

*Measuring religion in Japan:
ISM, NHK and JGSS*

**Survey Research and the Study of Religion in East Asia
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Points

- Introducing three national surveys measuring religion: by Institute of Statistical Mathematics, JGSS and NHK
- Belief or practices
- Own belief or **religion of one's family**
Different situations for men and for women
for **a successor** and for a non-successor
for a married and for **an un-married**
- A sense of **distrust towards religious organizations**
- Belief and political position
- Today's life and **inheritance of a family grave**

Contradiction in the number of followers

According to the annual statistical research on religion in 2015

by the Agency for Cultural Affairs, Government of Japan,

The number of **religious groups** in Japan: **181** thousand

Shinto followers: 89.5 million (**70.4%** of the total population)

Buddhists: 88.7 million (**69.8%**)

Christians: 1.9 million (1.5%)

Other religions: 8.9 million (6.9%)

Total: **188.9** million (**1.49 times of population**)

Japanese population: **127.1** million

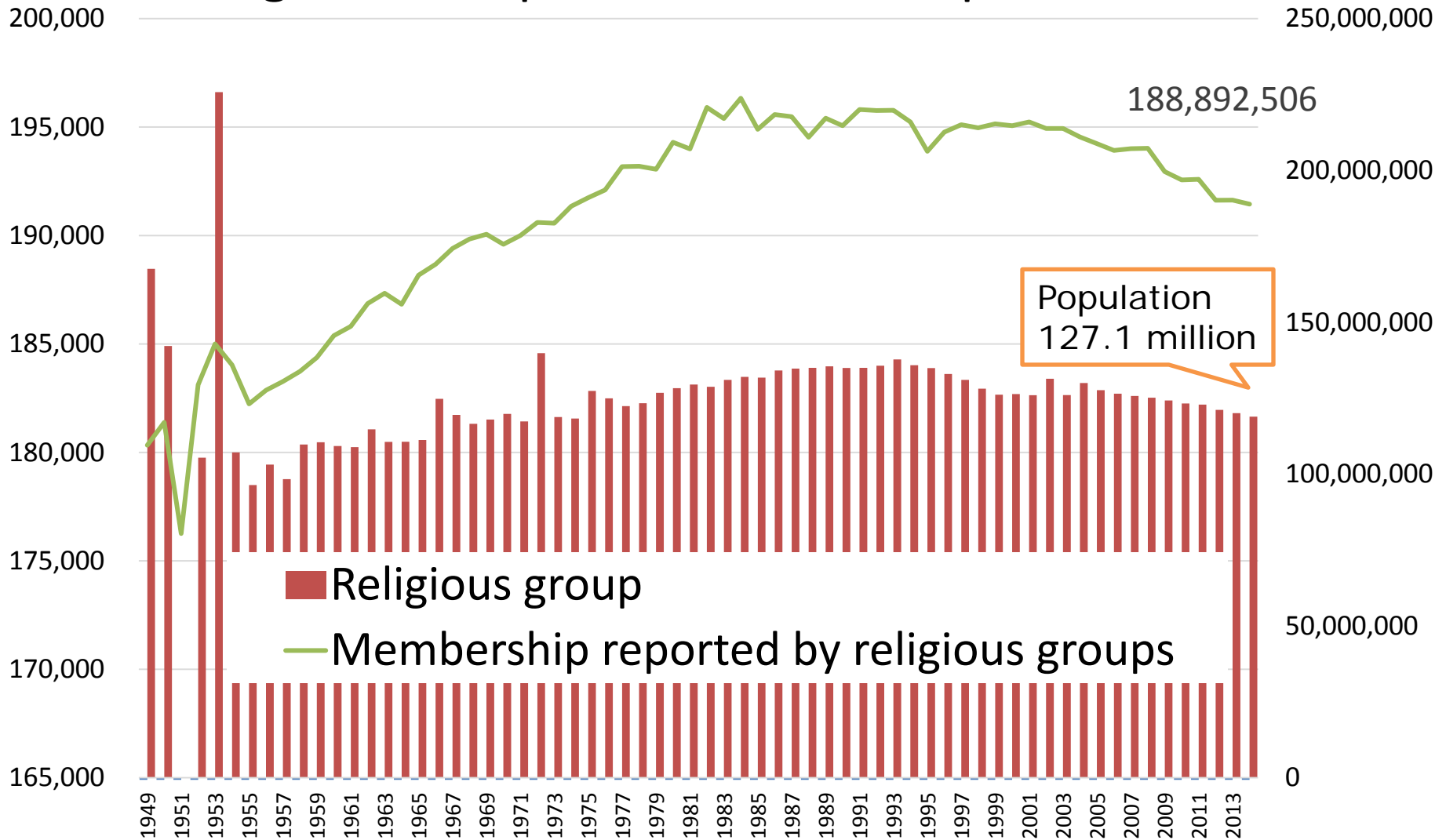
On the other hand, the Japanese National Character Survey in 2013:

72.0% do not have any **personal religious faith**

The Japanese General Social Survey in 2015:

68.6% do not follow any religion

Religious Groups and Membership: 1949-2015



Source: the annual statistical research on religion in 2015 (published in 2017) by the Agency for Cultural Affairs, Government of Japan

Major Surveys Measuring Religion in Japan

1. The Japanese National Character Survey

(日本人の国民性調査)

- The Institute of Statistical Mathematics (統計数理研究所)
- Conducted every five years since 1953; latest in 2013
- Includes questions about **religion** and **spirituality**
- stratified random sampling (N varies by year, 2000-4000; age 20+)

2. Japanese Social Survey (JGSS)

- JGSS Research Center, Osaka University of Commerce
- Conducted every couple of years since 1999; latest in 2017
- Includes questions about **religion**
- Two-stage stratified random sampling (N varies by year, 3600-9000; age20+; 1500 for JGSS-2017)

3. Survey on Japanese Value Orientation

(日本人の意識調査)

- NHK, Broadcasting Culture Research Institute
(NHK文化放送研究所)
- Conducted every five years since 1973; latest in 2013
- Includes questions about **activities related to religion and faith**
- Two-stage stratified random sampling (N=5400, age16+)

Access to the Data Sets

- The Japanese National Character Survey
 - SSJDA (<http://csrda.iss.u-tokyo.ac.jp/en/access/flow/>)
 - Available three surveys only (1958, 1963, 1968)
 - The Institute of Statistical Mathematics (http://www.ism.ac.jp/ism_info_e/kokuminsei_e.html)
 - No access to the whole data, frequencies and cross-tabs available
- Japanese Social Survey (JGSS)
 - SSJDA (<http://csrda.iss.u-tokyo.ac.jp/en/access/flow/>)
 - ICPSR (<https://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/>)
 - GESIS (<https://www.gesis.org/en/home/>)
- Survey on Japanese Value Orientation
 - SSJDA (<http://csrda.iss.u-tokyo.ac.jp/en/access/flow/>)
 - GESIS (<https://www.gesis.org/en/home/>)

1. The Japanese National Character Survey by ISM

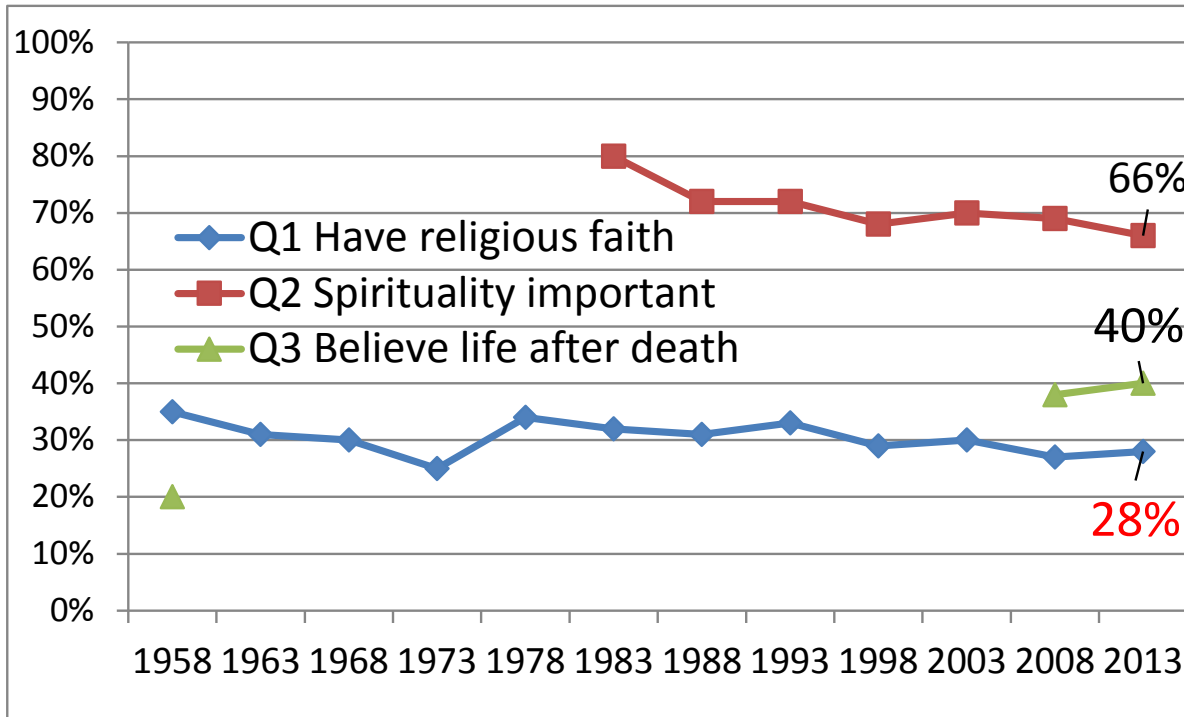
From **four different perspectives**:

1. Do you have **any personal religious faith**? yes/no
2. Without reference to any of the established religions, do you think a **religious attitude is important**, or not important? yes/can't decide/no
3. Do you believe that there is **Life after Death**? yes/no
4. How do **you think of religion generally**?

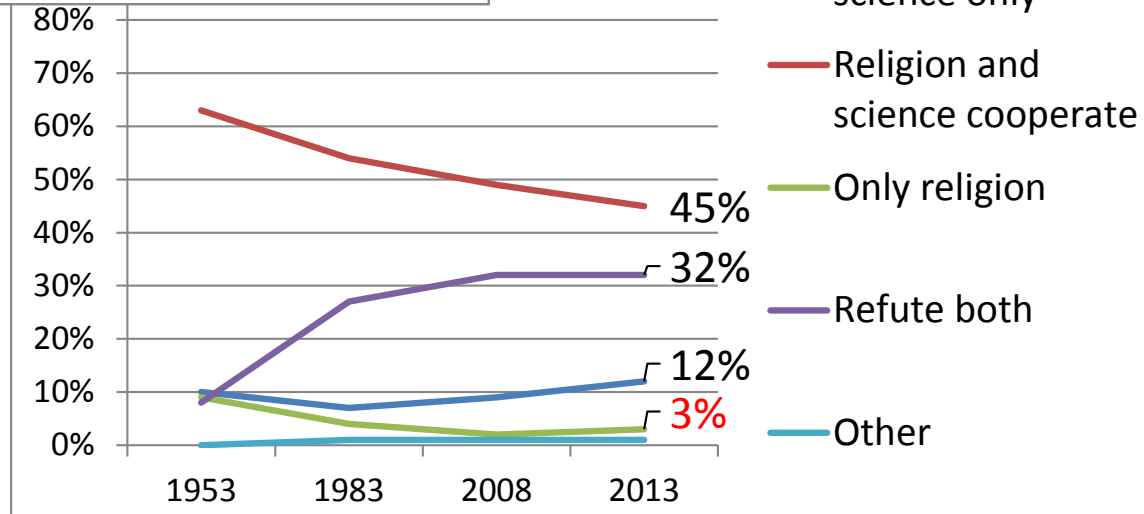
Please choose the statement below that comes closest to your opinion.

- a) Religion cannot save humanity; only **advancement in science can save humanity**
- b) **Advancement in science** and the **power of religion need to cooperate** in order to save humanity
- c) Advancement in science and the redemption of humanity are unrelated. Only the **power of religion** can save humanity
- d) **Neither** advancement in science nor the power of religion can save humanity
- e) Other(Specify)

The Japanese National Character Survey by ISM



Q4 Save humanity: Religion or Science



2. Japanese Social Survey (JGSS)

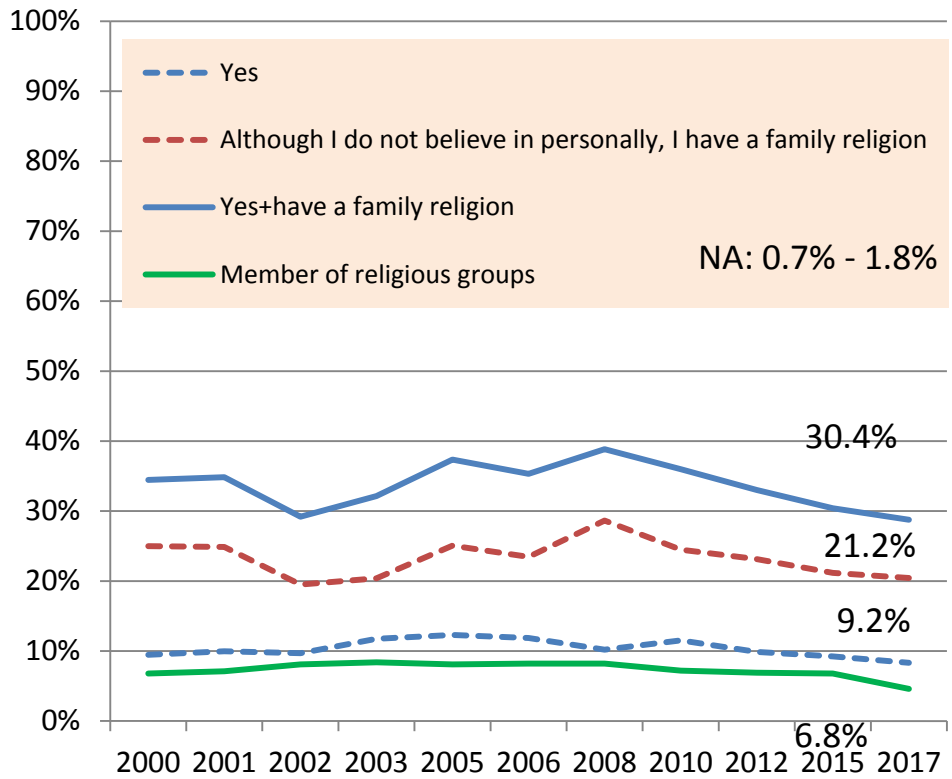
From five different perspective (1-4) and in terms of **the family grave**

1. Do you **believe in any religion**? Yes/no, but have a **family religion**/ no
2. Please **name the religion**
3. **How devoted** as a religious follower? very/certain degree/not very
4. A **member of religious groups**? Yes/no
- (5. How well do you **trust religious organizations**? Very much/some/not very)
6. How do you **feel about your own interment**? **Where** would you like **to be buried** when you die? Family grave of own parents/spouse's family/communal/to be scattered etc.
7. Are you **inheriting the grave of your family**? Yes/no (in the future /sibling or relatives)/no family grave
8. How would you like **to manage your family grave in the future**?

2. Japanese Social Survey (JGSS) ^{Who have a family religion}

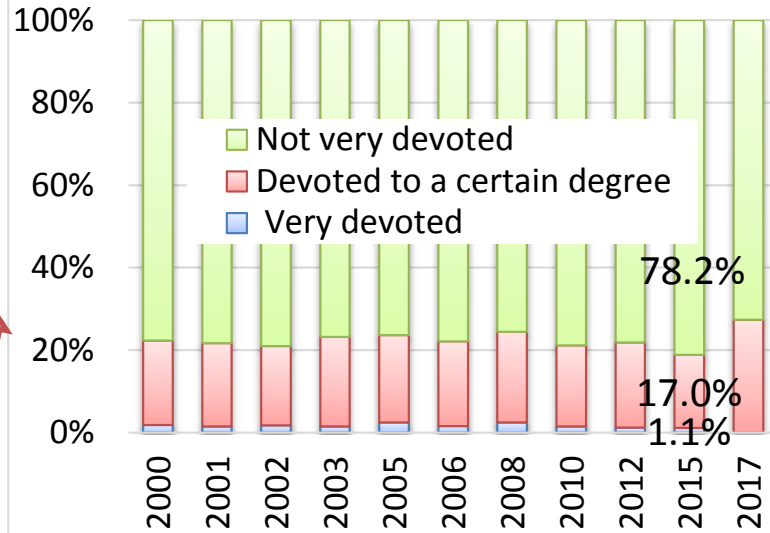
Q1 Do you believe in any religion?

Q4 Member of religious group?



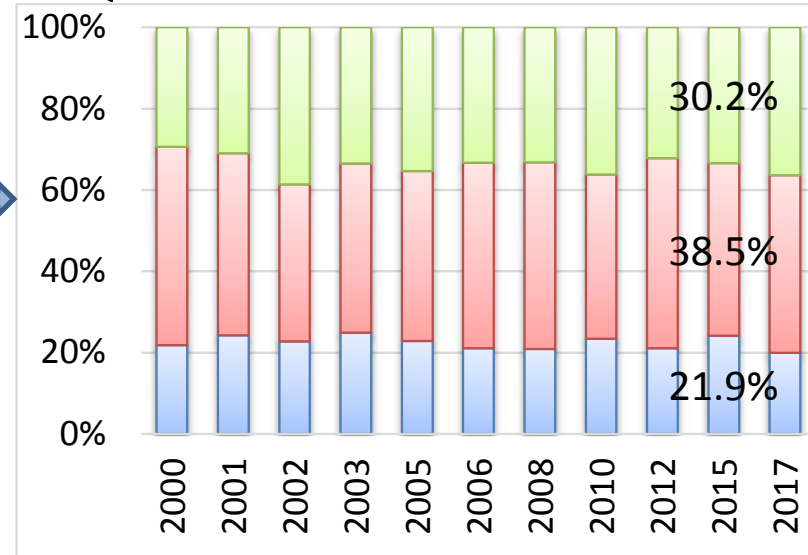
Membership 6.8% < follow a religion 9.2% < have a family religion 21.2%

Q3 How devoted? A certain degree



Yes, I believe in religion(s).

Q3 How devoted? more devoted



2. Japanese Social Survey (JGSS)

Q1 Do you **follow a religion**? By Size of Cities or by Regional Blocks

JGSS-2015	Size of Cities				Total
	Big Cities	Cities with more than 0.2million population	Cities with less than 0.2 million population	Town and Villages	
Yes	7.4%	8.3%	10.6%	10.2%	9.2%
Not believe in personally but have a family religion	18.1%	23.2%	20.9%	24.7%	21.2%
No	73.7%	67.7%	67.7%	62.8%	68.6%
NA	.8%	.8%	.8%	2.3%	1.0%

	Regional Blocks						Total
	Hokkaido/Tohoku	Kanto	Chubu	Kinki	Chugoku/Shikoku	Kyusyu	
Yes	7.5%	8.9%	11.3%	8.8%	8.9%	9.6%	9.2%
Not believe in personally but have a family religion	18.4%	15.8%	23.0%	23.0%	27.1%	27.3%	21.2%
No	72.4%	74.5%	65.2%	67.0%	63.1%	62.2%	68.6%
NA	1.7%	.8%	.5%	1.3%	1.0%	.8%	1.0%

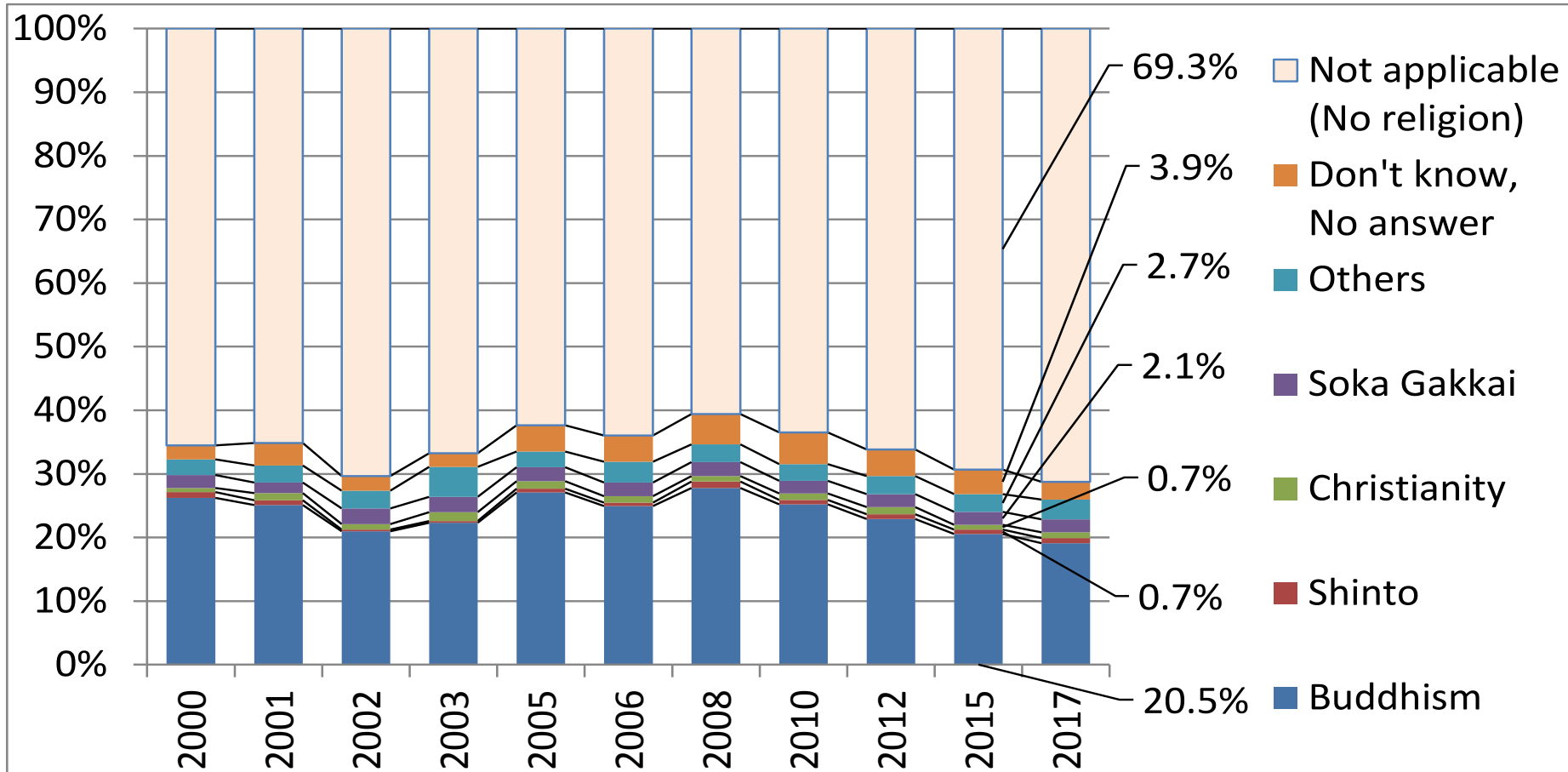
2. Japanese Social Survey (JGSS)

Q2. Name the Religion

Code	Japanese	English	Code	Japanese	English
Buddhist			Others		
10	仏教	Buddhism	42	立正佼成会	Rissho Kosei-kai
11	禅宗(曹洞宗・臨済宗)	Zen sect (Soto, Rinzai)	43	霊友会	Reiyukai
12	天台宗	Tendai sect	44	仏所護念会	Bussho Gonenkai Kyodan
13	浄土宗	Jodo sect (Pure Land)	45	幸福の科学	Happy Science
14	浄土真宗(本願寺・門徒宗・南無阿弥陀仏)	Jodo-Shin sect (True Pure Land)	51	崇教真光・真光	Sukyo Mahikari
15	真言宗	Shingon sect	52	天理教	Tenrikyo
16	日蓮宗	Nichiren sect	53	真如苑	Shinnyo-en
17	時宗	Jishu sect	54	神幽玄救世真光文明教団	Shin Yu Gen Kyu Sei Mahikari Kyodan
18	法華経・法華宗	Hokke sect	55	PL教団	Church of Perfect Liberty
19	本門佛立宗	Honmon Butsuryu Sect	56	霊波之光	Reiha-no-Hikari
82	日蓮正宗	Nichiren Shoshu	57	白光	Byakko Shinko Kai
Shinto			58	生長の家	Seicho no ie
20	神道	Shinto	59	金光教	Konkok yo
21	稲荷大明神	Inari Daimyojin	60	黒住教	urozumi kyo
Protestant			61	御獄教	Ontake-kyo
30	キリスト教	Christianity	80	先祖供養	Ancestor worship
31	カトリック	Catholic	22	大山ねずの命神示教会	Oyamanezunomikoto Shinji Kyoukai
32	プロテスタント	Protestant	29	仏教+神道(仏様・神様)	Buddhism + Shinto
33	ギリシア正教(日本ハリストス正教会)	Greek Orthodox	35	エホバの証人	Jehovah's witnesses
Soka Gakkai			36	世界救世教	Church of World Messianity
41	創価学会	Soka Gakkai	37	統一教会(世界基督教統一神霊協会)	Unification Church

2. Japanese Social Survey (JGSS)

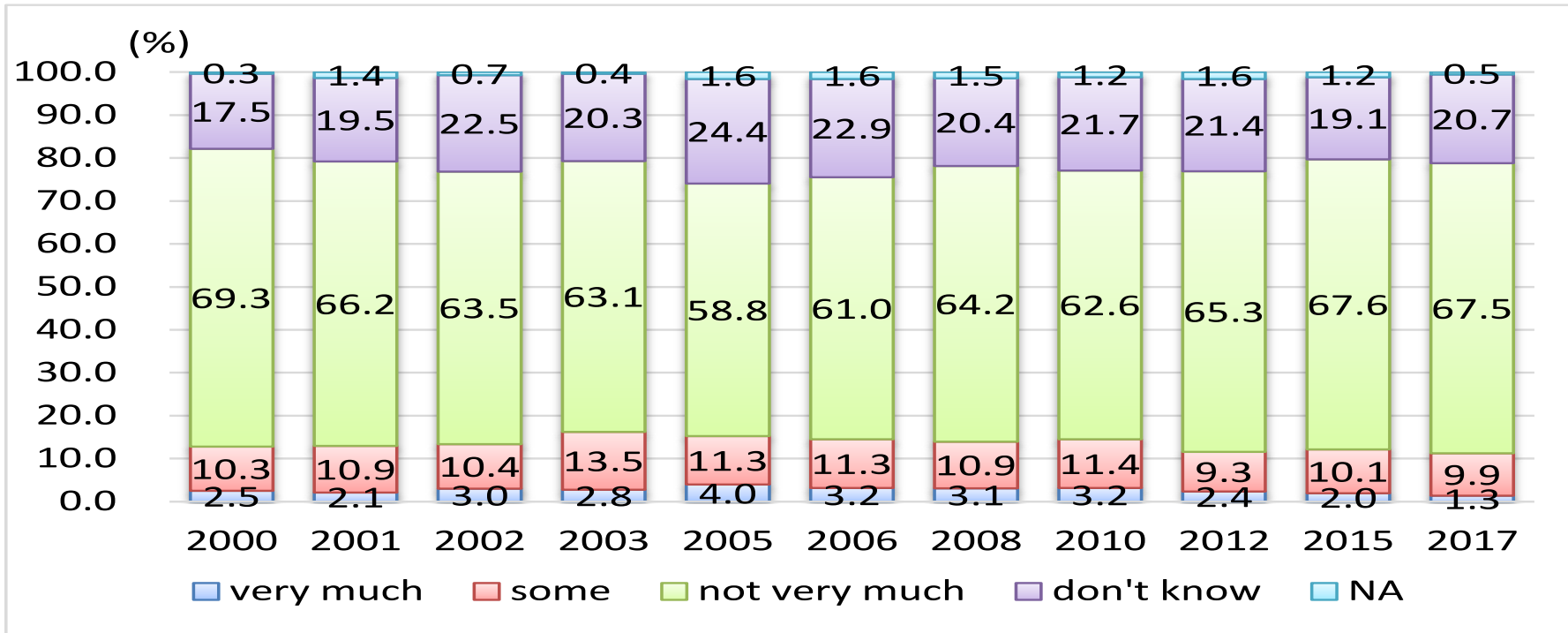
Q2. Name the Religion



86.0% of followers of **Soka Gakkai** support **New Komeito**;
68.5% of New Komeito supporters are followers of Soka Gakkai in 2015
(30 % of New Komeito supporters are not followers of Soka Gakkai)

2. Japanese Social Survey (JGSS)

Q2. How well do you **trust religious organizations**?

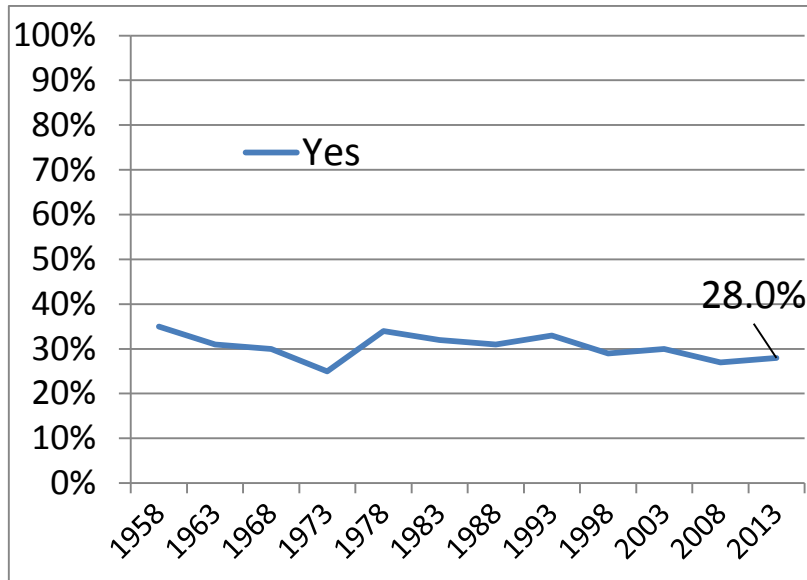


Religious organizations are the least trusted among 15 organizations: % of those who do not trust X very much in 2015: **religious group (68%)** > diet members (57%) > members of municipal councils (49%) > ministries and government agencies (28%) > labor unions (22%) , TV (21%), > police (16%), major companies (15%) , financial institutions (15%), scholars/researchers (13%), schools (12%), newspapers (11%), self-defense forces (10%), courts (9%), hospitals (6%)

Comparison of Questions

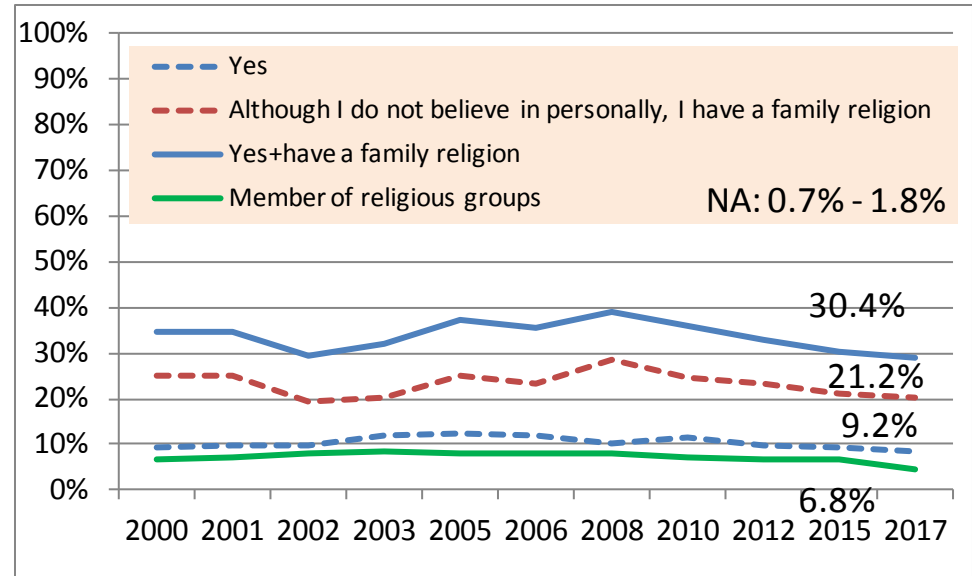
Do you have *any personal religious faith*?

(Japanese National Character Survey)



Do you *follow a religion*?

(JGSS)



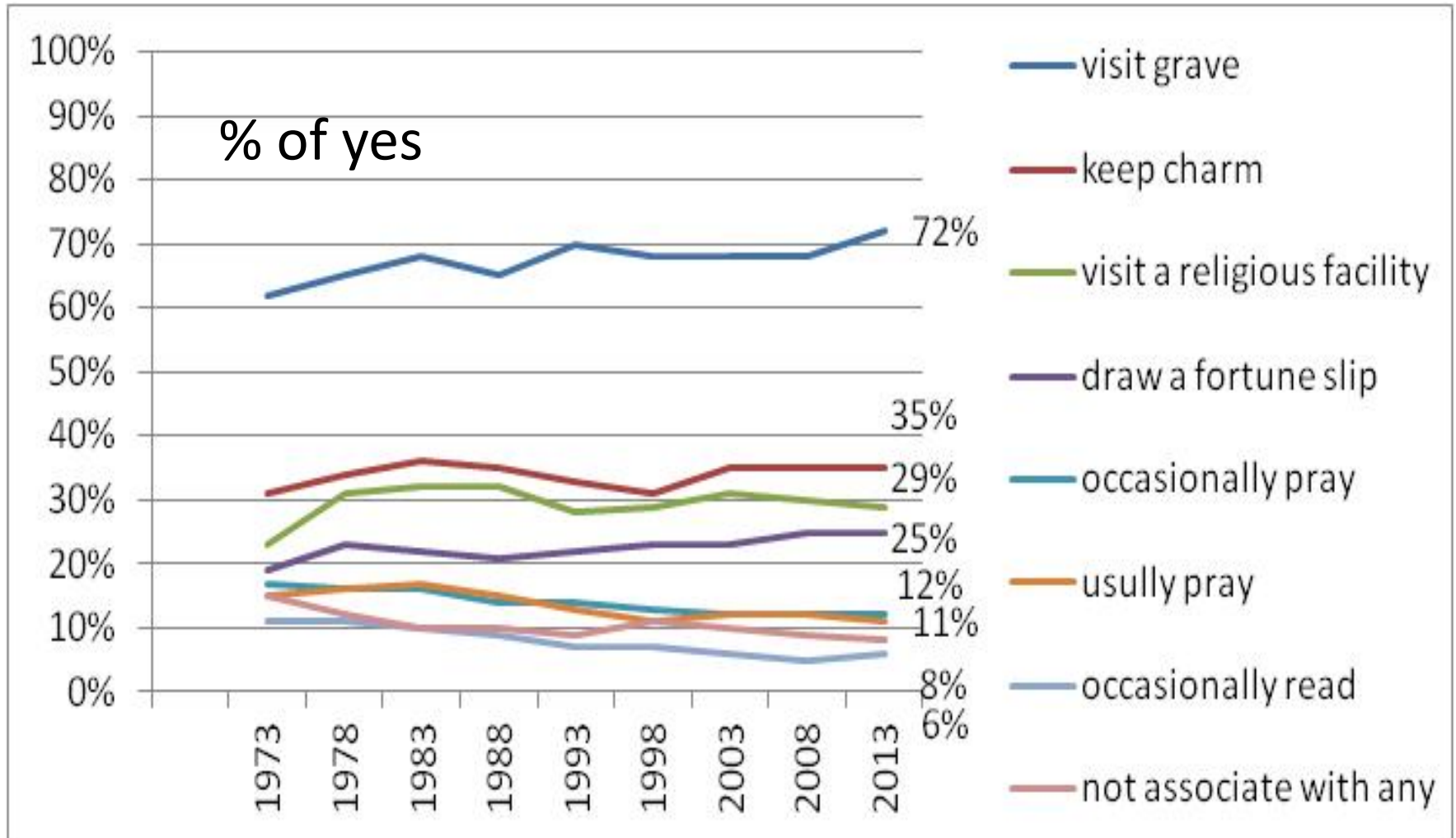
% of those who **have any personal religious faith** by ISM and that of those who **believe in or have a family religion** by JGSS are **close to each other**.

3. Survey on Japanese Value Orientation (NHK)

In terms of **everyday practices** related to religions

- ① I **usually practice religious activities** such as **prayer, participating in religious services, studying and/or missionary work.**
- ② I **occasionally** pray and participate in religious service.
- ③ I **visit ancestors graves** for a couple of times a year.
- ④ I **occasionally read religious books** such as bible or scriptures.
- ⑤ I have **gone to a religious facility to pray for good luck** (academic and business success, health, etc) during the past couple of years.
- ⑥ I **keep charm and/or amulet close to me** for good luck.
- ⑦ I have **drew a fortune slip and/or gone to see a fortune teller** during the past couple of years.
- ⑧ I do **not associate with** any activities which relates to religion or faith.

3. Survey on Japanese Value Orientation (NHK)



➤ Exceptionally high % of Yes for

Q3. I visit ancestors graves for a couple of times a year.





4. Diversification of the grave

Variety of graves and memorial ceremonies

- Traditional grave: **husband's family's ancestral grave**
- “**joint**” **grave of husband's and wife's families**
- Graves **without a family name** but with a phrase or word such as “in memory of...” or “impermanence.” 「偲ぶ」「無常」
- special cemetery that **guarantees permanent memorial services**
- buried with others **in a communal grave** regardless of family or marital ties

Diversifying in forms

- conventional **three-tier tombstone**
- large, **wall-like tombstones**, each of which is **used by several families**
- **flat tombstones** laid out on the lawn
- cineraria with **locker-like storage places for urns**
- **communal memorial grounds** simply marked with a “virtual cemeteries” **on the internet**: view photos of the deceased, read their obituaries and wills, and listen to their recorded messages

What do Japanese people think about the grave and the relationship with temples?

- Do they **continue to keep their family grave**? If currently do not have it, do they want to have it?
- People who want to have their own grave, where, what kind and with how much?
- What kind of the **relationship do people want to have with temples**?
(Query from young Buddhist monks of several religious schools)
 - geographical and relational distance
 - financial cost: managing fee for the grave and offering

➤ **JGSS questions:**

1. **current situation** of the **inheritance of the ancestor's grave**
2. what do **people want to do with their ancestor's grave**

JGSS 2000/2001/2010/2015

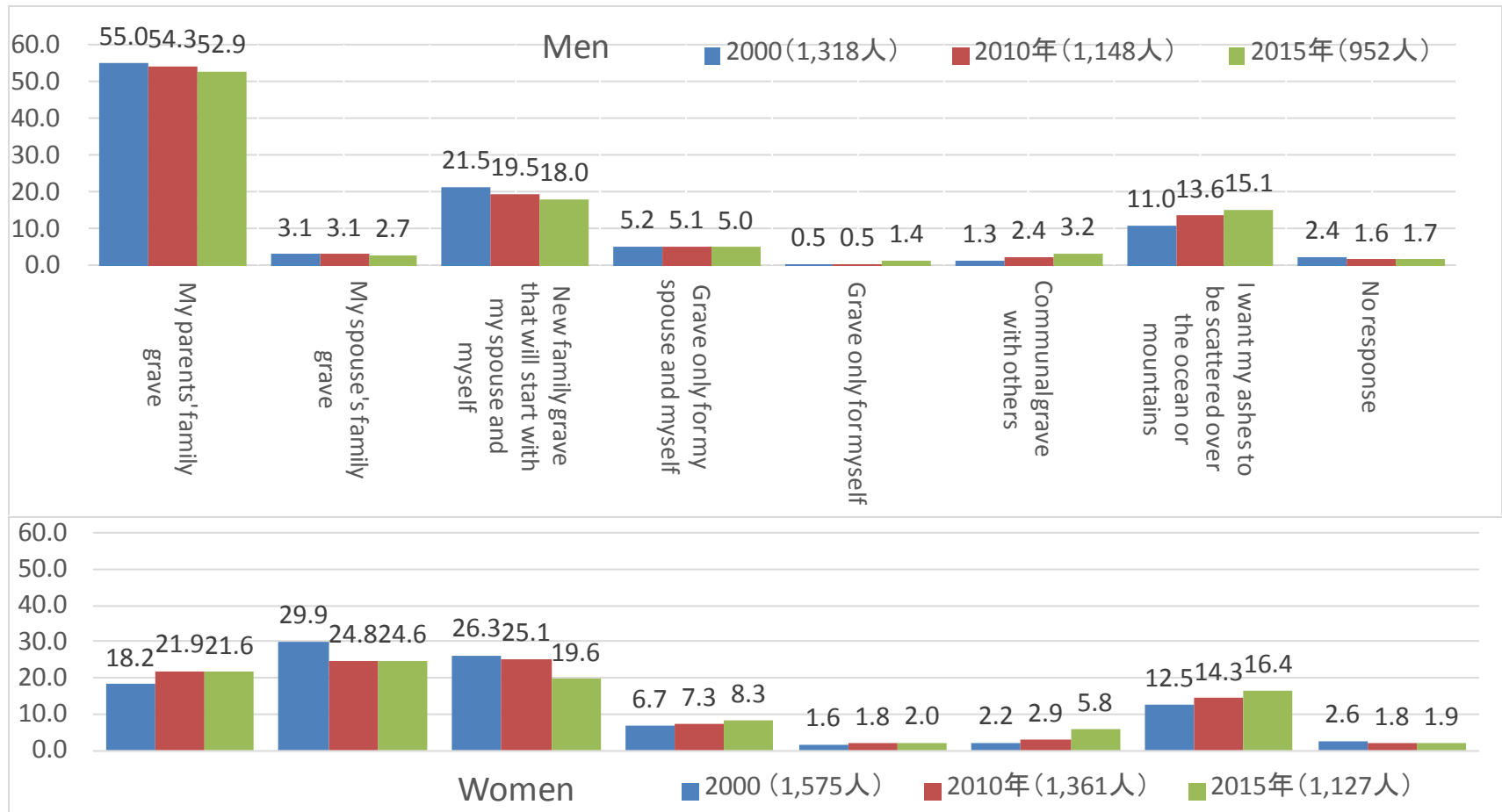
Q63-1 How do you feel about **your own interment**? **Where would you like to be buried** when you die? Please choose only one that best describes the way you feel.

- 1 **Family grave** of my parents
- 2 My **spouse's family grave**
- 3 I want to **start a family grave** which starts **with my spouse and myself**.
- 4 Grave **only for my spouse and myself** (a locker-style charnel included)
- 5 Grave **only for myself** (a locker-style charnel included)
- 6 **Communal grave** with others
- 7 I want my ashes **to be scattered over the ocean or mountains**.
(No conventional grave wanted)

Q 63-2 What are the reasons for choosing above 6 or 7? Please choose all that apply.

- 1 I would rather be in the family grave or in my own grave, but have **no one to look after it**.
- 2 I would rather be in the family grave or in my own grave, but do not want to **bother my children to look after it**.
- 3 I want to **return to nature**.
- 4 I **do not see any meaning** in having a family grave or my own.
- 5 Other(Please specify: _____)
(nothing marked)

4. Where would you like to be buried? (2000, 2010, 2015)



- Slight changes can be observed for both men and women during past 15 years.
- For men % of those who wish to be buried with their parents gradually decreased whereas, for women % wishing to be buried with husband parents gradually decreased.
- For both men and women % of those wishing to build a new family grave decreased, and % wanting to be buried in shared graves and scatter ashes increased.
- For women % wishing to build a grave just for themselves and their husband also increased.

JGSS 2015

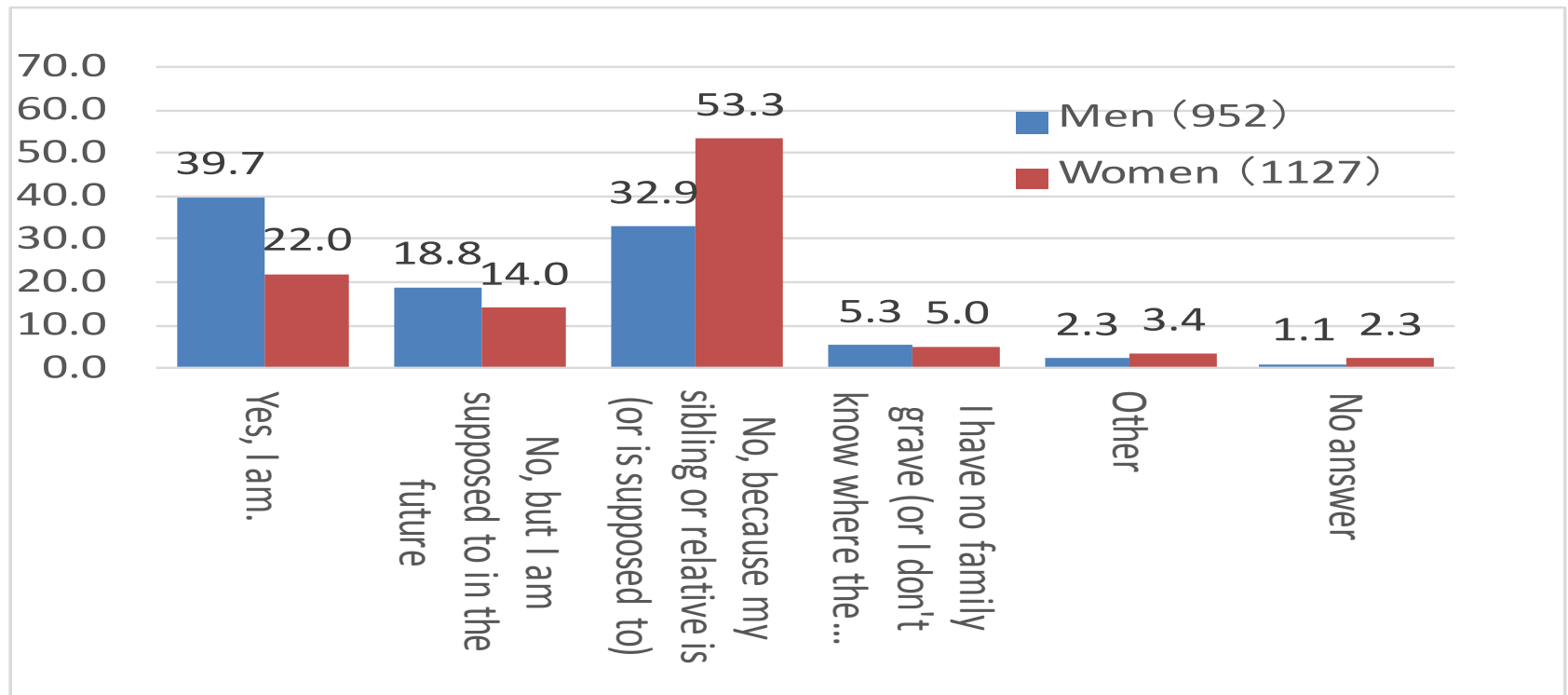
Q52-1 Are you **inheriting the grave of your family**?

- 1 **Yes**, I am.
- 2 **No, but** I am supposed to **in the future**.
- 3 No, because **my sibling or relative is** (or is supposed to).
- 4 I have **no family grave** (or I don't know where the grave is located).
- 5 Other (Please specify: _____)

Q52-2 How would you like to manage your family grave in the future?

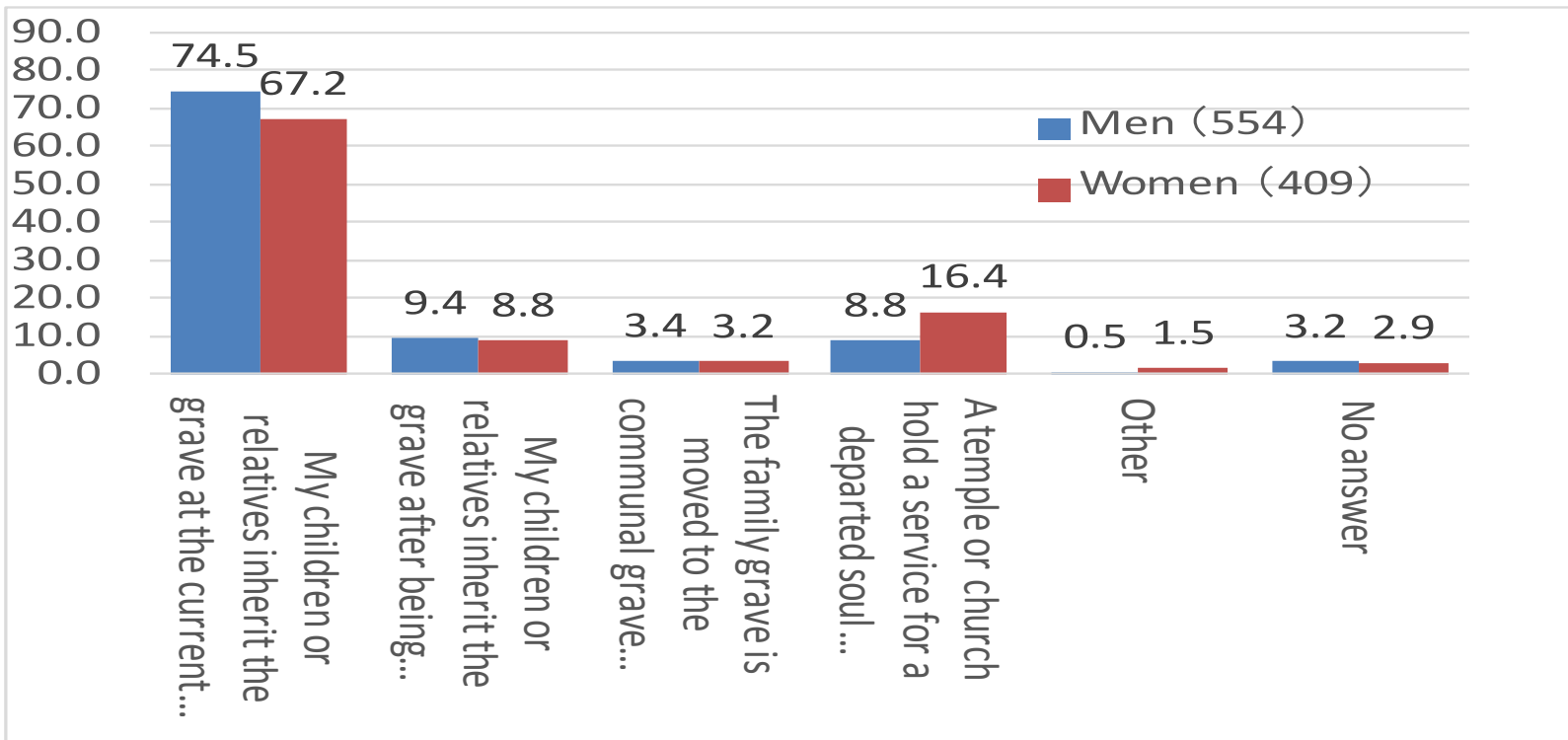
- 1 **My children or relatives inherit** the grave at the current location.
- 2 My children or relatives inherit the grave after **being moved to the convenient place**.
- 3 The family grave is **moved to the communal grave** (buried with others) and family members do not manage the grave.
- 4 **A temple or church hold a service** for a departed soul forever in compensation for donation.
- 5 Other (please specify: _____)

Are you inheriting the grave of your family? (2015)



- For men, 40% have already inherited and another 20% are expected to inherit in the future. 30% said sibling or relative instead of them.
- For women, about the half said sibling or relative instead of them. 36% have inherited or will inherit the family graves.
- For both men and women, 5% does not have or know family graves.

How would you like to manage your family grave in the future? (2015)



- 75% of men and 67% of women prefer traditional ways; pass on their children or relatives
- One in six women prefer paying fee to a temple or church for the management
- 10% prefer to move to more convenient location

Points

- Measuring religion: **direct or indirect ways to measure religion** by three national repeated surveys
- Belief or practices
- Own belief or **religion of one's family**
- A sense of **distrust towards religious organizations**
- Belief and **political position** (for a certain % of population)
- A focal point is **how to inherit or not inherit the family grave for a majority of Japanese who do not have a personal belief**
- Today's life and **inheritance of a family grave**
Different situations for men and for women
for **a successor** and for a non-successor
for a married and for an un-married
for those who has **no child** or **daughters only**
- **Structures of the family** (generations of the family) have affected **the continuity of one's family religion**

Acknowledgements

- ▶ The Japanese General Social Surveys (JGSS) are designed and carried out by the JGSS Research Center at Osaka University of Commerce (Joint Usage / Research Center for Japanese General Social Surveys accredited by Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology), in collaboration with the Institute of Social Science at the University of Tokyo.
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List of JGSS codebooks

JGSS-2000 Basic spreadsheet/codebook

JGSS-2001 Basic spreadsheet/codebook

JGSS-2002 Basic spreadsheet/codebook

JGSS Cumulative Data 2000-2003 Basic spreadsheet/codebook

JGSS-2005 Basic spreadsheet/codebook

JGSS-2006 Basic spreadsheet/codebook

JGSS-2008 Basic spreadsheet/codebook

JGSS-2010 Basic spreadsheet/codebook

JGSS-2012 Basic spreadsheet/codebook

<http://jgss.daishodai.ac.jp/english/index.html>

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