



Religious Juridical Persons and Administration of Religious Affairs

Today, in Japan, there are many different religious entities varying in size, including large religious organizations such as denomination, sects and associations, shrines, temples and churches, which engage in a diverse range of religious activities. Among these religious organizations, approximately 183,000 are incorporated as religious juridical persons based on the Religious Juridical Persons Act.

The purpose of the Religious Juridical Persons Act, which stipulates the Religious Juridical Persons System, is to secure the basis for the management of properties and organizations

for freedom and autonomy in activities. The Religious Juridical Persons System by religious organization, on the basis of freedom of religion and principle of the separation of religion and government guaranteed by the Constitution, minimizes the involvement of the competent authority and gives religious juridical persons autonomy and independence in operation, to guarantee maximum freedom in the religious activities of religious juridical persons. However, the general system is constructed in a way that clarifies the responsibilities of religious juridical persons, with their public nature as a principal element.

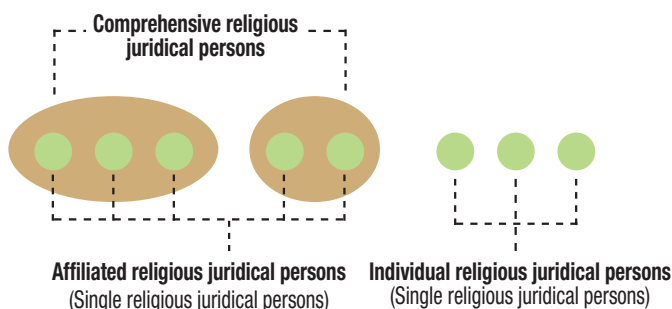
◆ Number of Religious Juridical Persons

Jurisdiction	Religion	Category	Comprehensive religious juridical persons	Single religious juridical persons	Total
Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology	Shinto		128	85	213
	Buddhism		154	262	416
	Christianity		60	239	299
	Others		31	77	108
	Subtotal		373	663	1,036
Prefectural governors	Shinto		6	85,228	85,234
	Buddhism		11	77,282	77,293
	Christianity		8	4,108	4,116
	Others		1	15,029	15,030
	Subtotal		26	181,647	181,673
Total			399	182,310	182,709

As of Dec. 31, 2007

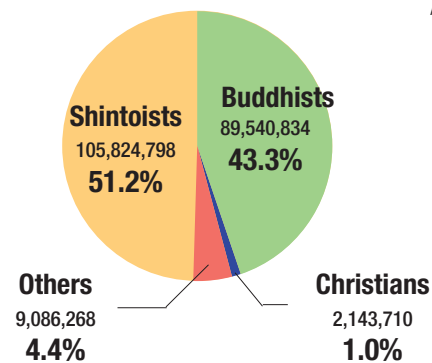
*Under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology: any religious juridical person whose precinct buildings are in multiple prefectures.
Under the jurisdiction of a prefectural governor: any religious juridical person whose precinct buildings are in only a single prefecture.

◆ Category of Religious Juridical Persons



◆ Number of Followers by Classification of Religion

As of Dec. 31, 2007



*The criteria for determining religious affiliation vary with the religious group.
Source: Shukyo Nenkan 2008 (Religion yearbook) by Agency for Cultural Affairs

- Comprehensive religious juridical persons
 - Shinto denominations, Buddhist denominations, or Christian denominations that contain single religious juridical persons
- Single religious juridical persons
 - Shinto shrines, Buddhist temples, Christian churches, and other corporate religious entities equipped with facilities for worship
 - Affiliated religious juridical persons
 - A religious juridical person that is under the coverage of another religious juridical person
 - Individual religious juridical persons
 - A religious juridical person that is not under the coverage of another religious juridical person

1. Promotion of Management and Operation of Religious Juridical Persons

The Agency for Cultural Affairs certifies the incorporation, changes to rules of incorporation, merger and voluntary dissolution of religious juridical persons as the competent authority stipulated in the Religious Juridical Person Act.

The Agency also provides guidance and advice to the prefectural administration for religious affairs, holding lectures for administrative officers in charge of religious affairs at the prefectural level, running practical workshops for religious juridical persons and producing manuals for them.

In addition, to review religious trends of Japan, the Agency each year has conducted a statistical survey on religious juridical persons and published the results in the *Religious Yearbook* with the cooperation of religious juridical persons. Moreover, the Agency has worked on gathering materials related to religion and overseas surveys on religious situations.



The *Religious Yearbook* and other publications

2. Promotion of Measures on Inactive Religious Juridical Persons

Among religious juridical persons there exist so-called inactive religious juridical persons, who have ceased activities for any reason after establishment. Inactive religious juridical persons may cause social problems, for example, if a third party abuses their name for conducting business. Cases such as this could impair social trust in the religious juridical person system generally.

In this context, ACA and prefectures manage inactive religious juridical persons through certification of amalgamation by absorption-type merger or voluntary dissolution, or if such measures are not feasible, by a petition for dissolution order to the court.



Meeting on countermeasures for inactive religious juridical persons (Kyoto Pref.)

3. The Religious Juridical Persons Council

To ensure the freedom of religious juridical persons and duly consider their distinctive characteristics from a religious perspective, the Religious Juridical Persons Council was

established as an advisory organ of the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology.