subjects, the stars. If the subjects as stars protect the sun and moon, they will not hide it, as is now the case. Just as the sun, moon, and stars have always been in Heaven, so our imperial sun and moon—and the stars his vassals—have existed without change from ancient days and have ruled the world fairly. However, some knaves appeared, and as a result the emperor is diminished in power, and his subjects, too, have fallen off. The Age of the Gods is where we may gain a knowledge of this. To discover it, we should carefully examine the words and thoughts in the ancient poetry and thereby see clearly into the oldest writings.

[*Sekai daishisō zenshū*, vol. 54, pp. 2–10; Dumoulin, "Kamo Mabuchi"]

MOTOORI NORINAGA

PRECIOUS COMB-BOX (TAMAKUSHIGE)

The following excerpt is from Motoori Norinaga's *Precious Comb-box* of 1786, whose contents are meant to "comb" out the snarls of intellectual confusion. In it, Norinaga upholds the traditional account of the divine creation in all its unembellished simplicity while rejecting the rationalistic cosmogony of the Chinese. The Sun Goddess Amaterasu is represented as a universal as well as a national deity, one who has shown special favor to the Japanese and is guiding them to a special destiny.

The True Way is one and the same, in every country and throughout Heaven-and-earth. This way, however, has been correctly transmitted only in our imperial land. Its transmission in all foreign countries was lost long ago in early antiquity, and many and varied Ways have been expounded, each country representing its own way as the Right Way. But the Ways of foreign countries are no more the original Right Way than the end branches of a tree are the same as its root. They may have resemblances here and there to the Right Way, but because the original truth has been corrupted with the passage of time, they can scarcely be likened to the original Right Way. Let me state briefly what that original Way is. One must understand, first of all, the universal principle of the world. The principle is that Heaven-and-earth, all the gods and all phenomena, were brought into existence by the creative spirits of two deities—Takami-musubi and Kami-musubi. The birth of all humankind in all ages and the existence of all things and all matter have been the result of that creative spirit. It was the original creativity of these two august deities that caused the deities Izanagi and Izanami to create the land, all kinds of phenomena, and numerous gods and goddesses at the beginning of the Divine Age. This spirit of creativity [*musubi*, literally "union"] is a miraculously divine act, the reason for which is beyond the comprehension of the human intellect.

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

In deep sorrow at the passing of his goddess, Izanagi journeyed after her to the land of death. Upon his return to the upper world, he bathed himself at Awagihara in Tachibana Bay in Tsukushi in order to purify himself of the pollution of the land of death, and while thus washing himself, he gave birth to the Heaven-Shining Goddess who, by the explicit command of her father-god, came to rule the Heavenly Plain for all time to come. This Heaven-Shining Goddess is none other than the sun in heaven that today casts its gracious light over the world. Then, an imperial prince of the Heaven-Shining Goddess was sent down from heaven to the middle kingdom of Ashihara. The goddess's mandate to the prince at that time stated that his dynasty should be coeval with Heaven-and-earth. It is this mandate that is the very origin and basis of the Way. Thus, all the principles and the Way of humankind are represented in the different stages of the Divine Age. Those who seek to know the Right Way must therefore pay careful attention to the stages of the Divine Age and learn the truths of existence. These aspects of the various stages are embodied in the ancient traditions of the Divine Age. No one knows with whom these ancient traditions began, but they were handed down orally from the very earliest times, and they refer to the accounts that have since been recorded in the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki*. The accounts recorded in these two scriptures are clear and explicit and present no cause for doubt. Those who have interpreted these scriptures in a later age have contrived oracular formulas and have expounded theories that have no real basis. Some have become addicts of foreign doctrines and have no faith in the wonders of the Divine Age. Unable to understand that the truths of the world are contained in the evolution of the Divine Age, they fail to ascertain the true meaning of our ancient tradition. Because they base their judgment on the strength of foreign beliefs, they always interpret at their own discretion and twist to their own liking anything they encounter that may not be in accord with their alien teachings. Thus, they say that the High Heavenly Plain refers to the imperial capital and not to Heaven and that the Sun Goddess herself was not a goddess or the sun shining in the heavens but an earthly person and the forebear of the nation. These are arbitrary interpretations purposely contrived to flatter foreign ideologies. In this way, the ancient tradition is made to appear narrow and petty by depriving it of its comprehensive and primal character. This is counter to the meaning of the scriptures.

Heaven and earth are one; there is no barrier between them. The High Heavenly Plain is the high heavenly plain that covers all the countries of the world, and the Sun Goddess is the goddess who reigns in that heaven. Thus,

she is without a peer in the whole universe, casting her light to the very ends of Heaven-and-earth and for all time. There is not a single country in the whole world that does not receive her beneficent illuminations, and no country can exist for even a day or an hour without her grace. This goddess is the splendor of all splendors. Foreign countries, however, having lost the ancient tradition of the Divine Age, do not know the meaning of revering this goddess. Only through the speculations of the human intelligence have they come to call the sun and the moon the spirit of yang and yin. In China and other countries, the "Heavenly Emperor" is worshiped as the supreme divinity. Other countries have objects of reverence, each according to its own way, but some of their teachings are based on the logic of inference and some on arbitrary personal opinions. At any rate, they are merely manmade designations, and the "Heavenly Ruler" or the "Heavenly Way" has no real existence at all. That foreign countries revere such nonexistent beings and remain unaware of the grace of the Sun Goddess is a matter of profound regret. But because of the special dispensation of our imperial land, the ancient tradition of the Divine Age has been correctly and clearly transmitted in our country, telling us about the genesis of the great goddess and the reason for her adoration. The "special dispensation of our imperial land" means that ours is the native land of the Heaven-Shining Goddess who casts her light over all countries in the four seas. Thus our country is the source and fountainhead of all other countries, and in all matters it excels all the others. It would be impossible to list all the products in which our country excels, but foremost among them is rice, which sustains the life of man, to whom there is no product more important. Our country's rice has no peer in foreign countries, which is why our other products are also superior. Those who were born in this country have long been accustomed to our rice and take it for granted, unaware of its excellence. They can enjoy such excellent rice morning and night to their heart's content because they have been fortunate enough to be born in this country.

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

[*Motoori Norinaga zenshū*, vol. 6, pp. 3–6; PN]

"FIRST STEPS INTO THE MOUNTAINS" (UIYAMABUMI)

"First Steps into the Mountains," an essay written in 1798, represents the fullest statement of Norinaga's taxonomy of learning. Ever the precisian, he distinguishes among different academic traditions and expounds the advantages of Japanese studies. His disclaimer that "any methodology is acceptable" notwithstanding, Norinaga explains how one might resurrect the true Way of the Gods (*kami*).

In life, there are many routes to pursue learning, not just one. Among these routes is, first, the diligent study of the Way, based on the book on the Age of the Gods in the *Nihon shoki*. This is called the Learning of the Gods, and a student of this is called a scholar of the Way of the Gods. Then there is learning whose object of study is government offices, ceremonies, and legal codes. Yet another area of learning deals with ancient customs, costumes, and accoutrements. These last two are called the Study of Classical Procedures.

There is also an approach that is not based on any particular set path; it studies the records starting with the Six National Histories and other ancient writings, including the later records. There are further divisions in this approach.

Another is the study of poetry, which has two methods. Some people compose only poems, while others study the ancient poetry collections and tales.

These are the kinds of learning, and each student learns according to his preferred way. The method of learning also varies according to the intentions of the teacher and his students.

A person who is determined to learn and begins to study has a preferred route from the beginning. Some choose the methodology by themselves, while others have no preconceived way of learning or understanding in this matter. They approach a learned teacher and ask, "Which Way should I take?" or "Which book should a novice read first?" This is common and understandable.

You should begin studying your discipline in an orthodox manner, adopting a correct attitude; in this way you will not later deviate into erratic and improper directions. In addition, your learning will bear fruit sooner if the most effective methods are clearly outlined from the beginning. This is the most desirable way to approach scholarship.

Even when the energy expended is constant, there are advantages and disadvantages depending on the path and the methodology followed. But as for the choice of learning, a teacher should not force something onto a student; the choice should be left to the student's interests. No matter how much a novice he may be, a person who is determined to pursue scholarship is not entirely like an infant in regard to his intellect. There is invariably a route in which he is interested and which accords with his ability. He likes some direc-

tions and is uninterested in others. Furthermore, people are gifted by birth in some things and not in others. Success is seldom achieved in something that you do not like or are not gifted in, no matter how much effort you may put into it.

In any kind of study, it is easy enough to teach a method based on a set of superficial reasons, with the teacher instructing the pupil to follow this path or that. There is no way of knowing, however, whether the adopted method is indeed good or whether against all expectations it may turn out to be unhelpful. So the method should not be forced onto a student; the choice should be left entirely to his preference. In essence, the most important and fundamental requirement is that learning be pursued for many years, sparing no effort, without ever becoming boring or fatiguing.

In this respect, any methodology is acceptable, and it should not be a matter of great concern. Yet, however excellent your method of study, you will not be successful if you are lazy and make no effort. . . .

There are many types of foreign studies, starting with Confucianism, Buddhism, and so on, but since they are foreign to us, they need not be discussed here. I prefer to expend my efforts on studies of my country, rather than waste it on matters pertaining to foreign countries. Leaving aside for the moment the question of which is superior, is it not regrettable that some people study foreign things and remain ignorant of the matters of their own country?

What is the main principle of study that one should rely on? It is the study of the Way. This Way is the Way of the Sun Goddess. It is the Way in which the emperor governs his realm. It is the true Way that permeates all nations within the four seas and is transmitted exclusively in our imperial land.

The True Way of the Gods is totally different, dissociated from the teachings of Confucianism, Buddhism, or any other doctrine, having nothing whatsoever in common with them.

Since in recent years all the scholars studying the Way of the Gods are as I have described, they resemble the scholars of the Song school of Chinese studies. Displaying not the least discernment, they seek the Way with single-minded commitment. But fettered by their exclusive reliance on Chinese-style logic, they do not realize that they search for the spirit of ancient times. Their viewpoint is completely Confucian, so the more they progress in their studies, the further they depart from the meaning of the Way.

As a rule, the ceremonies of the Way of the Gods as performed by those who advocate relying on Buddhism are imitations of Buddhist ritual; the ceremonies are just inventions and are by no means the genuine ancient practices of our imperial land.

Confucian scholars of the Way of the Gods in recent years perform ceremonies such as funerals, memorial services, festivities, and other unorthodox rites. They claim that these, different from ordinary secular ceremonies, are the ceremonies of the Way of the Gods. In truth, they are not the ancient ceremonies, for they are mixed with Confucian ideas, and many features have been invented.

In all matters, Chinese ways were preferred in the past, and changes were made according to Chinese systems. As a result, the ceremonies of remote antiquity disappeared and were not transmitted to the present age. Lamentably, it has become impossible to know their details exactly. Perhaps in rural areas there still remain vestiges of the ceremonies of antiquity, but even these may well be tainted with Buddhist customs, for they are seldom transmitted in their original form.

The Way is enacted by the ruler. It is bestowed on subjects from above, so subjects should not privately interpret and carry it out. In the present age when the scholars of the Way of the Gods perform unorthodox ceremonies, claiming them to be in accordance with the Way, such ceremonies are mere private acts, even though they seem to conform with customs of remote antiquity.

This is the just and public Way with which the emperor governs the world. It is therefore repulsive and sad when people turn it into their private, individual possession, changing it into something narrow and small. Performing unsound rituals like shamans, they call this the Way of the Gods. As far as subjects were concerned, the purpose of the ancient Way was for them to obey and behave in accordance with the laws of the government of the time, regardless of whether the laws were good or bad.

[Adapted from Nishimura, "First Steps into the Mountains," pp. 449–55]

LOVE AND POETRY

PERSONAL VIEWS OF POETRY (ISONOKAMI SASAMEGOTO)

In this piece, *Personal Views of Poetry* of 1763, Norinaga acclaims Japanese poetry for its spontaneous expression of the deepest human emotions and justifies its defiance of Confucian canons of emotional restraint. Characteristically, Norinaga recognizes the worth of all Japanese poetry in this regard, whereas his teacher Kamo no Mabuchi singled out the *Man'yōshū*.

QUESTION: Why are there so many love poems in the world?

ANSWER: The oldest love poems are found in the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki*, but the dynastic anthologies are particularly conspicuous for the great number of love poems that they contain. The *Man'yōshū* has sections . . . devoted entirely to love poems. . . . Even in the Chinese *Classic of Odes*, love songs are prominent. Why is this so? It is because

love, more than any other emotion, stirs the human heart deeply and demands an outlet in poetry. It is to love poems that we must look for lines that profoundly express human emotions.

QUESTION: Generally speaking, man seems to be constantly concerned not so much with love but, rather, with personal success and the acquisition of wealth, in which he appears to be completely and unreasonably absorbed. Why is it that there are no poems expressing these sentiments?

ANSWER: There is a distinction between emotion and passion. All the varied feelings of the human heart are emotions, but those among them seeking something in one way or another are passions. These two are inseparable, for passions are generally a kind of emotion. Only such feelings as sympathy for others, sadness, sorrow, and regret are specifically called emotions. But poetry comes only from emotion. This is because emotion is more sensitive to things and more deeply compassionate. Passion is absorbed only in the acquisition of things; it does not move someone deeply or intimately. Thus, it has no capacity for tears at the sight of flowers or the song of birds. The desire to acquire wealth is an example of passion. It is so alien to the awareness of the sorrow of existence that there can be no outpouring of poetry from it. Although love has its origin in passion, it is a deep emotion that no living thing can avoid. And because man is most highly capable of understanding the meaning of the sorrow of existence, it is he who is most deeply moved—sometimes unbearably—by the sentiment of love. Outside love in which there is awareness of the sorrow of existence, there is poetry. And whereas it became the practice in later times to suppress emotion—for emotion was regarded as less profound than passion, a sign of a faint heart, and therefore a shameful thing—poetry alone retained the spirit of antiquity and continued to express truthfully and without adornment the real sentiments of the human heart. Nor has poetry felt constrained to apologize for femininity or faintheartedness. In later times, in order to enhance the charm of poetry, poets have emphasized awareness of the sorrow of existence and have turned against themes of passion. Passion is not a fit subject for poetry. Thus, poems like those in praise of wine found in the third volume of the *Man'yōshū* and so common in Chinese poetry are unappealing, if not odious. They evoke no affection and hold no attraction, because passion is regarded as tainted and not conducive to fine sentiment. Why is it that in other countries [meaning China] the feeling of emotion is regarded as something shameful, and base passion is regarded as something admirable?

QUESTION: The Chinese work, the *Record of Rites*, states that love is the cardinal passion of man. Conjugal sentiment is deep, for it is the feeling of husband for wife and wife for husband, and this is as it should be. But love in poetry is not always confined to love between man and wife. A man in the privacy of his own room yearns for the woman who is not acceptable to his parents; another, in the intimacy of the bedchamber, gives his love to a woman betrothed to another. Such conduct is licentious and wicked; yet it is regarded as an exquisite example of love.

ANSWER: It was stated above that the human is susceptible to love—no one can avoid it. Once involved in and disturbed by it, the wise and foolish alike frequently behave illogically in spite of themselves, and they end by losing control of the country[18] and ruining their bodies and their reputations. That has been the case in countless instances in the past, and it is so in the present. And this happens even though everyone fully realizes that such behavior is evil and that one must guard against becoming wildly infatuated. But not all men are sages. Not only in love but also in their daily thought and conduct, the good does not always prevail; in fact, the bad often does. Of all the things in life, love is most difficult to suppress, despite every effort to control it. And even realizing that conduct contrary to the dictates of his own mind is evil, man is helpless to control it; of this there are numerous instances. Inside the heart, unnoticed by others, there may be a fancy for someone else, even though outwardly one appears quite sober and admonishes others to beware of love. If one searches the bottom of one's heart, it is impossible not to find love there, especially the type of love forbidden by man. And try as one might to suppress it, there will be only melancholy and bewilderment in one's heart. Because love is thus unreasonable, the love poems issued on such occasions are especially touching. It is also natural that many love poems suggest impropriety and licentiousness. Be that as it may, poetry follows the principle of the sorrow of existence and attempts to express without adornment the bad as well as the good. Its aim is not to select and arrange for the heart what is good or bad. To advise against and check evil is the duty of those who govern the country and teach the people. While unruly love should be strongly cautioned against, it is not the responsibility of poetry to teach such discipline. The aim of poetry is different: it aims to express an awareness of the poignancy of human life and should not be judged on any other basis. This is not to say that poetry applauds evil conduct or implies that it is good. It means only that poems, as a medium for expressing emotion, are admirable.

18. It is characteristic of Confucian teaching, which is addressed initially to the ruling class, that it is most concerned with the political consequences of moral failings.

All forms of literature, including the novel, should be seen and appreciated in this light and an attempt made to grasp the spirit of their purpose. For further reference I have dwelled on this point separately and at greater length in my study of *The Tale of Genji*, which includes quotations from every chapter and explanatory notes. From this tale one can understand the spirit of poetry.

QUESTION: Chinese poetry and other forms of Chinese literature are rarely devoted to accounts of love, but our literature abounds in them, including many instances of licentious behavior involving high and low alike. Yet no one condemns this as evil. Is it because there is a taste for the frivolous and the voluptuous in our national character?

ANSWER: Man's predilection for love is the same now as it has been in the past, and it is the same here as it is elsewhere. An examination of Chinese historical accounts indicates that country has had more than its share of licentiousness affairs. The Chinese, however, customarily subject all things to long, tedious moralistic judgments. In particular, love affairs have been judged by would-be scholars as contemptible and despicable. Chinese poetry, likewise, has been subjected to this same national tendency; it has a taste for only the heroic, manly spirit and speaks not of the effeminate sentiments and sinful aspects of love, which it regards as shameful. This aspect of Chinese poetry is only its edited, ornamented, and outward appearance and not the true revelation of the human heart. But in a later age the readers of such poetry have accepted it without serious study as expressive of the true situation. It is ridiculous to believe on this basis that the people of that country are less susceptible to the temptations of love than are the people of other countries.

In general our countrymen are generous and not particularly discerning or critical. They have not engaged in painstaking and persistent disputations on the good or the bad in men. Instead they have transmitted in speech and in writing things as they were without adornment. This is particularly true of our poetry and our novels, which have as their aim the expression of a sensitivity to human existence; they are calm, straightforward revelations of the varied feelings of men in love.

Again, our national histories written according to Chinese models show no special distinction from their Chinese prototypes. It is a mistake to ignore these national histories and to fail to discern what is so clearly written in them, just as in their Chinese prototypes or to judge the Japanese solely on the basis of their poetry and novels as being especially susceptible to the temptations. Even the *History of the Wei* (*Wei zhi*), a Chinese history that may not be wholly reliable on all matters, says that the Japanese are not sexually licentious. Not only in

love but in all other things as well, there have been many scoundrels in China. The Chinese persistently warn against evil; yet there are many evil men there because the country is bad. In our country, conversely, man's conduct has neither been excessively praised nor excessively decried; it has been dealt with calmly and straightforwardly. Thus, we do not make much of evil men in our country. And this is because our country is the land of the gods.

[*Motoori Norinaga zenshū*, vol. 6, pp. 524–29; PN]

POETRY AND MONO NO AWARE

A LITTLE BOAT BREAKING A PATH THROUGH THE REEDS (ASHIWAKE OBUNE)

Motoori's first published work, *A Little Boat Breaking a Path Through the Reeds*, is an honest attempt to confront the problems of composing poetry and not, like so many similar books, a mere restatement of platitudes. An encounter with Keichū's writings inspired Motoori to search for the truth about poetry and to make himself into "a little boat breaking a path through the reeds"—that is, resolved to brush aside the encumbrances hindering his boat and sail directly to the heart of poetry.

A Little Boat is written in a question-and-answer form and covers a wide range of topics. Most of its basic ideas remained characteristic of Motoori's later writings on literature. It opens with a statement and question.

The *uta* is a Way for assisting the government of the country. It must not be thought of as a plaything to be toyed with idly. That is why one finds statements to this effect in the preface to the *Anthology of Old and New Japanese Poems* (*Kokinshū*). What do you think of this opinion?

This question reveals a Confucian attitude toward literature and brings to mind the controversy over the eight essays and the statement that uta *(waka poems) are of no help in promoting good government. Although Motoori's answer to the question reveals his familiarity with Arimaro's arguments, he also introduces a distinctive note.*

ANSWER: This is incorrect. The basic function of the *uta* is not to assist in government, nor is it intended to improve the person. It is the outward expression of thoughts in the mind and nothing else. Undoubtedly some poems do help in government, and others serve as a lesson to the people. Some poems also are harmful to the country and do damage to the person. These effects surely depend on the particular poem produced by the mind of a particular person. A poem can be

used for evil or for good; it can be used to express excitement, depression, grief, joy, or any other mood. . . . And moreover, if you wonder why there are so few poems with a didactic message and so many about love, it is because that is the area in which the true nature of poetry is naturally expressed. No emotion is as powerful as love, and it is precisely because every single person wants to be successful in love that there are so many poems on the subject. Few sages in the world are so given to improving themselves and obtaining the good that they think exclusively about didactic matters; that is why there are so few didactic poems.

The key expression in Motoori's aesthetic judgments is mono no aware. *The word* aware *was found in the* Man'yōshū *as an expression of wonder or awe. Motoori defined the word in terms of its original meaning.*

When we speak of knowing *mono no aware*, we refer to the cry of wonder that comes to our lips when our mind is moved by the realization that something we have seen, heard, or touched is *aware*. Even in our common speech today, people say *aa* or *hare*. When they have been impressed by the sight of the moon or the cherry blossoms, they say, "*Aa*, what splendid blossoms!" or "*Hare*, what a lovely moon." *Aware* is the combination of the two cries of *aa* and *hare*.

One is moved because one has recognized *mono no aware*. This means, for example, if something joyous makes us feel happy, it is because we have recognized the joyful nature of the thing. . . .

The true feelings of people are awkward and untidy. Suppose a beloved child dies—surely there would be no difference in the depth of grief of the father and mother. But the father would pretend this was not so, even as the mother, overcome by lamentations, is blinded by her tears. Why should this be the case? The mother, unable to conceal her true feelings, expresses them exactly as they are. The father unavoidably must worry about how he appears in others' eyes, and he will control or suppress his emotions for fear that people will think him softhearted. He will not shed a single tear, nor will he reveal on his face the terrible grief he feels in his heart but will present a picture of noble resignation. The mother's appearance will be unseemly, distraught, and disheveled. But this is what is meant by showing feelings as they actually are. The father's appearance is indeed masculine and severe, and it is admirable that he manages somehow not to appear distraught, but these are not his true feelings. . . . One may see, then, that the real appearance of human emotions is frail, untidy, and foolish. And since poetry is something that describes feelings, it is fitting that it should accord with one's feelings and also be untidy, clumsy, and frail. . . .

When a man who knows *mono no aware* encounters something that is *aware*, he may try not to think about it, but he cannot prevent himself from feeling the *aware*. It is like a man with good hearing who, though he tries not to hear

the thunder, hears it and is afraid. . . . The words that naturally burst forth when the poet is unable to resist *aware* inevitably multiply and become decorated and eventually form themselves into a poem. . . .

A poem is not merely something composed to describe one's feelings when one can no longer bear the *mono no aware*. When one's feelings are extremely deep, one's heart still feels dissatisfied and unresigned, even after having composed a poem. In order to feel comfort, one must read the poem to someone else. If the other person hearing the poem finds it has *aware*, this will greatly comfort the poet. . . . Even though reading one's poem to someone else brings no material advantage to either the listener or the poet, it is quite natural that the poet feels compelled to read it aloud to another person. And since this is the intent of poetry, it is a basic principle and not an accident that poems must be heard by others. Someone who does not understand this might say that a true poem describes one's emotions exactly as they are, whether bad or good, and it has nothing to do with whether or not people hear it. Such an argument sounds plausible, but it betrays ignorance of the true meaning of poetry.

[Adapted from Keene, *Dawn to the West*, pp. 322–26]

GOOD AND EVIL IN THE TALE OF GENJI

THE EXQUISITE COMB
(TAMA NO OGUSHI)

Before Norinaga became involved in the National Learning movement, he devoted himself to studying Japanese literature, and his interpretation provided the basis for much of his later thought. The following selections from *The Exquisite Comb*, a study of Lady Murasaki's *Tale of Genji*, reveal his view of the novel as a record of human experience as we find it, not necessarily as we wish it to be. It is just such a realistic appreciation of the emotional life of man that confirms *The Tale of Genji* as one of the greatest expressions of the Japanese spirit and provides a key to all that is true and best in the Japanese national life.

There have been many interpretations over the years of the purpose of this tale. But all these interpretations have been based not on a consideration of the nature of the novel itself but, rather, on the novel as seen from the point of view of Confucian and Buddhist works, and thus they do not represent the author's true purpose. To seize on an occasional similarity in sentiment or a chance correspondence in ideas with Confucian and Buddhist works, and to generalize about the nature of the tale as a whole, is unwarranted. The general appeal of this tale is very different from that of such didactic works. [p. 472]

Good and evil as found in this tale do not correspond to good and evil as found in Confucian and Buddhist writings. . . . Good and evil extend to all realms. Even for human beings, good and evil are not necessarily limited to