues that, while in Yomi, Izanami was not actually dead because she both ate and conversed; thus, Yomi is not the final destination of the spirit.

> In the first place, the substance of the Way is just that a sovereign as a sovereign show kindness to those beneath him, that a minister as minister be loyal to his sovereign, that parents be affectionate toward their children, that children be filial toward their parents, that married couples, siblings, the old and the young, and friends act as is correct and fitting for their respective roles. This is what is meant by the Way. These are the things that everyone must do, and through the divine spirit of the engendering deity, everyone naturally discerns them.[69]
>
> *Ibid*., vol. 2, 25v
>
> However one regards the Way, it cannot be known apart from facts, because empty theories will leave little impression on people's hearts …[70]

Master Hirata has made this discovery: upon reading the histories of our land and looking at the achievements of the ancients, one is so moved that one sheds tears, grinds one's teeth and moans; therefore upon careful consideration, [one concludes that] the human heart is naturally endowed with the true Way. This is so because [the human heart] is born by the divine spirit of the engendering deity, and if one acts upon that basis, then there is no need to teach anyone such concepts as filial piety, obedience, loyalty, and fidelity.

As I mentioned previously, Confucianists and Buddhists likewise maintain that the human heart is naturally endowed [with these things], but that the human heart may become distorted as it encounters things or happenings, and may go astray because of sensual desires. To cite a further example, one may be aware that consuming much alcohol is harmful to the body, but out of desire one may allow oneself a little, then one cup leads to another until one is caught up in sensual desire, then involuntarily allows oneself more and more until finally he is a drunkard. Therefore, a teaching is established in order that people not to yield to sensual desire and keep their consciences strong and firm. Pursuing learning through this teaching is not merely a matter of not doing evil, [but also] to polish one's conscience, that it might shine forth. Both in China and in India the teachings of the sages have been unanimous on this point. Since each country differs both in climate and in the temperament of its populace, there will be adaptations in its teachings, but it will be a felicitous teaching for each land. As I mentioned previously, our land has a superior way of teaching that corresponds to what is superior here. That way is Shinto. I shall now explain this in detail according to word spirit.

To begin with, if one explicates the word spirit of "way of the gods" (*kami no michi*) one syllable at a time, *ka* is a syllable that wondrously and immeasurably animates things through the workings of Heaven's applications. (This is also the *ka* of "two days" [*futsuka*] and "three days" [*mikka*].) *Mi* is a syllable that informs of the wondrousness that is contained within the animating spirit of the applications of Earth. (One should be aware that this is the "fruit" [*mi*] of herbs and trees.) This *ka* of Heaven and *mi* of Earth unite to engender the myriad things. Without ceasing the four seasons run their cycles, animals are born and die, plants flourish and wither, over and over inexhaustibly, and this is the way of *kami*. In the chapter on the Age of the Gods [of the *Nihon shoki*], *musubi* (engendering force) is written with the characters 産霊, which expresses this idea, as do the names of two deities mentioned in the Shinto classics: Takami-

[69] *Shinshū Hirata Atsutane zenshū*, 10:126.
[70] *Shinshū Hirata Atsutane zenshū*, 10:62.

musubi-no-kami and Musubi-no-kami. As something born of the union of Heaven and Earth, the human heart is naturally endowed with the rules of the universe. In India this is called the buddha nature, and it is characterized by quietude and constancy; this is what the Zen writings mean by "self" (*shujinkō*).[71] In China this is called "bright virtue" (C. *mingde*, J. *meitoku*) and they speak of "illuminating [one's] bright virtue," of being "endowed with the reasoning of a multitude [of things] (C. *juli*, J. *shūri*) to interact with the myriad phenomena."[72] Following this reasoning [the Chinese] also say: "To direct what Heaven has conferred is called Nature, [and] to follow Nature is called the Way."[73] (These are things that everyone knows, so it is strange that Master Hirata talks as if he had just discovered them for the first time. Since whether reading Buddhist or Confucian texts he seems determined to find only what is bad, these things seem not to catch his attention.)

The generative power of *kami*, which is the basis of both buddha nature and bright virtue, is superior in our land, and therefore the human heart is also superior [here]. If you ask why the generative power of *kami* is superior to [that of] foreign countries, it is because our land is within the thirtieth and fortieth degrees of latitude,[74] its division of the four seasons occurs with precision, and the relative division of day and night does not vary. Its shape lies from northeast to southwest, and it receives sufficient sunlight through the day. Therefore the grains, of course, but also all comestibles are of superior flavor, colored objects are of rich hue and lovely, and the sounds of things are bright and pure. It goes without saying that especially the sounds of the human voice [here] are superior. [People's] voices are superior because their things are superior. You should [try] striking a vessel and listen to its sound. You discover that those made of iron produce a turbid sound, while those of gold have a pure and bright ring.

Both in India and in China [creatures] are born by the generative force of Heaven and Earth, they live within Heaven and Earth, and they are reared by Heaven and Earth, and so they cannot be placed outside of Heaven and Earth. Just as the saying in Buddhist lore that "passing through 100,000 times 100,000,000 buddha lands [to the west of here], there is a world called Paradise"[75] instructs us, after reflecting on the things before our very eyes between Heaven and Earth and amplifying them hundreds of thousands of times we discover for the first time that what is called "Paradise" is here. This is a very interesting way of putting it. Now in the first meditation in the *Amitayurdhyana Sutra* where it speaks of the "Meditation on the Setting Sun," it refers exclusively to meditating on the virtue of the sun, and is the foundation, then the

[71] Section twelve of *Wumenguan* (J. *Mumonkan*) by Wumen Huikai (1183-1260) tells of Priest Ruiyanyan who every morning would address himself: "Self (*shujinkō*)!" He would then respond as he was waking up: "Yes." Next he would warn: "Don't be deceived by anyone." "Yes, I understand."

[72] Atsuyoshi is referring to the opening lines of *The Great Learning* (*Daxue*): "The way of the great learning is to illuminate bright virtue (大學之道在明明德)."

[73] Here, Atsuyoshi appears to be misquoting the opening line from the commentary on *Doctrine of the Mean* (*Zhongyong*) in the *Qunshu zhiyao*, an encyclopedic commentary on the classics commissioned by the second Tang emperor Tai Zong (Li Shimin, 598-649; r. 626-649): "What Heaven has conferred is called Nature, directing [i.e. controlling] Nature is called the Way (天命之謂性，率性之謂道)."

[74] Atsuyoshi appears to refer here to the work of the astronomer and cartographer Shibukawa Shunka (or Harumi, 1639-1715, also known as Yasui Santetsu), who had determined the geographical position of Japan by reference to the north star. See Yulia Frumer, *Making Time: Astronomical Time Measurement in Tokugawa Japan* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2018), 63-80.

[75] This phrase is found in the *Amitabha Sutra*.

"Meditation on Water," the "Meditation on the Land," and so forth one after another [whereby] the grandeur of Paradise is opened up to one's view.[76] In like manner these are all things that are before our eyes in this country. Whether Avalokitêśvara (Kannon bosatsu) or Mahāsthāmaprāpta (Seishi bosatsu), both will appear now before our eyes. I have ideas about this, but since I am not directly concerned with it, I shall not comment. Nor is there any need to mention all the passages seen the *The Book of Changes* (*Yi jing*) that elucidate the workings of Heaven and Earth.

Now then, realizing that by the generative force in Heaven and Earth the myriad things come into being and considering carefully the nature of the Heaven-and-Earth-endowed basis of human beings, the genesis of that which is called either "buddha nature" or "bright virtue" occurred in the Heaven and Earth of China, which is situated low geographically, closer to the equator. There, the courses of the days and months leave very little balance between night and day, mostly tending toward one of three-to-seven or two-to-eight. Since it is so unbalanced, the myriad things that are born through the generative force are weak in flavor, meager in color, and dull in sound. The human voice is thick and rough, and that is because the people are not good, as can be understood by my previous analogy of vessels.

Now it so happens that sometimes the correct generative force of Heaven and Earth [there] produces a person known as a sage or a true gentleman, and these people, pondering deeply the nature of Heaven and Earth, established teachings. However, since the basis [of their teachings]—Heaven and Earth—are so unbalanced, there are things in the theories they expound in their teachings that are not suited to the upright and correct natural conditions of our land. Master Hirata severely reviled those people called sages, but though their personal characters cannot be accounted for, the way of the teachings they established followed deep thought about the reasoning of Heaven and Earth, and thus contain much that is excellent. It is up to us to select what is good and reject what is not.

During the eleventh month of last year, a certain man mentioned to me that in the *Book of Changes* it says that *fu* [the twenty-fourth hexagram] sees the mind of Heaven and Earth. Since this is exactly the same as what is found in our Shinto classics, the *Book of Changes* should be used as an aid in understanding those native works. Moreover, the Shinto classics should be used to understand the *Book of Changes*. (Such things are detested by the *kokugakusha* of our day, but at the beginning of the Chinese classic *Records of the Grand Historian* (*Shiki*; C. *Shiji*) it speaks of "the energy of fire" and "the energy of earth,"[77] and we should acknowledge how greatly this differs from such things as Susanoo-no-mikoto's "spirit of metal."[78])

Now then, even if we say that we know from looking at facts that the human heart is naturally endowed with the true way, it is [still] not a simple thing thereby to conduct the government of the realm. As an analogy of the necessity of teachings, we could look at a boat

[76] The *Amitayurdhyana Sutra* describes a series of "meditations" which reveal the Pure Land.

[77] The opening section of *Records of the Grand Historian* (*Shiji*) describes "an auspicious omen of earth energy" (有土德之瑞) upon the advent of the Yellow Emperor. One of the major commentaries, *Shiji Zhengyi*, similarly uses the expression "fire energy" (火德) in its description of Shen Nong, the god of agriculture.

[78] This application of *Book of Changes* divination to the birth and character of the Japanese gods appears to have been fairly common. See Yoshino Hiroko, *Kamigami no tanjō: eki, gogyō to Nihon no kamigami* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1990). The treatment of Amaterasu and Susanoo appears on pp. 5-12.

being rowed across the sea and consider the reasoning. First, the planks must be joined in a way to prevent leaking, and the hull must be shaped so as to follow the waves and float without capsizing. The sail must be hoisted so as to capture the wind, and the rudder must be handled correctly. Considering the principles of ships, one understands that building one is no simple task. For this reason, the ancients took great pains in establishing methods for joining the planks so that no water would leak in, and fashioning the hulls so that the boat would not capsize. And by following their teaching, without expending unnecessary toil we are at length able to build boats. Conducting the government of the realm is the same as this. The prescription for medicine that Ōnamuchi no kami [Ōkuninushi] and Sukubikona no kami concocted to heal illnesses as well as perform incantations was the same,[79] and all things are like that.

And yet this Master [Hirata] thinks that the way of teaching exists only to prohibit evil deeds and thus claims that there was no such thing as teaching. But the purpose of teaching is to illumine the true way of Heaven and Earth with which the human heart is naturally endowed, so to say that we have no teaching is to deprive us of anything in which to take pride. We should rather rejoice that the teaching of our land is superior to that of other lands.

Ibid., vol. 2, (43v)

> Because Japan is a land that naturally observes benevolence and righteousness, it maintains peace even without sages.[80]

It is strange that he did not think there was anyone in our land who could be called a sage. [In fact], since ancient times there have been many who were even more worthy of that appellation than—and were notably superior to—their Chinese counterparts. But because they were people who did not say everything in full, no one knows that they existed.

Ibid., vol. 3 (31r)

> Conversations unsullied by mundane concerns were in vogue and, with [everyone] parroting the words and imitating the actions of the likes of Xu You and Chao Fu, they heroically spout their pipe dreams. They deliberately talk in grandiose terms, are indiscreet in their actions, drink excessively, and put on a performance of being weary of the world … they speak of the Seven Wise Ones of the Bamboo Grove … Traces of this [idea] also reached our land, and may be seen in Ōtomo no Tabito's verses praising wine in the *Man'yōshū*. All these things are of this intent and are the height of deceit.[81]

This is very poor reasoning. As I said previously, it is because he does not know that there is a divine teaching against stating everything openly. The verses of Lord Tabito are meant to make things ambiguous through wine and [thereby] diffuse his melancholy. I shall explicate those of the thirteen verses that [Atsutane] transcribes:

---

[79] The account of Sukubikona no kami acting in concert with Ōkuninushi to achieve these things is found in the *Nihon shoki*.

[80] *Shinshū Hirata Atsutane zenshū*, 10:74.

[81] *Shinshū Hirata Atsutane zenshū*, 10:96-97. According to an ancient Chinese legend, Xu You was a hermit famed for his integrity. Hearing that Emperor Yao offered to yield the throne to him, he washed his ears with water containing husks. Chao Fu saw him do that and, saying that such filthy water was unfit even for livestock, led his ox home. The Seven Wise Ones of the Bamboo Grove were hermits of the late Wei period (third century) who often held conversations on lofty matters (*seidan*) as they indulged in wine and became frequent subjects of paintings.

Kashikoshi to mono iu yori wa sake nomite einaki suru shi masaritaru rashi
Rather than make clever statements,
how much better to imbibe and shed sotted tears. [MYS #341]

This verse expresses the indignation that weighed on him when people of that age tried to sound clever to ingratiate themselves with those in power.

Ana miniku sakashira o su to sake nomanu hito o yoku mireba saru ni ka mo niru
How ugly! those who, claiming wisdom, forego wine—
a good look reveals a close resemblance to apes. [MYS #344]

Employing a sense similar to the preceding verse, this equates pretension to wisdom with apishness.

Nakanaka ni hito to arazu wa sakatsubo ni nariniteshi kana sake ni shiminamu
Rather than a half-baked human, would that I could be a jar of wine
and spend my days steeped in it. [MYS #343]

In this verse, upon realizing that not even having achieved [the rank of] an ordinary official, he will be unable to govern as he thinks best and will end his days as a mediocrity, it is better to become a jar of wine and soak in the brew that he so loves. Thinking of the feeling of indignation he poured into this poem, one is moved to tears.

Iwamu sube semu sube shira ni kiwamarite kashikoki mono wa sake ni shi aru rashi
Exceeding all words and deeds—
nothing loftier than wine. [MYS #342]

This is saying that only through intoxication by wine can one forget the bitter anguish of the age, and so there is nothing better. This is a very moving verse.

Inishie no nana no kashikoki hitotachi mo horisuru mono wa sake ni zo arikeru
The Seven Wise Ones of yore—
what they wished for was wine. [MYS #340]

Even as the Seven Wise Ones, finding that the conditions of their age did not concur with their own hearts, shunned the world and sought diversion and intoxication in bamboo groves, Lord Tabito must have composed this verse out of appreciation for their feelings, seeing them as like his own. In criticizing the Seven Wise Ones, Master Hirata also criticized even this verse of Lord Tabito's, which is poor reasoning.

Sake no na o hijiri to ōseshi inishie no ōki hijiri no koto no yoroshisa
Great sages of antiquity called wine a "sage"—
well chosen was that name! [MYS #339][82]

Rather than praise the wine for its flavor, [great sages] referred to it as a sage. Suspicion is aroused in the minds of people when I say that there was a reason why he favored that [name].

Kono yo ni shi tanoshiku araba komu yo ni wa mushi ni tori ni mo
As long as I enjoy myself in this life,

[82] During the early Wei dynasty, to cut expenses Cao Cao (155-220) banned the consumption of liquor. It continued to be consumed secretly under such code names as "the wise one" and "the sage."

no matter if I become an insect or a bird in the next. [MYS #348]

"As long as I enjoy myself" are words born of not enjoying oneself, and it is because of anguish in one's heart that things are not enjoyable. If he could be free from this anguish, then even if he were reborn as an insect or a bird in the next life, he asserts that he would not mind. To speak of the next life is to call to mind the present life, and when one considers this in light of the afore-cited [verse] "Rather than a half-baked human …," [it seems that] he was very angry because it was not worth it to have been born human.

When approaching the poetry of antiquity, if one does not apply one's heart in reading it then it will be impossible to know the sentiments of the ancients. I am not able to recall from memory the other [verses in this sequence], but they are all of this same style. Having no other outlet for his surfeit of distress, these verses were directed to friends who understood his feelings. Now I do not know what sort of thing a "conversation unsullied by mundane concerns" is, but there is no deceit at all in these poems. This Lord [Tabito] was fond of wine, and thus was fortunately able to pour his indignation into his verses, thereby finding consolation.

Speaking openly and without reserve creates apprehension in the listener, and so it is a custom in our divine land not to bare one's thought completely. Ancient poems and ancient language [all] accord with this usage, and it is extremely unconvincing to look down upon or ridicule [this practice]. It is also quite arrogant. Among the many books by this Master [Atsutane], upon perusing his *Shutsujō shogō*,[83] he appears to have read all Buddhist scriptures thoroughly, and in *A Lamentation of Chinese Books* seems to have addressed all Chinese tomes. It is not easy to calculate everything in these two works, and it even appears doubtful [that it could be done]. He has devoted his entire attention to foreign teachings, slighting the things of our land, and appears not even to have given serious thought to the *Man'yōshū*. And yet he is to be commended for his intention in forcefully rejecting foreign teachings.

- Nonoguchi Takamasa posited [his teaching of] the Three Desires and the Three Ways, but what he says therein also seems to combine European learning, and since it cannot be called the divine learning of our land, I shall not comment on it.[84]
- The theory of the hidden and the apparent—of appearance and concealment (*yūken shutsubotsu*)—in Master Tachibana Moribe's exegesis of the Shinto classics is derived from the Preface to the *Kojiki* and [reveals] both his perspicaciousness and discernment, yet it is not something that could be made into a teaching or used for governing.[85] It feels incoherent. Of course, that is because it is the limit of this master's wisdom. Moreover, that which is in the Shinto classics is correctly transmitted narration (*katarigoto*). Omitting this as if it were children's stories is all too sophomoric.[86] This has been very

[83] Also titled *Butsudō taii*, this work written in 1811 is a scathing critique of Buddhism.
[84] Nonoguchi Takamasa (1792-1871, Atsuyoshi transcribes his name as "Noguchi"), also known as Ōkuni Takamasa. His *Sandō san'yoku shōkō zusetsu* (1836) describes three "ways": the way of the gods (*Shintō*), the way of humans (*jindō*), and the way of beasts (*jūdō*), each with its peculiar set of desires (*yoku*).
[85] It is difficult to determine which of Tachibana Moribe's (1781-1849) works Atsuyoshi is referring to. For a treatment of Moribe's theories see Burns, *Before the Nation*, 168-177.
[86] Atsuyoshi appears to be conflating Moribe's *katarikotoba* and his *katarigoto*, the former including "childish words" which were supposedly added for the amusement and instruction of the young and were not part of the original transmission. The latter "refers to the incorporation of figurative language—metaphor, allegory, and rhetorical embellishment—into the narrative." (Burns, 172)

misleading to later scholarship. Even if one is drawn to this, one should be wary. (Master Hirata's theory positing Tsukuyomi no Mikoto and Susanoo no Mikoto as national deities as well as his having created *The True Text of the Ancient History* (*Koshi seibun*) could also be called this kind [of reasoning].)

- Last year, Fukuda Mitate came to this area and presumed [to represent] the theories of his teacher Fujitani. In expounding the Shinto classics, he spoke only of the hidden and the apparent (*yūken*): of the apparent within the hidden, the hidden within the apparent, of the hidden within the hidden, of the apparent within the apparent, and so forth. There is no way such lofty matters could be considered a teaching. This was of course not the theories of the Fujitani school, but rather appears to be something Fukuda became immersed in after Master Mitsue's passing. (Master Mitsue was my teacher, and I preserve his exegesis of the Shinto classics. It is very different [from Mitate's]. [Mitsue's teachings] seem not to have been preserved in the capital.)[87]
- Master Fujitani Mitsue defines Shinto as the order in which the deities were born at the time of the genesis of Heaven and Earth as told in the Shinto classics. His theory is one that the ancients did not enunciate, but he establishes a "way" not relying on Confucianism or Buddhism. It is a very excellent and provocative theory, but it relies on his own personal strengths, and it is impossible to take it as a teaching to apply to all things generally. On the other hand, there are other sections that could be called a divine teaching for our land. One of those that is particularly felicitous is where, commenting on the place in the *Kogo shūi* that says "Making stout the pillars of the august abode upon the nethermost rock-bottom and raising the cross-beams of the roof to the Plain of High Heaven," [Mitsue] maintains that [the pillars] penetrate Heaven and Earth, and that they unite Heaven and Earth.[88] Also, on the theory of not baring one's thoughts completely he cited as proof Emperor Jinmu's use of poetry and indirect language (*fūka tōgo*) in the *Nihon shoki*, though no one had been aware that this referred to the manner of selecting diction. This is an excellent and felicitous thing.
- In the debate between Master Izumi Wamaro and Master Taira no Harumi,[89] the claim was made that the true way exists in our land, and that the Chinese could only wish to attain it. This is a very compelling theory, but it begs the question whether our land has such-and-such a teaching. Moreover, it seems to follow Master Motoori's theories.
- There are also those who are devoted exclusively to poetry and letters. It sounds like a way of teaching when they assert their sincerity, but [their sincerity] is only a matter of poetry composition, which in turn really has nothing to do with the actual or the fictional in poetry, so it is just a plaything. There is no need to join in this discussion.
- Then there are also those who see it as their only task to search through ancient diction or verify famous sites and old ruins. This, too, is a good thing, but has nothing to do with the present discussion.

[87] Fukuda Mitate (1789-1850), a student of Fujitani Mitsue, was a poet and *kokugakusha*. See Suga Shūji, *Fujitani Mitsue no monjin-tachi* (Kyoto: Rinsen Shoten, 2001), 29-42.

[88] *Kogo shūi*, written in 807 by Inbe Hironari, is a commentary on the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki*.

[89] Wamaro, better known as Izumi Makuni (1765?-1805), was a student of Norinaga. Harumi is of course Murata Harumi (1746-1811). Their debate is recorded in *Meidōsho*. See *Meidōsho*, in *Kokugaku undō no shisō*, ed. Haga Noboru and Matsumoto Sannosuke, Nihon shisō taikei 51 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1971), 125-219.

- There is the *Mizuho no tsutae*, which is devoted exclusively to explaining water and fire.[90] Within it there are good theories, but it is completely wrong in what it says about *kotodama*.
- Anciently there were things called "transmissions of the syllabary," and Master Keichū also wrote one.[91] In their explication of the meanings of each individual syllable they appear to have some semblance to *kotodama*, but since they do not have their basis in the principles of Heaven and Earth, they are greatly mistaken.

In addition to those mentioned above there are surely others who have spoken of a "Way of our land," but my familiarity [with them] is limited, and so I should not comment on any other than those treated above.

Before proceeding with a general overview of the divine teaching of *kotodama* I should bring together here the things I have mentioned. That divine teaching instructs [us] to follow the principles of Heaven and Earth. Those principles of Heaven and Earth are none other than the way of the gods. Those things which narrate and transmit the way of the gods are the Shinto classics, and it is the True Mirror (*Masukagami*) that teaches them.[92]

The True Mirror is what is known in the world as the fifty syllables, with the addition of twenty voiced sounds and five voiceless labial sounds for a total of seventy-five syllables. Where the fifty syllables are arranged [in the order of] A-I-U-E-O, [the True Mirror] arranges them horizontally [in the order] A-O-U-E-I. The five syllables have the same sound (*on*) and rhyme (*in*), and are distinct from other syllables. They are [further] arranged in order according to the height of their pitch: *A* is low, while *I* is high. These five syllables constitute the rhyme for all of the other syllables. Also, where the fifty syllables are [arranged in the order] A-KA-SA-TA-NA-HA-MA-YA-RA-WA, [the True Mirror] arranges them vertically [in the order] KA-GA-DA-TA-RA-NA-HA-SA-ZA-PA-BA-MA-YA-WA-A. Five rows of syllables are [divided successively according to] columns of three to form [groups of] fifteen syllables, one group [including] "velar 牙," "lingual 舌," "dental 歯," labial 唇," and "guttural 喉."[93] Within this group of one row of five and five columns of three, the syllables [are arranged vertically] according to the height of pitch, [and the groups combine to make] seventy-five syllables. [Within each group] the upper [syllables] are high in pitch while the lower ones and low in pitch. The columns of three within each group divide the five sounds of velar, lingual, dental, labial, and guttural according to "light," "medium," and "heavy," with light appearing in the upper row and heavy in the lower. Rhyme is also arranged horizontally: guttural = A, labial = O, dental = U, lingual = E, and velar = I. The warp and woof [thus] combine to yield the seventy-five syllables (there is a tradition that does not use the rhyme *A* in this combination).

This is called the True Mirror. All things between Heaven and Earth reside within this one mirror. Each syllable possesses a spirit, and this is called word spirit. This is what I

[90] *Mizuho no tsutae*, by Yamaguchi Shidō (1765-1842), advances a theory of *kotodama* applying principles of divination.

[91] Keichū's work in question is undoubtedly his *Waji shoran shō*.

[92] It becomes clear from what follows that Atsuyoshi is describing the same *Masukagami* that appears in Nakamura Takamichi's *Kotodama kikigaki*. See the link to the illustration in n34.

[93] This classification (*wu yin* 五音) was used in traditional Chinese phonology, and beginning with the Heian period was applied to Japanese phonetics.

mentioned previously as "a land which does not use direct expression," "a land aided by word spirit," "a land blessed [by word spirit]." *Kotoage* refers to saying completely and without mediation the thoughts of one's heart. When one does so, there is no blessing of word spirit and no aid from the gods; rather, one will encounter eeriness. Therefore, if one does not use direct expression and bare all thoughts but instead utters only seventy or eighty percent of them, then one will have the blessing of word spirit and the aid of the gods, and one's thoughts will penetrate the heart of the listener. This is the wondrous thing about use of words in our land. (I have explained this in detail in *Yutsu tsumagushi*.) We should not be careless about this: the *mikoto* (命) that is used in naming deities is actually "divine word" (*mi-koto* 御言). (Using the character 命 makes it the same as the "command" of a ruler.)

Now the Shinto classics are about the syllables [of speech], and the syllables are in turn about Heaven and Earth. The details defy description.

Regarding following the gods, as I said previously, the two syllables KA-MI (god) are the application of Heaven and Earth, and since the way of the gods is none other than the way of Heaven and Earth, if one follows this way, adding nothing private but proceeding on it as it is, then that is called "following the will of the gods." This is what is meant in the *Kogo [shūi]* where it says that the emperor is a "god in human form" (*akitsu mi-kami*) who rules according to the will of the gods. Also, as Prince Toneri personally notes in the *Nihon shoki*, "according to the will of the gods" is an example of [what is meant by saying that] if you follow the way of the gods then you yourself become the way of the gods.[94]

If one interprets the two syllables A-ME (heaven) by means of word spirit, A means "appearing" (*arawarederu*), while ME is the syllable that enlivens things at the beginning. This tells us that Heaven is the parent of all things. There is an even deeper meaning; the "benevolence" (*jin*, C. *ren*) that one sees in Chinese sources refers to knowing as regarding what is usual as the will of Heaven.

That being the case, the volume "Age of the Gods" [in the *Nihon shoki*] teaches us about the generative force (*musubi*) of Heaven and Earth that is before our eyes now, and its teachings are invested in the True Mirror of the seventy-five syllables. It is a most precious and marvelous thing.

Now among words there are three kinds: nouns (*na*), predicates (*koto*), and particles (*musubi*). Nouns are such things as "mountain," "river," "pine," or "plum." Predicates include verbs that conjugate such as "think," adjectives that conjugate such as "hot," and transitive/intransitive pairs such as "to cool/awake" (*samuru*) / "to cool/awake" (*sameru*). (The conjugations of these three types of predicates cannot be treated exhaustively [here].) The particles are *te*, *ni*, *o*, *ha*, and they unite nouns and predicates. This can be generally understood through such [examples] as "draw water" (*mizu [na] o [musubi] kumu [uchikoto]*)," "fire is hot (*hi [na] wa [musubi] atsushi [sotokoto]*)," or "the pines flourish (*matsu [na] wa [musubi] sakayuru [uchikoto]*)." In like manner, just as by means of noun, predicate, and particle people of the world—both noble and base—make distinctions among everyday things [of life], it is the

[94] Prince Toneri (676-735), the son of Emperor Tenmu, was one of the compilers of the *Nihon shoki*.

same as practicing the way of the gods by means of uniting Heaven and Earth. Thus, spirit resides in words, and they are living things. It is a wondrous thing; what each of us says today is endowed [with this], and is blessed and aided by word spirit, but people are unaware of it.

Regarding particles, Master Motoori explained their correct usage in his *Kotoba no tama no o*, but he said nothing about differences in feeling. For example, he explained only that [a sentence beginning with] *yuki wa* ("snow") should end with *furikeri* ("falls") and [one beginning with] *yuki zo* should end with *furikeru*, but he does not mention that there is an affective difference between *wa … keri* and *zo … keru*. Through word spirit, if one syllable changes then there is a difference in feeling; by the word spirit of that syllable, it becomes something like reading a palm. Of course, the purpose of the particles is to convey that feeling, and so …[95] If one is ignorant of this divine teaching of word spirit, then even if one reads ancient poetry and prose, it will be impossible to perceive the feeling therein. It will not even be possible to distinguish one's own feelings in the verses one composes.

And so I should like to record [all of this] to convey it to future generations, but the written word is a dead thing. The voice is a living thing. A teaching of word spirit is established orally, and thus if one records it, it is impossible to exhaust its nuances. Therefore, I shall conclude with just this much.

Under the full moon of a previous year when the Master came, he conveyed this to several hundred people, but now no one remains who speaks of it. If by chance people hear of it, they only ridicule and do not seem to make use of it. Since it is explained orally, there are those who think it careless that O-WO, E-WE, and I-WI are pronounced the same, but I shall now explain in passing how this carelessness came about. It was during the Heian period that *kana* usage fell into disorder, and such works as *Kogentei*[96] have brought to light the errors in ancient books, and so now there seem to be those who suppose that the sounds based on the *kana* are incorrect. But such is not the case. For example, even if one writes WO-TO-ME (maiden) as O-TO-ME, the sound of the O is the same WO as from ancient times. The error lies only in the *kana*. Of course, [the difference between] O and WO is only a matter of the height of the pitch (*chōshi*); the sound is the same. It is not only sounds represented by two *kana*—such as O-WO, E-WE, and I-WI—that have [difference in] height of pitch; there are countless examples of difference in pitch where a sound is represented by the same single *kana*. For example, the KA of *kanashi*, of *kazasu*, and of *okashi* are all completely different in pitch. The E and I of the A-line and the E and I of the YA-line are different in pitch but use the same *kana*. It is not careless to make no distinction in saying O and WO, because it is the sound that is of main importance. Note well the distinction.

Though I am but a minor provincial, Heaven and Earth have their rules and I am not afraid to set those alongside the theories of acclaimed scholars and call out their errors. Do not think that these are nothing more than my private views.

Eighteenth of the second month, Ansei 7 (1860)

[95] There appears to be something missing from the manuscript here. In the Yoshida ms., a phrase reads: "Merely observing the rules results in something even more lifeless. Therefore …"
[96] A dictionary of *kana* usage by the Edo scholar Katori Nahiko (1723-1782).

In the sixth month (*minazuki*) of Meiji 4 (1871), I complete this transcription

Madoitsutsu Nago no urabe ni tadorikite ima zo namima no tama hiroitsuru
Lost and wandering, I make my way to Nago's shore—
finding gems among the lapping waves.[97]
Yoshihisa

[97] Nago no ura, in present-day Imizu City of Toyama Prefecture.