

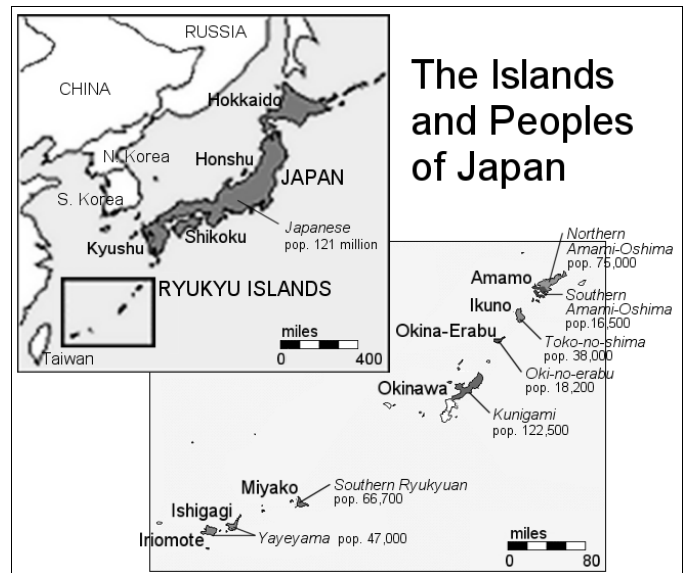
Spiritual Situation Summary

Christianity was first brought to Japan by Francis Xavier in 1549. Today less than one percent of Japan's population follows Jesus Christ, but that is still nearly one million people. Over 150 different mission agencies are working in Japan. Nevertheless, many cities and villages in Japan still have no Christian witness, and growth of existing churches is painfully slow.

Shintoism, which is founded on establishing relationships with the spirits of both nature and one's ancestors, is the native religion of Japan. Buddhism, which can be assimilated into Shintoism, began growing in Japan in the sixth century. While most Japanese identify themselves as either Buddhist, Shinto, or both, at least eighty percent of Japanese are not practicing any religion.

Although secularism has swept Japan, many are hungry for a spiritual experience. An average of 100 new cults shooting off of Buddhism and Shintoism are founded every year. The largest of these, Sokka Gakai, has over 17 million adherents.

Japan's national population approaching 122 million is one of the most homogenous in the world. Minorities are fewer than one percent. These include the Ainu (an all but extinct aboriginal people), immigrant foreigners (Koreans, Chinese, Americans, Filipinos, Pakistanis, and Malays), and the seven indigenous people groups of the Ryukyu Islands,



The Islands and Peoples of Japan

each with its own disappearing culture and no Scriptures in their respective disappearing native languages.

Alternately subjugated by Chinese and Japanese invaders, Ryukyuan peoples adopted a stance of tolerance and passivity. Considered to be backward by the Japanese, the principally Buddhist Ryukyuan peoples are steeped in superstition. They believe in many unseen natural and ancestral spirits which must be appeased but can also be manipulated. Spirits of the ancestors who are buried in elaborate tombs are venerated by the community, and the spirit powers of nature are worshipped in households. These powers are frequently consulted before major personal and household decisions.

Resource and Contact Information

Resource	Contact Info
Jesus Video in Japanese Language	1-800-560-8713 < www.jesusfilm.org >
Japanese Language Scripture Audio Tapes	1-760-745-8105 < www.gospelcom.net/asi >
Gospel Radio Broadcasting in Japanese	1-719-548-7490 < www.wb2000.org >
Japanese language Scriptures from: International Bible Society American Bible Society Scripture Gift Mission	1-800-524-1588 < www.gospelcom.net/ibs > 1-800-322-4253 < www.americanbible.org > 1-877-873-2746 < www.gospelcom.net/asgm >
Japanese Language Christian Literature	1-717-738-0582 < www.multilanguage.com >
List of Mission Agencies Working in Japan	< www.missionjapan.org/mission/e_missionorgjapan.html >
Search Engine for Churches in Japan	< www.missionjapan.org/church/e_index.html >
Connect Japanese returning from abroad with Christians in their home country	< www.jema.org/RCNJ.html >
Japan Evangelical Missionary Association	< www.jema.org >

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