



College Students' Attitudes Toward Religion Survey General Analysis (1995-2015)



IJCC

2019

Know Japan. Know the world.



College Students' Attitudes Toward Religion Survey General Analysis (1995-2015)



Institute for Japanese Culture and Classics,
Kokugakuin University, Tokyo, Japan, 2019

© 2019 Institute for Japanese Culture and Classics,
Kokugakuin University.

All right reserved.

Published by the Institute for Japanese Culture and Classics,
Kokugakuin University,

4-10-28 Higashi, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo, Japan.

Printed in Japan by Meiseisya Inc.

Foreword

This report is a partial translation of *College Students' Attitudes Toward Religion Survey General Analysis (1995-2015)* 『学生宗教意識調査総合分析（1995年度～2015年度）』 published by the Kokugakuin University Institute for Japanese Culture and Classics (IJCC) in 2018.

The original *Analysis* comparatively analyzes the results of the joint Japanese College Students' Attitudes toward Religion (SATRA) Survey undertaken 12 times between 1995 and 2015 by IJCC and the Japanese Association for the Study of Religion and Society. This translated report comprises selected sections of the original Japanese version. Thus, the section numbers do not correspond precisely, but the table and graph numbers do. This report also does not include the lead section from the original *Analysis*, which is an analytical essay examining the trends and distinguishing features found across all the surveys; we plan to publish a translation of that essay separately in the near future. For background regarding the SATRA and the original *Analysis*, please refer to the translation of the “Introduction” from the original Japanese version presented in this report.

Carl Freire translated and edited the majority of this volume excepting Section III, which was translated by Dylan Luers Toda. This report could not have been completed without the help of IJCC staff, who proofread and made revisions to the text, charts, and graphs. Our thanks to Imai Nobuharu, Amada Akinori, Odaka Ayako, and Takase Kōhei.

We hope that this report will help readers to get a broad sense of Japanese students' attitudes toward religion, and to elaborate further considerations on youths' attitudes toward religion. We would be especially grateful if the present report could be put to use in the classroom and be of aid in stimulating discussion among your students.

Institute for Japanese Culture and Classics
Kokugakuin University
February 2019

Introduction to the Japanese Edition

This report comparatively analyzes the results of the joint Japanese College Students' Attitudes toward Religion (SATRA) Survey undertaken 12 times between 1995 and 2015 by the Kokugakuin University Institute for Japanese Culture and Classics (IJCC) and the Japanese Association for the Study of Religion and Society. The results of those 12 surveys were published in 2017 in a volume edited by the IJCC titled *College Students' Attitudes Toward Religion Survey General Report (1995-2015)*. The present report analyzes the data collected over the two decades the surveys were conducted from a comparative perspective. It also attempts a diversified analysis through such measures as cross tabulating results using multiple different perspectives.

The questions used remained largely the same across each of the surveys, though some slight changes were made to some over the years. Those questions whose content went largely unchanged were of the following sorts: the respondent's gender, class year, name of university they were attending, living situation (i.e., with family, roommates, living alone, etc.), whether they graduated from a parochial (religious) high school or not, degree of interest in religion, whether or not their family had a religion, whether or not their parents had a faith, whether or not their home had a Shinto or Buddhist household altar or similar, whether or not the student visited shrines at New Year's or graves of family members, and so forth. The questions whose content underwent slight changes included ones on such matters as the respondent's opinions about religion, interest and knowledge of religious education, awareness of varying forms of funerals, interest in subcultural phenomena, interest in gender issues, knowledge and awareness of the Aum Shinrikyō problem and of Islam, and the like. Some of these questions were asked numerous times over the course of the surveys, while others appeared only once.

Broadly speaking, this report used three analytical perspectives to break down the data: an analysis based on change over the years, the extraction of trends based on cross tabulation, and an analysis of trends apparent in open-ended question responses. Furthermore, while the scale of the surveys conducted in 1999, 2000, 2005, and 2007 was somewhat smaller than other years, similar investigations were also conducted during those years in South Korea that allowed for a comparison of religious attitudes between students in that country and Japan. This report makes such comparisons for each round of the surveys, and analyzes the trends that emerged over the four rounds.

The analysis based on change over the years takes into account not only the 12 SATRA surveys, but also the changes that appeared in several surveys that did not satisfy the SATRA requirements. The cross tabulations involved comparing differences in religious outlook apparent between those students who had a faith and those who did not, comparisons between respondents who graduated from a parochial (religious) high school and those who graduated from a secular high school, comparisons between

genders, comparisons among class years, and the like. Finally, we made an effort to include as much as possible for each when it came to the analyses for open-ended question responses in view of the fact that they were omitted from the General Report and only a very small sampling was presented in the individual reports for the 12 surveys.

The lead section of this report (Editor's note—To be published separately in translation at a later date) provides an analysis of the trends and distinguishing features found across all the surveys. As an appendix, we have included a list of research literature that has used the results of these surveys (Editor's note—Not included in this translated report). Synopses of each of the 12 surveys—including such materials and information as questionnaire response forms, subject schools, survey partakers and collaborators, and so forth—were included in the *General Report*. Please refer to that volume for further information on these matters.

Professor Inoue Nobutaka
Editor-in-Chief
January 2018

Table of Contents

Foreword

Survey Outline

[1] Number of respondents	1
[2] Number of schools where survey was conducted	1
[3] School attended classified by religious vs. secular	1
[4] High school graduated from classified by religious vs. secular	1
[5] Gender of respondents	2
[6] Class year of respondents	2

[I] Comparison Over the Years in the Results for the 1st through 12th Surveys

Chapter 1: Changes Over the Years in Students' Attitudes toward Religion

a) Presence or lack of faith	3
b) Interest in religion	4
c) Belief in gods, buddhas, and souls or spirits?	
[1] Existence of gods	11
[2] Existence of buddhas	13
[3] Existence of souls or spirits	15
[4] Our ancestors are watching over us	17
[5] The existence of an afterlife	19

Chapter 2: Religious Environment in the Home

a) Family's religion	21
b) Faith of parents	23
c) Household Shinto and Buddhist altars	25

Chapter 3: Involvement with Religious Customs

a) Visiting Shinto shrines at New Year's	28
b) Visiting graves	29
c) Christmas and <i>setsubun</i>	
[1] Christmas	31
[2] <i>Setsubun</i>	32
d) Funerals	
[1] Type of funeral I prefer when I die	33

[2] In the event parents desired scattering of cremains or natural burial	35
[3] Personal desire for scattering of cremains or natural burial?	36
e) Faith and religious customs	
[1] Non-Christian's wedding held in a Christian church	37
[2] On calling a Buddhist priest for a funeral by individuals with no religious belief	39
Chapter 4: Opinions on Religion and Religious Figures	
a) Religious figures you might want to seek advice from	41
b) What is sought from religion	43
c) Do you think humans need religion?	47
d) If you have a faith, can you turn to it for inspiration?	49
e) Do you have the image of religion being dangerous?	51
Chapter 5: Social Problems Connected with Religion	
a) On religious solicitation	
[1] Experience of being solicited	53
[2] Religion by which solicited	54
[3] Period in life when solicited	55
[4] Location where solicited	56
[5] Response when solicited	57
b) Restrictions on proselytization in the streets	58
c) "Cult" problem	60
d) Need for public information center for religious conflicts	63
e) Gender issues	
[1] Discrimination related to positions or ranks	65
[2] Prohibitions on women entering sacred spaces	69
[3] Prohibitions on homosexuality	72
f) Religion and politics	75
g) Tax exemptions for religious facilities	76
Chapter 6: The Aum Shinrikyō Issue	
a) News coverage of Aum Shinrikyō	78
b) Content of interest	79
c) Knowledge about Aum Shinrikyō	80
Chapter 7: Regarding Islam	
a) Connections with Muslims	82
b) Interest in Islam	83
c) Regarding the establishment of mosques	84

Chapter 8: Regarding Religious Education	
a) Need for religious education	85
b) Opinions on religious culture education	87

Chapter 9: Subculture, Religious Subculture, and Other Phenomena

a) Interest and levels of belief in divination	
[1] Palm reading	89
[2] Name-character reading	90
[3] Personality determination based on blood type	91
[4] Astrology	92
[5] Computer horoscope	93
b) Interest in the eschatological prophecies of Nostradamus	94
c) Interest in supernatural phenomena	
[1] Spirit readings of Aiko Gibo	95
[2] Near-death experience	96
[3] Past lives and reincarnation	97
[4] Existence of an afterlife	98
[5] Existence of auras	99
[6] Existence of telepathy	100
d) Power spots	101

Chapter 10: Faith of Friends

a) Have friends with religious faith?	103
b) Attitudes toward friends with religious faith	104

Chapter 11: Response to Spread of Information Technology

a) Changes in IT tools at the end of the 1990s	106
b) Interest in information about religions on the internet	107

[II] Cross Tabulations

Chapter 12: Correlations with Degree of Interest in Religion

a) Opinions about religion	
[1] Opinions about the need for religion	109
[2] Opinions about the matter of if you have a faith, can you turn to it for inspiration?	112
[3] Do you think religion is dangerous?	113
b) Existence of gods, buddhas, and souls or spirits	
[1] Existence of gods	115
[2] Existence of buddhas	116
[3] Existence of souls or spirits	118
c) Interest in and awareness of Islam	

[1] Interest in Islam	119
[2] Awareness of mosque nearby	120
d) Need for religious education	121
e) Power spot	123

Chapter 13: Correlations with Religious Faith of Parents

a) Interest in religion	124
b) Do you think humans need religion?	131
c) Do you think religion is dangerous?	137

Chapter 14: Correlation with Gender

a) Astrology	141
b) Palm reading	143
c) Name-character reading	144
d) Computer horoscope	145
e) Personality determination based on blood type	146

Chapter 15: Correlation by High School Graduated from Classified by Religious vs. Secular

a) Interest in religion	147
b) Humans need religion	149
c) Existence of souls or spirits	151
d) Visiting graves	153
e) Experience of divination	153

Chapter 16: Correlation with Class Year

a) Experience of religious solicitation	156
b) Humans need religion	157
c) Do you think religion is dangerous?	163
d) What do you think about being educated about religions in grades through high school? ..	168
e) Existence of souls or spirits	173

[III] Opinions Presented in the Open-Ended Question Responses

Chapter 17: Faith and Religion-related Issues

a) Details of interest in religion and related phenomena	178
b) Regarding friends with religious faith	182
c) Regarding spirituality	183
d) Psychological impact of the Great East Japan Earthquake	186
e) Image of souls or spirits	188

Chapter 18: Social Problems Involving Religion	
a) Regarding solicitations from strangers	189
b) Social role of religious persons	190
Chapter 19: Issue of Organ Transplants from Brain-Dead Donors	
.....	193
Chapter 20: The Yasukuni Problem	
a) Japan survey	196
b) Korea survey	197
Chapter 21: The Aum Shinrikyō Issue	
a) Regarding people who joined	199
b) Regarding coverage of Aum	201
Chapter 22: The Issue of Islam	
.....	204
 [IV] Japan-Korea Comparisons	
Chapter 23: Comparison of Attitudes toward Religion	
a) Ratio of persons with faith	208
b) Ratio of belief in existence of god, buddhas, and souls or spirits	
[1] Existence of gods	209
[2] Existence of buddhas	209
[3] Existence of souls or spirits	210
c) Afterlife	210
Chapter 24: Religious Environment in the Home	
a) Faith of parents	211
Chapter 25: Involvement with Religious Customs	
a) Visiting graves	212
b) Relationship between faith and religious customs	212
Chapter 26: Opinions on Religion and Religious Figures	
a) Religious figures you might want to seek advice from	213
b) No matter how much science develops, humans still need religion	213
c) Do you think religion is dangerous?	214

Chapter 27: Social Problems Connected with Religion	
a) Religious solicitation	215
b) Patriotism	215
c) The Yasukuni problem	
[1] Awareness that a conflict exists	216
[2] Opinions about pilgrimages by the prime minister	216
d) Brain death and organ donation	217
e) Gender issues	218
Chapter 28: Regarding Aum Shinrikyō	
	219
Chapter 29: The Issue of Islam	
a) Interest in Islam	220
b) Image of Islam post-9/11	220
Chapter 30: Regarding Religious Education	
a) Need for religious education	221
Chapter 31: Subculture, Religious Subcultures, and Other Phenomena	
a) Interest in divination	
[1] Palm reading	223
[2] Personality determination based on blood type	224
[3] Name-character reading	224
[4] <i>Feng shui</i>	225
b) Interest in supernatural phenomena and the like	
[1] Telepathy	225
[2] Past lives and reincarnation	226
c) Interest in information about religions on the internet	226

Explanatory Notes

1. Percentages have all been rounded off to one decimal place.
2. Those universities and professional training schools whose students were survey subjects that have a religious affiliation are termed "religious" schools; public and other institutions that have no religious affiliation are termed "secular" schools.
3. Those high schools from which respondents graduated that have a religious affiliation are termed "religious high school" and those that do not are termed "secular high schools."
4. Decisions as to whether or not an institution was religious or not were made based on Institute for Japanese Culture and Classics, ed., *Shūkyō Kyōiku Shiryōshū* [*Sources on Religious Education*] (Suzuki Publishing, 1993); International Institute for the Study of Religions, Religious Information Research Center (RIRC), "Links to Religious Schools" and the websites of each of the educational institutions concerned.
URL: <http://www.rirc.or.jp>
5. Male and female students are listed simply as "men" and "women," respectively.
6. Notes with commentary set off by an asterisk have been to those graphs whose content was deemed a bit difficult to understand without an explanation of some sort.
7. The decision as to which religious groups come under the category of "new religion" was made based on the groups included in Inoue Nobutaka, et al., eds. *Shinshūkyō Kyōdan, Jinbutsu Jiten* [*An Encyclopedia of New Religion Groups and Personalities*] (Kōbundō, 1996).

Survey Outline

[1] Number of respondents

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th
	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2005	2007	2010	2012	2015
Total number of respondents	4,058	4,718	5,991	6,374	11,151	6,751	5,961	4,370	4,401	4,443	4,242	6,017
Number of persons with valid responses	3,773	4,344	5,718	6,248	10,941	6,483	5,759	4,252	4,306	4,311	4,094	5,773
Valid response rate (%)	93.0	92.1	95.4	98.0	98.1	96.0	96.6	97.3	97.8	97.0	96.5	95.9

*There are small changes in the breakdown of respondents. The respondents through 2001 also included professional training school students. Subsequent surveys were limited to university students.

[2] Number of schools where survey was conducted

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2005	2007	2010	2012	2015
Religious	8	12	13	11	19	16	15	14	14	17	14	19
Religious (%)	25.0	28.6	31.7	25.6	26.0	38.1	39.5	43.8	40.0	47.2	46.7	52.8
Secular	24	30	28	32	54	26	23	18	21	19	16	17
Secular (%)	75.0	71.4	68.3	74.4	74.0	61.9	60.5	56.3	60.0	52.8	53.3	47.2

[3] School attended classified by religious vs. secular

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2005	2007	2010	2012	2015
Religious	1,152	1,510	2,093	2,142	3,779	2,976	2,733	1,611	2,096	2,308	2,375	2,746
Religious (%)	30.5	34.8	36.6	34.3	34.5	45.9	47.5	37.9	48.7	53.5	58.0	47.6
Secular	2,621	2,834	3,625	4,106	7,162	3,507	3,026	2,641	2,210	2,003	1,719	3,027
Secular (%)	69.5	65.2	63.4	65.7	65.5	54.1	52.5	62.1	51.3	46.5	42.0	52.4

[4] High school graduated from classified by religious vs. secular

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2005	2007	2010	2012	2015
Religious	—	588	712	773	1283	812	871	582	653	573	475	525
Religious (%)	—	13.5	12.5	12.4	11.7	12.5	15.1	13.7	15.2	13.3	11.6	9.1
Secular	—	3,595	4,786	5,175	9,117	5,323	4,477	3,270	3,208	3,679	3,531	5,118
Secular (%)	—	82.8	83.7	82.8	83.3	82.1	77.7	76.9	74.5	85.3	86.2	88.7
Other	—	161	220	300	541	348	411	400	445	59	88	130
Other (%)	—	3.7	3.8	4.8	4.9	5.4	7.1	9.4	10.3	1.4	2.1	2.3

* "Other" refers to those cases in which the character of an educational institution as religious or secular is unclear due to such reasons as the student not having provided a response, having graduated from a foreign school operating overseas, or having passed a high school equivalence test.

[5] Gender of respondents

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2005	2007	2010	2012	2015
Men	1,308	1,628	2,619	2,602	4,643	2,918	2,737	1,945	1,920	1,953	1,911	2,458
Men(%)	34.7	37.5	45.8	41.6	42.4	45.0	47.5	45.7	44.6	45.3	46.7	42.6
Women	2,446	2,699	3,090	3,630	6,281	3,552	3,007	2,274	2,378	2,350	2,171	3,304
Women (%)	64.8	62.1	54.0	58.1	57.4	54.8	52.2	53.5	55.2	54.5	53.0	57.2
No response	19	17	9	16	17	13	15	33	8	8	12	11
No response (%)	0.5	0.4	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.8	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.2

[6] Class year of respondents

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2005	2007	2010	2012	2015
1st year students	1,860	2,008	2,719	2,939	4,530	2,838	2,029	1,800	1,779	1,807	1,704	2,848
1st year students (%)	49.3	46.2	47.6	47.0	41.4	43.8	35.2	42.3	41.3	41.9	41.6	49.3
2nd year students	1,163	1,369	1,785	1,877	4,051	2,142	2,237	1,354	1,024	1,357	1,187	1,242
2nd year students (%)	30.8	31.5	31.2	30.0	37.0	33.0	38.8	31.8	23.8	31.5	29.0	21.5
3rd year students	446	640	848	1,118	1,576	1,093	943	676	913	767	758	1,020
3rd year students (%)	11.8	14.7	14.8	17.9	14.4	16.9	16.4	15.9	21.2	17.8	18.5	17.7
4th year students	271	281	313	230	600	349	410	303	415	291	352	491
4th year students (%)	7.2	6.5	5.5	3.7	5.5	5.4	7.1	7.1	9.6	6.8	8.6	8.5
Other	33	46	53	84	184	61	140	119	175	89	93	172
Other (%)	0.9	1.1	0.9	1.3	1.7	0.9	2.4	2.8	4.1	2.1	2.3	3.0

* "Other" refers to no responses or to situations that do not fall within the 1st through 4th year undergraduate range such as graduate students or students in their 5th year or beyond.