

# VI Religious Juridical Persons and Administration of Religious Affairs

## (1) Overview of the Religious Juridical Persons System

In Japan, a diverse range of religious activities are carried out by a variety of religious groups, including religious associations of various sizes such as Shinto shrines, Buddhist temples, and Christian churches as well as comprehensive religious groups—such as religious denominations, sects, and associations—that contain such individual religious groups. Among these religious groups, approximately 183,000 are incorporated as religious juridical persons in accordance with the Religious Juridical Persons Law.

In order to ensure the freedom and autonomy of activities by religious groups on the basis of freedom of religion guaranteed by Japan's Constitution and principle of the separation of religion and politics, the religious juridical persons system aims to secure a foundation for the administration of the property and organizational structure of religious groups by granting them the status of corporate entities.

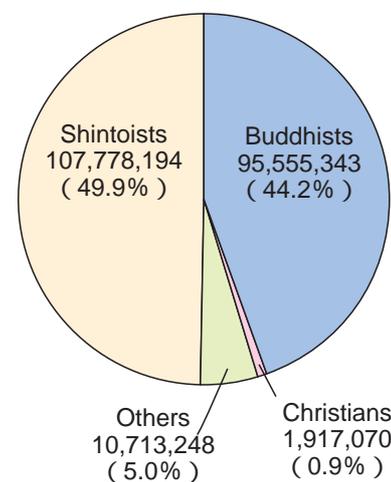
### ◆ Number of Religious Juridical Persons

(as of December 31, 2002)

Jurisdiction	Category	Comprehensive religious juridical persons	Single religious juridical persons	Total
	Religion			
Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology	Shinto	138	83	221
	Buddhism	157	248	403
	Christianity	59	233	292
	Other	30	64	94
	Subtotal	384	626	1,010
Prefectural governor	Shinto	7	84,984	84,991
	Buddhism	11	77,226	77,237
	Christianity	8	4,145	4,153
	Other	1	15,242	15,243
	Subtotal	27	181,597	181,624
Grand total		411	182,223	182,634

### ◆ Number of Followers of Religious Organizations

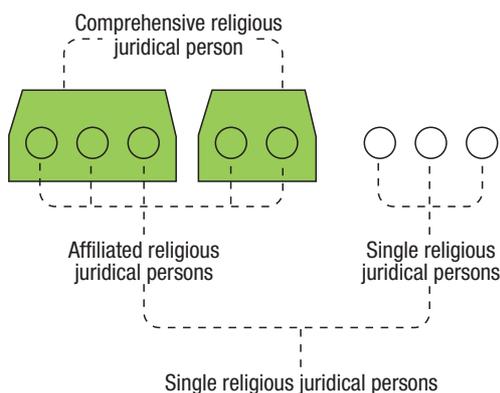
(as of December 31, 2002)



The criteria for determining religious affiliation varies with the religious group.

※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 religion juridical person whose precinct buildings are in only a single prefecture.

### ◆ Types of Religious Juridical Persons



#### ● Comprehensive religious juridical persons

Religious denominations, sects, or associations 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 person:

A religious juridical person that is part of another religious juridical person.

##### • Single religious juridical person:

A religious juridical person that is not part of another religious juridical person.

## (2) Administration of Religious Affairs

The Agency for Cultural Affairs carries out the following activities to ensure both the appropriate application of the religious juridical persons system and the appropriate management and operation of religious juridical persons.

### Authentication of religious juridical persons

As the competent authority stipulated in the Religious Juridical Persons Law, the Agency for Cultural Affairs authenticates various aspects of religious juridical persons, including their incorporation, amendments to their rules of incorporation, mergers, or voluntary dissolution.

### Guidance for the management and operation of religious juridical persons

The Agency for Cultural Affairs also provides guidance and advice on the administration of religious affairs at the prefectural level; holds training courses for prefectural supervisory staff in charge of religious affairs; offers practical workshops and other lectures for religious juridical persons; produces manuals and videotapes, and so forth.

Moreover, the Agency for Cultural Affairs is also striving to widely ensure that all religious juridical persons comply with the new obligation—resulting from the partial amendment of the Religious Juridical Persons Law in 1995—to submit copies of their office documentation for review.



A lecture for leaders of religious juridical persons

### Collection and production of materials on religion

In addition to collecting statistical data concerning religion, the Agency for Cultural Affairs also compiles and publishes the annual "Religion Yearbook" and other publications.



The "Religion Yearbook" and other publications

### Religious Juridical Persons Council

To ensure the freedom of religion 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.