

Intellectual Polarities and the Development of the Norinaga School “Field:” Hirata Atsutane and the Nudenoya, 1823-1834

There were two forms of nativism¹ during the Tokugawa period. The first was literary in orientation. Literary nativists undertook exhaustive and comprehensive studies of Japan’s classical literature, and both poetry and prose works were central to their scholarship. An array of luminary intellects mostly from the eighteenth century made their mark on this form of nativism, including Keichū (1640-1701) and Kamo no Mabuchi (1697-1769). The most famous member of this cohort was Motoori Norinaga (1730-1801). The second incarnation of nativism was radically different from its literary counterpart. These scholars, mostly of the nineteenth century, emphasized the profound role of Shinto in antiquity. The ancient classics had value not only

as literary works, but had religious significance as well. Scholars of this religious form of nativism included Suzuki Shigetane (1812-1863) and Ōkuni Takamasa (1792-1871). The most famous member of this group was Hirata Atsutane (1776-1843).

Of these two strains, literary nativism developed first. Adherents of religious nativism, therefore, had to reconcile their interests with classical literature. Many literary scholars were unmoved by these efforts, and some began to develop notions of intellectual orthodoxy to deal with their piously devoted colleagues. As the first scholar of the religious tradition, Hirata Atsutane was a lightning rod for criticism from the ranks of the literary nativists, most of who tried to uphold the scholarship and teachings of Motoori Norinaga. The presence of Atsutane in the midst of literary scholars, generated a lasting antagonism that defined his career despite his claimed discipleship under Norinaga. As a resident of Edo, he continued his religious scholarship while his enemies, residing mostly in the Kansai area, denounced and refuted him. The confrontation between the two sides, however, began to lose its vitality by 1820. When Atsutane departed on a tour of Kansai in 1823, the debate exploded. Atsutane now had the opportunity to meet his detractors face to face.

His journey to Kyoto created a furious controversy among Norinaga’s disciples (Norinaga himself had died in 1801). The letters that they wrote to one another about his presence provide valuable insight into the precise nature of their reservations about his scholarship. At the same time, Atsutane recorded his own reflections that summarized how he saw himself and his scholarship within the context of their refutations. His journey, and the lingering debate that surrounded it, revealed the extent to which distinct intellectual positions had formed among the ranks of Norinaga’s disciples. Of particular importance were the two positions that had come to represent their ideological poles. One of these stood for Atsutane and his religious scholarship. The other, represented by a Kyoto academy called the Nudenoya, had a membership who held uncompromising literary views. The tensions between these two sides gave the ranks of

¹Defining the precise meanings of either “nativism” or *kokugaku* is a difficult task. For this paper, I will treat them as equivalent and use the term “nativism.” The issue of terminology, however, is an important one and deserves a fuller treatment. Maruyama Masao understood this very well. He observed that scholars could approach *kokugaku* in either of two ways: historically, in which case the issue of identifying a founder would be important; or, categorically, in which case scholars could view *kokugaku* as a movement (Maruyama chose the latter). Maruyama Masao, *Studies in the Intellectual History of Tokugawa Japan*, translated by Mikiso Hane (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), p. 143. I have argued elsewhere that Hirata Atsutane understood this issue as well. Atsutane was the first Tokugawa scholar to emphasize *kokugaku* as an historical phenomenon, and he tightened the intellectual rules of inclusion to exclude scholars who clearly belonged in *kokugaku* according to the categorical definition. My use of “nativism” will refer to the latter definition of *kokugaku*.

Norinaga discipled a kind of energy and dynamism that they lacked previously, and these conflicts transformed their collective intellectual and institutional identity.

The Suzunoya and the Norinaga School

Motoori Norinaga led discussions of the major works of classical literature at his home in Matsusaka. Over the course of the latter half of the eighteenth century, the number of students who attended these meetings grew; as was the custom during the Tokugawa period, he kept registers of his officially enrolled students (called *monjin*), and his nativist academy was born. Norinaga usually delivered his lectures from the second-floor study where he displayed his collection of bells; over time, his students referred to it as the Suzunoya or “hall of bells,” and the name came to signify his academy as well.

The study of ancient verse was, not surprisingly, a cornerstone of the Suzunoya’s curriculum.² In this way, Norinaga followed the lead of his famous predecessor, Kamo no Mabuchi, who had devoted his career primarily to the study of the *Man’yōshū*. He parted ways with Mabuchi, however, in one significant way; whereas Mabuchi had privileged the *Man’yōshū* over all other classical works, Norinaga believed that other poetic anthologies had aesthetic merit as well. In addition, he asserted that classical prose works, such as histories and narrative tales, were important as well. He did not want scholars to limit themselves only to investigations of ancient verse.

[I]f one studies antiquity and composes verse without narrative tales, one would think that their verse duplicated the feelings of the ancients. This is not the case. As I have said before, reading only

verse [in order to] understand the feelings of antiquity is trivial.³

He believed that the Japanese cultural essence, which he called the ancient Way, was lived and practiced by the ancients before the importation of foreign forms of knowledge, especially Buddhism and Confucianism. They left their wisdom regarding the ancient Way in the Japanese classics. An exclusive focus on verse, therefore, failed to reveal the ancient Way in its entirety.

Norinaga left one important teaching for his students to follow after his death. It was an admonition not to simply replicate his scholarship and his philological conclusions. He told his students not to be afraid to correct his conclusions if they were mistaken and based on flawed evidence. It would be far worse, he told them, if they continued to perpetuate his mistakes because a correct understanding of the ancient Way would suffer.

Students who will try to follow my teachings, after I am gone, should scrutinize my interpretations, pronounce my failings, and propagate [their own] good views. All that I have taught my students has been to explicate the Way. Thus, in their attempt to do this, they use [my teachings]. Revering me, without thinking of the Way, is not what I had in mind.⁴

Norinaga emphasized this lesson perhaps because he knew that his disciples would find it difficult to follow. It was an issue in his thoughts when he designated his daughter’s husband, Inagake Shigeo, as his legal heir; Shigeo took the

²For one of the few sources on the Suzunoya in English, see Richard Rubinger, *Private Academies of Tokugawa Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), especially pp. 159-173.

³Motoori Norinaga, *Shibun yōryō*, *Motoori Norinaga shū* (Shinchōsha, 1983), p. 223. [All places of publication in Japan are Tokyo, unless otherwise noted.]

⁴Motoori Norinaga, *Tamakatsuma*, *Nihon shisō taikai* [hereafter NST] vol. 40 (Iwanami Shoten, 1978), p. 73.

name Motoori Ōhira (1756-1833). Ōhira became the steward of the Motoori family's affairs upon Norinaga's death. He resided in Matsusaka as his heir until 1809, when the daimyo of Kii-Wakayama, Tokugawa Harutomi (1771-1852), offered him a position as his physician and tutor. Norinaga had served as the teacher of Harutomi's father from 1789 until his death. Whereas Norinaga had asked for permission to remain in Matsusaka because of his advanced age, Harutomi asked Ōhira to move to Wakayama.

At around the same time as Ōhira's move to Wakayama, Norinaga's biological son, Haruniwa (1763-1828), was thinking of reviving his father's academy. Ōhira's departure from Matsusaka only strengthened Haruniwa's ambitions. Norinaga chose not to designate his own son as his legal heir because Haruniwa had lost his eyesight during the early 1790s.⁵ Thinking that Haruniwa would be unable to supervise the affairs of the family and serve the daimyo of Kii-Wakayama, he chose Ōhira instead.⁶ To make matters worse for Haruniwa, Norinaga informed his son that a career in scholarship was out of the question. Haruniwa, who had wanted to follow in his father's footsteps, was told to study medicine for a career in Matsusaka. With his father's death and Ōhira's departure, he was finally able to pursue his dream of life as a scholar.⁷ Thus, by 1809, Norinaga's disciples congregated into two major academies, both of which were affiliated with the old Suzunoya. This was the beginning of the Norinaga school.

Both Haruniwa and Ōhira readily accepted students into their academies. Ōhira had a distinct advantage over Haruniwa because of his official status in Wakayama; he enrolled more than twice as many disciples as his brother, roughly one-third of who were warriors from the surrounding

domain.⁸ The combined enrollments of both scholars were nearly three times larger than Norinaga's Suzunoya, greatly expanding the prestige and influence of his scholarship. Many of the most enthusiastic of their students lived outside of both Matsusaka and Wakayama; as a result, they were unable to attend meetings with any regularity. A few of the intrepid decided to establish their own academies, which they would link to Norinaga's scholarship via either Haruniwa or Ōhira. One of the first of these affiliated academies was founded in Osaka by Fujii Takanao (1764-1840); a few years later, his colleague, Murata Harumon (1765-1836), opened a second academy in Osaka. In Nagoya, Suzuki Akira (1764-1837), a long-time student of Norinaga, began teaching nativism in his academy around 1833. Two other important academies opened in the two largest cities of Tokugawa Japan, Kyoto and Edo. The latter was Atsutane's Ibukiya, which he founded in Edo around 1805 and affiliated with Haruniwa shortly thereafter. The other was Kido Chidate's (1778-1845) Kyoto academy, the Nudenoya, which he established in 1816. Thus, Norinaga's disciples created a network of academies that functioned as a social space for their cultural production. As we will see, this was the first stage in the formation of what Pierre Bourdieu calls "field" of cultural production.

As Norinaga's legal successor, Ōhira was pleased with the growing number of adherents to his father's scholarship. He understood that most of these disciples would be unable to fathom Norinaga's scholarship in its entirety; he anticipated that the leaders of these affiliated academies would specialize in one specific aspect of his father's scholarship. Ōhira himself focused his research on ancient *kagura*. Haruniwa and Suzuki Akira collaborated on linguistics. Fujii Takanao carried on Norinaga's research into narrative tales. Atsutane emphasized ancient religious ceremonies and practices, while Murata Harumon and Kido Chidate spent their energies on the study of ancient verse. Ōhira observed that

⁵Yamada Kanzō, *Motoori Haruniwa* (Matsusaka: Motoori Norinaga Kinenkan, 1983), p. 31.

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 46.

⁷*Ibid.*, p. 52.

⁸Haga Noboru, *Kokugaku no hitobito* (Hyōronsha, 1975), pp. 274-275.

while nativism began with the study of verse, traces of the ancient Way were inherent in all of the textual sources from antiquity. As long as scholars pursued their research with the ancient Way in mind, their particular specialization was of little importance.

Current adherents of ancient learning [nativism] divide all matters into separate subjects. More and more of them consider the evidence and correct the meanings of words. This is a very good development. These are the fundamentals of learning...Among the students of the Old Man of the Suzunoya [Norinaga], [no one] focuses solely on verse. They broadly study Chinese writings, as well as Japanese writings, such as national histories, legal codes, and ritual texts.⁹

Ōhira's expressed tolerance of scholarship that did not specifically focus on ancient verse was consistent with his father's statement that studies of antiquity that relied only on poetic sources were too narrow. There were, however, two conditions for Ōhira. First, scholarship had to be based on the classical sources. Second, despite variations in specialization, all scholars dedicated to Norinaga's teachings had to use a philological methodology.¹⁰

Although Chidate was one of Norinaga's most active supporters in Kyoto, he believed that Norinaga was too liberal in his approach to antiquity. The key to the revelation of the ancient Way was the study of verse, especially those of the *Man'yōshū*.¹¹ In this way, Chidate's view of

antiquity was similar to Mabuchi's. After he had founded his Nudenoya, he instructed his students primarily in the study of ancient verse. Since he was aware of his ideological proximity to Mabuchi, he openly courted ties with scholars in Edo, known collectively as the Edo-ha, who traced their intellectual heritage back to Mabuchi. One of these scholars was Shimizu Hamaomi (1776-1824), a disciple of Murata Harumi (1746-1811), who himself was a former student of Mabuchi. Hamaomi visited the Nudenoya in 1820. As head of the school, Chidate discussed a whole range of nativist topics with him, most notably classical poetry and Mabuchi's scholarship.¹² Hamaomi agreed with him that despite Norinaga's intellectual stature, he had neglected the centrality of ancient verse. Scholarship on the *Man'yōshū* was still the foundation of nativism.¹³

Unlike Chidate and Hamaomi, Atsutane applauded the intellectual tolerance of Norinaga and Ōhira. He dedicated his scholarship to revealing the ancient Way as it was manifested in Shinto. True nativism, he declared, was based on knowledge of the divine and the afterlife.

[The idea of] supporting pillars is (also) the basis [*shizumari*] of the Japanese spirit for those who practice ancient learning [nativism]...By adhering to [the idea of] of the destination of the soul, they establish these pillars...Seeking to fortify and solidify their Japanese spirit, they begin with knowledge of the destination of the soul.¹⁴

The ancients had lived their lives in harmony with their ancestors and the divine; they

⁹Motoori Ōhira, *Kogakuyō, Nihon kokusui zensho* vol.13 (Nihon Kokusui Kankōkai, 1916), p. 30-32.

¹¹Ibid., 40.

¹²Kido Chidate, *Manabi no hiromichi, Kokumin dōtoku sōsho*, edited by Arima Hirose and Kurokawa Masamichi (Hakubunkan, 1911), p. 284.

¹³Kido Chidate, *Shimimuro zakki, Nihon zuihitsu taisei*, series 1, vol. 2 (Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1975), pp. 231-232.

¹⁴Shimizu Hamaomi, *Hakubaku hitsuwa, Nihon zuihitsu taisei*, series 1, vol. 7 (Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1975), p. 230.

¹⁵Hirata Atsutane, *Tama no mihashira*, NST 50 (Iwanami, 1973), pp. 12-13.

understood the mysterious relationship between the world of the living and the hereafter. This wisdom was none other than the ancient Way itself. He flatly rejected the views of scholars who upheld the primacy of verse, which revealed little about the ancient Way. He was especially critical of the scholars of the Edo-ha, such as Hamaomi, whose research into classical verse was ultimately irrelevant.¹⁵ Although they saw themselves as the heirs to Mabuchi's teachings, they had fundamentally misunderstood his interpretation of the ancient Way. Although Atsutane was himself a resident of Edo, he criticized the work of his Edo-ha neighbors as pointless, believing that his academy had found a more hospitable home in its association with the Norinaga school.¹⁶

Chidate, who esteemed the scholarship of Mabuchi and his followers, took exception to Atsutane's statement. He was also upset over criticisms Atsutane had made about Ōhira's scholarship several years earlier. Chidate was fully aware of Atsutane's growing self-confidence and claims to be a Norinaga disciple.

Even though Atsutane said that a scholar [*gakusha*] is a scholar, even in Kyoto, he [also] said that he had become a disciple of the Old Man [Norinaga] in a dream...I do not believe him. Moreover, to say that his scholarly methods meet with the approval of the Great Man [Norinaga], makes him a charlatan [literally, someone "with a lot of mountain air"].¹⁷ Chidate himself had joined the Suzunoya

¹⁵Hirata Atsutane, *Tamadasuki, Shinshū Hirata Atsutane zenshū* vol. 6 (Meichō Shuppan, 1977), p. 506.

¹⁶Haga Noboru, "Edo ni okeru kabun-ha to Hirata Atsutane," *Edo no geinō to bunka* (Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1985), pp. 287-289.

¹⁷Kido Chidate, *Dōjin yori naisho*, dated 1823/10/4, in *Kiyosōhansho, Shinshū Hirata Atsutane zenshū*, supplemental vol. 5 (Meichō Shuppan, 1980), p. 385.

in 1794; as a bookseller, he was an instrumental figure in Norinaga's publication efforts in Kyoto. In Chidate's mind, Atsutane was a fraud, but as long as he confined his activities to Edo, Chidate felt assured that the integrity of Norinaga's true disciples would not be threatened.

Atsutane's Tour of the Kansai

While the Norinaga school grew and expanded during the first two decades of the nineteenth century, Atsutane continued his eschatological research. In the Kanto area, his scholarship was gaining its own following, and the number of Atsutane's disciples grew. As his scholarship became more popular, he came to the attention of Yoshida Shinto priests in Kyoto who had ties to the imperial court. Some had heard about his work on Shinto theology and were understandably intrigued by it. Members of the Yoshida contacted Atsutane via the Kan'eiji temple in Ueno, asking him to come to Kyoto and offer them copies of his books for presentation to the court.¹⁸ Atsutane was excited to hear the news. He had planned a trip to Kyoto seven years earlier in 1816 but pressing family and school obligations prevented him from making the journey. He presented the news to the Itakura family, for whom he worked as a physician, and they granted him an indefinite leave of absence. Accompanied by two of his students, he set out for Kyoto on 1823/7/22 and arrived there on 8/6.

Atsutane set for himself four goals that he wished to accomplish with this trip. The first was to establish some kind of relationship with both the Yoshida and with the imperial court. Second, he wanted to meet his nativist colleagues living in the Kansai, especially Osaka and Kyoto. Third, he wanted to make a pilgrimage to Norinaga's grave in Yamamuro just outside of Matsusaka. Finally, he wanted to meet Ōhira and Haruniwa as well. This last goal would prove to be especially important in Atsutane's efforts to garner forms of what Bourdieu calls "symbolic

¹⁸Watanabe Kinzō, *Hirata Atsutane kenkyū* (Rokko Shobō, 1942), p. 67.

capital,” in order to signify his intellectual and spiritual standing in the Norinaga school.

The Imperial Court and the Yoshida House

Atsutane used his contacts at court to present his works to members of the Imperial family. He was fortunate enough to have connections to the current emperor, Ninkō (1800-1846), and his recently abdicated father, Kōkaku (1771-1840). He turned one set of his books over to his contact with the abdicated emperor, a court poet and scholar who had ties to Kōkaku via his daughter. The next day a letter from his contact arrived at his lodgings informing him that Kōkaku had received the books. Atsutane gave a second set of his works, all of which were hand copies, to two Yoshida Shinto priests, who submitted them to Ninkō. Shortly thereafter, he received word that the emperor had accepted his books. This time, however, the letter stated that Ninkō was deeply impressed with Atsutane’s scholarship.¹⁹ Since the emperor had voiced his approval, some Yoshida priests approached Atsutane with the idea of becoming their consultant in Shinto theology. Consequently, they formally enrolled as his students.

Although Atsutane never received an official endorsement from the imperial court, the fact that Kōkaku had accepted his works and that Ninkō had held them in some esteem was more than enough for him. Since Ninkō had indicated his approval, Atsutane was able to establish a scholarly relationship with the Yoshida house, the ritual specialists to the imperial court. Such patronage was vital to the national profile of his school and would help boost the ranks of his disciples. More importantly, his ties to the imperial court validated and even vindicated his scholarship, providing him with the kind of sanction that no other Norinaga disciple enjoyed. This was especially poignant for Kido Chidate, laboring in relative obscurity and removed from contact with members of the imperial court. Atsutane’s ties to the Yoshida house and to the imperial court would later function as forms of

symbolic capital in his effort to create a dominant position for himself within the emerging field of the Norinaga school.

Calling on the Nudenoya: Takanao and Nakatsune

Atsutane intended to meet the other Norinaga disciples in Kyoto, most of who were members of Chidate’s Nudenoya. When he called upon the academy for the first time, he was surprised to find that Fujii Takanao was there. Takanao was a resident of Osaka who was visiting the Nudenoya at the time. During his stay, he had taken ill, and when Atsutane saw him, he was still in recovery. Takanao was elated to see him. Two years earlier, he had visited Edo.²⁰ Someone introduced him to Atsutane, as a fellow disciple of Norinaga. Atsutane insisted that he stay with his family as their house guest. Takanao thanked him for his graciousness, and he lodged at Atsutane’s home for more than three months. Before leaving Edo, he told Atsutane that he would repay his kindness should Atsutane ever find himself in the Kansai area. Now Takanao had his chance to reciprocate.

Another pleasant surprise awaited Atsutane on this first day at the Nudenoya. Another of Norinaga’s disciples, Hattori Nakatsune (1756-1824) of Ise, was also there. Like Takanao, Nakatsune was delighted to meet Atsutane for what was the first time. The two scholars were very familiar with one another’s work. About twenty years earlier, Nakatsune had come under attack by Ōhira and others for a treatise that he had written on a metaphorical interpretation of the Age of the Gods chapters of the *Kojiki*.²¹ Ōhira had argued that the *Kojiki* was a kind of native scripture that should only be interpreted literally.

When a scholar seeks to understand the details of the Age of the Gods, they interpret and distort [*shiite*] matters that

¹⁹Ibid., p. 69.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹See Nakatsune’s *Sandaikō* in NST 50.

have no classical references [literally, “transmissions,” *tsutae*] and are [therefore] unknown. One interprets and distorts the original meanings of words, so that the result invariably becomes a flawed explication. These are the teachings of our Old Man [Norinaga] that he left in his *Kojiki-den*. These are teachings that those who practice ancient learning [nativism] know well.²²

Nakatsune was stunned by Ōhira’s critique, since Norinaga himself had approved of his work and even included it in the published edition of his magnum opus, the *Kojiki-den*, in 1792. Ōhira waited until after Norinaga’s death to brush his refutation, accusing Nakatsune of dabbling too much in astronomical works of Dutch Learning.²³ Atsutane was the only major scholar of the Norinaga school to defend Nakatsune against these attacks. He viewed Nakatsune’s metaphorical interpretation as an opportunity to justify his views of the afterlife which were difficult to document otherwise. He wrote no fewer than three defenses of Nakatsune. Nakatsune was grateful to him for his efforts, and hoped that he would someday have the chance to meet him.

Takanao was a good friend of Chidate, and he decided to use his influence to persuade the leader of the Nudenoya to allow Atsutane to deliver lectures at the academy.²⁴ Most of the Norinaga disciples in Kansai had already known about Chidate’s reservations about Atsutane, but

²²Motoori Ōhira, *Sandaikō-ben*, unpublished manuscript, University of Tokyo Library, no pagination in the original.

²³Ibid., no pagination in the original.

²⁴The details of Atsutane’s activities in Kyoto during the late summer of 1823 can be found in a liturgical text written by Hattori Nakatsune in 1824. See *Minoda Suigetsu Hattori Nakatsune-ō norito*, in *Kiyosōhansho, Shinshū Hirata Atsutane zenshū*, supplemental vol. 5 (Meichō Shuppan, 1980), pp. 454-472.

Takanao thought that Chidate would lay aside his personal feelings and give Atsutane the chance to speak. He was mistaken. Chidate pointed out that his school was not open to the public, in a comment that showed how he still did not recognize Atsutane’s membership in the Norinaga school. He further explained that outside of Haruniwa, Ōhira, and a handful of daimyo, no one was allowed to attend meetings at the Nudenoya.²⁵ Takanao, believing that finding a place for Atsutane to deliver some lectures was the best way to repay him, approached two other scholars of the Nudenoya and asked for their help; both agreed to lend whatever assistance they could. A few days later, however, both withdrew their offer because of pressure from Chidate. Atsutane, therefore, never was able to deliver any lectures in Kyoto.

In a letter that Chidate wrote to Ōhira soon after this incident, he explained his side of the story. He had two basic criticisms of Atsutane. First, Atsutane neglected the study of ancient verse. In fact, he noted, Atsutane’s scholarship was hardly literary at all, which was the reason why he never recognized Atsutane as a fellow disciple of Norinaga, and why he saw no reason to allow Atsutane to deliver lectures at the Nudenoya.

As for meeting him, since he has no aesthetic refinement [*miyabi*], he has nothing to say that any of us should hear. As for his ancient learning, we have the works of our previous teacher [Norinaga]. We also have Hirata’s [sic] views in his *Koshichō* and other works. If we peruse them, we can understand what he means.²⁶

His second criticism had to do with Atsutane’s letter of admission to Haruniwa’s

²⁵Watanabe (1942), p. 71.

²⁶Kido Chidate, *Kido Chidate yori raijō*, dated 1823/9/10, in *Kiyosōhansho, Shinshū Hirata Atsutane zenshū*, supplemental vol. 5 (Meichō Shuppan 1980), p. 384.

academy in 1806. By 1823, it was common knowledge among scholars of the Norinaga school that Atsutane claimed to be a direct disciple of Norinaga because of a dream that he had had. In this dream, Norinaga had supposedly accepted Atsutane as one of his disciples. Atsutane related the details of his dream to Haruniwa in his letter of admission. Haruniwa accepted Atsutane and noted how the dream had truly demonstrated Atsutane's commitment to the ancient Way: "Recently, Hirata Atsutane has deeply concentrated on the Way. He has studied the texts of our Old Man [Norinaga] with profound devotion."²⁷ Thinking that Haruniwa's remarks constituted a kind of official recognition, he asked Haruniwa to compose a poem about his dream, which he had reproduced on a painting of his dream that he later commissioned.²⁸

Atsutane's dream was an important aspect of his membership credentials in the Norinaga school in two ways. His claim of discipleship via a dream sounded plausible to those who were inclined to accept it because of similar accounts in other cultural and religious traditions, such as Zen. In addition, the implication of the dream was that Norinaga's spirit had appeared to Atsutane, Norinaga having died four years earlier. This idea both bolstered Atsutane's views of a spiritual realm in the hereafter and was, in turn, reinforced by them. At the very least, Atsutane appeared to be consistent.

Chidate reserved his sharpest criticisms of Atsutane for the dream. He expressed his utter amazement that other Norinaga disciples could possibly take it or Atsutane seriously. He sarcastically observed that if Norinaga appeared in Atsutane's dream and accepted him as his disciple, then he could easily claim that Norinaga had appeared in his dream and disavowed Atsutane.²⁹ Although Chidate could do nothing

about his presence in Kyoto, he tried very hard to persuade his students to ignore him. Chidate himself met Atsutane only once, and their meeting was very brief.³⁰

Hattori Nakatsune was also interested in finding a suitable venue for Atsutane to lecture. He, however, had an additional, more profound way to express his gratitude to Atsutane for coming to his defense. In a private meeting with him, Nakatsune told him about a conversation that he had had with Norinaga just months before he died. On this occasion, he had walked Norinaga home after a moon-viewing party held by Ōhira in Matsusaka. During their stroll, the two talked about the state of the Suzunoya. Norinaga was happy that his scholarship had become so popular (he had more than four hundred enrolled students by then). He was disappointed, however, that of his legion of disciples, no one devoted their energies to the study of the ancient Way, preferring literary scholarship instead. As Nakatsune observed,

[I told Norinaga that I] should have some time this autumn to devote to the Way and learn a little about the composition of poetry and prose. The Great Man [Norinaga] replied, 'No, you should not engage in the composition of poetry and prose! [Unfortunately,] there are those who esteem that kind of learning. Thus, there is absolutely no one who pursues ancient learning in the main. Even if I lament what is a lamentable situation, it seems that this will continue into the future. You, [however], have ceased to engage in the composition of poetry and prose, and you have concentrated [instead] on the Way of the Gods.'³¹

Thus, the only exception to the general practice was Nakatsune, as demonstrated in his

²⁷Motoori Haruniwa, *Muchū taimen zu*, text reproduced in *Hirata Atsutane ushi toshū* (Akita: Iyataka Jinja, 1993), p. 67.

²⁸For a reproduction of this painting, see *ibid.*

²⁹Kido Chidate, *Kido Chidate yori rajjō*, p. 383.

³⁰Watanabe (1942), p. 70.

³¹Hattori Nakatsune, *Minoda Suigetsu Hattori Nakatsune-ō norito, Kiyosōhansho*, p. 456-457.

metaphorical interpretation of the *Kojiki*.³² Nakatsune told Atsutane that he had kept this conversation a secret for more than twenty years. The time had come to tell Atsutane because he, too, had demonstrated his devotion to the ancient Way by composing his defenses of Nakatsune's work. Nakatsune was grateful for the opportunity to relate the secret to Atsutane since he felt that his own death was imminent. Nakatsune promised him that he would put the details of the secret in writing, which Atsutane received after he returned to Edo in the eleventh month of that year; Nakatsune died less than four months later, leaving Atsutane as the only "true" Norinaga disciple.

The Return Journey: Haruniwa and Ōhira

After a stay of more than two and a half months in Kyoto, Atsutane departed for Osaka on 10/20. Although it is not clear, he most likely intended to visit the two academies located there; one of these was run by another of his avowed critics, Murata Harumon. He stayed in Osaka for only one night, however, and he never recorded any visitation to either of these academies. Atsutane may have simply changed his mind after arriving in Osaka, after his rather cool reception in Kyoto. He and his party pressed on, and they reached Wakayama by the evening of the following day.

He called on Ōhira late the next day. This was the first meeting between the two. Ōhira was not taken completely off-guard, however, since Nakatsune had insisted on writing ahead to tell him of Atsutane's impending visit. Atsutane wanted to meet Ōhira in order to clear the air of any lingering misunderstandings in the wake of their previous disagreements, one of which was over the merits of Nakatsune's scholarship. Ōhira was impressed with Atsutane's serious yet gentle demeanor; he was especially moved by Atsutane's humility.³³ Ōhira agreed that it was time to finally end their feud. As a token of his

respect for Atsutane, he gave him two of Norinaga's prized possessions: the first was a portrait of Norinaga painted by a disciple at the end of the eighteenth century; the second was a wooden *shaku* (scepter) personally made by Norinaga himself. The latter gift was especially important symbolically to Atsutane, since it was one of three such objects; each of the other two were in the possession of Ōhira and Haruniwa. Atsutane was overcome with joy by this second gift. It seemed like an appropriate gift to him, however, when considering (1) his newly won imperial favor and (2) the revelation of Nakatsune's secret. All three of these confirmed his self-perception that he was the most important of all of the scholars of the Norinaga school. These were also forms of symbolic capital that not only justified Atsutane's membership credentials in the Norinaga school (which Chidate opposed), but also, more importantly, helped to legitimate the perception of his dominant position within the school.

Two days later, Atsutane and his companions set out for Matsusaka, finally arriving on 11/1. He journeyed there in order to pay his respects at Norinaga's grave. He initially called on Haruniwa to inform him of his intentions and to get directions to the gravesite. This was his first meeting with Haruniwa, and the conversation between the two was lively and amiable. Before departing, Haruniwa gave him a set of brushes used by Norinaga in the composition of his greatest works. Realizing the significance of this gift, Atsutane wept.³⁴

Conclusion

Atsutane's only visit to the Kansai marked the beginning of a new stage in his scholarly life. The imperial favor that he had received, along with the patronage of the Yoshida house, significantly raised the profile of his school. It gave his scholarship a form of distinction that other disciples, his critics especially, did not have. His meetings with other disciples in Kyoto demonstrated that his scholarship and

³²Ibid., p. 458.

³³Watanabe (1942), p. 84.

³⁴Ibid.

membership in the Norinaga school were a reality that they could not ignore. Atsutane needed to meet his rivals and critics in order to drive this point home. The sociologist, Randall Collins, in his study of global intellectual history, asserts that intellectual life “hinges on face-to-face situations,” since these meetings elicit such emotional responses.³⁵ Although Atsutane’s most ardent foes experienced no change of heart, his personality was instrumental in winning at least one of his critics, Motoori Ōhira, over to his side.

The various forms of symbolic capital that Atsutane either generated or received, such as Nakatsune’s revelation and the gifts from Ōhira and Haruniwa, were also important results of his journey. They functioned as signs of legitimation and official sanction for his scholarship. They helped to confirm that his intellectual outlook, especially as it pertained to literature, was correct, and that the literary inclinations of his critics were misguided. Literary studies, especially of ancient verse, were insufficient for the investigation of the ancient Way. Thus, he felt justified in moving his own scholarship even further away from the ancient sources. Eventually, he abandoned textualism entirely, preferring to use the techniques of evidential scholarship to conduct field research on the supernatural.

At the same time, Kido Chidate, perhaps his most implacable enemy, only strengthened his resolve to preserve poetic studies as the foundation of the Norinaga school in the aftermath of Atsutane’s visit. Atsutane and Chidate, as well as their students and supporters, all claimed to uphold the true nature of Norinaga’s scholarship. The two, therefore, represented polar oppositions within the Norinaga school. These polarities were the culmination of a process that had begun more than a decade earlier, in a debate over the merits of Nakatsune’s scholarship. Although Ōhira and others opposed Nakatsune, Atsutane was not the central focus of the debate, and Chidate was not involved in any way. The irreconcilable differences between the

scholarship of Atsutane and Chidate, however, fundamentally transformed the social structure of the school. In the words of Bourdieu, the school had become an autonomous field of cultural production.³⁶ Opposing poles of this kind give a field a kind of dynamism and energy that focuses the attention of its members inward. Issues of orthodoxy and legitimacy dominate their attention, while matters originating outside of the field become less prominent.

It is clear that the field-effect which results from the opposition between the two schools, and is intensified by the process of institutionalization that is needed to constitute a fully-fledged literary group, i.e., an instrument for accumulating and concentrating symbolic capital...tends to consecrate and underscore the critical differences.³⁷

Both Atsutane and Chidate were compelled to deal with these issues, but they did so in divergent ways. Chidate chose to affirm what he thought was the strongest ideological position within the Norinaga school, since he thought that the majority of disciples felt the same way as he about classical poetry. As Atsutane’s experiences in Kyoto clearly demonstrated, he did not have the same kind of support in the school. The only way that he could defend his position within the school was to transform it into something else by claiming to be its leading scholar. The forms of capital that he acquired were critical in this effort. The confrontation between Atsutane and Chidate can best be described by Collins, in his analysis of intellectual conflict in general:

Each intellectual faces a strategic choice.
One can go all out, try to be king of the

³⁵Randall Collins, *The Sociology of Philosophies: A Global Theory of Intellectual Change* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1998), p. 26.

³⁶Pierre Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), p. 193.

³⁷Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), p. 67.

mountain, which means trying to be alone or nearly alone at the center of one of the major intellectual positions. Or one might cut one's losses and aim for a more modest position: as loyal follower of some successful position[.]³⁸

In 1834, as part of Atsutane's effort "to be king of the mountain," he published an account of his tour of the Kansai which he entitled the *Kiyosōhansho* ("Writings of Both Praise and Condemnation"). Eleven years after his journey, he triumphantly declared victory over his opponents.

Mark McNally
Department of History
University of Hawai'i, Manoa

³⁸Collins (1998), p. 40.