



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.

Number of Religious Juridical Persons

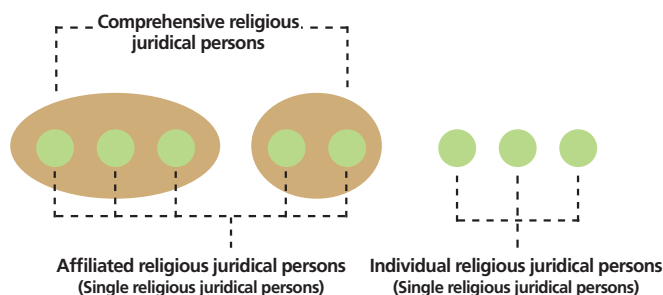
Jurisdiction	Category	Comprehensive religious juridical persons	Single religious juridical persons	Total
Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology	Shinto	128	86	214
	Buddhism	155	273	428
	Christianity	61	245	306
	Others	30	77	107
	Subtotal	374	681	1,055
Prefectural governors	Shinto	6	85,148	85,154
	Buddhism	11	77,299	77,310
	Christianity	7	4,144	4,151
	Others	1	14,930	14,931
	Subtotal	25	181,521	181,546
Total		399	182,202	182,601

As of Dec. 31, 2008

Note: 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.

Source: *Shukyo Nenkan (Religious Yearbook) 2009* by ACA

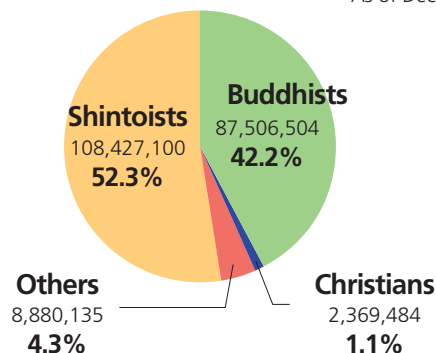
Category of Religious Juridical Persons



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 Followers by Classification of Religion

As of Dec. 31, 2008



Note: *The criteria for determining religious affiliation vary with the religious group.
Source: *Shukyo Nenkan (Religious Yearbook) 2009* by ACA

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 *Shukyo Nenkan (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.



Shukyo Nenkan (Religious Yearbook) and other publication

2. Promotion of Measures on Inactive Religious Juridical Person

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 (Tokyo)

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.