

## 1-1

**Aum Shinrikyo maintains dangerous traits even a year after the execution of Asahara and others****Aum Shinrikyo still remains under the influence of Asahara**

Inside Aum Shinrikyo (a cult group), a split of opinion arose over issues such as, while maintaining its faith in Chizuo Matsumoto, aka Shoko Asahara, whether the group should explicitly emphasize faith in Asahara, or pretend to cast aside his influence to avoid the surveillance disposition; and it has divided into “Aleph”<sup>1</sup>—which explicitly emphasizes faith in Asahara—and “Hikari-no-Wa” (The Circle of Rainbow Light)—which pretends to cast aside Asahara’s influence—with each group conducting its own activities (in May 2007). Later, another split of opinion occurred within “Aleph” about the return of Asahara’s second son to the group, and as a result, “the group led by Yamada”<sup>2</sup> came to conduct activities while keeping a certain distance with “Aleph” (in January 2015).

In this manner, changes were seen in its organizational structure due to the differences in direction for its activities; however, even in 2019, no changes were seen in the actual state of the group

where Asahara—the mastermind behind the subway sarin gas attacks—and his influence remained deeply rooted in the cult group, as “Aleph” and “the group led by Yamada” (herein both groups together will be referred as the mainstream group) displayed Asahara’s photographic portrait on their altars, and “Hikari-no-Wa” (represented by Fumihiro Joyu and known as the Joyu group) still hung Buddhist paintings related to Asahara in its facilities; and the same activities, which had been conducted before Asahara’s death penalty was carried out in July 2018, continued.

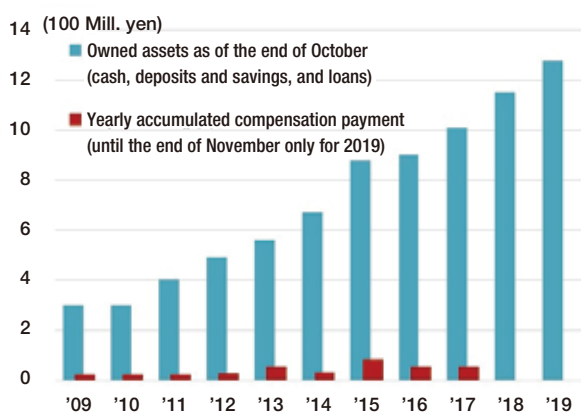
1. In 2007, the group conducted activities under the name, “religious group Aleph,” but was renamed to “Aleph” in May 2008.
2. For “the group led by Yamada,” the name of a senior follower is used because the group does not use any specific name of its own.

**Aum Shinrikyo maintained the number of its followers and increased its assets even after Asahara’s execution**

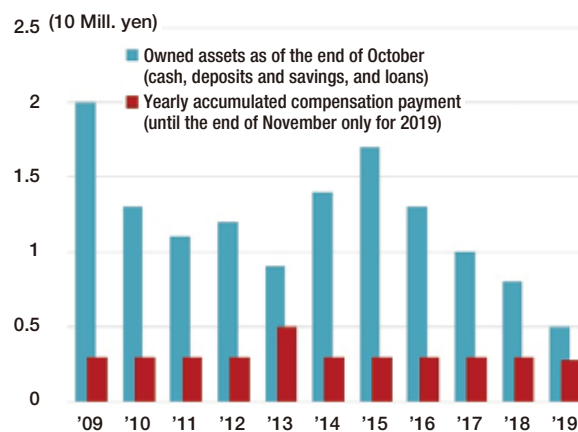
Major shifts in the number of its followers have not been seen even after Asahara’s execution, and the cult group maintained 1,650 followers in Japan in 2019. In addition, followers of the group were confirmed in Russia.

As for the assets of the group (cash, savings, and loans), the cult group continuously acquired funds such as day-to-day offerings of its followers and participation fees from events, and as of the

end of October, the total amount approached 1.3 billion yen, which was a 100 million-yen increase compared to the end of October 2018. On the other hand, regarding compensation to victims of a number of their attacks such as the subway sarin gas attacks, the mainstream group continued to withhold compensation payment, and the Joyu group only paid about 2.8 million yen (the total from January to November).



The Mainstream group's owned assets and yearly accumulated compensation payment



The Joyu group's owned assets and yearly accumulated compensation payment

## Proper and strict surveillance on Aum Shinrikyo enforced

Based on the Act regarding the Control of Organizations Which Committed Acts of Indiscriminate Mass Murder (Act on the Control of Organizations), PSIA mobilized a total of 448 officers and conducted on-site inspections that stretched to 28 Aum Shinrikyo facilities in 12 prefectures from January to the end of November. Of these, sweeping on-site inspections of the cult's facilities were carried out at 11 locations nationwide on the occasion of a year passing since Asahara's execution in July. These on-site inspections confirmed that altars were mounted with photographic portraits of Asahara as well as many teaching materials containing his sermons were kept in "Aleph" facilities; "the group led by Yamada" kept many teaching materials of Asahara's sermons;

and the Joyu group still hung Buddhist paintings relating to Asahara.

Furthermore, in 2019, PSIA collected reports from the cult group of its current state of organization and activities every three months four times a year based on the Act on the Control of Organizations, and provided 51 pieces of information obtained from these reports and results of the inspections to local public entities upon request during the period from January to the end of November. Moreover, PSIA conducted a total of 42 public meetings with local residents in 21 regions during this period in order to dissipate the fears and concerns held by the residents, in which the current state of the cult and the state of implementing the surveillance disposition were explained.

## Aum Shinrikyo showed uncooperative stance towards the surveillance disposition

The mainstream group and the Joyu group consistently took a non-cooperative stance during the on-site inspections which were conducted under the Act on the Control of Organizations: the mainstream group, for instance, did not open their doors for a while after the commencement of the inspections had been announced; and when followers of both groups were asked questions by the inspectors, they only

answered, "We are not obligated to answer," or, "It is as you see it."

In addition, the cult group is required by the Act on the Control of Organizations to submit reports to PSIA regarding its current state of organization and activities every 3 months; however, problems were seen in those reports which were submitted from both the mainstream group and the Joyu group;

for instance, both groups left out certain pieces of information that were required, and they both reported inaccurate information.

## COLUMN

### Moves made by Aum Shinrikyo regarding compensation to victims

Regarding the compensation to victims for the series of incidents such as the sarin gas attack on the subway system, the claim\* of receivable compensations was transferred from the bankruptcy trustee overseeing the cult to the “Aum Shinrikyo Crime Victim Support Organization” (Support Organization) in March 2009, and since then, the Support Organization has been putting effort into having compensation be paid and it filed a lawsuit with the Tokyo District Court in February 2018 seeking payment of unpaid compensation by “Aleph.” In the suit, the Tokyo District Court handed down the ruling

that ordered the payment of approximately one billion yen be made by “Aleph” (in April), in which “Aleph” objected to the ruling and appealed before the Tokyo High Court, and the case is currently pending.

Moreover, since 2018, “Aleph” has suspended installment payments for compensation that it had paid earlier.

\* In July 2000, Aum Shinrikyo had agreed to continue paying compensation even after the bankruptcy proceedings between the cult and bankruptcy trustee.

# Inspected facilities of Aum Shinrikyo (January – November 2019)

## Legend

Name of facility	Date of inspection
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### Miyagi Prefecture

Sendai facility	Oct. 4
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### Saitama Prefecture

Kita-Koshigaya facility	Jul. 31
Yashio Oze facility	Jun. 14
Yashio Iseno facility	Nov. 7

### Tokyo

Nishi-Ogi facility	Sep. 20
Hokima facility	Jul. 8
Adachi Iriya facility	Feb. 27 Jul. 5
Shin-Hokima facility	Jul. 8
Musashino facility	Jul. 11
Minami-Karasuyama facility	May 15 Jul. 5

### Ishikawa Prefecture

Kanazawa facility	Mar. 19
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### Hokkaido

Sapporo Shiroishi facility	Jul. 5 Nov. 26
Sapporo facility	May 30

### Ibaraki Prefecture

Mito facility	Mar. 4
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### Chiba Prefecture

Noda facility	Oct. 10
Kamagaya facility	Jun. 5

### Kanagawa Prefecture

Yokohama facility	Apr. 12
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### Aichi Prefecture

Nagoya facility	Jan. 22 Jul. 5
Toyoake facility	Jul. 8

### Kyoto

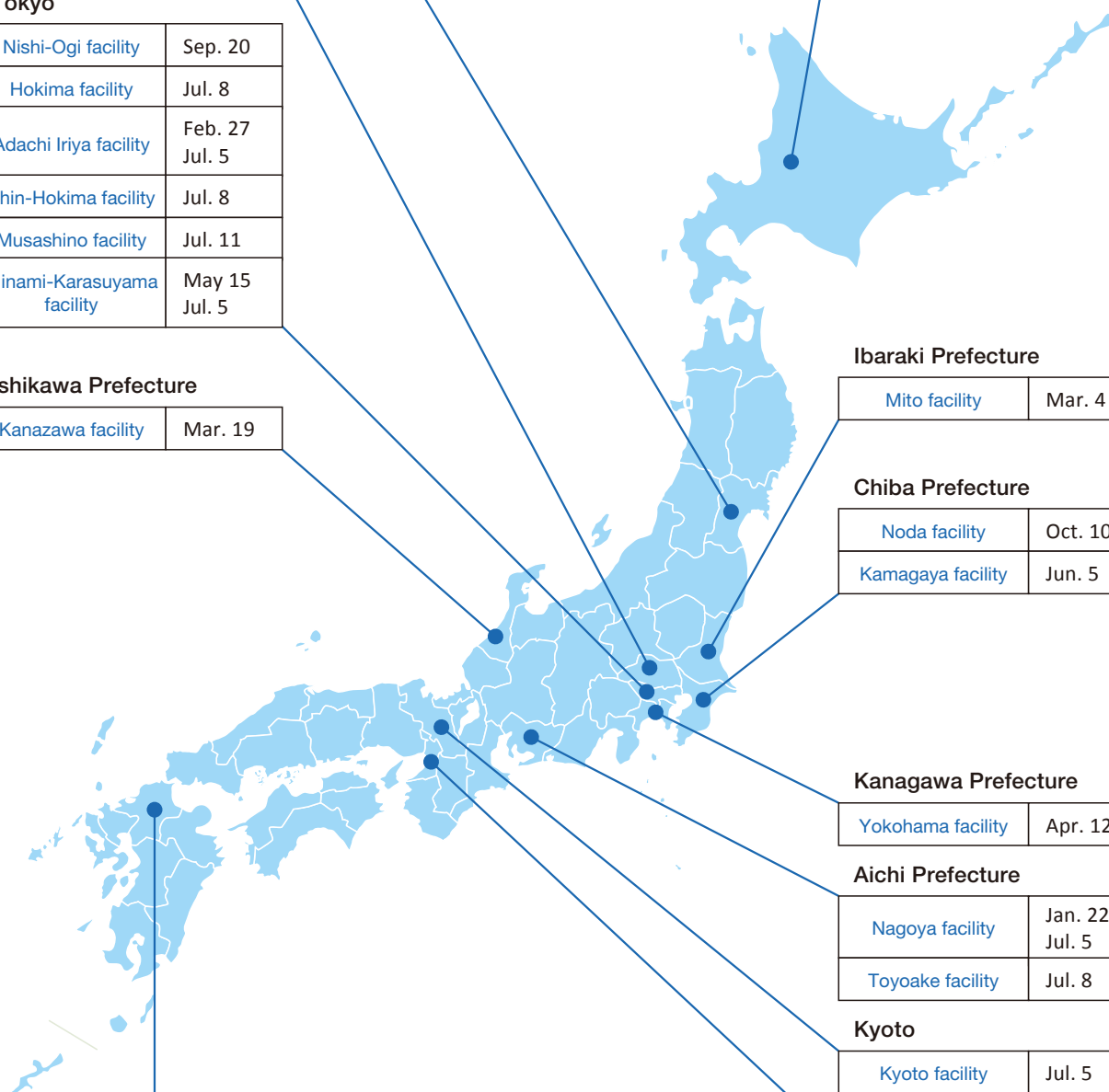
Kyoto facility	Jul. 5
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### Osaka

Ikuno facility	Jul. 5
Higashi-Osaka facility	Sep. 9

### Fukuoka Prefecture

Fukuoka facility	Jul. 5
Fukuoka Fukutsu facility	Jan. 31



### Exhaustive guidance to inculcate absolute faith in Asahara, and showed stance of attaching importance to practice

“Aleph,” as in the past, provided thorough guidance to inculcate absolute faith in Asahara through such measures as displaying Asahara’s photograph and others on the altars in their facilities, conducting “intensive seminars” for lay followers (in January, May and September), and holding the “birth festival” (in March) celebrating Asahara’s birthday.

In addition, “Aleph” defined the year 2019 as the “year to strengthen practice,” setting up policies to have its followers bolster their practices centered around “*Gyoho*”<sup>\*</sup> and showed moves of “getting back to its roots,” such as restarting its “insane focus training” and “seminars for supernatural abilities”—which centered around practices of inflicting harm on the body and had been implemented during Aum

Shinrikyo’s early years.

Furthermore, “Aleph” conducted systematic recruitment activities, placing it as “important activities to realize ‘salvation of sentient beings’” preached by Asahara, and it gained about 90 new followers in 2019.

“The group led by Yamada”—which keeps a degree of distance from “Aleph”—continued similar activities to “Aleph” to firmly maintain absolute faith in Asahara, such as chief followers holding study groups using Asahara’s preachings.

<sup>\*</sup> In Aum Shinrikyo, “*Gyoho*” (literally means “method of practice”) stands for practice that requires physically moving the body, such as breathing exercises and standing worship (repeated prostration while citing faith in Asahara).

### The cult group hoped for the return of Asahara’s second son

Since October 2013, there has been internal friction within “Aleph” amongst its senior followers, which stemmed from moves made by Asahara’s wife, who tried to bring Asahara’s second son back to the cult’s activities whom Asahara had named as the group’s successor; while Asahara’s third daughter and others opposed her attempts. To deal with this situation, the Joint Meeting—which is the decision-making body of “Aleph”—successively conducted “expulsions” or other punishments of some of its senior followers who sided with the third daughter from May 2014 to May 2018. As a result, the internal friction seemed to subside, and senior followers who hoped for the return of the second son

led its organizational management.

Under these circumstances, in 2019, senior followers of “Aleph” made efforts to foster a mindset for the return of the second son, such as by guiding its followers to entreat the second son to return to the group and also by convening a “birth festival” to celebrate his birthday (in March). As a result, the expectation for the second son’s return to the cult group as the successor of Asahara became further prevalent, as, for example, the number of attendees to the “birth festival” increased, and a growing voice was seen among followers who hoped for the early return of the second son.

#### COLUMN 1

##### Deft recruitment activities targeting the young generation

Nearly a quarter of a century has passed since the heinous incidents such as the subway sarin gas attacks, and with fear that they would dilute with

time, “Aleph” has made efforts for the purpose of expanding its organization by conducting recruitment activities targeting young people who have less

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awareness of the attacks, and it has acquired about 100 new followers every year with those aged 34 or under accounting for nearly 70 percent of its newly acquired followers.

“Aleph’s” main recruitment method is to maintain a point of contact with the general public by soliciting on the streets and in bookstores, convening various

events, and interacting through social networking services (SNS); thereafter, they deepen the relationships by inviting the recruits to yoga classes or study groups while concealing the name of the cult group and corner them into a situation where it is difficult for the recruits to refuse, thereby having them join the group.

## COLUMN 2

### “Aleph’s” financial status

The cult group reported the amount of its owned assets as 1.291 billion yen to PSIA as of the end of October, with most of this being “Aleph’s” assets.

“Aleph’s” principal source of income is from offerings from its lay followers, and as it guides its followers on a daily basis using the doctrines of Asahara’s teachings to preach that offerings are “good deeds” in thoroughly giving absolute faith to Asahara,

“Aleph” is able to collect as much as several million yen in total from offerings per year from a single follower. Moreover, “Aleph” collects a hefty amount of funds from its followers through registration fees of its “intensive seminars” and charges for initiation (a ritual that transfers energy to the followers), and it has even increased its assets by over 100 million yen in merely a three-month period in the past.

## 1-3

### No essential changes in the Joyu group

The Joyu group continued efforts to “conceal Asahara” in 2019, which pretended as if it had casted aside his influence on appearance, but on the other hand, it still continued to display Buddhist paintings of either Gautama Buddha, Avalokitesvara, or Maitreya—of which Asahara claimed himself as their reincarnation—in its facilities nationwide.

In addition, it held “intensive seminars” (in January, May, and August)—which is held three times annually—where it conducted religious rituals without any essential changes as what Asahara did in the past; and from January, it held events—what it claims to be “one-day seminars”—where it had

followers intensively learn teaching materials of the Joyu group, and introduced and conducted “learning tests” where followers were pitted against each other, which was a method once used by Asahara.

Furthermore, it repeatedly conducted “pilgrimages to sacred places” in which its followers visited shrines and other sites that were deemed as “places associated with Asahara.”

Taking into account the aforementioned activities, even though Fumihiro Joyu expressed the group’s break from Asahara at talking events, there has been no essential change in the Joyu group’s actual state, which still remains under the influence of Asahara.

## COLUMN

### Current state of the litigation of rescinding the ruling to renew the period of surveillance disposition

Regarding the decision to renew the surveillance period for the fifth time (in January 2015), “Aleph” and “Hikari-no-Wa” (the Joyu group) took legal action against the Government of Japan and filed suit with the Tokyo District Court seeking the ruling be rescinded. In either lawsuit, the Tokyo District Court ordered parts of the decision relating to “Hikari-no-Wa” be rescinded in September 2017. The

government appealed both suits and the Tokyo High Court ordered parts of the original ruling, where the government had lost, be rescinded. (The decision by the appeal court in the suit filed by “Hikari-no-Wa” was made in February, and the decision by the appeal court in the suit filed by “Aleph” was made in November.)