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# Shintō Shrines and Secularism in Modern Japan, 1890–1945

*A Case Study on Kashihara Jingū*

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## Abstract

From the late eighteenth century to WWII, shrine Shintō came to be seen as a secular institution by the government, academics, and activists in Japan (Isomae 2014; Josephson 2012, Maxey 2014). However, research thus far has largely focused on the political and academic discourses surrounding the development of this idea. This article contributes to this discussion by examining how a prominent modern Shintō shrine, Kashihara Jingū founded in 1890, was conceived of and treated as secular. It also explores how Kashihara Jingū communicated an alternate sense of space and time in line with a new Japanese secularity. This Shintō-based secularity, which located shrines as public, historical, and modern, was formulated in antagonism to the West and had an influence that extended across the Japanese sphere. The shrine also serves as a case study of how the modern political system of secularism functioned in a non-western nation-state.

## Keywords

religion – secularism – Shintō – modernization – nation-state – center-periphery

## Introduction

The validity of theories on secularization which take Western Europe as their model to Asian and other non-Western areas has increasingly been called into question. Japan in particular has proved an important example of how secularism developed in significantly different ways outside the West in the

process of modernization. Various accounts have traced the development of the concept of religion and the secular in modern Japan (Isomae 2012, 2014; Josephson 2010; Maxey 2014; Shimazono 2009, 2010). This research has focused particularly on how the political and/or academic discourse led to the adoption and modification of these modern concepts by the Meiji government in its efforts to create a stable modern nation-state able to compete with the West.

The discourse on religion and the secular was initially limited to elites in Japan. Yet eventually, these concepts became embedded into the shared consensus of Japanese society (Isomae 2012: 242). While the national school system, the rising number of war dead, and national body (*kokutai* 国体) theory were perhaps more important in the Japanese government's efforts to create such a shared consciousness, Shintō shrines were one of the most visible institutions utilized for this purpose. This article, taking the modern Shintō shrine Kashihara Jingū 檜原神宮 as a case study, demonstrates how the newly-born concept of the 'secular'<sup>1</sup> was applied to and enacted at Shintō shrines in order to communicate and foster a Japanese secularity based around the Imperial house that was seen as distinct from (and often superior to) a Western secularity.<sup>2</sup> Shintō rites and their shrines were positioned as public rather than private, modern rather than primitive, and as objective history rather than contestable myth. Kashihara Jingū served a particularly important role in supporting this new secularity as the physical location of the birthplace of a Japanese conceptualization of space and time.

### Religion and Secularism in Japan

While scholars have struggled to reach a consensus on defining 'religion' and its sibling concept 'the secular,' post-colonial research has argued that both are

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- 1 While post-colonial scholars often see religion and the secular as modern inventions, Kleine argues that the binary between transcendence (*lokottara/shusseken* 出世間) and immanence (*laukika/seken* 世間), imported from India through medieval Japanese Buddhism, should be seen as a binary between religious and secular spheres. Interestingly, the *kami* of shrines in this premodern binary were usually considered *laukika*, which Kleine considers equivalent to the secular sphere (Kleine 2013: 18).
  - 2 I reserve the term *secularism* for the "political doctrine" (Asad 2003: 16) included within the project of modernization (*bunmei-kaika* 文明開化, *kindai-ka* 近代化) that recategorizes the world into secular (*mushūkyō* 無宗教), superstitious (*meishin* 迷信), and religious (*shūkyō* 宗教) spheres (Josephson 2012: 260–261). The term *secularity* indicates the reality consensus of reality promoted within a system of secularism.

modern concepts intimately connected with the development of the nation-state in Western Europe (Asad 1993, 2003; Masuzawa 2005; Nongbri 2013). While medieval Christians in Europe often perceived what are now called religions within a unified heresiological framework, the word ‘religion’ began to take on the defining aspects of the modern concept—an internal privatization and a focus on belief over action—from as early as the seventeenth century (Nongbri 2013: 125). European states utilized the privatization of religion and an emphasis on doctrine as a means of stability when unable to limit its population to a single religion. By pushing ‘religion,’ that is, various religious sects, out of the sphere of universal truth into a private sphere, the nation-state was able to create stability based upon only the shared consensus of the populace<sup>3</sup> (Nongbri 2013: 101). Thus, the state could control the public secular sphere, while the disruptive doctrinal disputes of the various Christian sects were defanged by being confined to the private sphere of religion. This secular sphere initially included within it supernatural elements that are now often considered ‘religious,’ such as the existence of a divine creator or ‘God-given rights’ (Taylor 1998: 33).

The concepts of religion and the secular have continued to change and develop. In the early nineteenth century, the English language discourse around religion largely divided the world into a fourfold hierarchical system, with Christianity at the top as the only true and universal religion. This fourfold concept of world religions declined, and the mid-nineteenth to early twentieth century was characterized by “the destabilization, the collapse, and the reconstitution of the classificatory logic” of religion. This led to a flattened list of twelve or so world religions by the 1920s, which were united together in their increasing marginalization by liberal secularism (Masuzawa 2005: 307; Taylor 1998: 270).

### *Religion in Japan*

Japan was first forced to deal with the modern concept of religion in 1853, during the period when the fourfold hierarchical concept of world religions was weakening (Josephson 2012: 1). Japan did not adopt the concept of religion without modification but went through a process in which the concept was slowly adapted to the Japanese context. According to Isomae, the first period was the establishment of the originally Buddhist term *shūkyō* 宗教 as the translation for the English term religion. In the second period, *shūkyō* as a coined

3 However, the final arbitrator of the “core principles” which form the basis of the shared consensus is the state (cf. Asad 2003: 4–6).

term to designate a foreign concept was equated with Western civilization. At this point, Western, civilized, and Christian were nearly equivalent terms and, under the still common hierarchical conception of world religions, Christianity continued to be seen as the only *true* religion. Many Japanese customs were prohibited as superstitions (*meishin* 迷信) in the name of civilizing Japan, and people scrambled to prove various Japanese traditions were not inferior to Christianity (Isomae 2014: 233). In these early years, the Meiji government considered turning the loose collection of Shintō rites into a national religion—religion which takes Christianity as its model—and these efforts influenced the Taikyō Senpu 大教宣布 (Promulgation of the Great Teachings) movement in the 1870s to early 1880s.

The hierarchical conception of world religions which placed Christianity as the highest truth was in decline by the late nineteenth century. Also, an evolutionary view of religion gained influence in Japan and, along with conflicts between religion and state, led to the third period of religion's embedding process (Isomae 2012: 235). It was during this period in the 1880/90s that Shintō slipped into the category of the secular as a form of morality rather than religion (Josephson 2012: 155; Maxey 2014: 233; Nitta 2000: 269). The concept of religion finally became firmly embedded into Japan during the fourth period, marked by the establishment of a professorship in religious studies at Tokyo Imperial University in 1905 (Isomae 2012: 241).

### *Secular Shintō*

Although the ideal of *saisei itchi* 祭政一致 (Unification of Rite and Governance)—one of the fundamental ideologies underpinning the legitimacy of the Meiji government—connected Shintō rites and their shrines to the Imperial institution from the beginning of the Meiji period, the concepts of religion and the secular remained vague and unclear in late-nineteenth century Japan. The concept of a secular sphere could only be legally clarified after a religious sphere had been established with the “religious settlement” that occurred in the 1880s (Maxey 2014: 14). With the increasingly clear distinction between secular Shintō as comprising the rites of the state and religious Shintō in the form of sect Shintō,<sup>4</sup> Shrine Shintō was molded into a form of morality (*dōtoku* 道徳)

4 An interesting gap between foreign and Japanese understandings of Shintō can be seen by reading through the record of the World's Parliament of Religion held in Chicago in 1893. The Western organizers present Rev. Reuchi Shibata, head of Jikkō-kyō (a denomination of sect Shintō) as the representative of “the state religion of Japan—the Shinto religion” and the “High Priest of the Shinto Religion in Japan” (Barrows 1893: 90, 168). But Rev. Shibata reminds his listeners that he “only represents [his] own Shinto sect” and later draws a

(Isomae 2014: xix; Nitta 2000: 259). This served as a basis for a Japanese secularity that provided Buddhists and Christians with the religious freedom they desired while protecting the imperial ideology of the state from contestation (Maxey 2014: 233).

After the enactment of the Meiji Constitution in 1890, the modern concept of religion was largely incorporated into modern Japan. The active discourse around the 1900 Religion Bill established a generic vocabulary of religion, with terms like *kyōkai* 教会 (church), *kyōha* 教派 (denomination), and *kyōshi* 教師 (cleric) being applicable to Christianity, Buddhism, and Sect Shintō (Maxey 2014: 220).<sup>5</sup> However, shrine Shintō was left out of this religious sphere through the use of an entirely different vocabulary. This is most obvious in the terms that came to be standard for Shintō, Buddhism, Christianity, and sect Shintō. Historically, both the characters *tō* 道 and *kyō* 教 were used for Shintō and Buddhism, but after the Meiji Restoration, Shintō used only the character *tō*, with its focus on praxis, while Buddhism, Christianity, and sect Shintō groups used the character *kyō*, which emphasizes doctrine.<sup>6</sup> With the focus of religion on doctrine (*kyō*) and the focus of the secular on praxis (*tō*), a unifying national identity could be demanded from Japanese subjects through ritual action without impinging upon freedom of belief (Josephson 2012: 139). Thus the everyday vocabulary reinforced the distinction between religion and secular Shintō.

While this construction allowed Japanese subjects to hold private beliefs and participate in the shared consensus by using the vocabulary and forms of Shintō in the public secular sphere (Josephson 2012: 161), this is not contrary to the argument that shrines were designated non-religious for political reasons; they were. But the popular postwar idea of shrine Shintō as ‘actually’ a religion<sup>7</sup> despite secular treatment assumes an idea of religion as a static concept innate

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clear distinction between the Shintō “which every Japanese, no matter what creed—even Buddhism, Christianity, etc.—he belongs, must walk” and his own sect’s “religious form of Shinto” (Barrows 1893: 168, 452).

- 5 Buddhist temples were often granted the Buddhist-specific term *tera* 寺 as well, yet they still legally fell into the category of *kyōkai*, unlike shrines. Cf. Maxey (2014: 224–225).
- 6 This difference in vocabulary is especially noticeable when comparing shrine Shintō to sect Shintō. The buildings utilized in sect Shintō and shrine Shintō might look very similar, but the former is called a *kyōkai* (church) while the latter is called a *jinja* 神社 (shrine). Likewise, sect Shintō teachers, who tend towards sermons, were called *kyōshi* while the shrine Shintō ritualists, focusing on rites, were called *shinkan* 神官 (lit. *kami* official).
- 7 This debate over the religious nature of shrine Shintō (state Shintō) continues to be contentious. For an overview, consult Hardacre (2017: 355–357).

to humanity. As discussed above, the flattened concept of religion adopted by the Meiji government only gained international consensus in the early twentieth century, while the older concept of one ‘true’ religion (other ‘religions’ being half-mistaken imitations of it) continued to be used by some, sometimes in parallel with the newer concept.<sup>8</sup> This article looks at the position of Shintō shrines in secularism as part of/constituting *an invented political system*.

How was this new Shintō-based secularity of the Meiji state communicated to and embedded in the popular conception of reality? While mandatory schooling, war dead memorials, and public events perhaps played a greater part, Shintō shrines were one of the most visible institutions representing a distinctly *Japanese* secularity, in “antagonism” (Buntilov 2016: 6) with Western secularity.<sup>9</sup> Kashihara Jingū, a modern Shintō shrine built upon the site designated by the Meiji government as the location of the ancient palace where the legendary first Emperor of Japan was said to have had his enthronement rite, serves as a particularly influential example of how shrines communicated this Shintō-based secularity to the public.

### Kashihara Jingū

Kashihara Jingū was established as a *kanpei taisha* 官幣大社 (greater imperial shrine) in 1890 at the south-eastern foot of Mt. Unebi in Nara Prefecture (Figure 1). The location resembled descriptions of Jinmu’s Kashihara Palace given in ancient works like the *Kojiki* 古事記 (Records of Ancient Matters, 711–712) and *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀 (Chronicles of Japan, 720), and was near the ruins of Fujiwara-kyō, another early capital of the Yamato Court. Kashihara Jingū celebrated its main festival (*reisai* 例祭) on 11 February, national Foundation Day, while 3 April was noted as a “solemn festival” (Uta 1981a: 178, 443). The main kami (*gosaishin* 御祭神) was the legendary first emperor of Japan, Jinmu Tennō 神武天皇 (traditionally, 660–585 BCE), and his empress consort. While many scholars today consider Jinmu fictional (Antoni and Antoni 2017: 17–19), from the Meiji period until the end of the war, Jinmu was depicted as a historical

8 For example, John Barrows, a prominent American protestant, gave lectures positioning Christianity as the only true religion in 1896 (Seager 2009: 140), and Kondō Yoshihiro in his 1943 work on overseas Shintō shrines argues for Shintō as the one true religion of Asia (334). Both these scholars, however, also accepted a multicultural view based upon the flattened concept of religion to a certain degree.

9 I use the term “antagonism” to emphasize how the relationship was “more complex than direct opposition” and had elements of “borrowing and adaption” (Cf. Buntilov 2016: 6).



FIGURE 1 *Kashihara Jingu against the backdrop of Mt. Unebi*  
PHOTOGRAPH BY AUTHOR

person in schools and treated as factual in popular media. Furthermore as discussed above, the Meiji state's model of ritual and politics relied upon praxis, rather than belief, to produce social cohesion (Josephson 2012: 139), making the historical existence of Jinmu of less importance than how Jinmu was treated as historical in that period.

With the development of national learning (*kokugaku* 国学) during the Edo period (1603–1868), Japanese scholars began to take an interest in the location of ancient sites mentioned in records like the *Nihon shoki* and *Kojiki*. The location of the tumulus of Jinmu attracted particular attention, with Tokugawa officials and scholars such as Moto'ori Norinaga visiting the Kashihara area to investigate possible historical locations of the tumulus (Itō 2002: 67). While the Meiji government affirmed the location that the Tokugawa government had recognized in 1863, the first petition for establishing the location of Jinmu's Kashihara Palace was in 1887. Nishiuchi Narisato 西内成郷, a local assembly member and an imperial tumulus guardsman, submitted a proposal to the governor of Osaka calling for the erection of a monument identifying the site of Jinmu's Kashihara Palace. A year later Nishiuchi, who later became Kashihara Jingu's first chief ritualist, submitted the same proposal again, this time to the

Minister of Home Affairs (Naimu Daijin 内務大臣). After a series of discussions and surveys between the Imperial Household Ministry and Nara Prefecture, this led to official permission being given in March 1889 (Takagi 1997: 270).

As plans for a shrine advanced, the Imperial Household Ministry notified Nara Prefecture on 23 July that two buildings of the Kyoto Imperial Palace—the Kashikodokoro and Shinkaden—were to be given for use as the central structures of the shrine. Furthermore, on 20 March the Ministry of Home Affairs fixed Kashihara Jingū's status as *kanpei taisha*—the highest rank in the modern ranking system established in 1871—and bestowed the lump sum of ten thousand yen as its preservation fund (*hōzon-hi* 保存費) (Uta 1981a: 127–129). Kashihara Jingū had its official foundation on 2 April 1890, just in time to celebrate the national holiday of Jinmu Tennō-sai 神武天皇祭 as a major festival.

After its foundation, Kashihara Jingū grew in popularity. Beginning in 1911, the state gave permission for an expansion of the shrine, with funds coming from the imperial household, the national government, and private donations. The first phase included almost doubling the grounds in size from about 6.7 hectares to 12.1 hectares, while a new train line improved access (Kashihara Jingū-chō 1989). Furthermore, the government bought the land between Jinmu's tumulus and the shrine, relocating the villages within, to form the 13.2-hectare Unebi Park. Plans for such a park had been discussed since the late nineteenth century between Nara Prefecture and civilian groups, such as the Kashihara Shin'en-kai 橿原神苑会 started by local Ishihara Jikichi, but the park only came into existence after Kashihara Jingū's second chief ritualist, Kuwahara Yoshiki 桑原芳樹, a former ritualist (*gongūji* 権宮司) of Ise Jingū 伊勢神宮, petitioned the Minister of Home Affairs in 1911. Kuwahara's petition brought an end to the civilian-organized Shin'en-kai and in 1912 the shrine established the Kashihara Jingū Kōsha 橿原神宮講社 to coordinate fundraising from subjects across the nation (Takagi 2006: 59). Although a second phase of the expansion called for further improvements, plans were truncated and the expansion considered complete in 1926 (Uta 1981b: 216).

Modern rail transportation encouraged visits to Kashihara Jingū and an average of 367 thousand passengers a year debarked at Sanpai Insen Unebi Station near Kashihara Jingū between 1915 and 1918 (Uta 1981a: 745). The shrine continued to receive formal visits from the Emperor, Prime Minister, and other government officials.<sup>10</sup> Shrine ritualists such as Uta Shigemaru 菟田茂丸, the

10 For example, the Minister of Finance visited in 1921, the Minister of the Imperial Household in 1925, the Minister of Education in 1937, the Minister of External Affairs in 1939, the Minister of the Interior and the Minister of War in 1941. Cf. Uta (1981a, 1981b).



fifth chief ritualist of the shrine, were actively involved in educational activities such as publishing pamphlets and books about Jinmu and the Kashihara Palace (Uta 1921, 1922, 1940), giving lectures, and holding museum exhibitions of its treasures (Uta 1981b: 98, 167, 335, 101).

The year 1940 marked the 2600th anniversary of Jinmu's enthronement rite at Kashihara, celebrated as the founding moment of Japan. As this anniversary approached, civilian groups, companies, and local governments across the empire planned celebratory events. Kashihara Jingū, as the shrine constructed upon that site, was the focus of many of these celebrations. The national government formed the Kigen 2600-nen Shukuten Junbi Iinkai 紀元二千六百年祝典準備委員会 (2600th Anniversary Celebration Bureau) in 1935, whose fundraising was supplemented in 1937 by the semi-governmental Kigen 2600-nen Hōshuku-kai 紀元二千六百年奉祝会 (Association to Celebrate the 2600th Anniversary). The 2600th Anniversary Celebration Bureau sponsored another expansion of Kashihara Jingū, largely funded by private donations collected by Association to Celebrate the 2600th Anniversary. New inner and outer *haiden* 拝殿 buildings were constructed, while an outer garden (*gaien* 外苑) including dormitories, a museum, and athletic facilities was added to the shrine (Ruoff 2010: 42). The Nara Prefectural government encouraged volunteer labor brigades (*kenkoku hōshitai* 建国奉仕隊), based on the youth group volunteer service used by Meiji Jingū and similar to Miyazaki Jingū's volunteer labor brigades, to come from across the empire to donate their labor to the shrine. Of particular significance was the tree planting, with over twenty thousand trees being donated from across the empire (Kashihara Jingū-chō 1989).

Kashihara Jingū received a record amount of visitors in 1940, with 1.25 million visitors recorded during the first three days of the year. Foundation Day attracted 700 thousand visitors (Ruoff 2010: 99). Athletic competitions and martial arts demonstrations were held in the shrine's outer garden to celebrate the anniversary and the shrine received visits from dignitaries including the Showa emperor and Emperor Puyi of Manchuria (Ruoff 2010: 60). Places as far away as Manchuria (Ruoff 2010: 59) and Hawai'i (Maeda 1999: 107) as well as international groups such as the Congress for Overseas Brethren meeting in Tokyo (Ruoff 2010: 157) performed *yōhai* 遥拝 (reverence from afar) towards Kashihara Jingū. Thus 1940 marked the height of Kashihara Jingū's popularity in the public consciousness.

### A Modern, Public, Historical Site

The modern concept of religion was defined in contrast to the secular and superstition (Josephson 2012: 5). While the religious sphere was private and contestable, things public and “factual” fell into the secular sphere. Aligning with the evolutionary view of religion as an intermediate stage between superstition and truth, the secular sphere was associated with modernity—trains, electricity, western science—while religion was associated with outdated or primitive customs (Asad 2003: 13). Shintō, with its emphasis on ritual, was often seen not only by foreigners, but also by some westernizing Japanese as a religion in the most primitive stages. With the imperial institution intimately linked to Shintō, this view was a danger to the new Meiji government (Maxey 2014: 141). As discussed above, new concepts of religion and the secular which protected the imperial institution were largely in place in Japan by 1890, the same year Kashihara Jingū was established. Kashihara Jingū was founded as a public institution—a government institution similar to a park, gymnasium, or museum. While the shrine’s most important role was to perform the rites of the nation, how Kashihara Jingū was treated as a modern secular site needs consideration first.

The original impetus for founding Kashihara Jingū was not specifically as a ritual space, but as a monument at a historical site related to national history. The early documents discussing the Kashihara Palace site (*ato* 跡) called for its preservation (*hazon* 保存) and the building of a monument (*kenpi* 建碑) (Uta 1981a: 3, 20). In the years following, the government held multiple inquiries and investigations, and identified a site to the southeast of Mt. Unebi as that described in the classics. By April 1889, specific discussions about a shrine (*shinden* 神殿) were being held in Takaichi district, which then included the Kashihara area, and the official foundation of the shrine as Kanpei Taisha Kashihara Jingū occurred on 2 April 1890 (Uta 1981a: 47).

To petitioners like Nishiuchi and to the national government which supported his proposal, the significance of Kashihara Jingū lay in the history of the site. This proposal was not the first nor only one aiming to construct a building for revering Jinmu near his tumulus. For example, Shinkai Umemaro of nearby Imai Town formed the Unebi Kyōkai in 1882, and the national instructor (*kyōdōshoku* 教導職) Okuno Jinshichi helped form the Unebi Kashihara Kyōkai Hon’in 畝傍檣原教会本院 in 1889, led by the former lord of Miyazu Domain. Both societies drew up unsuccessful plans to build shrine buildings (*shinden*, *yōhai-sho*) near Jinmu’s tumulus. However, as the term *kyōkai* (‘church’) implies, these societies differed significantly from Kashihara Jingū in that they drew influence from the semi-religious Taikyō Senpu movement and promoted

a more doctrinal-based reverence for Jinmu focused on his tumulus. These groups continued activities alongside Kashihara Jingū until 1903, but the relationship was not always cordial: Nishiuchi, finding a problem with Okuno's radical personality and inability to differentiate between private and public, succeeded in having Tokyo revoke Unebi Kashihara Kyōkai's license as an organization in 1903 (Takagi 2006: 25–27). This suggests the importance Nishiuchi, as chief ritualist of Kashihara Jingū, placed on the separation between private religion and public shrines.

In the twentieth century, Kashihara Jingū continued to be seen as a historical site. The Ministry of Education undertook a project under the sponsorship of the 2600th Anniversary Celebration Bureau from 1937 to 1940, where a committee of professors from Japan's top universities investigated the legitimacy of thirty-six historical sites related to Jinmu based on written documentation and fieldwork. Kashihara was one of only two sites given unqualified recognition by the committee. The Ministry of Education was also in charge of a related project to build a museum of national history. While the original plans were scrapped, private donations organized by the Nara prefectural government funded a museum in the same spirit, the Yamato Kokushikan, within Kashihara Jingū's outer garden (Ruoff 2010: 40–42). The Kashihara palace and Jinmu also featured in textbooks and popular history books. In these books, Kashihara is depicted as a factual historical site rather than a site of legend or myth. An ethics textbook published for fifth-grade students in 1928<sup>11</sup> writes matter-of-factly that over 2580 years have passed since Jinmu had his enthronement rite and includes a lithographic illustration of the Jinmu performing his filial rite (*gotairei* 御大礼) on nearby Mt. Tomi (Figure 2). In this way, national and local governments, as well as civilian works, treated Kashihara Jingū as a historical site similar to other secular sites of Japanese national history in both official and popular contexts.

Histories about the shrine emphasized the site as factual history. Abbreviated histories (*Godenkiryaku* 御伝記略記, *Ryakki* 略記) describe the surveys and research that went into legitimating the site. They also remark on the many historical sites located on or near the shrine grounds. Furthermore, as mentioned above, the Yamato Kokushikan museum was built within shrine grounds (Uta 1981a: 178, 1981b: 747), making the shrine not only the subject of historical research but also a place for learning about Japanese history. Uta Shigemaru, the fifth chief ritualist of the shrine authored multiple books in the 1920s that detailed the 'history' of Jinmu and the Kashihara site as the first capital of

11 Cf. Watanabe (2013: 24–25) for a reprint of this passage.

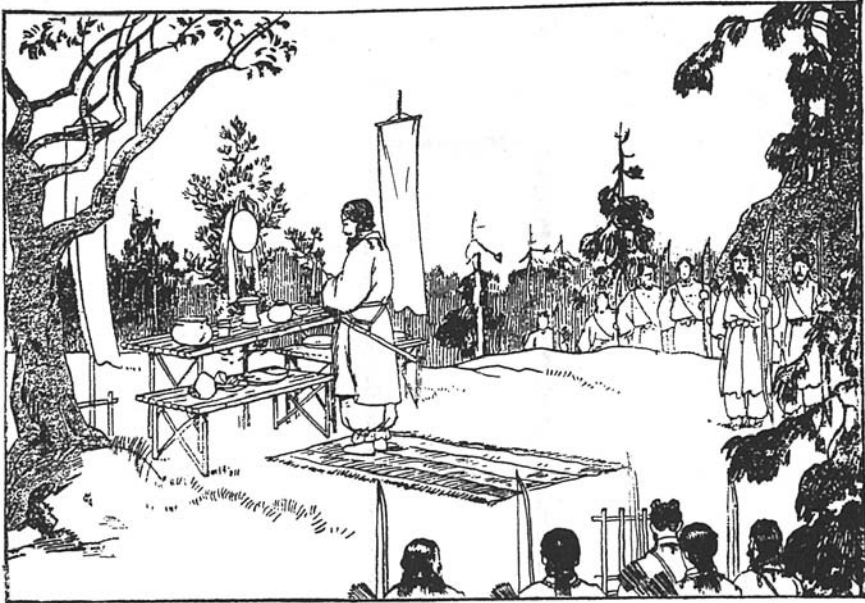


FIGURE 2 “Today over 2580 years have passed since the enthronement of Emperor Jinmu”

Japan.<sup>12</sup> These books, while written for a popular audience, drew on academic works (Uta 1981b: 499) and included historical maps, illustrations based on archaeological evidence, lineage charts, and study questions asking readers to recall exact names and dates relating to the history related in the book.

Kashihara Jingū also served as a public facility. As discussed above, civilian groups had suggested plans as early as 1882 to build a shrine at Jinmu’s tumulus. But the identification and maintenance of tumuli were part of an effort to provide the imperial house with a history to match that of Western imperial houses, making them private assets of the imperial house (Takagi 2006: 180). The establishment of Kashihara Jingū at Mt. Unebi rather than the tumulus led to a division of ritual, with the shrine focused on rites for the public and the tumulus site focused on the imperial house’s private rites, in a division similar to that seen later between Meiji Jingū in Tokyo and the Meiji emperor’s tumulus in Momoyama (Yamaguchi 2005: 200).

As a public site, easy and modern access to the shrine itself was necessary and the first expansion of the shrine extended the railway in 1893 at Unebi Station. As the popularity of the shrine grew, the rail system further expanded to

12 In particular, see Uta (1921, 1922, 1940).



FIGURE 3 *Fukada Lake at Kashihara Jingū*  
PHOTOGRAPH BY AUTHOR

open up two more stations near the shrine, Kashihara Jingū-mae Station in 1923 and Yamato Ikejiri Station in 1929. During the 1940 anniversary improvements, the old Kashihara Jingū-mae Station was moved to its current location and Yamato Ikejiri Station was renamed Kashihara Jingū Nishiguchi Station. The Kashihara shrine grounds underwent landscaping and beautification projects to turn it into a forested park and lakeside to be enjoyed by the public (Figure 3). While the stated purpose included the idea of returning the land to the forested purity of Jinmu's age, a serene forested outer garden is a modern characteristic, with the *gaien* originally referring to the outer precincts of a palace and having precedents in the constructed purity of the forests of Ise Jingū and Meiji Jingū (Yamaguchi 2005: 82–84). Volunteer labor and the donation of money and trees from Japanese subjects across the empire<sup>13</sup> gave not

13 This included financial or labor donations from residents of Hokkaidō, Okinawa, Taiwan, Korea, Karafuto, Kwantung, Manchuria, China, Mongolia, India, Germany, and the South Pacific (Uta 1981b: 73, 523), with tree donations coming from as far away as Taiwan, Korea, and Manchuria (Uta 1982: 687).

only to residents of the local Kashihara area, but to all imperial subjects a connection to the shrine. This was fostered by diverse media such as illustrations of the shrine sold at department stores, and radio and television broadcasts about the shrine ceremonies<sup>14</sup> which allowed those unable to travel to the shrine to still experience it. Activities at the shrine were not limited to the enjoyment of nature, as the Kashihara Arena in the outer gardens included the Yamato Kokushikan museum, a conference hall, dormitory, library, athletic facilities, and an outdoor theater. Kashihara Jingū also became a popular destination for school field trips for local children as well as students from the colonies (Ruoff 2010: 99).

Shintō, when put in competition with Christianity as a religion, was in danger of being dismissed as primitive animism: something would serve poorly as a state religion. One of the ways scholars and politicians in the Meiji period defended Shintō from this claim was to argue that Shintō was no mere contestable religion, but something more than that, able to encompass all religions within its framework (Nitta 2000: 262). Kokugaku scholars, and the Meiji ideologues influenced by them, saw Shintō as hearkening back to an ancient past when humans were purer and more closely connected to the truth of reality. At the same time these scholars and ideologues posited Shintō at the cutting edge of modernity as a way to not only encompass technology but also understand its underlying nature with a fullness western science still lacked (Josephson 2012: 96–97). This compatibility of ancient customs with modern technology could be experienced at Kashihara Jingū.

First, encounters with Kashihara Jingū were linked to encounters with modern technology. Many visitors to Kashihara Jingū arrived at and left the shrine by train. Photographs show how visitors in sharp morning coats mingled naturally with shrine priests in classical Japanese garb. The deep beat of the taiko drum during rites at Kashihara Jingū left a deep impression on school children in Korea, who listened to it over the radio (Ruoff 2010: 31). Colored photography captured the brilliant dress of Kashihara Jingū's shrine maidens (Uta 1981b: front matter), while the masses could watch the Emperor's entourage, arriving in sleek automobiles, pay their respects at the shrine on news films (Nippon Nyūsu Eiga-sha 1940).<sup>15</sup> Modern technology became part and parcel of experiencing Kashihara Jingū, whether in person or from afar.

14 For examples, see Ruoff (2010), who examines the massive popularity of Kashihara Jingū and the narratives surrounding Jinmu in the home islands and overseas.

15 The segment on Kashihara Jingū was mixed in with other depictions of modern Japan, including a cheerful inter-university swim meet and a report celebrating the strength of German and Japanese military technology.

Second, ancient customs and modernity were often portrayed together. In 1940, a *naorai* 直会 (communal meal), attended by nineteen hundred people, was held after the ritual announcing the completion of improvements to the shrine. While this meal celebrated an improvement project impossible to complete without modern technologies, it was served on commemorative dishes copied from Sue pottery, the “ceremonial pottery of our ancient ancestors” (Uta 1981b: 706–717). This harmony between ancient Japan and modernity is also portrayed in pamphlets issued by the shrine. The pamphlet *Hajime no Tennō* はじめの天皇, written by chief ritualist Uta Shigemaru, consists of an account of Jinmu’s eastward expedition (*tōsei* 東征) to eventually found his capital at Kashihara. It is written in a didactic manner and comes complete with historical maps, genealogical charts, photographs of historical sites, and questions to check the reader’s understanding. The simple illustrations in the book depict clothing and tools like swords, boats, and dishes (similar to the pottery used at the *naorai*) in the manner that was presumed to be used during that period. This text further communicates the harmony between modernity and ancient purity with passages like the following. Jinmu laments that:

at that time [of Ninigi no Mikoto], the country was still undeveloped and people’s hearts were pure (*sunao* すなほ) ... but [now] in the faraway countries over there, there are bad people who conduct themselves selfishly. Thus the good people can not lay their heads down safely to sleep. It is very pitiful ... If I recall, the man who had previously visited that country was my relative Nigihayahi no Mikoto. Since this is so, I want to hurry and go to establish a capital there.

This passage is followed by questions such as “Who was the man who had previously ridden an airship to the Yamato basin?” (Uta 1981a: 799–800) and accompanied by an illustration of the airship which looks remarkably like a dirigible (Figure 4). Modernity and antiquity were depicted in perfect harmony together.

Third, Kashihara Jingū was often associated with new customs and the international stage. An example is found in another pamphlet published by the shrine, *Hajime no Miyako* はじめの都. Published in 1922 and distributed by public offices such as the police station (Uta 1981b: 70), the pamphlet begins with a brief history of the Kashihara palace in antiquity. But the majority of it consists of a Socratic dialogue between various persons. The dialogues depict Kashihara Jingū as representative of the new international Japan. In one dialogue, a “government official” expresses his resolve to “pioneer a new



飛船ノ圖

FIGURE 4  
*The airship of Nigihayahi no Mikoto (Uta*  
*1981a: 800)*

COURTESY OF KASHIHARA JINGŪ

example” (*shinrei o hiraite* 新例を、開いて) of visiting Kashihara Jingū in addition to Ise Jingū. In another dialogue, a husband and wife discussing where to bring their child for its Hatsumiya mairi 初宮参 (first shrine visit) ritual decide on Kashihara Jingū because Japan is now “ranked among the world’s three strongest nations” and modern Japanese citizens must make children into “international people” (*sekaiteki jinbutsu* 世界的人物) (Uta 1981b: 33–36). The pamphlet ends with a poem attributed to the American author Frances Burnett (1849–1924). Her poem, done in beautiful Japanese calligraphy and with her name written in Japanese style (family name first), demonstrates how the modern West could be seamlessly subsumed into a Japanese framework.

### *A Reflection of the Imperial Reality*

Kashihara Jingū acted as a modern public historical site—that is, as a secular institution. But how was what might be considered the most strongly ‘religious’ duty of the shrine—that of ritual—considered secular? As discussed above, the opposite of the secular is not necessarily the supernatural; rather, the secular designates a public sphere based on a shared consensus that can be considered universal to all citizens. From the beginning of the Meiji period, Shintō ritual was incorporated as the ideological basis of the new government



that had formed around and drew its legitimacy from the Emperor. The rites performed by and in connection with the imperial house were part of the incontestable reality upon which the new nation-state was built, and thus fell into the Japanese secular sphere (Maxey 2014: 22). The ritual of Kashihara Jingū reflected this imperial ritual and connected subjects to the imperial house as the heart of the national body. The manner in which Kashihara Jingū reflected imperial ritual can be seen by looking at the types of festivals celebrated, the shrine's architecture, the vocabulary used, and those participating in the rites.

The major festivals of Kashihara Jingū, like those of all state shrines, largely aligned with the previously established national holidays of the nation (Thal 2005: 157). The majority of the prewar national holidays in Japan were established in 1873 with the enactment of the holiday ordinance.<sup>16</sup> While this is discussed further below, these new holidays mostly focused upon the imperial house. The two most important festivals of Kashihara Jingū were 11 February (Foundation Day) and 3 April (Emperor Jinmu's Anniversary), overlapping two of the previously established national holidays. Thus the festivals of Kashihara Jingū aligned with the schedule of national holidays already considered part of the secular state in 1890. Furthermore, Kashihara Jingū conducted irregular festivals concerning international events such as the first World War (Uta 1981a: 733), which illustrates how the shrine's rites were more concerned with secular affairs than 'religious' concerns like personal salvation.

The architecture of Kashihara Jingū also emphasized the shrine's role as a historical imperial palace, rather than a site confined to conducting religious rituals. This is most clearly demonstrated by the acquisition of actual buildings from the Kyoto Imperial Palace to be utilized by Kashihara Jingū as the *honden* 本殿 (the seat of the *kami*) and *haiden* (building where rites are conducted in front of the *honden*). Popular illustrations and books depicting the dwellings of the ancient emperors as resembling shrine architecture further strengthened this impression. Pamphlets published by the shrine typically described or depicted not only Jinmu's original Kashihara Palace, but also other ancient palaces (*miya* or *gū* 宮) as having the raised floors and *chigi* 千木<sup>17</sup> now emblematic of shrine architecture (Figure 5).

16 The full name of this ordinance, promulgated on 14 October 1873, is "Establishing Holidays for Yearly Festival and Celebratory Days" (Nenchū saijitsu shukujitsu no kyūkabi o sadamu 年中祭日祝日ノ休暇日ヲ定ム).

17 *Chigi* are X-shaped roof beams that are now usually ornamental. Ironically, the *honden* of Kashihara Jingū, as a former building of the imperial palace, does not possess *chigi*, but the *haiden* 幣殿 hallways directly in front of it does. Neither the *honden* nor *haiden* are easily



FIGURE 5

*The single-footed palace of Usatsu-hiko (Uta 1981a: 802). Note the raised floor and chigi.*

COURTESY OF KASHIHARA JINGŪ

Vocabulary also confirmed the idea of shrine Shintō rites as secular rather than religious. Other authors have discussed how a generic vocabulary of religion was developed in Japan (Isomae 2014: 98; Josephson 2012: 78–93, Maxey 2014: 220). Religions (*shūkyō*) such as Christianity (*Kirisutokyo* キリスト教), Buddhism (*Bukkyō* 仏), and sect Shintō (e.g. *Izumo Ōyashiro-kyō* 出雲社教) were defined by doctrine (*kyō*), while religious buildings were called churches (*kyōkai*). Shintō shrines such as Kashihara Jingū, however, were never referred to as churches, and as discussed above, Nishiuchi cut Kashihara Jingū off from civilian *kyōkai* in 1903 (Takagi 2006: 27), suggesting he saw the shrine as existing outside the grammar of religion. The most typical term for a shrine was *jinja* (神社 lit. *kami*-shrine), but Kashihara used the term *jingū* (神宮 lit. *kami*-palace)—a term reserved for shrines dedicated to an imperial ancestor. This further emphasized its function as a reflection of the imperial reality. Furthermore, Shintō ritualists were referred to as *shinkan* (神官 lit. *kami*-official) and then from 1894 as *shinshoku* (神職 lit. *kami*-occupation), both which lent a governmental dignity to ritualists.

The type of visitors the shrine received also connected Kashihara Jingū to the imperial house and positioned the rites as secular rites of the state. The Meiji

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viewable by the public and it is not uncommon for the roof of the *haiden* to be mistaken for that of the *honden*. (Personal communication with Yamada Keisuke 山田敬介, 20 May 2016).

emperor was said to have taken a personal interest in the shrine, and lauded Kashihara Jingū in his public poetry. Furthermore, members of the imperial house, including the Emperor, regularly paid official visits to Kashihara Jingū. The shrine was visited by foreign dignitaries such as Emperor Puyi of Manchuria, Crown Prince Yi Un of Korea, and Prince Yi Wu of Korea.<sup>18</sup> Shrine pamphlets encouraged local officials to consider visiting Kashihara Jingū as a regular part of their duty as a government official (Uta 1981b: 34–35). These shrine visits (*sanpai* 参拜) generally included not only a financial donation to the shrine, but active physical participation in the form of clapping and offering an evergreen branch, and then recording the visit using the visitors' government title (Uta 1981a: 862, 1891b: 943). Official visits were publicized in news reports and connected Kashihara Jingū to the government, imperial house, and its ritual. Thus, Kashihara Jingū was treated as a public historical site where government officials conducted national rites connected to the imperial house, which formed the basis of the modern Japanese nation.

### The Origin of Japanese Time and Space

Situated in the secular sphere, Kashihara Jingū had an especially influential role as an anchoring point for the Japanese notion of secularity. In the Meiji period, the government undertook the ambitious task of remaking Japan into a unified modern nation-state capable of challenging the Western imperial powers. How Japan would do this was not immediately settled at the time of the Restoration in 1868, but shifted and developed over several decades, eventually solidifying into a relatively stable ideology with the promulgation of the Meiji Constitution. Japanese secularism, as a political ideology that included establishing newly defined spheres—the secular, superstition, and religion—strove to embed a new sense of how subjects perceived reality. Kashihara Jingū had a central part in establishing some of the most foundational principles of the 'real': time and space. Furthermore, this Japanese secularity was formulated in antagonism to Western secularity, making it an alternative applicable to the continuously expanding 'Japanese' sphere, which came to include not only the home islands, but the outer territories, puppet states like Manchuria, and the Asia-Pacific population of the South Seas. Within this Japanese secularity,

18 The *Kashihara Jingū-shi* (1981a, 1981b), a collection of primary documents about the shrine, records over a hundred official visits (*sanpai*) by Japanese nobility from its foundation to 1942.

the physical birthplace of time and space (and thus history), and the original center of Japan, was Kashihara Jingū.

### *Linear and Cyclical Time*

The Meiji government traced its legitimacy back to the Yamato court legendarily founded by Emperor Jinmu with his enthronement rite at Kashihara—thus a *restoration* brought the change of government in 1868. Kashihara Jingū was built upon the site recognized by the Meiji government as that rite's supposed historical location. But the Kashihara site was not the only possible choice for the birthplace of Japan. The legend of Jinmu's eastward expedition begins in Miyazaki Prefecture in Kyūshū and concludes with him settling at Kashihara. In the late 1930s, Miyazaki Prefecture unsuccessfully campaigned to be recognized as the birthplace of Japan.<sup>19</sup> So although there were alternative possibilities for the *time* and *place* to mark the start of Japan, the enthronement rite at Kashihara became the start of national history. Calculated to have occurred in 660 BCE, that year marked the start of Japanese linear time using the newly established imperial calendar (*kōki* 皇紀),<sup>20</sup> not unlike how the year Christ is traditionally said to have been born marks the start of the Western calendar (*seireki* 西曆).<sup>21</sup> The adoption of linear time, using the imperial calendar, supported the government's move from the solar-lunar calendar based on Chinese models to the modern solar calendar.

Kashihara Jingū, as the site of the beginning of time, directly exhorted the value of the new solar calendar. The previously mentioned shrine-published pamphlet *Hajime no Miyako* presents a conversation between two “country folk” where the first laments that, despite the new calendar being in use for fifty years, people can't seem to let go of the old calendar and wonders how this situation might be resolved. His fellow replies by suggesting they transfer their lunar new year traditions to the nearby national holiday of Foundation Day (11 February) as the first step to improving their lifestyle (Uta 1981b: 33–34).

19 Cf. Ruoff (2010: 86–97) for more about Miyazaki's campaign for recognition.

20 *Kōki* is the common appellation for the calendar based on *Jinmu Tennō Sokui Kigen* 神武天皇即位紀元, lit. The Era of Emperor Jinmu's Enthronement.

21 The translation of Anno Domini into *seireki* is an example of how European concepts could be first secularized not in the West, but in the periphery, i.e., Japan (Josephson 2012: 103–104). Only relatively recently has the secularized version of Anno Domini—the Common Era—gained acceptance in English language publications. The new English term also demonstrates how secularism can be more coercive than religious pluralism. The Common Era insists that counting time from the traditional birth of Christ is common to all people regardless of ethnicity or religious identity.

This conversation illustrates how the praxis of celebrating the new holidays was more important than the mental reasoning (doctrine) attached to the celebrations themselves (Josephson 2012: 139; Thal 2005: 285).

Ruoff (2010) has amply demonstrated the increasing prominence of the Imperial calendar in Japanese society as the founding anniversary year of 2600 (1940 CE) approached. Popular works chronicled Japan's "2600 years of history,"<sup>22</sup> international scholars gave lecture series on the topic, and department stores held exhibitions about Jinmu's enthronement rite across the empire (Ruoff 2010: 73–76). Residing at the center of these celebrations of Japanese history was Kashihara Jingū. The major renovations and expansions the shrine underwent in anticipation of the anniversary and millions of visitors the shrine received have already been described above, but Kashihara Jingū's influence was not limited to those who could physically visit the shrine. Newsreels (Nippon Nyūsu Eigasha 1940) and radio (Ruoff 2010: 31) brought the ritual of Kashihara Jingū to Japanese subjects throughout the empire. Furthermore, Kashihara Jingū, while a modern shrine founded without connection to a specific shrine lineage, was located within the loose network of secular shrines that extended across the empire and into the Asia-pacific region by means of immigrants. Kashihara Jingū's position as a monument to the start of Japanese time extended across the Japanese sphere.

Connecting the start of Japanese linear time to the foundation of Japan by Jinmu and placing that start 660 years before the start of the Western calendar allowed the government to position the solar calendar not as a Western imposition, but rather as predating the West and intimately connected to the original pure Japan of an idealized antiquity, making it more relevant to the average Japanese subject than an arcane explanation based on foreign science did. Having the imperial calendar predate the Western calendar also allowed the government to claim superiority over the West as the oldest nation of the world, despite the West's technological advancement. This fit easily with the Restoration's ideal of unifying governance and ritual (*saisei itchi*) and restoring the purity of ancient times to the modern era.

In addition to the linear time of the imperial calendar, Kashihara Jingū also affirmed the yearly cycle of time established by the Meiji government. In 1873, the Meiji government adopted the solar calendar and, at the same time, created a new set of national holidays considered appropriate for a modern nation-state. While some of the holidays overlapped Edo period celebrations, these new holidays mostly lacked ideological connection to the holiday practices

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22 Cf. Fujitani (1940), Hirose (1940), and Ōgawa (1940) for examples.

of the Tokugawa government. The new year was shifted a month back to the solar new year and was celebrated with the lengthy national holiday of *Genshi sai* 原始祭. *Kigen setsu* 紀元節 (Foundation Day) on 11 February celebrated Jinmu's enthronement rite at Kashihara, 3 April saw the anniversary of Jinmu's passing memorialized, and the Autumn was marked by the Shintō harvest rites of *Niiname sai* 新嘗祭 and *Kanname sai* 神嘗祭. Kashihara Jingū, as discussed above, honored these holidays with rites, and in the case of the two holidays directly connected to Jinmu, became the focal point for celebrations held across the empire.

Here, it might be enlightening to make another brief foray into terminology. The term national holiday (*shukusai jitsu* 祝祭日) refers to two types of holidays: celebratory days (*shuku jitsu* 祝日) and festival days (*sai jitsu* 祭日). By 1927, the four celebratory days were esteemed as the Four Great Seasons (*shidai setsu* 四大節) while the rest of the holidays remained festival days. The difference between these two types of holidays seems to have been national significance rather than type. For example, the beloved Meiji emperor's birthday was designated a celebratory day while the short-reigning Taishō 大正 emperor's birthday remained a festival day. Furthermore, while the government eventually recognized only seven *national* festival days, shrines celebrated a large number of local festival days, from their yearly main festival (*rei sai*) to their regular monthly festival (*tsukinami sai* 月次祭). Subjects were encouraged to mirror this festival day schedule in their homes with actions such as placing additional foods before their home shrine. This overlap of terminology reinforced the idea that local shrine festivals were of the same secular nature as national festivals. With the major festivals of Kashihara Jingū either aligned with or the focus of national holidays, the shrine's rites served as a significant way in which the yearly cycle of time was communicated to subjects of the nation.

### *Space*

In addition to measuring time, Kashihara Jingū also became the birthplace—the original *center*—of 'Japan.' As discussed above, this was not uncontested. Yet it was Kashihara—now, with the advent of modern rail travel, located relatively close to Kyoto and Tokyo—that the government recognized as national birthplace. Although Kashihara may seem to be located on the periphery from the perspective of Tokyo, from the viewpoint of those living in overseas communities, Kashihara was located in the center of the world map (Figure 6).

This corresponds to the informal concentric pattern of centers reflected in the modern system of ranked shrines. This concentric model of Shintō rites, based on Hirata Atsutane's 平田篤胤 "territorial hierarchy" (Thal 2005: 116) of

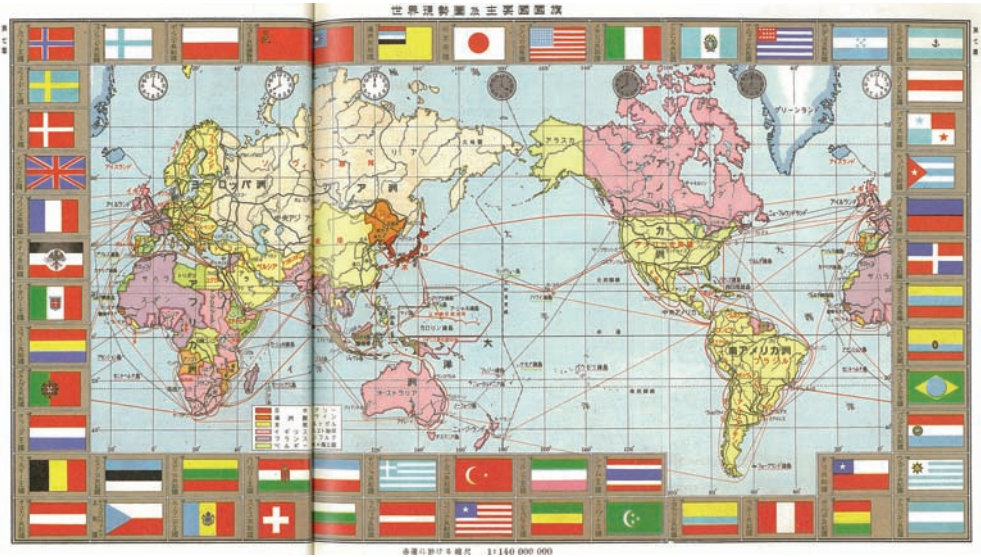


FIGURE 6 *The Japanese home islands replace Europe as the center of the world*  
MAMORIYA 1934: SEC. 7

shrines, positioned shrines as centers of their local community, but then connected individual shrines and their communities to the broader prefectural community through the local shrine's subordinate relationship with the prefectural shrine. The prefectural shrines likewise were connected to the center of Japan through veneration for national and imperial shrines. In other words, Kashihara Jingū became one of the important centers of Japan, helping bind the nation together.

Beyond being *a* center of Japan, Kashihara Jingū was *the* original center of Japanese space and time, in other words, the point from where all of Japanese history expanded.<sup>23</sup> In this capacity, the invocation of the foundation of the empire focused the attention of the entire nation on Kashihara Jingū. The shrine was also pointed to by the use of the phrase *hakkō ichiu* 八紘一宇 (lit. eight cords one roof), which came into prominence as the increasingly aggressive war on the Asian continent continued. *Hakkō ichiu* was derived from Jimmu's words on the occasion of embarking on the eastward expedition, a

23 Note that it was Kashihara Jingū, the site of Jimmu's palace, rather than his tumulus, that was the birthplace of Japanese history. While the two sites were connected, the shrine was a site of public ritual relating to the present world (*genze* 現世), while the tumulus never fully escaped its purpose as a site for private imperial reverence, connected to the other world (*meikai* 冥界). Cf. Takagi (2006: 192).

story that became prominent in the popular consciousness (Ruoff 2010: 14–15). The frequent invocation of Kashihara Jingū and the story of Jinmu's foundation of the nation helped instill a new sense of space and time among subjects, which formed the basis for a uniquely Japanese secularity.

### *Microcosm of the Nation*

Finally, Kashihara Jingū could be seen as a microcosm of the Japanese nation. At the center of the shrine was the legendary founder of Japan, enshrined in the imperial palace's former Kashikodokoro building. But the extensive shrine grounds surrounding this building were not constructed as an exclusive government project. Rather, the landscaping and improvement of the shrine grounds became possible due to thousands of imperial subjects, who donated their money, time, and labor (Kashihara Jingū-chō 1989). Particularly impressive was the reforestation effort the shrine underwent. The originally swampy site planned for the shrine was drained to expand Fukada Lake, and a massive effort was undertaken to recreate the forested landscape implied by the area's ancient name of Kashihara (榎原, lit. Oak-field). This included not only the planting of hundreds of oak saplings, but volunteers (*hōshitai* 奉仕隊) often brought trees from their hometowns to be replanted at the shrine (Kashihara Jingū-chō 1989). With this, the volunteers could contribute a living part of their hometown to become an integral part of the shrine. These volunteers came from across the Asia-Pacific area, including groups from Korea and Manchuria (Ruoff 2010: 63).

In addition to the labor and trees which were central to recreating a shrine/palace (*miya*) evoking the ancient Kashihara capital described the classics, the outer territories were incorporated as an vital part of the physical structure of the shrine buildings. In preparation for the 2600th anniversary celebrations, new larger *haiden* buildings were constructed. The massive supporting pillars of these structures could not be made of local cypress wood, but were harvested from the mountains of Taiwan by the indigenous tribes there—who were, at that time, Japanese subjects. Thus Kashihara Jingū, through its incorporation of plants, material, and labor from across the Asia-pacific, brought the periphery into the center and, in connection with the informal network making up shrine Shintō, allowed the center to be brought into the periphery, spiritually binding the center and periphery of the nation together. In this way, Kashihara Jingū could be seen as a microcosm of the Japanese nation, incorporating both the center and periphery at the site of the beginning of Japanese space and time.

Jinmu's legendary enthronement rite at Kashihara came to mark the birth of both Japanese space and linear time. Kashihara Jingū, founded at that site, became an anchoring point for Japanese secularity. This was in antagonism with the western conception of time and space, allowing Japan to claim to



be the older civilization and to place the Japanese home islands rather than Europe in the center of the world map, literally and ideologically. The combined start of space and time at Kashihara also made the site the birthplace of Japanese history, while the idealized restoration of Jinmu's palace (*miya*) and oak forest connected Japanese modernity back to the supposed purity of the ancient past. Kashihara Jingū also helped embed a different sense of cyclic time based upon the modern solar calendar and new holidays of the nation-state. This, combined with the melding of new technology and Shintō rites, brought subjects into a modern reality that did not feel like a western imposition, but rather a return towards the purity of Japanese antiquity. Thus Kashihara Jingū was an example of how "Japanese people were being won over to the civilization called for by Fukuzawa not through appeals to British social mores but by being taught about Shinto" (Josephson 2012: 153). Furthermore, as a center of Japan, Kashihara Jingū helped bind the Japanese nation together by incorporating the periphery into itself as an essential component, making the shrine into a microcosm of the nation. In a complementary manner, communities in the periphery could bring the center into themselves by mirroring the shrine's ritual on national holidays. All of this gave Kashihara Jingū a key role in incorporating a changed sense of some of the most basic elements of reality into the popular consensus and made Kashihara Jingū into a key anchor for Japanese secularity.

### Conclusion

Secularism, with its distinct categories of religion and the secular, was constructed as part of the project of modernity in Japan. While the role of shrines in this project was vague at the start of the Meiji period, they came to serve as "higher-order ideographs" (Josephson 2012: 155) in a new Japanese secularity. This article has examined two major aspects of modern shrine Shintō through the case study of Kashihara Jingū. First, it showed how Kashihara Jingū was largely conceived of and then acted as a modern secular site; that is, as a public historical site similar to a park, museum, or memorial. This conception was reinforced by the shrine's many associations with the government and Imperial institution. It was a site intimately connected with modern technology and the modern nation-state, and it helped construct and communicate to the public an idealized antiquity that was modern rather than primitive. Second, Kashihara Jingū, as the birthplace of Japanese space and time, served an especially important role in communicating a different sense of reality to Japanese subjects. Although this changed sense of time and space was based off the

Western model, it was formulated in antagonism with the West, allowing advocates to argue that the Japanese secularity was older and more authentic than the Western version—at least for Asia and the Pacific.

While Kashihara was unique as the birthplace of Japanese space and time, it shared its affirmation of a new Japanese secularity with the rest of modern shrine Shintō. As Thal concludes in her study of Kotohiragū 金刀比羅宮, “Shinto priests, as much as Western-educated intellectuals, sought to support the progress of Japan: they simply legitimized their version of ‘civilization’ with the authority of the gods and the culture of the nation, not the technological or geopolitical dominance of the West” (Thal 2005: 317). Shrines across the empire communicated—to a greater or lesser degree—the melding of modernity and antiquity, the changed sense of time and space, and the divide between public praxis over private doctrine that provided a basis for this new reality.

For example, Meiji Jingū is another modern shrine whose foundation has much in common with Kashihara Jingū. Founded 1 November 1920, it also began as a movement for a public memorial to commemorate a pioneering emperor. As Yamaguchi has pointed out, the plans for Meiji Jingū relied upon old examples (*senrei* 先例) to create a new example (*shinrei*) (Yamaguchi 2005: 171), linking modernity with the past. It supported a new sense of time by memorializing not merely the Meiji emperor, but also the span of time with which he shared an appellation (Yamaguchi 2005: 194), and preserving the Meiji-period holiday Tenchō setsu (3 November) as its fixed yearly festival date (Yamaguchi 2005: 172). In 1927, this date was reappraised as a national holiday (*shukujitsu*). Furthermore, Kashihara Jingū’s 2600th anniversary plans utilized the same method of providing the shrine with a public park-like outer garden (*gaien*) constructed mainly through donations of money, trees, and labor from across the Japanese sphere, to create “a shrine by the people, for the people” inclusive of all Japanese subjects (Yamaguchi 2005: 201).

Even at Kotohiragū, a shrine whose premodern connection to Shingon 真言 Buddhist ritual and association with “miracles” gave it a significantly different origin than Kashihara, ritualists translated the shrine’s miracles into “the language of secular, scientific progress” (Thal 2005: 216), melded shrine rites and national holidays together on the solar calendar (Thal 2005: 157–158), and developed the shrine into a modern institution accessible by steamship with a Western-style museum, public park, and other attractions (Thal 2005: 297). Furthermore, as shrines were increasingly relocated into the secular sphere in the late nineteenth century, Kotohiragū distanced itself from its doctrine-focused *kōsha* based on the Taikyō Senpu (Thal 2005: 207) and started emphasizing praxis over belief (Thal 2005: 285), while re-positioning itself as a site of national history, culture, and morality (Thal 2005: 213–215).

The construction of the categories of religion and the secular is still ongoing in many societies.<sup>24</sup> While these ideas may have originated in the West, non-Western communities have not adopted them wholesale, but modified them to suit their needs. This article has shown that, similar to how religion and *shūkyō* do not point to precisely the same concept,<sup>25</sup> there are varieties of the secular as well. Kashihara Jingū is one important example of how a secularity constructed in a non-Western context was communicated to and interacted with national subjects.

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24 For discussions about the construction of these concepts in India and China, see Elmore (2016) and Ashiwa and Wank (2009), respectively. Nelson (2012) gives an interesting discussion of how these concepts are being renegotiated in contemporary Japan.

25 Also see Elmore (2016, 185–187) for a discussion about the semantic slippage between the English term 'religion' and Indian terms often translated as religion.

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