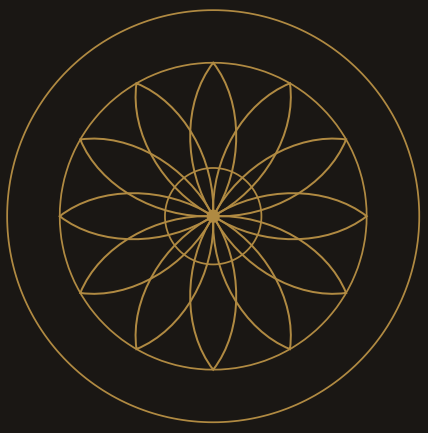


THE SACRED DIVIDE

THE FULL RECORD

Shinto

East Asian family

HONOR THE FAITH · NAME THE MACHINERY

TEXT CHECKED 2026-10-03

Before you begin

This is the record of Shinto in *The Sacred Divide*. It has 27 sections, the same 27 used for every tradition, so that any section can be set beside the same section for another. Every fact is sourced.

Before each section, a short note says what the section is built to show, so you know what you are looking at before you read the detail.

After each section, a note headed *Why this matters to you* points at the part of the section most likely to touch an ordinary reader: a member, a donor, a parent, a voter, someone thinking about leaving, or someone outside forming an opinion. It usually ends with a question. The questions are not traps. They are the ones a careful reader would ask anyway.

The hard questions in section 23 are set out one at a time: the question, why it is asked, and an example already documented in this record.

Where a note states a fact, the fact comes from this record's own tables and cited sources or, in a few places, from a well-known research finding named in the text. Corrections are logged, with their dates, in the last section, *What changed on this page*.

Contents

01 At a glance 10

Disclosure scorecard

02 A day inside 12

03 The forefront 14

The unanswered question · The widest gap between word and record · One cost of leaving, beside its denial · The strongest objection, answered

04 What healthy looks like here 17

05 History 18

Timeline · Moments in the room

06 Branches & variants 24

07 Structure 26

Size and shape · Authority · The top of the chain · Who holds what

08 Law & state here 31

Who can compel an answer

09 Money 33

Where it comes from · Follow the money · Pipelines this tradition shares · Money in numbers

10 Genealogy 39

11 Reach 42
Information · Children · Bodies

12 The 30 techniques 46
All thirty at a glance · Stage 1 · Idealize · Stage 2 · Hook · Stage 3 · Devalue · Stage 4 · Confuse · Stage 5 · Isolate · Stage 6 · Extract · Stage 7 · Discard · Stage 8 · Replace

13 The loops 85

14 Say versus do 97
What they say, what the record shows · Accountability or theatre? · Words used here

15 Cost & cover 100
What leaving costs · The ledger of exit · How the cost is denied

16 The ledger 103
Who benefits · Money out, leverage back · Who pays

17 Who gets hurt most 105
Where the weight lands

18 The middle tiers 107

19 Documented cases 109
The dormitory sale and the whistleblower (Japan, 2015–2022) · Two presidents at once (Japan, 2022–2024) · A succession feud ends in murder (Japan, 2017)

20 Precedent 111
It has been broken before · What would change this page

21 Voices from inside 113

22 Regional variants 114
Japan — the Jinja Honcho network · Japan — Yasukuni and the state

23 The questions 116
In closing

24 Leaving safely here 121

25 Where to get help 122

26 Sources 125
Courts · Law and history · Further sources

27 What changed on this page 131

How to read this

Every religion in The Sacred Divide is laid out the same way, in the same 27 sections, so that any section can be compared across religions. This file examines institutions, offices, money and power. It does not judge anyone's faith or the truth of any belief.

EVIDENCE GRADES

Each of the 30 techniques carries a grade for how it is established in this tradition.

- **CODIFIED** Written policy, published rule, contractual requirement, or a procedure the institution has confirmed in its own documents. The strongest grade and the hardest to deny.
- **DOCUMENTED** Established by court judgment, government inquiry, regulatory action, or financial filing. Not the institution's own words, but a body with subpoena power.
- **TAUGHT** Repeated leadership instruction from platform, publication, or curriculum, without a formal rule. Deniable as emphasis rather than policy.
- **CULTURAL** Community enforcement the institution neither mandates nor prevents. Real in effect, unattributable by design — the highest-deniability grade. A volume graded mostly Cultural has not been cleared of anything: it means the page names no document that makes the institution responsible. Cultural does not mean minor, and it is not a finding of absence.

- CONTESTED Occurs in some parts of the tradition and is actively opposed in others. Generalizing this grade across a whole tradition is a misuse of it.
- REFORMED Documented historically and materially changed since — policy withdrawn, practice ended, or independent oversight accepted. Recorded because omitting it would be dishonest.
- UNGRADED Present in the source material without a grade assigned yet. Read as an unverified pattern claim, not as a finding.

RECEIPTS

Bracketed labels such as [OFFICIAL POLICY] name the kind of source a claim rests on.

- **Official policy.** The institution's own written rule: handbook, canon, policy letter, catechism, trust deed, temple recommend question. The strongest evidence available, because it cannot be attributed to a rogue individual.
- **Court record.** Judgments, convictions, filings, and testimony given under oath. Adversarially tested, which is more than most religious claims about themselves have been.
- **Government inquiry.** Royal commissions, grand juries, parliamentary and state investigations with subpoena power. Where these exist they are usually the best record of what an institution did rather than said.
- **Regulatory action.** Findings and penalties from bodies like the SEC or consumer-protection regulators. Narrow in scope, unusually precise in what they establish.
- **Financial record.** Filings, audited statements, tax returns, disclosed compensation, property transactions. Frequently the only place an institution tells the truth about its priorities.

- **Leadership statement.** Recorded sermons, conference addresses, published letters. The institution in its own voice, to its own people, on the record.
- **Independent investigation.** Reports commissioned by the institution but conducted externally. Weaker than a court and far stronger than a press release — and notable when the institution publishes them in full.
- **Academic source.** Peer-reviewed history, sociology, and demography. Best for context, structure, and scale; weaker for specific institutional conduct.
- **Former member testimony.** Firsthand accounts from people who were inside. Indispensable and interested at once — graded as testimony, never presented as documentary proof.
- **Pattern observed.** A recurring configuration with no single document behind it. Labeled as an observation rather than a finding, and the weakest claim type in this codex.

METHOD

- Separation of targets. This codex analyzes institutional control patterns, never the worth of believers or the truth of beliefs. Theology is out of scope; behavior, money, and power are in scope.
- Pattern over anecdote. A tactic is attributed to a tradition's high-control expressions only where the mechanism recurs — one bad congregation proves nothing; the same architecture in a hundred proves the architecture.
- Evidence weighting. Every factual claim carries a bracketed source-type label and should carry a grade (A–D). Claims marked SOURCE NEEDED or PATTERN OBSERVED are analysis, not established fact, and must not be published as fact.
- Steelman rule. Every tactic section presents the institution's strongest defense before countering it. If the defense cannot be stated in a form its adherents would recognize, the counter is not yet earned.

- Asymmetry honesty. Similar tactic does not mean identical severity. A shunning policy that costs your entire family is not the same as a community that cools toward doubters, and the codex must never flatten that difference.
- The mirror rule. Any framework this powerful can itself be misused — to smear traditions, flatter one's own, or manufacture grievance. The self-audit and language guardrails apply to this project as much as to any institution it examines.

CITATIONS

A small raised number in the text links to the matching item in this religion's Sources, near the end. Every source was checked, and the date of the last check is shown at the top.

01 At a glance

BEFORE YOU READ

The whole page on one screen: how big Shinto is, who sits at the top, how that person is chosen and whether anyone can remove them, where the money comes from, and what leaving costs. The disclosure scorecard underneath asks six yes-or-no questions any charity or public company would be expected to answer. Every later section expands one of these rows.

SIZE	Jinja Honcho claims tens of millions of 'adherents' through household shrine affiliation; surveys show only a few percent of Japanese self-identify as Shinto believers. The two counts differ by a wide margin. ACADEMIC SOURCE
WHO'S IN CHARGE	Jinja Honcho, the Association of Shinto Shrines, is the umbrella body over roughly 80,000 shrines. The research chief who questioned a 2015 property sale was dismissed and a colleague demoted; the courts voided the dismissal (final, 2022), and a rival claim to the presidency was rejected (final, 2024). President Tanaka Tsunekiyo was confirmed for a sixth term in 2025.
CHOSEN BY	Boards within the shrine world choose the president.
REMOVABLE BY	The board can remove the president, and the courts have decided the disputes where the board failed.

MONEY IN ONE LINE	The money comes from amulet and fortune sales, ceremony fees (blessings, weddings, groundbreakings), festival funding levies on neighborhoods, and corporate purification services.
LEAVING IN ONE LINE	There is no membership to leave. The costs are neighborly and reputational, since opting out of shrine festivals or levies marks a household. VARIES BY COMMUNITY
THE UNANSWERED QUESTION	If participation is 'just culture' and belief is optional, why does refusal cost belonging?
EVIDENCE	None of the 30 techniques is sourced to a named document. All 30 are graded Cultural; none is graded Reformed.
FAMILY	East Asian — taoism, confucianism, shinto
LAST CHECKED	2026-10-03

Disclosure scorecard

ACCOUNTS	PAY	SAFEGUARDING	EXTERNAL FIRST	REMOVAL	REPLY
PARTIAL	NO	NO	NO	PARTIAL	NO

Y Yes — established from a public source · **P** Partial — true of some parts of the tradition, or true in some jurisdictions · **N** No — not established from any public source · **?** Not assessable — no institutional apex exists to assess

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

The glance table's answer to who chooses the top office is that boards within the shrine world choose the president, and to who can remove its holder, that the board can remove the president and the courts have decided the disputes where the board failed. Read that as though it described the board of a pension fund holding your savings. Would you accept the arrangement there? The scorecard finds no public evidence of leaders' pay, a public safeguarding policy, allegations going to police first or on-the-record replies. Each "No" is something the institution could publish tomorrow. Ask yourself why it hasn't.

02 A day inside

BEFORE YOU READ

One ordinary day, told from inside. The person is a composite built from documented patterns, not a real individual. The point is to make the structure visible at human scale: phrases like "removal mechanism" or "giving record" are easy to read past, but a Tuesday organized around them is not.

Keiko · A Tuesday in autumn · A residential ward in Nagoya

She hangs the washing before eight and greets Tanaka-san from next door, and the greeting is the whole architecture of her street compressed into four syllables and a bow of about fifteen degrees.

The neighbourhood association envelope is on the shoe cupboard. Four thousand yen for the autumn festival. It is not a lot. It is not the point. The point is that Furukawa-san collects it in person, house by house, and that she has a list, and that the list is not a threat and does not need to be.

Keiko is not religious. If a survey asked, she would say none. She goes to the shrine at New Year, she had her daughter blessed at one month, she will have a Buddhist funeral, and none of this feels like belief. It feels like being from here.

At school, her son's class is visiting the shrine on Friday for a seasonal event. There is a form. A mother she knows slightly said last year that her family would prefer not to, and the teacher was very understanding, and the child went anyway, and nobody was unkind at any point in that sequence.

In the afternoon on the news there is a story about a minister visiting a certain shrine, and a statement about it being in a private capacity, and a response from a neighbouring country. Keiko's mother, watching with her, says that the dead should be left in peace. Keiko's mother's uncle died in Burma in 1944 and is enshrined there, and Keiko has never once heard her mother say what she thinks about that.

At night she puts the four thousand yen in the envelope and writes their family name on it in her good handwriting. She has done this every autumn for twenty-two years. It would not occur to her to describe any of it as religion, and it has never once occurred to her that she could decline — not because she is afraid, but because there is no available version of the sentence.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Did any moment in that day feel familiar: a cost nobody questions, a door nobody can see how to open? The section of this page that explains that moment is the one to read first. If nothing felt familiar, ask whether that's because it isn't your life, or because the patterns have become normal to you.

03 The forefront

BEFORE YOU READ

The page's thesis in one place. First, the single question the documented record could not answer. Then the widest gap between what the institution says and what the record shows, one cost of leaving set beside how it is officially denied, and the strongest objection to this whole page, answered rather than dismissed.

> You may not consider yourself religious at all. You visit at New Year, you had your wedding at a shrine, and the whole thing feels like weather rather than belief — which is precisely why this profile matters. One of the most severe cases of a state capturing a religious tradition happened here, in a tradition with no doctrine, no membership, and nothing anyone thought they were obeying.

THE UNANSWERED QUESTION

If participation is 'just culture' and belief is optional, why does refusal cost belonging?

The widest gap between word and record

THEY SAY	THE RECORD SHOWS	RECEIPT
Shinto is not a religion, only Japanese culture.	Said exclusively when someone declines, and never at any other moment.	PATTERN OBSERVED

One cost of leaving, beside its denial

COST	DOCUMENTED?	DETAIL	THE OFFICIAL DENIAL
Formal membership	None	There is nothing to resign from; household affiliation is nominal	Accurately: there is no exit apparatus.

The strongest objection, answered

The objection. It is culture, not religion, so religious criticism does not apply.

What is true in it. Most participants would sincerely deny being religious, local shrine life is a genuine commons, and the tradition has no doctrine to dispute.

The answer. And that is precisely why it is here. A tradition with nothing written down has no text to hold up when someone hijacks it — which is how it became compulsory emperor worship within about seven decades. The 1868–1945 record is the strongest argument in this codex that 'it's only culture' is not a safeguard.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Try answering the unanswered question yourself: *If participation is 'just culture' and belief is optional, why does refusal cost belonging?* If you can't, who could, and would asking them be welcome? How an institution reacts to a fair question often tells you more than the answer does.

04 What healthy looks like here

BEFORE YOU READ

What genuinely works in Shinto, stated first and separately from any critique. That is a standing rule of this book: no tradition is reduced to its worst documented moments. Anything criticized later is measured against the best of what is described here.

> Shinto is Japan's indigenous tradition of kami (spirit-deities) veneration, shrine practice,

> purification and seasonal festival. It is largely non-doctrinal and non-congregational, and it is interwoven with Japanese cultural identity.

- Healthy practice here looks like local shrine life as a genuine commons, with festivals, ecology and continuity without creed, and with priests and scholars resisting political capture of the tradition.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

A bias check before the critique. People tend to read criticism of their own group as an attack and criticism of other groups as simply true. Social psychologists call this in-group bias; it shows up even when the groups are assigned at random (Tajfel's "minimal group" experiments, 1971). If you belong here, did this section feel fair? If you don't, did anything in it surprise you? The surprise is a rough measure of what you had assumed.

05 History

BEFORE YOU READ

A dated timeline and a few moments where the direction changed. Dates matter because they show that most rules had a beginning. A rule that began in a particular year, for a particular reason, is a rule that can be examined, and sometimes retired.

Shinto began as ancient localized kami cults, which were systematized alongside Buddhism. State Shinto (the state-run system of shrine worship) fused shrine religion with emperor worship and militarized nationalism from 1868 to 1945, and it was the modern era's clearest case of a tradition being weaponized by a state. Postwar disestablishment returned shrines to private religious status.

Timeline

HISTORY AT A GLANCE



Numbered markers match the timeline below; spacing is proportional to the years.

1 **PREHISTORY–6TH C. CE**

Local kami veneration existed, with no name, no canon and no clergy class

A landscape of local practice, not an organized religion.

2 **6TH–8TH C.**

Buddhism arrives, and the Kojiki (712) and Nihon Shoki (720), the earliest written chronicles of Japanese myth and imperial descent, are compiled

Myth is written down in service of imperial legitimacy — the first political use of the tradition.

3 9TH–19TH C.

Shinto and Buddhism are fused for a millennium, a blending known as shinbutsu-shūgō

The tradition's boundaries are historically porous — 'pure Shinto' is a modern invention.

4 1868

The Meiji Restoration forces the separation of Shinto from Buddhism (shinbutsu bunri)

The state reorganizes religion by decree; Buddhist property destroyed.

5 1871–1945

Under State Shinto, shrines are nationalized, emperor worship is compulsory and shrine attendance is mandated

The clearest case in this codex of a tradition converted wholesale into a state coercion instrument. GOVERNMENT REPORT

6 1930S–1945

Shrine rites are integrated into militarism and into colonial assimilation policy in Korea and Taiwan

Sacred ritual used to enforce imperial identity on subject populations. ACADEMIC SOURCE

7 1945–1946

The Occupation's Shinto Directive disestablishes State Shinto, and the emperor renounces divinity

Religion is legally separated from the state and shrines become private bodies.

8 1946–PRESENT

Association of Shinto Shrines (Jinja Honcho) organizes most shrines

A voluntary umbrella body with real political interests.

9 1969–PRESENT

Officials visit Yasukuni Shrine (Tokyo's shrine to the war dead), and Shinto Seiji Renmei (the Shinto Political League) lobbies for constitutional revision

Re-entanglement of shrine and state, contested in Japanese courts.

COURT RECORD

10 2000S–PRESENT

Shrines merge as rural areas depopulate, and ritual tourism grows

Institutional contraction alongside commercial expansion.

Moments in the room

1868–1871 — SHINTO AND BUDDHISM ARE SEPARATED BY DECREE

The Meiji government ordered the separation of Shinto from Buddhism and reorganised the shrines under state administration, inventing 'State Shinto' as an instrument of national unity.

Why it matters. The fusion of shrine and state was manufactured, by name, on a date, by a government. That is why the 1945 disestablishment was possible: what is built can be unbuilt.

DECEMBER 1945 — THE SHINTO DIRECTIVE

The occupation authorities ordered the complete separation of Shinto from the state, ending official sponsorship, funding, and propagation.

Why it matters. The apex in this tradition has already been abolished once. This codex rarely gets to write that sentence, and it is why the neighbourhood ledger — which survived — is what the page examines.

2017–2024 — THE SHRINE ASSOCIATION IN COURT

A property-sale scandal and a whistleblower's dismissal put Jinja Honcho's own governance into Japanese courts, where the dismissed research chief won (final, 2022) and a rival claim to the presidency was rejected (final, 2024).

Why it matters. The shrine world's accountability test is running in open court because no internal body would run it. Note where the venue is.

Sources for this section: [5] [7] [8]

Shinto began as ancient localized kami cults, which were systematized alongside Buddhism.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Pick one rule that shapes your week and look for it on the timeline. If it has a start date, it was decided by people at a particular moment, for reasons of that moment. Were you taught it as timeless? What would it mean for you if it turned out to be younger than your grandparents' grandparents?

06 Branches & variants

BEFORE YOU READ

Shinto is not one bloc. This section maps the main branches and variants, so that nothing documented about one community is read as true of all of them.

The main branches are Jinja (shrine) Shinto under Jinja Honcho, Sect Shinto (Tenrikyo, a nineteenth-century Japanese new religion, and others historically classified separately), folk and household Shinto, and imperial household rites.

BRANCH	WHERE	WHAT DIFFERS ON THIS PAGE'S QUESTIONS
Shrine Shinto under Jinja Honcho	It has about 80,000 shrines across Japan [7].	It is an umbrella body founded in 1946 [7], with a political arm, Shinto Seiji Renmei (1969) [8].
Independent shrines	They are found across Japan.	These are shrines outside the Jinja Honcho network, and they govern themselves.
Yasukuni Shrine	It stands in Tokyo.	It is independent of Jinja Honcho [23], and it enshrined 14 Class-A war criminals (the top-ranked leaders tried for crimes against peace) in 1978 [9].
Imperial rites and Ise	These rites center on the Imperial Household and Ise Jingu.	Ise has a supreme priestess drawn from the imperial family (2017) [10].

Sect and folk Shinto	They are found across Japan.	Tenrikyo and others were historically classed separately, and household and festival practice belong here.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

If you know one community of Shinto, you know one community. Most bad generalizations about a religion, and most unfair defenses of it, come from treating one branch as the whole. Which branch is the one you picture when you hear the name? Is that picture yours, or one you were given by news coverage or by the community itself?

07 Structure

BEFORE YOU READ

The organizational chart: how many people and institutions there are, where authority sits, who holds the top office, and who holds what beneath it. The question to keep in mind is simple: if the person at the top got something badly wrong, what written procedure exists to correct or remove them?

Size and shape

Adherents	Jinja Honcho claims tens of millions of 'adherents' through household shrine affiliation; surveys show only a few percent of Japanese self-identify as Shinto believers. The two counts differ by a wide margin. ACADEMIC SOURCE
Regions	Shinto is found in Japan almost exclusively, with ~80,000 shrines and a small diaspora presence.
Trend	Rural shrines are closing as villages depopulate, while ritual participation persists as custom (New Year visits, weddings, groundbreaking) and belief claims stay very low.
Participation	Most participants would deny being religious at all. The relevant control question here is not doctrine but social obligation — festivals, levies, and neighborhood expectation.

Authority

- Authority sits with the shrine priesthood (often hereditary), the Association of Shinto Shrines (Jinja Honcho) and neighborhood shrine communities.
- The political risk zone is shrine-network lobbying for constitutional revision and official Yasukuni patronage, which re-entangles shrine and state. INVESTIGATIVE REPORT / ACADEMIC SOURCE

The top of the chain

> The apex was abolished once already — by occupation order in 1945 — which proves the fusion of shrine and state was a choice. What remains enforces by neighborhood.

OFFICE	WHO SITS IN IT NOW	CHOSEN BY	REMOVABLE BY
Jinja Honcho — the Association of Shinto Shrines	The umbrella body over roughly 80,000 shrines. The research chief who questioned a 2015 property sale was dismissed and a colleague demoted; the courts voided the dismissal (final, 2022), and a rival claim to the presidency was rejected (final, 2024). President Tanaka Tsunekiyo was confirmed for a sixth term in 2025.	Boards within the shrine world choose the president.	The board can remove the president, and the courts have decided the disputes where the board failed.
Ise Grand Shrine	The Saishū (supreme priestess) is Sayako Kuroda, a former imperial princess, who has held the post since 2017, which keeps the imperial line present at the tradition's symbolic apex.	Imperial family custom decides the appointment.	Custom governs any removal.
The neighborhood	The ujiko (parishioners by residence) parish association and the ledger of festival obligations sit in it.	Residence in the district makes a household part of it.	Moving away ends it.

THE TELL

Nobody commands participation, and everyone knows who didn't participate. Ask who keeps that ledger, and watch how quickly 'nobody' and 'everybody' become the same answer.

Who holds what

ENTITY	TYPE	HOLDER	HOLDS	WHY IT MATTERS TO YOU	RECEIPT
Jinja Honcho — Association of Shinto Shrines	It is an umbrella body.	Its leadership holds the office.	It coordinates most of Japan's shrines and runs a political programme.	It pursues a constitutional agenda; how that agenda is funded is not recorded on this page.	INVESTIGATIVE REPORT
Shinto Seiji Renmei and allied political networks	It is a political network.	Affiliated legislators and organizers hold it.	It lobbies for constitutional revision and traditional family provisions.	It lobbies to shape the law; whether devotional revenue pays for that is not recorded on this page.	INVESTIGATIVE REPORT
Hereditary shrine families	It is an inherited office.	Priest families hold it, ordinarily through sons.	They hold shrine income from amulets, ceremonies and corporate services.	Their income comes from your wedding, your groundbreaking and your car blessing.	—

Neighborhood residents' associations	It is an informal collection.	Your neighbors hold it.	They hold festival levies collected door to door, where refusal is visible.	They decide your household's standing on your own street.	PATTERN OBSERVED
Yasukuni Shrine	It is a commemorative institution.	Shrine administration holds it.	It holds the enshrinement of the war dead including convicted war criminals, and an on-site historical account.	It decides what your grandfather's death is made to mean.	COURT RECORD · litigation over official visits
State Shinto, 1868–1945	It was a historical state apparatus.	The imperial state held it.	It held compulsory shrine worship, imposed domestically and on colonized populations.	It is the proof that 'only culture' is not a safeguard.	GOVERNMENT REPORT

Sources for this section: 1 3 7 9 10

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Jinja Honcho, the Association of Shinto Shrines, coordinates about 80,000 shrines. When its board failed, the courts stepped in. A staff member who questioned a 2015 property sale was dismissed, and the courts voided the dismissal. In 2024 the Supreme Court rejected a rival claim to the presidency. Amulets and festival levies pay for shrines; this page does not show how much, if any, reaches this body. Did you know it had been in court over its own leadership?

08 Law & state here

BEFORE YOU READ

What states actually do. That includes how they fund, protect, regulate or enforce the tradition, and which outside body, if any, can compel an answer from it. For most readers, this is where the institution meets their own passport.

QUESTION	WHAT THE LAW SAYS	WHAT HAPPENED
Separation of religion and state	Articles 20 and 89 of the Constitution (1947) separate religion and state [6], and the Shinto Directive of 1945 ended State Shinto [5]	The Supreme Court held public offerings to Yasukuni (1997) and free municipal land for a shrine (2010) unconstitutional [4]

Religious corporations	Shrines are religious corporations under prefectural or national oversight	Jinja Honcho's disputes ended up in the civil courts [1] [2] [3]. Separately, the Unification Church (now the Family Federation) was ordered dissolved as a religious corporation for unlawful solicitation of donations: Tokyo District Court, March 2025; upheld by the Tokyo High Court, 4 March 2026 [20]; final when the Supreme Court dismissed the special appeal on 22 June 2026 (reported on the 23rd), the first dissolution of a religious corporation confirmed on grounds of civil-law wrongdoing [21]. This page records no such order against a Shinto body.
Employment	Ordinary employment law applies to shrine bodies [1]	Courts voided Jinja Honcho's dismissal of the staff member who questioned a property sale (2021; final 2022) [1]
Gender	This page records no law on the question.	Women are barred from landing on the sacred island of Okinoshima, a World Heritage site [11]

Who can compel an answer

Japan's courts — where the shrine world's whistleblowers won their case — and prefectural oversight of religious corporations under the Religious Corporations Act. The neighborhood ledger has no address; the corporation holding the shrine does.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Japan's 1947 constitution separates religion and state (Articles 20 and 89) because State Shinto had been used to enforce emperor worship. The Supreme Court has held that public offerings to Yasukuni (1997) and free municipal land for a shrine (2010) were unconstitutional. If you are a Japanese voter, shrine-linked political networks are lobbying to revise that constitution. Do you know which of your representatives they support?

09 Money

BEFORE YOU READ

Where the money comes from, how each flow is justified, how it can be used to control, and who benefits. Read it the way you would read any organization you give to: what is disclosed, what is not, and who decides.

Where it comes from

- The money comes from amulet and fortune sales, ceremony fees (blessings, weddings, groundbreakings), festival funding levies on

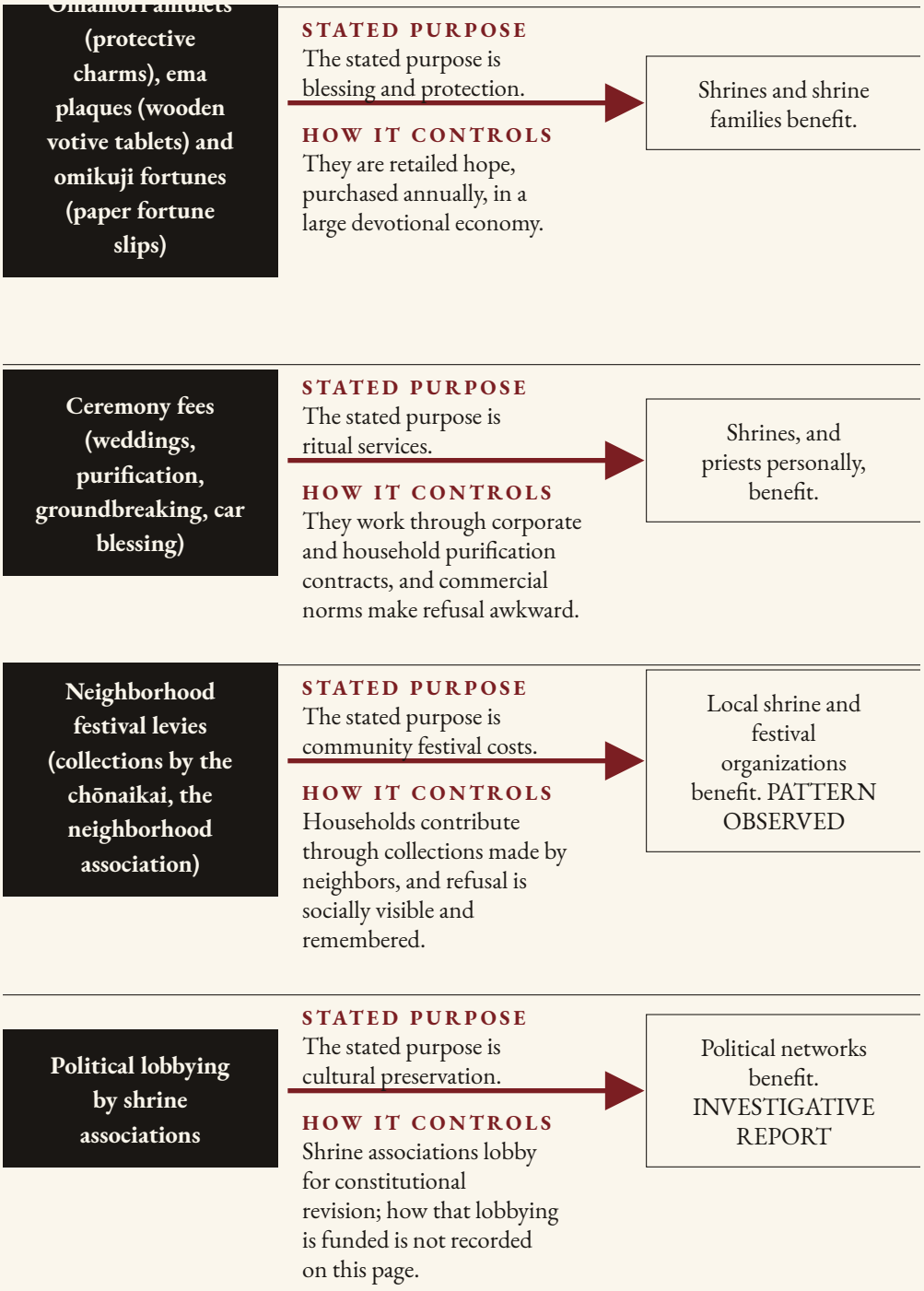
neighborhoods, and corporate purification services.

- The 'culture not religion' framing lets participation costs be socially levied without religious-freedom scrutiny. PATTERN OBSERVED

Follow the money

FLOW	STATED PURPOSE	HOW IT CONTROLS	WHO BENEFITS
Omamori amulets (protective charms), ema plaques (wooden votive tablets) and omikuji fortunes (paper fortune slips)	The stated purpose is blessing and protection.	They are retailed hope, purchased annually, in a large devotional economy.	Shrines and shrine families benefit.
Ceremony fees (weddings, purification, groundbreaking, car blessing)	The stated purpose is ritual services.	They work through corporate and household purification contracts, and commercial norms make refusal awkward.	Shrines, and priests personally, benefit.
Neighborhood festival levies (collections by the chōnaikai, the neighborhood association)	The stated purpose is community festival costs.	Households contribute through collections made by neighbors, and refusal is socially visible and remembered.	Local shrine and festival organizations benefit. PATTERN OBSERVED
Political lobbying by shrine associations	The stated purpose is cultural preservation.	Shrine associations lobby for constitutional revision; how that lobbying is funded is not recorded on this page.	Political networks benefit. INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

WHERE THE MONEY GOES, AND WHAT IT HOLDS



Not to scale. The table gives one figure, the German church tax of €6.75bn in 2025; the other flows are shown without amounts.

Pipelines this tradition shares

RITUAL FEE LADDER

Source. The fees come from life passages: birth, marriage, death and blessing.

Path. Officiant → Shrine → Shrine family income

Disclosed. Suggested offerings are disclosed.

Hidden. Negotiation, waiver practice and who is refused stay hidden.

POLITICAL MOBILIZATION

Source. Shrine standing and the Shinto Seiji Renmei's lobbying network [8]

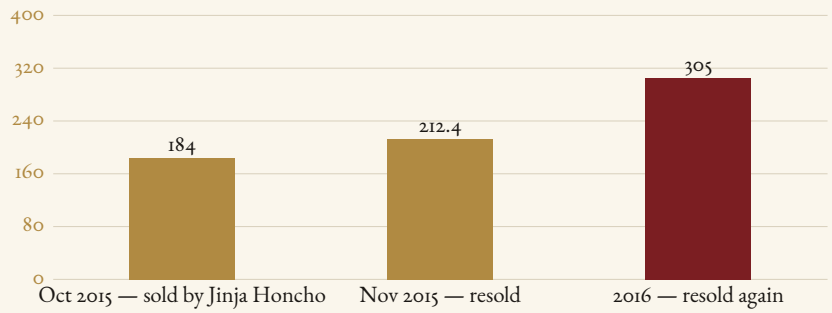
Path. Jinja Honcho → Shinto Seiji Renmei → legislators [8]

Disclosed. Issue positions

Hidden. How the lobbying is funded is not recorded on this page.

Money in numbers

THE JINJA HONCHO STAFF DORMITORY: SALE AND RESALES



¥ million — The final sale came about six months after the second, at more than ¥120 million above the first price; the research chief who questioned the sale was dismissed, and the courts voided the dismissal. [12]

- **The court's view:** The court held the dismissal void [1][12].
- **Shrine economies:** Shrines raise money through amulets, ceremonies and neighbourhood festival levies (see Money above).

The 'culture not religion' framing lets participation costs be socially levied without religious-freedom scrutiny.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

The money comes from amulets, fortune slips, ceremony fees, corporate purification services and neighborhood festival levies. The money table adds one line most shrine visitors don't know: shrine associations lobby for constitutional revision, and this page does not show how that lobbying is funded. Would you still buy an omamori if you knew exactly where the money went?

10 Genealogy

BEFORE YOU READ

Rules with a history. Each card asks the same three questions: what was this rule originally for, has that reason expired, and who benefits from the rule continuing anyway?

STATE SHINTO AND EMPEROR WORSHIP

Origin. It was constructed deliberately from 1868, nationalizing shrines and making imperial reverence compulsory, and the Allied occupation's Shinto Directive of 15 December 1945 ended government sponsorship and support of it [25] [26]. GOVERNMENT REPORT

What it was for. A modernizing state needed a unifying loyalty for a population that had lived under regional lords. Local kami practice was reorganized into a national ideology from above.

Why that reason expired. It ended in legal terms more than eighty years ago. Its lesson has not: this is the codex's clearest proof that a tradition with no doctrine and no clergy can still be converted into a total coercion instrument within about seven decades — precisely because there was nothing written to point at and say 'that is not what this says.'

Who benefits now. Historically, the imperial state and the military benefited. Today the political networks that campaign for constitutional revision using shrine legitimacy benefit, and they benefit from your belief that none of this is religion. INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

NEIGHBORHOOD FESTIVAL LEVIES

Origin. It began as community shrine support collected through neighborhood associations.

PATTERN OBSERVED

What it was for. A village funding its own festival, where everyone participated and everyone benefited.

Why that reason expired. In modern urban Japan, participation is voluntary in law and visible in practice. Declining is not a private act — it is a household decision your neighbors record. And because it is 'culture, not religion,' it evades the religious-freedom protections that would otherwise apply.

Who benefits now. Local shrine organizations benefit, and so does social conformity generally. The 'culture not religion' framing is the mechanism: it lets a religious levy be collected without religious-liberty scrutiny.

PURITY EXCLUSION OF WOMEN (KEGARE)

Origin. It comes from ancient kegare (ritual pollution) concepts around blood and death.

ACADEMIC SOURCE

What it was for. It served the ritual ordering of sacred space in a pre-scientific framework.

Why that reason expired. Some sites still bar women entirely, sustained by custom rather than any doctrine. There is no text to overturn, which means there is also no text to appeal to.

Who benefits now. Hereditary male shrine authority benefits, and nothing else does. This is control that persists purely because it was never examined.

YASUKUNI AND THE POLITICS OF COMMEMORATION

Origin. It was founded in 1869 to enshrine the war dead, and convicted war criminals were enshrined there in 1978. ACADEMIC SOURCE

What it was for. It honored the dead, an obligation every culture recognizes.

Why that reason expired. Official visits give state endorsement to a specific and contested historical account, and the site's own museum presents it. Grief has been fused to a political claim, so mourning your grandfather now means endorsing something about the war he died in.

COURT RECORD · litigation over official visits

Who benefits now. Nationalist political networks benefit, acquiring a sacred venue where dissent looks like disrespect for the dead.

Sources for this section: [9]

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

The expired-reason test works on any rule. Take one you follow or enforce, name what it was originally for, and ask whether that reason still exists. If it doesn't, and the rule survives anyway, the section's last question is the one that matters to you: who benefits from it continuing?

11 Reach

BEFORE YOU READ

How far the institution's authority extends into three private areas: what members may read and hear, how children are raised and schooled, and decisions about their own bodies.

Information

- There is no doctrine to control, which makes 'this is culture, not religion' the tradition's structural deniability — and its historical use as a state instrument the reason to take it seriously anyway.
- Textbook and museum controversies over wartime history involve shrine-aligned political networks. **INVESTIGATIVE REPORT**
- Yasukuni's on-site museum presents a contested account of the war; visits by officials carry the state's implicit endorsement. **ACADEMIC SOURCE**

Children

- Hatsumiyamairi (first shrine visit) and Shichi-Go-San (the 'seven-five-three' festival for children of those ages) mark childhood milestones — genuinely light-touch rites with no doctrinal enrollment.
- School participation in shrine visits and festivals has produced constitutional litigation over compelled religious activity. COURT RECORD
- Historically, State Shinto compelled schoolchildren to bow to the emperor's portrait and worship at shrines — coercion of children as state policy [26]. ACADEMIC SOURCE

Bodies

- Female priests exist and are numerous, though senior shrine leadership skews heavily male. PATTERN OBSERVED
- Menstrual and childbirth impurity (kegare) rules historically excluded women from certain rites and sacred spaces; some sites still bar women entirely. PATTERN OBSERVED
- Shrine-aligned political groups have campaigned against separate spousal surnames and for traditional family provisions in constitutional revision. INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

- Hereditary priesthood transmits authority through families, ordinarily through sons.

Sources for this section: [4] [11]

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

If you are a parent, this is the section about your children: what they may read, what they are taught about their bodies, and who else has a say in their schooling. Ask what your child would need to do at sixteen to hear the strongest case against what they were taught. Would they be allowed? Would they know it existed?

Textbook and museum controversies over wartime history involve shrine-aligned political networks.



12

The 30 techniques

How the thirty techniques are established here

30
CULTURAL

STAGE 1 Idealize	1 Love Bombing CULTURAL	2 Weaponized Generosity CULTURAL		
STAGE 2 Hook	3 Future Faking CULTURAL	4 Hoovering CULTURAL		
STAGE 3 Devalue	5 Devaluation CULTURAL	6 Gaslighting CULTURAL	7 Double Bind CULTURAL	
STAGE 4 Confuse	8 Intermittent Reinforcement CULTURAL	9 Moving the Goalposts CULTURAL	10 Strategic Ambiguity CULTURAL	11 Projection CULTURAL
	12 DARVO CULTURAL	13 Normalization / Desensitization CULTURAL		
STAGE 5 Isolate	14 Isolation CULTURAL	15 Triangulation CULTURAL		

STAGE 6 Extract	**16** Flying Monkeys CULTURAL	**17** Smear Campaign CULTURAL	**18** Silent Treatment / Stonewalling CULTURAL	**19** Manufactured Consent CULTURAL
	20 Trauma Bonding CULTURAL	**21** Learned Helplessness CULTURAL	**22** Benevolent Control CULTURAL	**23** Infantilization CULTURAL
	24 Identity Erosion CULTURAL	**25** Spiritual Bypassing CULTURAL	**26** Financial Control CULTURAL	
STAGE 7 Discard	**27** Manufactured Crisis CULTURAL	**28** Discard CULTURAL		
STAGE 8 Replace	**29** Replacement CULTURAL	**30** Plausible Deniability CULTURAL		

Thirty named techniques from domestic-abuse and social-psychology research, applied to institutions, in the eight stages of the cycle.

BEFORE YOU READ

A fixed checklist of thirty influence and control patterns from research on coercive control and social psychology, applied here to institutions rather than to individual people. Every entry carries an evidence grade. The grade matters more than the name of the technique: Codified or Documented means there is a paper trail; Contested means the claim is disputed.

Thirty named techniques from domestic-abuse and social-psychology research, applied to institutions, in the eight stages of the cycle. Each carries an evidence grade for this tradition.

Stage 1 · Idealize

You arrive with a need and are met with more warmth than you have had in years.

Beauty without demand: festivals, seasons, cleanliness, continuity, ancestors, place. It asks almost nothing and gives a great deal.

What it asks of you: Nothing was ever demanded of you. Notice how effective that is at producing participation.

1 · Love Bombing

Overwhelming affection on arrival to create emotional dependency before terms are revealed.

How it shows here

- Shinto draws people through festivals, shrines, purification rites, ancestral continuity, beauty, nature reverence, and national-cultural belonging.
- The warmth is often collective: you belong because you participate in the rhythm of the community, the shrine, the ancestors, the land.
- The love becomes coercive when purity, tradition, family duty, nationalism, or social conformity make nonparticipation feel like betrayal of people, place, and ancestors.

The strongest defense. Shinto is cultural and communal; participation is not manipulation.

The counter. Culture can pressure more efficiently than doctrine because it feels like air. When refusal is framed not as disagreement but as dishonor, impurity, or rejection of one's roots, belonging has become a leash.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL Festival and seasonal participation are neighborhood practice; nothing is asked and almost everyone complies.

2 · Weaponized Generosity

Giving help that installs unspoken obligation.

How it shows here

- Shinto communities may offer festivals, purification rites, shrine participation, ancestral connection, local identity, blessings, and social cohesion.
- The generosity is cultural: belonging to place, family, ancestors, seasons, and communal rhythm.
- Obligation appears when participation is expected to preserve family honor, local identity, national identity, or ancestral respect.
- A person may not be explicitly threatened, but refusal can be treated as impurity, disrespect, selfishness, or rejection of roots.

The strongest defense. Shinto is communal culture, not coercive theology.

The counter. Culture can collect debts more quietly than doctrine. When the gift is belonging itself, the repayment is conformity. If refusing a shrine rite or festival means dishonoring family, ancestors, or community, the generosity of belonging has become social control.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL Neighborhood festival levies are collected by residents' associations, not shrines — visible refusal, unattributable pressure.

Stage 2 · Hook

You are given a future that cannot be verified, and a rope for whenever you drift toward the door.

Continuity, the ancestors' regard, the household's protection, a good year — nothing promised outright, nothing deniable either. Retrieval is effortless because you were never formally in: New Year, a birth, a funeral, and you are back.

What it asks of you: Almost nothing was asked of you. Consider how efficient that is at producing lifelong participation.

3 · Future Faking

Promising a future that keeps you invested but never has to arrive.

How it shows here

- Shinto future-fakes through purity, continuity, ancestral blessing, communal harmony, national or local identity, and right relationship with kami.
- The promise is that participation keeps life aligned: festivals, rites, shrine visits, purification, seasonal observances, family rituals, and respect for ancestors maintain unseen balance.

- Refusing participation can be framed as inviting impurity, bad fortune, social disharmony, or disrespect toward the dead.
- The future being protected is collective: family continuity, local tradition, ancestral favor, cultural identity, and the stability of the community.
- Because the promised consequences are subtle or invisible, no one can prove whether the ritual prevented misfortune or whether misfortune came from neglecting ritual.

The strongest defense. Shinto rites are cultural continuity and reverence, not manipulative promises.

The counter. Culture becomes future faking when invisible blessing and invisible misfortune are used to pressure participation. If a person cannot refuse rituals without being blamed for disharmony or bad luck, the future has become a superstition-backed leash.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL Continuity and household protection are implied rather than promised, and are deniable for exactly that reason.

4 · Hoovering

Pulling someone back after they've started to leave, through guilt, love, or fear.

How it shows here

- A person distancing from Shinto rites, shrine visits, family rituals, or local festivals may be told they are disrespecting ancestors, kami, family tradition, or community harmony.

- The pull may happen around New Year shrine visits, weddings, funerals, purification rituals, local matsuri (shrine festivals), or rites connected to birth and death.
- Refusal may be treated not as belief difference but as impurity, coldness, disrespect, or rejection of one's roots.
- Family may say: "Just come for the ceremony," "It is not about belief," "Do it for the ancestors," making refusal socially difficult.
- The hoover is cultural: participation is framed as belonging, and nonparticipation as alienation.

The strongest defense. Shinto participation is often cultural respect rather than theological coercion.

The counter. "It's just culture" can be the strongest coercion of all. If the person cannot refuse without being cast as impure, disrespectful, or disconnected from family and place, then culture is functioning as control.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The pull-back comes from relatives and neighbors around New Year, weddings and funerals, in phrases such as 'Just come for the ceremony'; no written rule or office issues it.

Stage 3 · Devalue

You are taught that you are broken, that your perception is unreliable, and that both exits from the trap lead back inside.

The devaluation is rarely doctrinal and almost always social. The household is seen as insufficiently cooperative, insufficiently respectful of tradition, or simply as the one that does not participate.

What it asks of you: There is no sin here. There is only being the family everyone mentions.

5 · Devaluation

Reducing your sense of worth so you become dependent on the institution for identity.

How it shows here

- Shinto can devalue through purity, pollution, ancestral expectation, local belonging, and cultural conformity.
- A person who refuses rites, shrine visits, festivals, or family observances may be treated as disrespectful, impure, disconnected, cold, or ungrateful.

- The self is lowered beneath place, ancestors, kami, family, and communal rhythm.
- The pressure may not sound doctrinal. It may sound like: "This is just what we do."
- That makes dissent harder, because refusing is framed not as disagreement but as failure to belong properly.

The strongest defense. Shinto is often cultural participation rather than coercive belief.

The counter. Culture can devalue without preaching. If belonging requires ritual compliance and refusal makes someone feel dirty, disloyal, or alienated from their roots, then culture is doing the work of doctrine.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL There is no doctrine of insufficiency; the pressure is social standing within a place.

6 · Gaslighting

Making you doubt your own experience so you trust the institution's interpretation instead.

How it shows here

- A person says they do not want to participate in shrine rites or family ceremonies, and the answer is, "It is not belief; it is respect."
- Refusal may be treated as impurity, coldness, selfishness, or rejection of ancestors.
- Social discomfort is reframed as the person's failure to belong properly.

- A person's private conscience is overridden by local rhythm, family ritual, and cultural expectation.
- "Everyone does this" becomes a reality-control statement.

The strongest defense. Shinto is often cultural practice rather than dogmatic religion.

The counter. Culture can gaslight precisely because it does not announce itself as doctrine. If refusal is pathologized as disrespect, then "it's just culture" has become a way to deny coercion.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The reframing ('It is not belief; it is respect', 'Everyone does this') is spoken by relatives and neighbors; no institution issues it and no text sets it down.

7 · Double Bind

A trap where both options lead to compliance. No exit serves you.

How it shows here

- Shinto practice is framed as culture, not religion — so declining shrine rites at school, work, or festivals is not religious dissent (which would deserve protection) but social defect (which deserves correction).
- Purity is central, yet impurity (kegare) attaches through no fault — death in the family, illness, outsider status. You did nothing wrong and must still be cleansed, on the institution's schedule and terms.
- Community festivals are voluntary — and absence is noticed, recorded in reputation, and repaid in exclusion.

The strongest defense. Shinto has no dogma, no conversion, no membership. It cannot coerce what it never demands.

The counter. Demandlessness is the mechanism. A system with no formal membership offers no formal way to decline. You cannot resign from what you never joined; you can only be a bad neighbor.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The bind is built from the 'culture, not religion' framing and from impurity (kegare) that attaches through no fault; both operate through custom, and neither is set down in any rule.

Stage 4 · Confuse

The rewards become unpredictable, the standard keeps moving, the answers stop meaning anything, and the accusation gets turned around.

Object to a shrine rite at a school or a company and you are told it is not religion, so your objection is unreasonable. The category denial is the reversal.

What it asks of you: 'This isn't religious' is said exclusively when someone declines. Never at any other time.

8 · Intermittent Reinforcement

Unpredictable reward that creates addictive emotional dependency.

How it shows here

- Omikuji (fortune lots), omamori (amulets), and shrine petitions pay out on pure chance — and the paying visits are remembered, testified, and repeated, an explicit lottery ritualized into devotion.
- Festival roles and shrine-community honor rotate on informal, unstated criteria; households feel included some years and passed over others, and increase participation to stabilize a signal they cannot read.
- Blessings sought for exams, business, and childbirth succeed at base rates — and the shrine's ledger records only gratitude, because failure was never the kami's to own.

The strongest defense. No one claims omikuji are guarantees; shrine visits are cultural custom and hopeful play.

The counter. Hopeful play with a real cashbox and a curated testimony wall is a business model, whatever it is called. Custom does not exempt a variable-reward loop from being one.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL Omikuji and omamori pay out on chance, and festival honor rotates on unstated criteria; both are customs run by shrines and neighbors, with no rule that states the reward.

9 · Moving the Goalposts

The standard of success keeps shifting so you can never arrive.

How it shows here

- A person attends family rituals "just for respect." Then they are expected to attend shrine visits, festivals, ancestral rites, purification ceremonies, weddings, funerals, and seasonal observances.
- If they participate without belief, the goalpost moves: they should have the proper attitude, reverence, sincerity, or cultural humility.
- If they decline one ritual, prior participation is forgotten; refusal becomes disrespect.

The strongest defense. Shinto practice is cultural continuity, not coercive theology.

The counter. Culture becomes moving the goalposts when participation is first framed as optional respect and then treated as mandatory belonging. If refusal is punished, it was never merely cultural.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The expectation rises from 'just for respect' to festivals, rites and ceremonies, and then to the right attitude; family and neighbors set each step, with no written standard.

10 · Strategic Ambiguity

Language that sounds profound but means nothing specific — functioning as a shutdown to real questions.

How it shows here

- Shrine participation is "not religious" when defending it to skeptics, but "disrespectful to refuse" when family compliance is needed.
- Purity can be symbolic, cultural, emotional, spiritual, or social depending on who is being pressured.
- Ancestor respect becomes vague enough to require ceremonies without admitting belief coercion.

The strongest defense. Shinto is deeply cultural and not always about belief.

The counter. Culture becomes strategic ambiguity when refusal is punished while coercion is denied. If it is not religious, refusal should be easy. If refusal is betrayal, it is functioning like doctrine.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL 'This is not religion' is deployed only when someone declines, and never at any other time.

11 · Projection

Accusing the outside world of the exact thing the institution practices.

How it shows here

- A person refusing shrine rites may be accused of disrespect, impurity, or coldness while the community projects its discomfort with nonconformity onto the dissenter.
- Family may say, "It is not belief, just respect," while refusing to respect the person's actual belief or nonbelief.
- Local tradition accuses the individual of breaking communal rhythm while coerced participation already broke sincerity.
- Nonparticipation is treated as pollution while social pressure is treated as purity.

The strongest defense. Shinto participation is often cultural respect, not dogmatic control.

The counter. Respect that cannot respect refusal is not respect. If declining a ritual makes someone impure or disrespectful, coercion has been projected onto conscience.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The accusation of disrespect, impurity or coldness comes from relatives and neighbors when someone declines; no office issues it and no written rule sets it down.

12 · DARVO

Deny the wrongdoing. Attack the person who raised it. Reverse victim and offender.

How it shows here

- A person refuses shrine rites, ancestral rituals, purification ceremonies, or local festivals. The family denies coercion: “It is just culture,” “It is not religion,” “It is only respect.”
- Then the person is attacked as disrespectful, cold, selfish, impure, or disconnected from roots.
- The family or community becomes the offended party, while the person whose conscience was pressured becomes the offender.
- Refusal is treated as pollution; coercion is treated as tradition.
- The person is told they are harming harmony simply by asking for consent.

The strongest defense. Shinto rites often function as cultural continuity, not dogmatic religious control.

The counter. Culture does not erase consent. If “it is just culture” means refusal is punished socially, then culture has become the mask coercion wears when it does not want to call itself religion.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL 'This is not religion' is deployed only when someone declines, and never at any other time.

13 · Normalization / Desensitization

Practices that would seem extreme to an outsider feel normal to insiders because they were installed before critical evaluation developed.

How it shows here

- Shrine visits, purification rites, festivals, ancestor observances, New Year rituals, weddings, funerals, and community ceremonies become normal through cultural repetition.
- Because participation is framed as "just what we do," refusal can feel socially abnormal even without explicit doctrine.
- Purity and pollution ideas may subtly desensitize people to social pressure around conformity.
- Family participation at births, weddings, funerals, and festivals makes opting out emotionally costly.
- The person may participate not because they believe, but because nonparticipation would mark them as cold, impure, disrespectful, or detached from family and place.

The strongest defense. Shinto is often cultural continuity and communal rhythm, not coercive religion.

The counter. Culture becomes desensitization when repetition hides coercion. If people participate because refusal would cost belonging, then the ritual has become a social obedience test.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL Repetition of shrine visits, festivals and family rites installs the norm from childhood; custom carries it, and no rule is involved.

Stage 5 · Isolate

Your world narrows until every voice you hear is inside the system, and everything you came for now runs through a middleman.

You depend on your neighbors, your family and your position in a place, with no institution in the middle. The shrine is where your community's calendar lives.

What it asks of you: You depend on the people who collect for the festival. That is the whole mechanism.

14 · Isolation

Shrinking your world until the only voices you hear are inside the system.

How it shows here

- Shinto isolation can work through local shrine life, family rituals, festivals, ancestral observances, purity rites, and cultural conformity.
- A person who refuses participation may be treated as rejecting family, place, ancestors, community rhythm, or Japanese cultural continuity.
- Because participation is often framed as "just culture," refusal can isolate the person socially even if no one argues theology.

- Shrine visits, New Year rituals, funerary customs, weddings, festivals, and purification practices make nonparticipation visible.
- The person may continue attending to avoid standing out, not because they believe — isolation begins when refusal costs belonging.

The strongest defense. Shinto is often communal culture rather than coercive religion.

The counter. Culture can isolate without doctrine. If opting out makes someone cold, impure, disrespectful, or alienated from family and place, then the ritual is not merely cultural. It is a membership test.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL Boundaries are geographic and neighborly rather than doctrinal — the shrine is where the local calendar lives.

15 · Triangulation

Inserting intermediaries between you and the thing you came for, so the institution is always in the middle.

How it shows here

- Shinto triangulation works through family, ancestors, kami, shrine, local community, festivals, purity, national or regional identity, and social rhythm.
- A person refusing a shrine visit may be told, “Do it for your parents,” “Do it for the ancestors,” “Do it for the community.”
- Local festivals triangulate through belonging: everyone participates, so refusal marks the person as cold, impure, arrogant, or disconnected.

- Family ceremonies around birth, marriage, New Year, death, and purification make private conscience publicly visible.
- The person is triangulated through culture itself: "This is just what we do," meaning disagreement is not treated as thought but as failure to belong.
- The kami or ancestors may be invoked as silent witnesses to compliance.

The strongest defense. Shinto practice is often cultural continuity and community participation, not coercive belief.

The counter. Culture becomes triangulation when it recruits everyone around you to make refusal impossible. If family, ancestors, shrine, neighbors, and custom all converge on your consent, then "just culture" is doing the work of commandment.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The intermediaries are family, ancestors and neighbors ('Do it for your parents', 'Do it for the ancestors'); each acts through custom, and none holds a formal office.

Stage 6 · Extract

Now the harvest: your labor, your money, your identity, your silence, your children's schooling, your capacity to trust yourself.

Amulets and fortunes are retailed annually. Ceremony fees are charged for weddings, purification, groundbreaking and cars. Neighborhood levies are collected by the people who live next to you, so declining is visible and remembered. Shrine-aligned political lobbying is carried out by the association's political arm; how it is funded is not recorded on this page.

What it asks of you: Your household's contribution is collected by a neighbor rather than an institution, which is why refusing it costs more than any doctrine could.

16 · Flying Monkeys

The community enforces the institution's norms without being asked — mobilized by culture, not memos.

How it shows here

- A person refusing shrine rites, festivals, or ancestor ceremonies may be pressured by parents, grandparents, local community members, shrine participants, and relatives.

- The message is often soft: “Just do it for the family,” “It’s not religious,” “Everyone participates,” “Don’t be disrespectful.”
- Local festivals make refusal visible, allowing neighbors and relatives to become social enforcers.
- Family members may use ancestors and community harmony to shame nonparticipation.

The strongest defense. Shinto practices are cultural and communal, not coercive.

The counter. Culture becomes FLYING MONKEY pressure when the entire community makes refusal socially costly. If everyone insists it is optional while treating nonparticipation as betrayal, the pressure is real even without doctrine.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL Amulet sales, ceremony fees, and residents'-association levies are collected by neighbors, which is what makes refusal visible.

17 · Smear Campaign

Rewriting your character after departure to protect the institution from the implications of your leaving.

How it shows here

- A person refusing rituals may be smeared as cold, disrespectful, impure, selfish, arrogant, or disconnected from roots.
- Family or neighbors may treat nonparticipation as social deviance rather than conscience.

- Refusal of shrine visits, festivals, or ancestor observances may be recast as rejection of family.
- The community makes the person look like the source of disharmony.

The strongest defense. Shinto rites are often cultural respect, not forced belief.

The counter. Respect becomes smear when refusal is treated as character failure. If saying no makes someone impure or cold, then culture is functioning as coercive reputation control.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The character judgments ('cold', 'impure', 'disrespectful') are passed by relatives and neighbors; no institution issues them.

18 · Silent Treatment / Stonewalling

Refusing to engage with legitimate questions in order to maintain control.

How it shows here

- A person refuses rituals or shrine visits and family members say, “It’s just culture,” then refuse to discuss why refusal is punished.
- Concerns about belief, consent, or pressure are brushed aside as overthinking.
- Community silence follows nonparticipation: the person is no longer warmly included, but no one admits exclusion is happening.
- Ritual pressure is denied because it is cultural, while cultural consequences enforce compliance.

The strongest defense. Shinto participation is cultural continuity, not dogmatic coercion.

The counter. If refusal causes social coldness, then there is coercion whether or not anyone calls it doctrine. Stonewalling is saying "it's optional" while punishing the person who opts out.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The silence is household and neighborhood silence after nonparticipation; no one admits that exclusion is happening, and no office is responsible for it.

19 · Manufactured Consent

Creating the appearance of choice when the conditions of choice were shaped before you could evaluate them.

How it shows here

- A person "chooses" shrine visits, family rituals, festivals, and ancestor observances because refusal would be socially awkward or disrespectful.
- Participation is framed as not religious, but nonparticipation is treated as rejection of family and place.
- Silence during ceremonies is taken as agreement.
- Cultural expectation creates consent without explicit belief.

The strongest defense. Shinto rites are cultural participation, not coercive religious commitment.

The counter. If it is truly cultural and optional, refusal should not cost belonging. When "just participate" becomes the price of being a respectful family member, consent has been manufactured through custom.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The appearance of choice comes from custom: relatives and neighbors treat attendance as respect and refusal as awkward, and no written rule requires either.

20 · Trauma Bonding

The wound and the bandage come from the same hand.

How it shows here

- A person feels pressure to participate in shrine rites, festivals, ancestor observances, and family rituals.
- Refusal creates social coldness or guilt; participation restores harmony and belonging.
- "It's just culture" hides the cycle: discomfort when resisting, relief when conforming.
- The community becomes the source of pressure and the source of acceptance.

The strongest defense. Shinto rituals maintain cultural continuity and communal belonging.

The counter. Belonging becomes TRAUMA BONDING when acceptance is restored only through participation. If refusal makes you feel impure, cold, or disloyal, and ritual compliance makes you safe again, culture is regulating attachment.

EVIDENCE GRADE

CULTURAL The relatives and neighbors who create the pressure also restore acceptance when the person takes part; no institution is involved in the cycle.

21 · Learned Helplessness

Teaching you that your own judgment is unreliable until you stop trusting it entirely.

How it shows here

- A person declines rituals and is told it is disrespectful, overthinking, cold, or unnecessary to object.
- Participation is "optional," but refusal causes social distance.
- Because no doctrine is openly argued, the person cannot easily challenge the coercion.
- Eventually they participate to avoid disharmony, not because they choose it.

The strongest defense. Shinto practice is cultural and communal rather than coercive.

The counter. Culture creates LEARNED HELPLESSNESS when the rules are denied but the consequences remain. If the person cannot name the pressure because everyone calls it custom, resistance becomes exhausting.

EVIDENCE GRADE

CULTURAL No doctrine is argued that could be challenged, so the person cannot name the pressure; relatives and neighbors voice the denial as custom.

22 · Benevolent Control

Control wrapped in the language of care, so that resisting the control feels like rejecting the love.

How it shows here

- Family and community rituals are framed as cultural respect, not religious pressure.
- Refusal of shrine visits, festivals, or ancestor rites may be treated as coldness or disrespect.
- Participation is said to preserve harmony, family continuity, and local identity.
- The person is controlled through belonging rather than doctrine.

The strongest defense. Shinto participation is often cultural continuity and respect.

The counter. Culture becomes BENEVOLENT CONTROL when refusal is punished while coercion is denied. If "just respect" requires participation, then respect is being used to override consent.

EVIDENCE GRADE

CULTURAL Family and community present participation as respect and care; no written rule stands behind it, only custom and the household's standing.

23 · Infantilization

Positioning the adult believer as permanently childlike and dependent on institutional authority.

How it shows here

- Adults may be told to participate in rituals because family and community expect it, not because they personally consent.
- Refusal is treated like childish disrespect.
- "It is just culture" becomes a way to dismiss adult moral or religious objection.
- Family elders decide what participation means, while the individual is expected to comply.

The strongest defense. Shinto rites are cultural respect and family continuity.

The counter. Culture becomes INFANTILIZATION when adults are not allowed to define their own conscience. If refusal is treated as childish rudeness, tradition has denied adulthood.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL Family elders and community expectation decide what participation means for adults; the authority is custom, with no written rule behind it.

24 · Identity Erosion

Gradually replacing your identity with a role the institution provides, until you can't separate who you are from where you belong.

How it shows here

- Identity is absorbed into family, ancestors, shrine, local community, seasonal rites, purity, place, and cultural rhythm.
- Refusal of ritual can feel like refusal of roots.
- Because practice is often framed as culture, the person may not have language to separate self from custom.
- The individual becomes a participant in continuity before becoming a choosing subject.
- Belonging depends on performing respect.

The strongest defense. Shinto identity is cultural, local, ancestral, and communal.

The counter. Cultural identity becomes IDENTITY EROSION when the person cannot opt out without becoming alien to family and place. If custom speaks before conscience, the self is absorbed by the village.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL Identity is absorbed into family, place and seasonal rites through long participation; the pressure comes through belonging, and no rule is involved.

25 · Spiritual Bypassing

Using spiritual language to avoid engaging with real pain, real questions, and real accountability.

How it shows here

- Personal objection is bypassed with "it is just culture."
- Refusal is bypassed as disrespect to ancestors, kami, family, or place.
- Social pressure is bypassed as communal rhythm.
- Purity language may avoid direct discussion of consent.
- Ritual participation smooths over conflict without resolving it.

The strongest defense. Shinto practice preserves cultural continuity.

The counter. Culture becomes SPIRITUAL BYPASSING when it prevents honest refusal. If "just culture" is used to avoid discussing coercion, custom has bypassed conscience.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL 'It is just culture' and appeals to ancestors are spoken by relatives and neighbors to close off discussion; no institution issues the line.

26 · Financial Control

Extracting money through spiritual obligation while offering no transparency about where it goes.

How it shows here

- Shinto financial control may be subtle: shrine donations, festival contributions, family ritual costs, community obligations, weddings, funerals, purification rites, and local expectations.
- Refusing to contribute may be treated as disrespecting family, community, ancestors, or place.
- Participation in local festivals can require time, money, labor, and public conformity.
- Family rites may create financial pressure even for those who do not personally believe.

The strongest defense. Shrine and festival contributions support cultural continuity and community life.

The counter. Culture becomes FINANCIAL CONTROL when contribution is socially mandatory but rhetorically optional. If refusal costs belonging, the donation is not merely cultural. It is a membership tax.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL Amulet sales, ceremony fees, and residents'-association levies are collected by neighbors, which is what makes refusal visible.

Stage 7 · Discard

You become expensive — too many questions, too much independence — and the urgency ramps up until you are removed.

There is no expulsion, because there is nothing to be expelled from. There is only quiet social marking, and in the State Shinto era there was imprisonment of Christians and others who refused [22].

What it asks of you: When it needed teeth, it grew them over about seven decades.

27 · Manufactured Crisis

Creating urgency to suppress critical thinking and generate loyalty.

How it shows here

- Shinto-related family or local pressures may manufacture crisis around ritual refusal, shrine absence, festival nonparticipation, impurity, ancestor neglect, or community disharmony.
- A person declining a ceremony may be treated as inviting bad luck or disrespecting roots.
- Local participation becomes urgent because everyone is watching.

- Cultural continuity becomes a crisis if one person opts out.

The strongest defense. Ritual participation maintains communal rhythm and respect.

The counter. Respect becomes MANUFACTURED CRISIS when refusal is treated as social danger. If one person's no threatens harmony so easily, the harmony was already coercive.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL No office declares the crisis; the urgency comes from relatives and neighbors who treat one person's refusal as a threat to harmony.

28 · Discard

Removing members who become too costly — too many questions, too much independence, too visible a contradiction.

How it shows here

- A person who refuses shrine visits, ancestor rites, festivals, or purification rituals may be treated as cold, disrespectful, or detached from roots.
- Community warmth may fade without anyone admitting exclusion.
- Nonparticipation becomes social abnormality.
- The person is discarded not through doctrine, but through custom.

The strongest defense. Shinto rites are cultural respect and communal continuity.

The counter. Culture becomes DISCARD when refusal costs belonging. If a person can be socially chilled for opting out of "just custom," then custom is doing coercive work.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL There is nothing to be expelled from; the cost is being the household everyone mentions.

Stage 8 · Replace

Your seat is filled before the door shuts, and nobody is responsible for any of it because the authority rests with the kami, the ancestors and the way things are done here.

There is no seat to fill, no roll, no announcement — and in the State Shinto era, the replacement was total: an entire tradition repurposed over about seven decades. The authority is the kami, the ancestors, the way things are done here.

What it asks of you: A tradition with nothing written down has no text to hold up when someone hijacks it. That is the lesson of 1868 to 1945, and it has not been repealed.

29 · Replacement

Your seat is filled before the door closes behind you.

How it shows here

- A person who refuses rituals may be replaced in family pride by relatives who participate.
- Local community roles continue with those who show up for festivals, shrine visits, and ceremonies.
- Nonparticipants become socially peripheral.
- The compliant participant becomes the "respectful" one.

The strongest defense. Community rituals require people who participate.

The counter. Participation becomes REPLACEMENT when belonging is assigned to whoever performs custom. If the family can replace conscience with attendance, culture has become a social sorting system.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL Relatives who take part take the place of the one who refuses; the replacement is informal, with no roll or announcement.

30 · Plausible Deniability

The institution is never responsible, because the authority is attributed to the kami, the ancestors and custom, none of which is available for cross-examination.

How it shows here

- Ritual participation is framed as "just culture," not religion, while refusal is treated as disrespectful.
- Shrine visits, ancestor rites, festivals, and purification rituals are said to be optional, but social belonging depends on participation.
- Family members deny coercion because no one is arguing doctrine.
- Purity language can imply danger without issuing direct commands.
- Community exclusion happens quietly enough to deny intentional punishment.

The strongest defense. Shinto is cultural continuity. Participation does not require belief. No one is forcing anyone.

The counter. Culture becomes PLAUSIBLE DENIABILITY when it enforces what doctrine does not have to say. If belief is irrelevant but participation is mandatory for belonging, the ritual is functioning as a loyalty test. Coercion does not require explicit force. Social cost is enough.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL Authority attributed to kami, ancestors, and 'how things are done here' — the highest-deniability configuration in the codex.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Count grades, not names. A long list of Contested entries says something very different from a short list of Codified ones. A bias to watch for in yourself: people rate the same pressure as "normal" when their own group applies it and as "manipulation" when another group does. Before you judge an entry, try imagining it applied by a group you distrust. Does it look different?

13

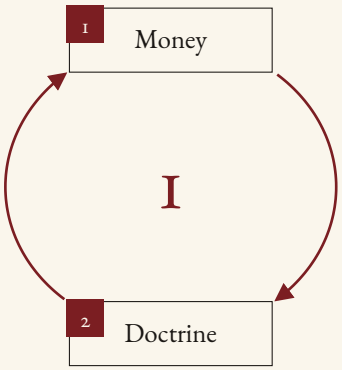
The loops

BEFORE YOU READ

How the techniques connect into cycles. A single practice can look harmless on its own. The loops show how one step feeds the next, so that, for example, a newcomer's welcome turns into an obligation.

> The seven loops below show how the practices connect, so that each step makes the next one easier and the last step feeds the first. The loops are analysis built from findings recorded elsewhere on this page PATTERN OBSERVED; each step names the section or technique where its fact is recorded.

1 · Money to Doctrine to Money



Amulets, fees and levies pay for shrines; this page does not show whether any of that money reaches the association's political programme.

How it runs.

1. Visitors and households pay through amulets and fortunes, ceremony fees, neighborhood festival levies and corporate purification services (section 9).
2. The money sustains shrines and hereditary shrine families; whether any of it reaches Jinja Honcho is not recorded on this page (sections 7 and 9).
3. Jinja Honcho and its political arm, Shinto Seiji Renmei, lobby for constitutional revision and traditional family provisions (sections 6, 7 and 16).

4. The 'culture, not religion' framing lets participation costs be levied without religious-freedom scrutiny, and the page does not show whether donors know of the agenda, because how it is funded is not recorded (section 9; technique 10).

5. Payment stays routine and unquestioned, so the money keeps flowing (techniques 26 and 30).

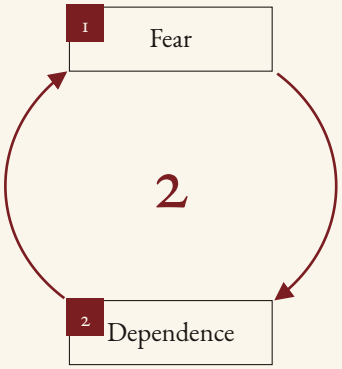
Techniques that feed it. 26 · Financial Control, 19 · Manufactured Consent, 10 · Strategic Ambiguity, 30 · Plausible Deniability.

Why it closes. The payers are told they are giving to culture, so the destination of the money is never put to them as a choice. The scorecard in section 1 finds no public evidence of leaders' pay, so the people who give cannot follow the money to the programme it funds.

Where it could be broken, and by whom. It weakens wherever the destination of the money becomes visible to the people who pay. The courts have been the one venue in which Jinja Honcho's own dealings were examined (section 19); a household can ask its shrine and its neighborhood association where its contribution goes. This paragraph is analysis, not a documented finding.

An example from this page. Section 9 records lobbying by shrine associations for constitutional revision, and says how that lobbying is funded is not recorded on this page.

2 · Fear to Dependence to Fear



There is no doctrine of fear. The pressure is neighborly standing, which requires no teaching at all.

How it runs.

1. A household takes part in festivals, rites and levies as ordinary custom, and nothing is demanded of it (section 12, stages 1 and 2).
2. Refusal is read as disrespect to ancestors, to parents and to the neighborhood (section 15; technique 4).
3. The neighborhood ledger records who did not take part, and neighbors and relatives apply the pressure (section 7; technique 16).
4. The household becomes the one everyone mentions, and no doctrine exists that could be argued with (section 12, stage 3; technique 21).
5. The household takes part again to restore its standing, and the next collection is made by the same neighbors (sections 9 and 15; technique 20).

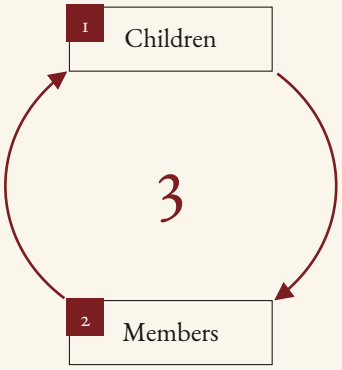
Techniques that feed it. 4 · Hoovering, 16 · Flying Monkeys, 20 · Trauma Bonding, 21 · Learned Helplessness.

Why it closes. The pressure comes from the people who live next to the household, so it needs no teaching, no office and no announcement. Acceptance is restored by taking part, which sets up the next season's pressure.

Where it could be broken, and by whom. It weakens where one household's refusal is met with ordinary neighborliness, and where officers who collect the levy decline to record who did not pay (section 18 names this as the point where a residents' association officer could refuse). This paragraph is analysis, not a documented finding.

An example from this page. Keiko's family has given the four thousand yen for twenty-two autumns, and for her there is 'no available version of the sentence' that would decline (section 2).

3 · Children to Members to Children



Childhood rites are light-touch, and school visits and household affiliation do the attaching.

How it runs.

1. Hatsumiyamairi and Shichi-Go-San mark childhood milestones, with no doctrinal enrollment (section 11).
2. Schools take classes to shrine visits and festivals, which has produced constitutional litigation over compelled religious activity (section 11).
3. A household is counted as ujiko by address, which makes non-participation a visible act (section 14, words used here).
4. The children grow up taking part as custom, with no moment at which participation was chosen (sections 2 and 12; technique 13).
5. They then have their own children blessed and send them on the same school visits, and the household stays counted (section 2).

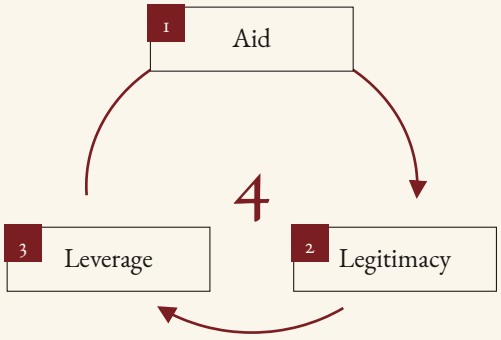
Techniques that feed it. 13 · Normalization / Desensitization, 19 · Manufactured Consent, 24 · Identity Erosion, 15 · Triangulation.

Why it closes. Each generation is brought in by milestones that feel like culture rather than enrollment, so no point arrives at which membership is decided. The loop continues unless a household decides to stop.

Where it could be broken, and by whom. It weakens where school participation is made genuinely optional. Section 18 names the point: a schoolteacher arranging a shrine visit could refuse to make participation non-optional, and the litigation recorded in section 11 shows courts being asked to decide it. This paragraph is analysis, not a documented finding.

An example from this page. In section 2 Keiko's son's class is visiting the shrine on Friday and there is a form; a family that preferred not to take part last year was met with understanding, and the child went anyway.

4 · Aid to Legitimacy to Leverage to Aid



Shrine legitimacy is traded for political influence, and influence protects the arrangement.

How it runs.

1. Local shrine life is a genuine commons of festivals, trees and continuity, and much of what it gives is real (sections 4 and 20).
2. That standing gives shrine bodies legitimacy that is rarely disputed, because participation is framed as culture (sections 3 and 9).
3. Jinja Honcho's political arm converts the legitimacy into lobbying for constitutional revision and official Yasukuni patronage (sections 7, 11 and 16).
4. The networks that benefit also benefit from the belief that none of this is religion, and the framing keeps the levies free of religious-freedom scrutiny (sections 9 and 10; technique 10).
5. The standing that results sustains the shrines and the associations again.

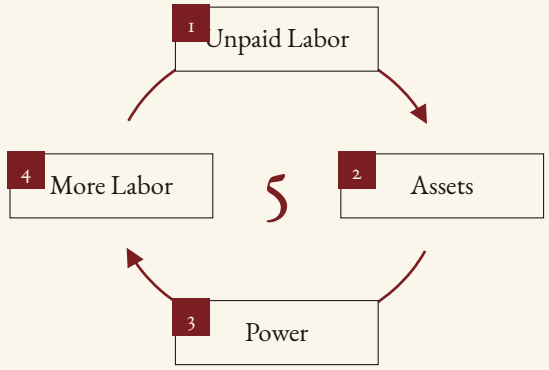
Techniques that feed it. 2 · Weaponized Generosity, 22 · Benevolent Control, 10 · Strategic Ambiguity, 30 · Plausible Deniability.

Why it closes. The commons that earns the legitimacy is also the channel through which the political programme travels. Because participants sincerely deny that any of it is religion, the legitimacy is never questioned as a religious claim.

Where it could be broken, and by whom. It weakens where courts enforce the separation of religion and state. The Supreme Court did so in 1997 and 2010, holding that public offerings to Yasukuni and free municipal land for a shrine were unconstitutional (section 8). This paragraph is analysis, not a documented finding.

An example from this page. Section 14 predicts that the next official shrine visit will be described as private, the same account given in the news story in section 2.

5 · Unpaid Labor to Assets to Power to More Labor



Neighborhood labor and levies maintain shrines held by hereditary families.

How it runs.

1. Residents' associations collect festival levies door to door, and local festivals take time, money and labor from households (sections 9 and 12; technique 26).
2. The levies maintain local shrine and festival organizations (section 9).
3. The shrines, and the income from amulets, ceremonies and corporate services, remain with hereditary priest families, ordinarily through sons (sections 7 and 9).
4. Hereditary male shrine authority persists unexamined, and women are excluded at some sites (sections 10 and 17).

5. The next season's labor and levies are collected the same way (technique 29).

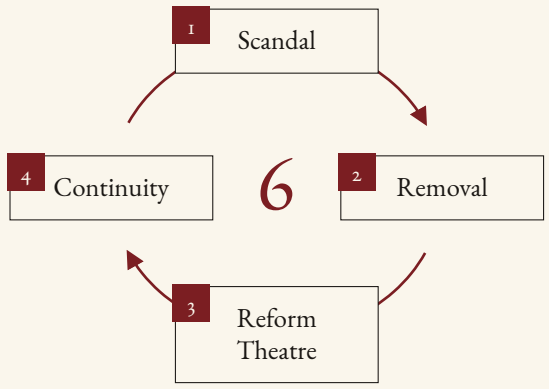
Techniques that feed it. 26 · Financial Control, 16 · Flying Monkeys, 24 · Identity Erosion, 29 · Replacement.

Why it closes. The people who supply the labor and the levies hold no office that controls the shrines. Value flows from households to the families that hold the shrine, and the households are replaced by the next set of neighbors who take part.

Where it could be broken, and by whom. It weakens where residents' association officers decline to record who declined (section 18), and where the exclusions that rest on custom are examined, since section 10 notes that there is no text to overturn. This paragraph is analysis, not a documented finding.

An example from this page. Keiko writes the family name on the envelope each autumn, and Furukawa-san collects it in person and keeps a list (section 2).

6 · Scandal to Removal to Reform Theatre to Continuity



There is no apparatus and nothing to remove, so the shrine simply continues.

How it runs.

1. The 2015 sale of the Jinja Honcho staff dormitory is questioned by a research chief, who raises a complaint in December 2016 (sections 9 and 19).
2. Jinja Honcho dismisses him in August 2017 and demotes a colleague (section 19; technique 28).
3. The case is decided by the courts, not by an internal body: the dismissal is declared void in March 2021 and the ruling is final in 2022 (sections 5, 8 and 19).
4. A dispute over the presidency follows, and the Supreme Court rejects the rival claim on 2 October 2024 (sections 1 and 19).
5. The association continues under the same president, confirmed for a sixth term in 2025, and section 20 records no structural reform (sections 1 and 20; technique 30).

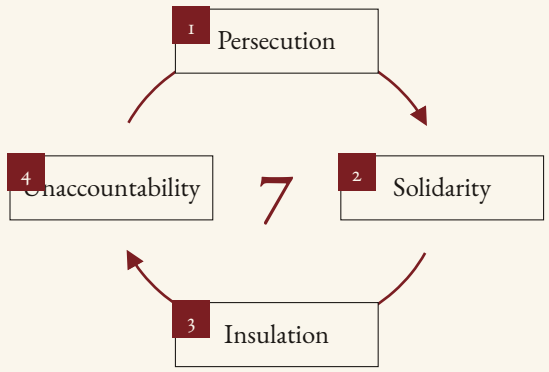
Techniques that feed it. 28 · Discard, 30 · Plausible Deniability.

Why it closes. The test of the association's accountability was run in open court because no internal body would run it (section 5), and this volume records no removal of anyone in the leadership as a result. The structure that produced the dispute is unchanged.

Where it could be broken, and by whom. Section 20 names the change that would break it: structural reform of the association's governance. That lies with the association's board and, where the board fails, with the courts. This paragraph is analysis, not a documented finding.

An example from this page. Takao Ina, the research chief, won in court, and the association he questioned continues under the same leadership (sections 19 and 21).

7 · Persecution to Solidarity to Insulation to Unaccountability



Postwar suppression and foreign criticism of Japanese religion are invoked to make historical honesty look like an attack.

How it runs.

1. State Shinto was ended by occupation order in 1945, and a neighbouring country responds when officials visit a shrine for the war dead (sections 2 and 5).
2. The response frames the criticism as an attack: 'That was militarism, not Shinto' (section 15) and 'Yasukuni simply honors the dead' (section 14).
3. Grief is fused to the political claim, so dissent looks like disrespect for the dead (section 10; technique 25).
4. Officials' visits are described as private (sections 2 and 14).
5. The account is not revised, and the next criticism is met the same way (technique 12).

Techniques that feed it. 10 · Strategic Ambiguity, 12 · DARVO, 25 · Spiritual Bypassing, 30 · Plausible Deniability.

Why it closes. The more the record is cited, the more it can be received as hostility from outside. Each protest strengthens the solidarity that keeps the account in place.

Where it could be broken, and by whom. It weakens when families of the dead are heard on their own terms. Section 20 records bereaved families bringing litigation over official shrine patronage, and section 17 records Korean and Taiwanese conscripts enshrined without consulting their families. This paragraph is analysis, not a documented finding.

An example from this page. In section 2, Keiko's mother says that the dead should be left in peace, and Keiko has never heard her say what she thinks about her uncle's enshrinement.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

The loops explain why good people stay in arrangements they would never sign up for from scratch. The more you have already put in, the harder it is to walk away. Researchers call this the sunk-cost effect (Arkes & Blumer, 1985), and it works on time, money and relationships alike. Ask yourself: if you were starting today, knowing what you know, would you join?

The seven loops below show how the practices connect, so that each step makes the next one easier and the last step feeds the first.

14 Say versus do

BEFORE YOU READ

Direct, checkable comparisons: a public statement on one side, the documented record on the other, and the receipt that links them. This is the most falsifiable section on the page, because each row either matches its source or it doesn't.

What they say, what the record shows

THEY SAY	THE RECORD SHOWS	RECEIPT
Shinto is not a religion, only Japanese culture.	Said exclusively when someone declines, and never at any other moment.	PATTERN OBSERVED
Shrines are apolitical.	Shrine-aligned organizations campaign for constitutional revision.	INVESTIGATIVE REPORT
Participation is entirely voluntary.	Festival levies are collected by neighbors, and declining is recorded socially.	PATTERN OBSERVED

Yasukuni simply honors the dead.	It enshrines convicted war criminals and presents a contested account of the war on site.	ACADEMIC SOURCE

Accountability or theatre?

Last time the chair ran. It ran from 1868 to 1945, when an entire tradition was repurposed over about seven decades and then disestablished from outside.

Who holds the chair now. Jinja Honcho, hereditary shrine families and the political networks nearby hold it.

Prediction. Nothing will be removed, because nothing is formally claimed. The next official shrine visit will be described as private.

Words used here

TERM	WHAT IT MEANS INSIDE	WHAT IT DOES	SAID PLAINLY
Ujiko	An ujiko is a shrine's parishioner by residence.	It makes membership a matter of address rather than belief, which makes non-participation a visible act rather than a private one.	'You live here, so you are counted, and everyone can see if you are not.'
Meiwaku	It means causing trouble or inconvenience to others.	It is broad Japanese social vocabulary that in this setting does specific work, making declining a festival obligation into an act against neighbours rather than an act of conscience.	'Refusing would be a burden on other people.'
Just culture, not religion	It is the standard framing of shrine participation.	It is genuinely true for many participants, and it also removes the practice from the category of things one may decline on grounds of belief.	'Belief is optional, so you have no grounds to opt out.'

Jinja Honcho, hereditary shrine families and the political networks nearby hold it.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Test one row yourself. Pick a "they say" line you have actually heard said in person, then read the receipt. If the record matches the statement, this page is wrong about that row, and you should tell us. If it doesn't, what does it mean that you had never seen the receipt?

15 Cost & cover

BEFORE YOU READ

What leaving actually costs here, in family, work, housing, money and legal status, and how each of those costs is officially denied. Where the cost is low, the page says so plainly.

What leaving costs

- There is no membership to leave. The costs are neighborly and reputational, since opting out of shrine festivals or levies marks a household. VARIES BY COMMUNITY

The ledger of exit

COST	DOCUMENTED?	DETAIL	THE OFFICIAL DENIAL
Formal membership	None	There is nothing to resign from; household affiliation is nominal	Accurately: there is no exit apparatus.
Neighborhood standing	Yes	Declining festival levies or shrine duties marks a household as uncooperative	“It's a neighborhood association, not a church.”
Family and ancestral duty	Yes	Refusing rites reads as disrespect to ancestors and parents	“It's just tradition.”
Historical state coercion	Yes, 1871–1945	Shrine worship was compulsory, including in colonized Korea and Taiwan.	“That was militarism, not Shinto.”

How the cost is denied

CHANNEL	LEVEL	NOTE
Explicit policy	Very high deniability	There is no doctrine, no membership and no rules, so nothing is written to hold anyone to.
Informal enforcement	Very high	Neighborhood expectation and family duty are the sole mechanisms today.
Leadership distance	High	Jinja Honcho can disclaim any individual shrine, and shrines can disclaim politics.
Doctrinal ambiguity	Total	There is no doctrine at all, which makes it the ultimate ambiguity shield.
Cultural outsourcing	Total	'It is culture, not religion' is how many participants describe it.
Volunteer enforcement	Very high	Neighborhood associations and relatives collect and expect; no priest asks.
Sacred secrecy	Medium	Imperial rites and some inner shrine practices are closed.
Exit cost denial	High	The denial is perfectly true institutionally and false at the level of the street you live on.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

There is no membership to leave. The glance table says the cost is paid in neighborliness and reputation: a household that opts out of shrine festivals or levies gets marked. The unanswered question asks it directly: if taking part is "just culture" and belief is optional, why does refusing cost you belonging? Could your household decline the levy for three years and go unremarked?

16 The ledger

BEFORE YOU READ

The balance sheet. It shows who benefits, who pays, and what leverage flows back to the institution in return for what it gives.

Who benefits

- The beneficiaries are hereditary shrine families and nationalist political networks borrowing sacred legitimacy, and historically the imperial state, which is the cautionary archetype for every church-state fusion in this codex. ACADEMIC SOURCE

Money out, leverage back

- Shrine-aligned political organizations lobby for constitutional revision and traditional family provisions, converting devotional legitimacy into a policy agenda most participants never endorsed.
  INVESTIGATIVE REPORT
- Under State Shinto, shrine rites were imposed on colonized Koreans and Taiwanese as assimilation policy — religion used as an instrument of imperial control over other peoples. ACADEMIC SOURCE
- Corporate purification and groundbreaking contracts make shrine services a routine business expense, embedding religious practice in commercial life where refusal is awkward rather than illegal.
  PATTERN OBSERVED

Who pays

- Women pay, under purity exclusions and shrine-aligned family politics.
- Non-participating households in tight neighborhoods pay, because they are socially marked.
- Japanese Christians and other minorities who resisted compulsory shrine worship paid, and they were imprisoned for it [22]. ACADEMIC SOURCE

- Colonized Koreans and Taiwanese paid, because they were forced into shrine rites under assimilation policy.
- Anyone whose family history the Yasukuni narrative erases pays.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Find yourself in this table. Are you among those who benefit, those who pay, or both? Most readers are both. The question is whether the exchange was ever explained to you in these terms, and whether you would agree to it if it had been.

17 Who gets hurt most

BEFORE YOU READ

Where the weight lands hardest, and what it compounds with: poverty, childhood, gender, a lack of civil alternatives. This is the human stakes stated plainly.

Where the weight lands

The costs in section 15 fall unevenly. The table names who carries the most, how, and what makes it worse.

WHO	HOW	WHAT IT COMPOUNDS WITH
Women	They face purity exclusions at some sites, sustained by custom with no doctrine to appeal to.	The harm compounds with shrine-aligned family politics opposing separate surnames.
Non-participating households	They are socially marked in tight neighborhoods.	It compounds for minorities and religious dissenters in small communities.
Japanese Christians and others who refused	They were imprisoned under State Shinto for declining shrine worship [22].	It compounds historically, and it happened within living memory.
Colonized Koreans and Taiwanese	They were forced into shrine rites under assimilation policy.	It compounded with language and name erasure.
Families the Yasukuni narrative erases	Their dead are conscripted into a political account.	It compounds for Korean and Taiwanese conscripts enshrined without consulting their families [17] [18].

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

The table puts women first: purity exclusions at some sites, kept in place by custom with no doctrine to appeal to. Women are still barred from landing on the sacred island of Okinoshima, a World Heritage site. Then come households that don't take part, marked in tight neighborhoods, especially minorities and religious dissenters. If you are a woman who has been turned away from a sacred site, who could you ask to explain why?

18 The middle tiers

BEFORE YOU READ

The people in the middle: local clergy, teachers, officials and volunteers who apply rules they did not write. The section exists so that an institution is not collapsed into a monolith, and so that people in the middle can see their own position in it.

Most of the work of keeping the arrangement running is done by people who apply expectations they did not write. Shrine priests, residents' association officers, schoolteachers and corporate facilities managers each carry part of it, and each stands at one point where the next step could be declined. The table sets out what each tier does, what it sees, what it is asked to do and what it could refuse.

ROLE	DOES	SEES	IS ASKED TO	COULD REFUSE
Shrine priests	Serve the local shrine and the local calendar	The gap between the shrine and the association's politics	Stay affiliated	Lend the shrine's standing to a constitutional campaign
Residents' association officers	Collect the levy	Which households cannot pay and which will not	Collect from everyone	Record who declined
Schoolteachers arranging shrine visits	Take children to rites	That some families object and cannot say so	Treat it as cultural education	Make participation non-optional
Corporate facilities managers	Book purification and groundbreaking rites	That refusal would be awkward rather than illegal	Keep the tradition	Require staff attendance

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

If you are a local leader, a teacher or a volunteer, this section is about you. It is not an accusation: most of the people who carry out a rule did not write it. But the middle tier is also where a rule is most often quietly softened, or quietly enforced. Which do you do, and what would happen to you if you chose differently?

19 Documented cases

BEFORE YOU READ

Named, dated, sourced incidents: court records, government inquiries, regulators' findings and on-the-record reporting. Read the outcome lines in particular. They show what actually changed, if anything.

The dormitory sale and the whistleblower (Japan, 2015–2022)

WHEN: 2015–2022

WHAT: Jinja Honcho sold a staff dormitory in Kawasaki for ¥184 million in October 2015; it was resold the next month for ¥212.4 million and six months later for ¥305 million. Takao Ina, a senior official, alleged a breach of trust by the leadership in December 2016; Jinja Honcho dismissed him in August 2017 and demoted a colleague [12].

RECORD: Tokyo District Court (March 2021), upheld on appeal and final in 2022 [1][12][19]

OUTCOME: The dismissal was declared void [1].

TACTICS: 28 · Discard, 30 · Plausible Deniability

GRADE: DOCUMENTED

Two presidents at once (Japan, 2022–2024)

WHEN: 2022–2024

WHAT: Two men each claimed to be the next president of Jinja Honcho [2].

RECORD: *Tokyo Shimbun* [2]; Jinja Honcho notice [3]

OUTCOME: The Supreme Court rejected the rival claim on 2 October 2024 [2 3].

TACTICS: 30 · Plausible Deniability

GRADE: DOCUMENTED

A succession feud ends in murder (Japan, 2017)

WHEN: 2017

WHAT: Nagako Tomioka, chief priestess of Tokyo's Tomioka Hachimangu, was killed by her brother, a former chief priest who had left the post in 2001 and had threatened her in writing in 2006 [13].

RECORD: NPR, 8 December 2017 [13]

OUTCOME: Three people died, including the attacker; police treated it as a succession feud [13].

TACTICS: —

GRADE: DOCUMENTED

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

These are not hypotheticals. Three documented cases on this page rest on a named record. The most common reaction to documented cases is "that was them, not us." Before settling on that, read the outcome lines. Did anything change in the structure that allowed each case to happen, or did one person leave while the structure stayed?

20 Precedent

BEFORE YOU READ

What has already been broken once, somewhere, and what would count as real change here. It is a benchmark, not a prediction.

It has been broken before

WHAT	WHO	WHEN	WHAT IT COST
The 1945 Shinto Directive disestablishing State Shinto	Occupation authorities and postwar Japanese constitutionalists	1945–46	It was imposed rather than chosen, which is part of why the lesson is fragile.
Court litigation limiting official shrine patronage	Japanese citizens including bereaved families	1970s–present	It meant decades of litigation, with Supreme Court wins in 1997 and 2010 [4].
Local shrine life as a genuine commons — festivals, trees, continuity	Neighborhoods	Continuous	It cost nothing, and it is the truest good on this page.

What would change this page

Structural reform of the association's governance, following the court rulings, would revise this page's accountability finding. The whistleblower's dismissal has already been voided.

Sources for this section: [4]

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Some rows here record a change that has already happened somewhere; others name what would count as change here. When you are told something "can't change", it is fair to ask: can't, or won't? And who decided?

21 Voices from inside

BEFORE YOU READ

The people this section names: a Jinja Honcho research chief who took a whistleblower case to court, citizens who took public support for shrines to the Supreme Court, and the women excluded from Okinoshima. Each appears in the record because of what they did in court or what was done to them.

- **Takao Ina.** He was the Jinja Honcho research chief who blew the whistle on the dormitory sale and won in court [112].

- **The Ehime and Sorachibuto plaintiffs.** They were citizens who took public support for shrines to the Supreme Court and won [4].
- **The women excluded from Okinoshima.** Okinoshima is a World Heritage site closed to them [11].

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

The people named here are known through what they did in court or what was done to them, and none is quoted. If one of them told you in their own words what happened, which part of this page would that change? If someone in your community raised one of these questions tomorrow, how would they be treated, and by you?

22 Regional variants

BEFORE YOU READ

The same tradition under different governments. What a member can say, leave, marry or inherit depends heavily on the state, and these cards show how differently it plays out.

Japan — the Jinja Honcho network

APEX: Jinja Honcho's president and board hold the apex [3].

LAW: The Constitution and the law on religious corporations govern it [4 6].

DOCUMENTED: The record covers the dormitory case [1 12] and the presidency dispute [2 3].

EXIT: Shrines can leave the network, and individuals rarely "belong" in the first place.

REGULATOR: The courts act as regulator [1 3].

TELL: The shrine world's governance disputes were settled by judges.

Japan — Yasukuni and the state

APEX: Yasukuni's own priests hold the apex [9].

LAW: Articles 20 and 89 of the Constitution govern it [6].

DOCUMENTED: The record covers the Ehime ruling (1997) [4] and the 1978 enshrinements [9].

EXIT: There is no membership to exit.

REGULATOR: The Supreme Court acts as regulator [4].

TELL: The constitution forbids public money for shrines; the court has enforced it.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

This page covers Japan — the Jinja Honcho network and Japan — Yasukuni and the state. Your country changes what this tradition can do to you, and what you can do about it. If you live somewhere not listed, ask which of these cards your country most resembles. If you are a voter, note that each of these arrangements was chosen by a government.

23 The questions

BEFORE YOU READ

The six questions the documented record could not resolve. Each is set out below: why it is being asked, and a concrete example already on this page that it points back to.

QUESTION 1 OF 6

If Shinto is culture and not religion, ask why the postwar constitution needed a clause separating it from the state.

WHY THIS IS ASKED

If Shinto were only culture, the constitution would not have needed a clause separating it from the state. The question asks readers to notice the contradiction.

EXAMPLE ALREADY ON THIS PAGE

The law table records Articles 20 and 89 of the 1947 constitution, and that the 1945 Shinto Directive ended State Shinto [5][6].

QUESTION 2 OF 6

Ask whether your household could decline the festival levy for three years running and remain unremarked upon.

WHY THIS IS ASKED

This is a practical test of whether taking part is really voluntary. The question asks you to imagine opting out and watch what happens.

EXAMPLE ALREADY ON THIS PAGE

The glance table records that opting out of shrine festivals or levies "marks a household," with costs that are "neighborly and reputational."

QUESTION 3 OF 6

Some shrines still bar women. Ask who decided, when, and on what authority — and note that nobody can tell you.

WHY THIS IS ASKED

A ban with no doctrinal basis cannot be defended from a text. The question asks who decided it, and notes that no one can say.

EXAMPLE ALREADY ON THIS PAGE

The law table records that women are barred from landing on Okinoshima, a World Heritage site [11]. The who-gets-hurt table records purity exclusions "sustained by custom with no doctrine to appeal to."

QUESTION 4 OF 6

Officials visit a shrine that enshrines convicted war criminals. Ask what a Korean or Chinese family is supposed to understand by that.

WHY THIS IS ASKED

A shrine visit by officials is a public act with a public meaning. The question asks readers to consider how it looks to the families of those Japan invaded.

EXAMPLE ALREADY ON THIS PAGE

The branches table records that Yasukuni Shrine enshrined 14 Class-A war criminals in 1978 [9]. The history section records official visits since 1969, contested in Japanese courts.

QUESTION 5 OF 6

Within about seven decades this tradition was converted into compulsory emperor worship. Ask

what structural feature made that possible — and whether it has changed.

WHY THIS IS ASKED

If the tradition was turned into compulsory emperor worship within about seven decades, some structural feature made that possible. The question asks whether that feature is still there.

EXAMPLE ALREADY ON THIS PAGE

The structure section records shrine-network lobbying for constitutional revision and official Yasukuni patronage as "re-entangling shrine and state."

QUESTION 6 OF 6

You were taught none of this is belief. Ask who benefits from a religion that cannot be criticized because it denies being one.

WHY THIS IS ASKED

A religion that denies being a religion avoids being criticized as one. The question asks who benefits.

EXAMPLE ALREADY ON THIS PAGE

The say-do table sets "Shinto is not a religion, only Japanese culture" beside the observation that it is "said exclusively when someone declines, and never at any other moment."

In closing

Local shrine life is one of the genuinely good things in this codex: a commons, a calendar, trees kept standing, a place that belongs to everyone in the neighborhood and no one in particular. Almost nothing in this profile is aimed at that.

What it is aimed at is the lesson of 1868 to 1945 — that a tradition with nothing written down is the easiest of all to hijack, because there is no text to hold up against the hijacker. Your protection is not doctrine; you have none. Your protection is remembering that it happened, and noticing who is currently standing near the torii (the shrine gate) with a political program.

Sources for this section: 1 2 6

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Choose one question and ask it this month, out loud, to a real person who could answer it. Then write down what happened. Were you answered, redirected, or told that asking was the problem? Whichever it was, the response is information.

24 Leaving safely here

BEFORE YOU READ

Practical, non-theological guidance for someone who needs to step back or step away safely. It is a safety document, not an argument.

Practical guidance, not legal advice.

1. **Shinto has no membership to leave;** the pressure comes from neighbourhood festival levies and shrine-support associations, which you can decline.
2. **Public bodies may not fund shrine rites;** the Supreme Court has said so twice [4].
3. **If you work for a shrine body,** employment law protects whistleblowers — the courts voided a dismissal [1].
4. **Find support** through the organizations in section 25 [14] [15] [16].

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Even if this section is not for you, it may be for someone you know. Most people who leave a high-demand community say that the first person who listened without trying to argue them back mattered more than anything else. Could that person be you?

25 Where to get help

BEFORE YOU READ

Organizations that can help, each checked directly against its own site, with the date of the check. Nothing here is endorsed beyond that check.

Checked 2026-10-03. No Japanese-language line has been checked for this page; the TELL line is English only.

ORGANIZATION (continued)	FOR	WHERE	CONTACT
Faith to Faithless	People leaving religion	UK	**0800 448 0748** (freephone; Monday 10:00–13:00, Wednesday 10:00–13:00, Thursday 16:00–19:00 UK time) [14]
Recovering from Religion	People questioning or leaving faith	US, Canada and online	**(844) 368-2848** (aims to offer a 24-hour service) [15]
ICSA	Former members of high-control groups; families	International	Via website [16]
TELL Lifeline	Anyone in Japan who needs to talk, in English; not specific to religion	Japan	**0800-300-8355** (toll-free; English only; Sat 9am to Mon 11pm, Tue–Thu 9am–11pm, Fri 9am–2am) [24]

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Save one contact now, before anyone needs it: **Faith to Faithless** (people leaving religion; UK). People in crisis rarely have the energy to research options. Having a name ready is one of the most useful things you can do for someone else.



26

Sources

BEFORE YOU READ

Every numbered citation on this page, with a named, checkable source. Spot-check a few before trusting the rest; that is the honest way to read any page in this book, including this one.

Courts

1. Diamond Online, 「神社本庁が全面敗訴、『内部告発者の懲戒解雇は無効』」 (Mar 2021 — Tokyo District Court voids the disciplinary dismissal of the research chief who questioned the 2015 sale of a Kawasaki dormitory; the later appeal steps are reported in source 19). https://diamond.jp/articles/-/266171
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3. Jinja Honcho, 「総長指名に関するお知らせ（判決確定及びその後の状況について）」 (official notice after the ruling). https://www.jinjahoncho.or.jp/news/detail/26
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6. Constitution of Japan (1947), Articles 20 and 89 — separation of religion and state. https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Japan_1946
7. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, "Shinto" — Kojiki (712), Nihon Shoki (720); shinbutsu-shūgō; shinbutsu bunri (1868); Yasukuni (founded 1869); Jinja Honcho (1946); ~80,000 shrines. https://www.britannica.com/topic/Shinto
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10. Wikipedia, "Sayako Kuroda" — appointed Saishu (supreme priestess) of Ise Jingu, 2017 (replaced Atsuko Ikeda on 19 June 2017). https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sayako_Kuroda
11. UNESCO, "Sacred Island of Okinoshima" (2017) — women barred from landing. https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1535/

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12. Diamond Online, 「神社本庁が全面敗訴、『内部告発者の懲戒解雇は無効』」 (2021) — the sale chain: ¥184m (Oct 2015), ¥212.4m (Nov 2015), ¥305m (six months later); Takao Ina's December 2016 complaint and August 2017 dismissal. https://diamond.jp/articles/-/266171
13. NPR, "'Samurai Sword' Attack At Tokyo Shrine Leaves 3 Dead" (8 Dec 2017). https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2017/12/08/569336750/samurai-sword-attack-at-tokyo-shrine-leaves-3-dead

14. Faith to Faithless (Humanists UK) — helpline 0800 448 0748 (freephone; Monday 10:00–13:00, Wednesday 10:00–13:00, Thursday 16:00–19:00 UK time). https://humanists.uk/faith-to-faithless/helpline/

15. Recovering from Religion — (844) 368-2848. https://www.recoveringfromreligion.org/

16. International Cultic Studies Association (ICSA). https://internationalculticstudies.org/

17. Nobumasa Tanaka, "Yasukuni Shrine and the Double Genocide of Taiwan's Indigenous Atayal: new court verdict", *Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* — the Osaka District Court (13 May 2004) dismissed the Taiwanese plaintiffs' petition; the article states that nearly 50,000 Taiwanese and Korean soldiers who died in Japanese uniforms were enshrined at Yasukuni "without consultation with family members". https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/asia-pacific-journal/article/yasukuni-shrine-and-the-double-genocide-of-taiwans-indigenous-atayal-new-court-verdict/EE8C2C20B136FF482CE2A0473DAEF354

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19. Shinano Mainichi Shimbun (Kyodo), 「解雇無効確定も出勤拒む　神社本庁「対応を調整」」 (25 Apr 2022) — reports that the judgment voiding the dismissal became final in April 2022 and that Jinja Honcho said it was adjusting its response. https://www.shinmai.co.jp/news/article/CNTS2022042500644

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22. Tokihisa Sumimoto, "Religious Freedom Problems in Japan: Background and Current Prospects", *International Journal for Peace Studies* — "Some Christian teachers and students were arrested and died in prison"; Soka Gakkai's cofounders Makiguchi and Toda were imprisoned for rejecting compulsory worship of the emperor and State Shinto, and Makiguchi died in prison in 1944. https://www3.gmu.edu/programs/icar/ijps/vol5_2/sumimoto.htm

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26. Wikipedia, "State Shinto" (retrieved 2026-10-06) — state teaching of Shinto in public schools, including ceremonies involving the emperor's portrait and compulsory class trips to shrines, citing Donald Keene; State Shinto from the Meiji era to 1945. A secondary summary; Keene is the underlying scholarly source. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/State_Shinto

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Don't take this page's word for anything either. People tend to believe a claim more the more often they have heard it, whether or not it is true; this is the "illusory truth effect" (Hasher, Goldstein & Toppino, 1977). Spot-check three citations at random. If any fails, tell us, and it will be corrected and logged.

27 What changed on this page

BEFORE YOU READ

A dated log of what changed on this page: corrections, additions and new sources. Changes are logged in public rather than made quietly.

- **2026-10-03:** Corrected the technique tally: none of the 30 techniques is now counted as sourced to a named document, and the two graded as reformed are graded as custom, because their entries describe present-day pressure from relatives and neighbors. Replaced "the single most dangerous capture in modern history" and "within one generation" with wording the record supports. Stopped saying that amulet sales fund the shrine association's constitutional campaign, which no source on this page shows; the page now says how it is funded is not recorded. Corrected the account of the dormitory case (one research chief was dismissed and a colleague demoted; the court voided the dismissal), the claim that "it is culture, not religion" is the tradition's official self-description, and the claim that the amulet trade is untaxed. Added sources for the Korean and Taiwanese enshrinement claim, for the imprisonment of Christians and others who refused State Shinto worship, for Yasukuni's independence from the association, and for the final steps of the dormitory case; added the Unification Church dissolution to the law section; removed a funeral card that described Buddhist temples and rewrote the political-mobilization card; dropped the smear-campaign tag from the

dormitory case; added help-line hours and an English-language line for Japan. Sources 17 to 24 are new.

- **2026-09-27:** Added Branches, Law & state, Money in numbers (the dormitory sale chain), three documented cases, Voices from inside, two regional cards, Leaving safely and Where to get help.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

This page keeps a public log of its own changes, mistakes included. Does the institution you belong to, give to, or were raised in keep one like it? If not, how would you know what it got wrong, and when?

Colophon

Set in EB Garamond (SIL Open Font License), regular, italic and bold, with true small capitals and old-style figures in text and lining tabular figures in tables. Laid out with Paged.js in Chromium from the same Markdown that feeds the website. US Letter, single-sided, tagged for accessibility and checked against PDF/UA-1 with veraPDF. Built 2026-10-27. Text checked 2026-10-03.

Palette: ink, oxblood, gold, cream, rule. Seven type sizes. Rules of 0.4 pt and 2 pt only.