1 Introduction

Recently, anthropology of religion has made substantial impacts on religious studies and theology. Anthropology of religion was originally motivated by Western scholars’ interest in non-western, namely non-Judeo-Christian traditions. Western anthropologists categorized them as religion and non-religion judging on whether or not they held explicit similarities with Judeo-Christianity, especially Protestantism. This lead Western anthropologists, on the one hand, to reflect on the unique characteristics of their own Judeo-Christian tradition, and on the other hand, to treat their own tradition as the civilized superior to the ‘uncivilized’ others. This was of course bound up in the West’s colonial project in the non-West (Masuzawa 2005, 107–121).

A relevant representative work is Talal Asad’s critique on religion as a modern notion. He analyzes the Protestant definition of Islam and Catholicism as religions. The problem of the Protestant notion of religion, according to Asad, is its belief-centric and privatized nature, which is also a core component of religion as a modern notion (Asad 1993, 1–17).

The Protestant notion of religion is a product of the secularization of society in which the dichotomy of religion and the secular divides the private and public spheres. Here religion is designated only for the private sphere. According to Hannah Arendt, this is an intimate dimension of human activity where people are deprived of social rights (Arendt 1958, 58–71). In the public sphere, on the contrary, people are granted social rights. Obviously in secular society the public sphere is deemed more valuable than the private sphere. The division of the public and the private itself does not directly mean secularism. If this division, however, presumes the priority to public sphere because it is considered secular, it should be called secularism (Asad 2003, 1–17).

The Western notions of secularism and religion as facets of modernization permeated through non-Western societies as a way to avoid the threat of colonization. Western empires required non-western countries to show evidence of Western civilization, via constitutional law and freedom of (Christian) religion. Many societies in the Global South challenged the dichotomy of civilized vs non-civilized forwarded by the West. For example, in Japan, the system of State Shinto emerged as a reaction to the Western dichotomy of the religious and the secular. The Japanese government defined the ideology associated with State Shinto and the Japanese Emperor (Tennō) beyond this dichotomy, because it was described as neither religious nor secular (Isomae 2014, 25–67). In this way, Shinto’s belief-centric character was lost, and it became instead a form of popular religion under the totalitarian system of State Shinto.
In this chapter, I would like to examine the ideology of Shinto in modern Japan to explore the negotiating process between the Western definition of religion and non-Western religious practice through the case of Fushimi Inari Shrine in Kyoto (Isomae 2017, 87–102).

2 Beyond Belief-Centric Religion

At the tall red Shinto gate (Torii) of the Fushimi Inari Shrine in Kyoto, you will find on your right the Shrine² worshipping former Shinto priest, Kada no Azumamaro (1669 – 1736). He was active in the Tokugawa period (1603 – 1867) as a priest of the Fushimi Inari Shrine. In the modern period, he came to be extolled as one of the four great men of native learning (Kokugaku) in Japanese, or the ‘Learning of the Imperial Land’. In this sense, he reveals a dimension of the Fushimi Inari Shrine in the early modern period which is different from the world of popular belief where people would eat roasted sparrow and quail in front of the shrine gate and go on to the pleasure quarters nearby after pilgrimage. He stood for a divergence of the Shrine from the world of popular religion.

Upon climbing the slope while leaving that Shrine behind, you come to the famous sequence of the red Torii gate. In fact, the Fushimi Inari Shrine enshrines the Inari Mountain as its divine object of worship, as the mountain is shaped like the abode of the kami². With this mountain in the background, numerous kami have been worshiped here including Kannon Bodhisattva. These kami had forms decided by human beings but the kami themselves, just like the Inari Mountain, did not utter a single word. Precisely due to this silence, it had been an important concern of pilgrims and believers to figure out what kind of kami were to be discovered here. Into the Meiji period (1868 – 1912) when policies of separating the kami from the Buddha (Ketelaar 1993, 122–139) were implemented, numerous red Shinto gates were donated by believers and erected to form a pilgrimage path, and various rock altars that could not be assimilated into the State Shinto structure were constructed.

Along the path on the western side of the Inari Mountain all the way to its top is a succession of religious constructions: numerous rock altars (Otsuka) inscribed with names of businesses and human individuals such as “The Mainichi News Paper Company” and “The Grand Shrine of Great Sight”, and Daoist temples enshrining the Inari gods, goddess of still-born children, and the “kami of crown of head” (Smyers 1998, 150 – 183).

¹ The Shrine is the name of the building to worship Shinto Gods and Goddess to be distinguished from Christian churches and Buddhist temples.
² Kami is the name of Gods and Goddess in Shinto symbolizing the essences of nature, mountains, trees, sky, sea and so on. It can be thought of as another side of Buddhist Hotoke (Gods and Goddess). Kami is distinguished from the monotheistic Christian God.
As such, Fushimi Inari can be understood as a space continuously pluralized through the existence of rock altars and refusing to be homogenized either in terms of the kami enshrined or those who enshrine. Fushimi Inari in the modern period, while being an Imperial Shrine, was not reducible to Shrine Shinto which was incorporated into the State Shinto system (Hardacre 1991, 21–41). The plurality of space is not unrelated to the activities of the Inari confraternities affiliated with the Inari Shrine which were connected to folk religions.

Despite the activities of the Nativist scholar Kada no Azumamaro, it is in the modern period, when State Shinto was created, that rock altars increased and enriched the beliefs of Fushimi Inari. It is the believers of rock altars and waterfall practitioners who supported these various religious facilities on the Inari Mountain inside and outside the shrine compound and expanded the beliefs of these facilities. There, the kami enshrined were never homogenized. Actual Fushimi Inari beliefs were pluralized by pilgrims and believers.

3 Healing as the Practice of Subjectification

Fushimi Inari Mountain is a metaphor of God which is always expanding through religious practice. Here I introduce one example of an Inari believer who founded his own Shinto church in Aichi Prefecture. He was famed to be good at healing diseases. The act of healing has often been dismissed as superstition in modern societies. Here, however, I would like to evaluate it as religious practice of subjectification. In this chapter, I will move beyond the belief-centric notion of Protestantism defined by Asad (Asad 1993, 55–80) and examine the notion of religion as a practice of subjectification.

The Shinto Fushimi Inari Great Tōyō Church (at the Futagawa Fushimi Inari Shrine) in Toyohashi City of Aichi prefecture is another example of the proliferation of meaning in the process of regional expansion of Inari beliefs. The Great Tōyō Church started its religious activities as one sect of the Shinto religions, the Shinto Jikkō-kyō, after its founding leader, Urano Katsuyasu, received a branch spirit from the Fushimi Inari Shrine in 1910. Both the Sect Shinto, which traced its origin to the Mount Fuji confraternity, and the Fushimi Inari were deeply connected to mountain asceticism. As such, they shared one religious tradition. Because Urano was a religious person belonging to the Religion Bureau of the Ministry of Education, he did not need a license to become a Shinto priest.

In 1927 he moved to Futagawa, one of the post towns on the highway between Tokyo and Kyoto, and built a hall at the foot of a mountain and gave the peaks on the mountain the same set of names as those of the Inari Mountain: Mount of First Peak, Mount of Second Peak, Mount of Third Peak, etc. On each mount, he set up iwakura (‘god’s abode’) that corresponded to the rock altars of Fushimi Inari and at each one, he enshrined spirits from various lineages. Katsuyasu, who was born in Shinshiro City of the Aichi prefecture, once received training in moun-
tain asceticism and in the Ontakekyō religion that were popular in the Mikawa region.

Katsuyasu was a charismatic figure with good looks and an impressive presence. It is said that many followers were moved to tears by his voice during praying. It is said that through the mediation of his charismatic character, illness was cured. During the treatment, however, the kami enshrined at god’s abode on the mountain of his town, Ōiwa, also very likely played a vital role by connecting heaven with humans.

As such, Katsuyasu shared a world of heterogeneous beliefs in common with the folk believers commuting to Fushimi Inari. The kami and spirits in that world sometimes protected believers whilst also bringing about disasters. It is said that when Katsuyasu went to the local Mountain, Ontake, for practice, fellow believers traveling with him became possessed by the kami and suddenly started to jump up and down. It is not unusual for popular religion founders, often called ‘living gods’, to be possessed by this kind of heterogeneous kami or spirits. As an example, here, how to incarnate and control an unknown kami that possessed oneself became a question that tests the skill of the possessed.

Treatment of illness was something Sect Shinto founders of the late Tokugawa and Meiji periods, such as Nakayama Miki of Tenrikyō and and Deguchi Nao of Ōmotokyo, as well as early modern mountain ascetic practitioners like Ontakekyō, excelled at. Illness treatment was based on a broad religious tradition tracing back to pre-modern times in Japan. Katsuyasu converted people in pleasure quarters, private store owners, and dentists who wished for the treatment of illness and business prosperity, into followers, and his believer base was able to expand not just in Toyohashi but also to Hamamatsu and Yokohama where he once worked.

Shimazono Susumu uses the term “amalgamation religion” to refer to this world of popular religious activities, a world mixing kami with Buddhist deities, where religious leaders revered powerful kami, spirits, or locally active kami and Buddhist deities, and connected with each other across regions (Shimazono 2004, 3). These practices cannot be fully encompassed by modern concepts of Shinto or Buddhism and were attempts to reconfigure the subjectivity of practitioners and followers through corporeally based communications with the kami.

Here Katsuyasu was preaching that ethics following the laws of the universe would be rewarded in this life. Treatment of illness was for Katsuyasu not simply an act for this worldly benefit but also an act of self-reflection on how to transform one’s way of life through the relationship with the kami. This was the same with Fushimi Inari’s ascetic practitioners. When the subject of illness treatment shifted from individuals to society, these acts would turn into subjectivity-reconfiguring “world renewal” attempts preached by Deguchi Nao and Nakayama Miki.

Katsuyasu’s case shows certain features specific to the religious groups which operated locally and independently without being assimilated into a centralized religious structure. Inoue Nobutaka calls this “long-legged cup model” (Inoue 1991, 124–127). Ontakekyō and the Fushimi Inari Shrine provided social spaces for the
popular religious practitioner Shigeno, who was given the freedom to fill the space as she wished.

Anne Bouchy observed that “their characteristic is not to theorize practice which contrasts with many attempts to decorate waterfall practice with polished Shinto or Buddhist doctrines” (Bouchy 2009, 91). Without sticking to doctrine, it became possible for individual practitioners to freely incorporate meanings which developed from their practice into established religious frameworks. When this un-institutionalized belief world entered society, however, its risked being re-appropriated by established social powers.

Accommodative inclusion and the State Shinto system are two sides of the same coin. Departure from that inclusive framework would mean no official recognition and could lead to arrest: charged with harbouring dangerous thoughts. Popular religions described by Inoue as the “long-legged cup model” did have the tolerant tendency to include any popular religion as its branch, but at the same time they needed a minimum qualification of doctrine and organization to meet legal criteria of official religious systems. In the case of the popular religions of Deguchi Nao and Nakayama Miki as portrayed by Yasumaru Yoshio, when their worldviews conflicted with the worldviews of the emperor system state, they would be punished by the state. The form of freedom in the State Shinto system was conditional and precarious, as Yasumaru has pointed out (Yasumaru 1987, 209 – 213).

In the overlap of the state and the world of popular beliefs, and manifestation of the kami could appear through the channel of the emperor. These were the overwhelming structures of Sect Shinto consolidated under the State Shinto system. On the other hand, popular desires for illness recovery and business prosperity were made to overlap with the imperial universe.

If amalgamated religions want to give up pursuit for this worldly benefit and deepen their faiths by contemplating ethical ways of life while maintaining their religious praxis, certain mediums that connects them to the universal become necessary. In modern Japan it was the emperor system, which in its embodiment of both the nation-state and the empire played the role of the channel for universalization. Here, it is difficult to differentiate publicness from the state, or the state from the nation because the emperor system served all public functions. It is not possible to understand State Shinto and the world of popular beliefs as two completely different things or as an official position and a real intention. Rather, we need to explore why religious believers were able to formulate their subjectivity whilst maintaining a subtle balance between their religious practice and the emperor system.

As the third leader of the Great Tōyō Church, Urano Tomoyasu, told me, believers live their life by “revering the heaven and prostrating before the earth.” But what does the heaven mean here? Very likely, in pre-war Japan, the answer did not manifest as an either–or choice between state power and kami of the populace.

Popular religions emerged one after another during the late Tokugawa and Meiji periods to provide salvation to people suffering from contradictions of modern capitalism. If they chose to critique the logic of exploitation of the modern state, like Na-
kayama Miki and Deguchi Nao, they would lose their social space and be expelled as heterodoxy. On the other hand, when they focused on dissolving people’s anxiety arising from modern capitalism, like Katsuyasu has done, there existed a possibility in pre-war Japan of a channel through which they could universalize their local belief world into the public space of the modern nation-state by proactively stepping into the space of the emperor-system.

As such, the simplistic binary perspective of choosing between the emperor-system and popular belief cannot grasp pre-war worlds of belief. We should ask rather whether the spiritual metaphor, either as Amaterasu (ancestral Goddess of royal family) or the Inari kami, came to shape the subjectivity of the believer by making it identify with the kami or Amaterasu, or whether that subjectivity, formulated via that metaphor, was also able to objectify that power of identification.

The question is whether subjectivity, in reliance it is upon the kami, hardens or transforms itself via the kami. This is a question about the technique of subjectivity formation. Both humans and the kami continue to transform. At question it was how to believe in the kami and what the nature of that belief was.

### 4 Purified Body and State Power

Against the government’s policy of secularization of Shinto, religious right-wingers started to religionize Shinto. They challenged the dichotomy between religion and the secular as well as the separation between public and private spheres. Their approach to Shinto may be seen as part of the movement of ‘public religion’.

Recently the notion of “public religion” is estimated positively by scholars (i.e., José Casanova) to go beyond the limitation of private-sphere religion (Casanova 2008, 102–103). The case of Shinto in modern Japan, however, has revealed the problems of public religion, as it fostered a homogenization of plural voices in the public sphere by a one and only religion. By expanding the religious sphere into the public sphere, the system of State Shinto homogenized the Japanese society and fostered totalitarianism in the 1940s.

Edward Said has advocated “secular criticism” and argues that only secular intelligence can critique society objectively (Said 1983, 24–30). On the other hand, Talal Asad and Gauri Viswanathan have advanced “religious criticism”. For them, religious speeches and actions can be used to interrogate social values (Asad 2008, 605; Viswanathan 1998, 45–47). The case of Japanese Shinto, however, both the positive and negative sides of religious criticism are shown in terms of a way to relocate human subjectivity; on the one hand to heterogenize secular subjectivity, on the other to be homogenized under state authority.

The second leader of the Great Tōyō Church, Shirai Kiichirō conducted practice at Toga Shrine which was a site of much religious practice. He married into the Urano family as in February 1935 and entered the Shintō University, Kokugakuin, in October that same year.
The Toga Shrine enshrines the tutelary *kami* of the area. Up to the early modern period, the shrine was called “the Great Toga Bodhisattva” and enshrined the medicine Buddha Bhaisajyaguru with a Buddhist temple affiliated with it as steward temple. Like the Great Fushimi Inari Shrine, the Toga Shrine had prosperous confraternities and activities from the early modern to the Meiji periods. In the backyard area of the shrine are sites of extreme mountain ascetic practice and in the interior compound are huge cedar trees reaching into the sky. Near the interior compound is the place of seclusion practice where Yoshiyasu used to stay overnight. This shrine is like the Fushimi Inari Shrine in valuing practice as a form of belief. Yoshiyasu enshrined an earthly *kami*, which is different from the imperial gods, and managed confraternities (Isomae 2012).

In these two respects, Yoshiyasu maintained beliefs by refusing to be domesticated by the State Shinto. In this sense, he must have met expectations of the first leader Katsuyasu. At that time, Shinto priests reportedly stayed at the Toga Shrine for about a month for practice. It is said that during Yoshiyasu’s practice stay, he experienced a variety of uncanny phenomena such as Tengu running at the ceiling, thunder sounding without rain, and a procession of lamp-carrying foxes in the valley.

Yoshiyasu’s spiritual power manifested as the power to see dreams. When he was a middle school student, he once stepped over a snake on a mountain trail without giving it a second thought. The snake followed him to his home and coiled itself beside Yoshiyasu. That night the snake appeared in his dream and complained that its practice to become *kami* had been hindered by being stepped over. Now it had to rectify its practice, so it asked Yoshiyasu also to practice as a priest and enshrine it as *kami*. This was how Yoshiyasu started his practice at the Hongusan, the well-known place of religious practice.

One day, in practice, Yoshiyasu entreated the snake to manifest itself. Then in a dream he saw the snake again, and the snake told him that “if I show you my entire body you will be shocked” and then manifested itself as a huge dragon covered in golden scales. It is said that the Inari family crest was painted on the dragon’s body.

The dragon became the tutelary *kami* of Yoshiyasu and started to be enshrined as the White Lady Dragon *Kami* on the mountain of the Great Tōyō Church. The dragon then reappeared in Yoshiyasu’s dream telling him that thanks to Yoshiyasu’s effort it had become a *kami* thereby ascending to heaven. For Yoshiyasu the snake *kami* is the messenger of the *kami* connecting heaven with humans.

For Yoshiyasu who had been working as a priest at the Toga Shrine, it was not so easy to cure believers’ illnesses with a spiritual power like that of Katsuyasu nor was it so easy to provide counselling for people’s life problems. But then there came a turning point. One day, Yoshiyasu talked to his teacher at the Kokugakuin University and made the decision to study the purification ritual by water (*misogi*) under the tutelage of Yukihiro Tadasu, the once-priest of the famous big Shinto Shrines. Yoshiyasu participated for the first time in the water purification ritual at the Fushimi Inari Shrine at the end of 1941.
The Manchurian Incident took place when Yoshiyasu married into the Urano house in 1931. Then in 1937 the Sino-Japanese War broke out, followed by the start of the Pacific War at the end of 1941. In the social context of imminent war, Patriotic Corps was organized at the Kokugakuin University in 1941, and students in Shinto Studies of the university started to perform water purification at the Meiji Shrine and at other shrines. Water purification practices became widespread in the Shinto circle and then spread across Japanese society.

It was Kawatsura Bonji, born in Ōita prefecture in 1913 and Yukihiro’s teacher, who systematized the water purification ritual. Upon receiving divine revelation in South Japan, Kawatsura went to Tokyo and preached “the unity of all teachings” and “all gods as one” as a Shinto specialist of “despiritualized Shamanism” (Tsushiro 1990, chap. 4). In particular, Kawatsura emphasized purification praxis rather than doctrine. His teaching with its emphasis on praxis spread not only in Japan but also to Manchuria and the Korean Peninsula.

His supporters included prominent figures such as the politician Hiranuma Kichirō who was vice-president of Kokugakuin University, professor Kakei Katsuhiko of the Faculty of Law of the Tokyo Imperial University who promoted an ‘All Teachings Returning to One’ Shinto, Imaizumi Sadasuke, chairman of the Association for Reverting the Ise Shrine (Jingu Hōsaikai) and the navy, and so on. With his emphasis on the bodily practice of water purification, Kawatsura’s Shinto differed from the stances of the scholars in the Shinto Studies department of Tokyo Imperial University and Kokugakuin University which either followed the traditions of Western philosophy or Kokugaku philological studies.

Like Katsuyasu, Kawatsura placed an emphasis on bodily practice. At the same time, he tried to dovetail popular practice with Kojiki and Nihon shoki mythological metaphors to provide substance to intellectualized Shinto terminology while systematizing popular beliefs. For the Great Tōyō Church, the essence of Kawatsura’s teaching was first and foremost ‘correcting spirit’.

All things in the universe including humans have a pearl in their bodies. This is the fundamental straight spirit (ultimate potential consciousness) and has the same quality as the kami. With this spirit, every human possesses the thought about the kami [...]. We pray to the kami through this innermost correcting spirit. (Kanatani 1941, 170)

Putting the spirit to exercise was the water purification practice. For that purpose, it is important to foreground the metaphor of Amenominakanushi no kami (‘the Central God of the Heaven’).

Kawatsura held that the fundamental ontological nature of human being and the universe is called Amenominakanushi no kami in Japan, Shangdi in China, Buddha in India, and God in the UK and the U.S. He wanted to pose Shinto as a world religion, as a universal phenomenon in smooth and flexible relationship with Christianity, Buddhism, or Islam, rather than as an ethnic religion.
Amaterasu Ōkami is the imperial ancestor enshrined at the Ise Shrine which provided the mythological basis for the claim of Japanese emperors being living gods. According to current Great Tōyō Church leader Tomoyasu, this kind of kami, with its concrete features, cannot become the original kami of the universe. Where the State Shinto system erred was to present Amaterasu Ōkami as an original kami. Rather, by relying on a content-void kami named as Amenominakanushi no Kami (‘Center God of Heaven’), which has no personality nor can be called an imperial ancestor, Shinto can be relieved of any ethnic nationalist feature. Here, the Great Tōyō Church dramatically transformed from an illness-treating popular religion of Katsuyasu’s time to a Shinto of the water purification ritual connected to Amenominakanushi no kami.

Here, the popular belief in Tengu experienced by Yoshiyasu at a local Shrine was also transformed into the role of spiritual guru in the systematic religious world. According to Tomoyasu, the Great Tōyō Church’s encounter with the belief of Kawatsura rendered the messenger kami such as the dragon kami and Tengu dispensable. “Revelation” delivered by these medium kami was also negated as of this world, and no longer given positive meaning.

The importance of understanding laws of the universe and living a life in accordance with those laws came to be the central teaching of Kawatsura. Illness arose from mistakes in one’s life when one went against the universe’s laws. When one realized this deviation, illness would be cured naturally. As a result, illness treatment came to be reconceived as a derivative phenomenon. Tomoyasu told me personally that “the teaching of the master Kawatsura did not respond to personal problems but rather emphasized guidance by following laws of the universe.”

Amenominakanushi no Kami, however, remained a metaphor that constituted one side of the coin with the other side being the public space of the emperor-system state, insofar as the kami was written into Kojiki and Nihon shoki mythologies, the origin and ancient history of the Japanese Royal family, to secure the unbroken imperial genealogy starting from Amaterasu. In fact, regarding the emperor-system state, Kawatsura asserted that “the world is broad, and countries are numerous, but the Great Japan is the only state and ethnic nation that developed, based on a unity of the kami and the land, an unbroken genealogy tracing back to the sun goddess Amaterasu” (Kawatsura 1940, 8). He then asserted that Shinto held the key to save humanity.

These assertions of Kawatsura reflected the complicated social conditions of the time and cannot be reductively understood as meaning that Shinto was some universal phenomenon transcending nationalism. The Japanese empire of the time was sustained by the two-layer structure of a mono-ethnic Japanese nation-state and a multi-ethnic nation-state concerned with its relationship with colonies. Multi-ethnicity can function to affirm imperialist domination if the Japanese ethnic nation was located at the central position of excellence.

If the hypostatization of such a centre were negated, however, it was possible for certain universality to emerge. Would the state open itself up to plural public spaces,
or would public space end up being assimilated by state power? Kawatsura died in 1929, before Japan plunged into the Asia-Pacific War. He was unable to see the bankruptcy of the ambiguous logic embodied in imperialism, his life coming to an end when the two-layer structure of universalist and nationalist maintained its subtle balance.

The question was how Kawatsura’s successors would interpret his teachings. His multivalent teachings contained the danger of departing from Kawatsura’s original intention and segmenting into new discourses in East Asian political conditions.

In 1939, the tenth anniversary of the death of Kawatsura was commemorated at the Military Officers’ Club neighbouring the Yasukuni Shrine. The head priest of the Fushimi Inari Shrine until 1936, Takayama Noboru, presided over the commemoration event. Prime Minister Hiranuma who promoted the national mobilization system and Mizuno Rentarō, the director of the National Shinto Priest Association, offered prayers. The following year, the Imperial Rule Assistance Association was founded and in 1941, the water purification ritual was adopted by the association as the method for national training.

The water purification ritual was promoted not just in Japan but also in colonies including the Korean Peninsula. On the other hand, at the Fushimi Inari Shrine the water purification ritual site, the Pure and Bright House, was erected in as early as 1934 thanks to the effort of Takayama Noboru, the head priest of the Fushimi Inari Shrine. The purpose of the creation of the house was motivated by the contribution of the Fushimi Inari Shrine to the State Shinto system, rather than to folk religion, through the water purification ritual.

In 1924 Takayama banned construction of a new rock altar at Fushimi Inari and in 1927, he created the Inari confraternity. Shimazono Susumu observes: “the Inari confraternity gathered together various communities of devotion to the Inari kami and directed it toward where shrines intended in order to counter the critique since the Taisho period of the thesis that Shinto shrines were non-religious facilities” (Shimazono 2004, 7).

Takayama attempted to situate the Inari Mountain as the space for swearing loyalty to the imperial kami by way of the water purification ritual, rather than the space of interaction with a plurality of kami through divine possession. Whilst being a bodily practice, the misogi purification ritual of Kawatsura came to be contrasted with the belief of the Fushimi Inari Mountain practitioners.

Takayama studied at the Institute of Imperial Classics, the predecessor of Kogakuen University, and worked as the head priest of major shrines such as Nogi Shrine. It can be assumed that he played an important role in dovetailing the shrine-as-non-religion thesis of the Ministry of the Interior and established Shinto shrines with the popular water purification ritual advocated by Kawatsura. The intellectual pillar of this dovetailing was Imaizumi Sadasuke, Chairman of the Association for Revering the Ise Shrine. Conflating the emperor-system state with the principles of the universe, Imaizumi reinterpreted Kawatsura’s Shinto thought as centring on the emperor to make it comply with the conditions of the time.
As Akazawa Shirō has pointed out, they were “nationalists who succeeded the non-State-Shinto tradition” (Akazawa 1985, 96–97). They used the same metaphor of imperial kami as that of bureaucrats in the Ministry of the Interior but aimed at the expansion and transformation of the national subject fit for national mobilization, to be achieved through bodily practice that took seriously the human spirit which was ignored by the imperial metaphor. It was no longer possible to constitute the national subject capable of meeting the difficulty of the time with purely doctrinal inculturation.

Yukihiro who taught Kawatsura’s teaching to Yoshiyasu was also a Shinto specialist actively promoting Kawatsura’s water purification ritual during this period. Yukihiro’s work, *Misogi Ritual Practice Guide*, had the endorsement of Hiranuma Kichihiro, the preface of Imaizumi Sadasuke, and the afterword of Takayama Noboru, and was appended with *guidelines to the Misogi Practice at the Central Training Institute of the Imperial Rule Assistance Association*. In the Guide, Yukihiro stated, “during the crisis of our imperial nation, we must revive the spirit of the imperial nation and realize the unified spirit of Japan by practicing the water purification ritual which is the mysterious movement resulted from the enactment of one’s nature” (Yukihiro 1943, 3).

It is true that in Kawatsura’s teaching there existed the possibility for a belief subjectivity, which refused assimilation by the nation-state, to emerge from the overlapping space of the emperor-system state and popular belief. If the emperor system was not used for private interest, the centre would maintain its balance and serve the whole collectively. Here one notices the possibility of the emperor system as a ‘selfless apparatus’, the possibility first envisioned by Motoori Norinaga. When the emperor was used to serve a particularistic interest group, the decentred centre articulated by Kawatsura may be hypostatized. When retracing the historical process of such a hypostatization in pre-war Japan, we come to understand that church-state separation introduced in the post-war period, its evaluation aside, is an institution to prevent the kami from coming to the foreground through the mediation of the state.

With the effort of Kawatsura, Takayama, Imaizumi and Yukihiro, the bodily practice of purification ritual became an indispensable training for many Shinto priests. The practice of the water purification ritual popular among today’s shrines was systematized during this period although their names were forgotten because of defeat in war. The bodily practice of water purification as a technology of subject constitution saw phenomenal development in the second decade of the Showa Period (1925–1989).

### 5 Shinto as World Religion

The third leader of the Great Tōyō Church, Tomoyasu, from 1954, received instruction from Toda Yoshio, a graduate in religious studies from the University of Tokyo, and
others at Kokugakuin University, and progressed to third year in the master’s program while practicing yoga under the guidance at the Yoga Association. When Yoshiyasu died in 1971, Tomoyasu followed the footprint of his father in the water purification practice of Kawatsura under the guidance of the Miizukai Society to learn the teaching of the straight spirit and the unity of the universe. Returning Kawatsura’s teaching to its original focus on *Amenominakanushi no kami*, Tomoyasu in the post-war period intended to go beyond wartime imperialism as well as the post-war mainstream stance of Shinto being an ethnic religion. Precisely because post-war Japan lost its colonies, for Tomoyasu it was important to transcend self-ethnocentrism by opening Shinto up to other ethnicities and nations.

Then Tomoyasu attempted to establish an open subjectivity, without being limited to its interiority, through bodily practice, while renouncing statism. Because bodily practice refuses to be assimilated into the political structure of church-state separation, which divided state and religion into the public and private spheres, it represents a chance of relativizing both institutions of church-state unity and church-state separation. Through the deepening of bodily practice, a channel opens up for establishing a subjectivity of belief which resists identification with the state or *kami* and also refuses to be devoured by one’s own subjectivity.

The *kami* itself, however, remains unchanged and remains the subjectivity unable to materialize. *Kami* as the other that refuses segmentation and materialization turns into the subjectivity calling upon humans to act. Depending on how the voice is heard by humans, the form of existence of the *kami* itself changes as the form of human society changes. In a given historical context, humans give name to *kami* and make it manifest in society by way of thought and bodily practice. The words of Tomoyasu, “Praying to Heaven and Prostrating before the Earth,” which was told to me personally, demonstrate a stage of belief reached by the leaders of Great Tōyō Church after going through difficult times. The Fushimi Inari Mountain, today as in the past, continues to be the womb engendering diverse subjectivities of belief.

Here I would like to conclude this article by explaining how anthropology of religion has developed Asad’s critique on the Protestant notion of religion. Following Asad’s argument, the critique of the notion of religion opens the gate to the discussion on religious subjectification which is totally distinguished from a secular one. For Asad, religion as a method of subjectification breaks the boundaries between the religious and the secular and bridges the sphere of the private and that of the public.

In terms of Asad’s critique, it is now obvious the Western secularism coupled with a Protestant notion of religion is not universal all over the world. It questions the superiority of secular subjectification, basing on the binary thinking that the West is civilized whereas the non-West is uncivilized. Anthropology started to presume this binary division, on the other hand nowadays, it has turned to reflect its own locality of each tradition without prejudice of evolutionism like with the notion of ‘world religions’. It can be a method opening the gate to recognize the diversity subjectification beyond the dichotomy of the West and non-West.
However, I do not claim that public religion is right whilst private religion is wrong. Under the Japanese emperor system, public religion had served as a governmental means to establish totalitarian homogeneity in society by mobilizing both public discourse and bodily emotion. On the other hand, public religion also ushers religious plurality to challenge homogeneity. Therefore, the function of public religion is principally ambivalent, and may lead to either heterogeneity or homogeneity, or both.

Lastly, the structure of religious subjectification is composed of subject, mystical Other and transference of emotion. A mystical Other may play the crucial role in constructing individual subjectivity, depending on whether one takes a secularist or religionist standpoint. If one takes the secularist standpoint, individual subjectivity does not need a mystical Other because rational subjectivity is independent of the other’s gaze. From the standpoint of religionist subjectification, however, individual subjectivity was necessitated by the gaze of the mythical Other (Lacan 1973, 203–263). Individual subjectivity must always negotiate with the gaze of the mythical Other to renew itself.

Needless to say, Asad’s argument on religious subjectification comes from Michel Foucault’s notion of the technology of the self. But the Foucauldian argument lacks a religious dimension, as it deals only with individual subjectivity not collective subjectivity (Foucault 2005, 491–505). Adding Lacanian theory of the mythical Other to Foucauldian subjectification allows us to expand the theory of religious subjectification from the private sphere into the public sphere.

The case of Japanese modern religions leads us to the discussion on the degree of religious freedom under State Shinto, a public religion system. What kind of freedom or tolerance does a public religion system provide? What is the possibility and impossibility of public religion? The history of Shinto as an imperial religion provides ample examples of how to rethink the boundaries defined by Western-centric notions of world religion and national religion (Masuzawa 2005, chap. 3).

Bibliography


