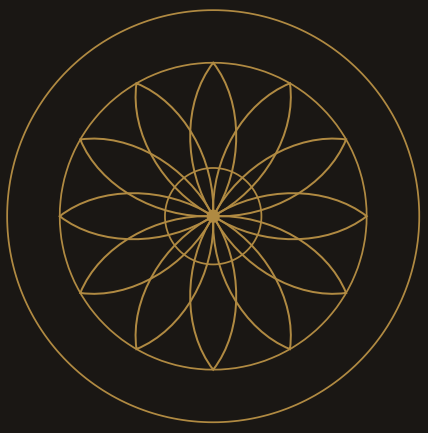


THE SACRED DIVIDE

THE FULL RECORD

Soka Gakkai

Buddhism family

HONOR THE FAITH · NAME THE MACHINERY

TEXT CHECKED 2026-10-03

NOBLEFATHERCREATIONS.COM/FAITH

Before you begin

This is the record of Soka Gakkai 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 strongest objection, answered

04 What healthy looks like here 16

05 History 18

Timeline · Moments in the room

06 Branches & variants 21

07 Structure 23

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

08 Law & state here 26

Who can compel an answer

09 Money 28

Where it comes from · Follow the money · Money in numbers

10 Genealogy 33

11 Reach 35
Information · Children · Bodies

12 The 30 techniques 38
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 63

14 Say versus do 71
What they say, what the record shows · Accountability or theatre? · Words used here

15 Cost & cover 74
What leaving costs · The ledger of exit · How the cost is denied

16 The ledger 77
Who benefits · Money out, leverage back · Who pays

17 Who gets hurt most 79
Where the weight lands

18 The middle tiers 81

19 Documented cases 82

20 Precedent 83
It has been broken before · What would change this page

21 Voices from inside 85

22 Regional variants 87
Japan · United Kingdom · France

23 The questions 90
In closing

24 Leaving safely here 95

25 Where to get help 96

26 Sources 99

27 What changed on this page 103

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 Soka Gakkai 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	Soka Gakkai self-reports 8.27M households in Japan and ~3M members outside Japan (2021 announcement) [1].
WHO'S IN CHARGE	The president is Minoru Harada, in office since 2006 [1].
CHOSEN BY	Organizational process.
REMOVABLE BY	Internal.
MONEY IN ONE LINE	The money comes from member contributions (zaimu, the organization's term for its financial contributions) and from subscriptions to the daily Seikyo Shimbun (the organization's own newspaper), whose claimed 5.5 million circulation (a 1997 claim) is unaudited [8].
LEAVING IN ONE LINE	There is no formal shunning; the cost of leaving is social and familial, felt in tight local districts and multi-generational families [5].

THE UNANSWERED QUESTION	Who decides which candidate is kosen-rufu (the movement's term for the widespread propagation of the Lotus Sutra for world peace)?
FAMILY	Buddhism — buddhism, tibetan-buddhism, soka-gakkai
LAST CHECKED	2026-10-03

Disclosure scorecard

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

Accounts: the UK charity files public accounts; the Japanese organization's are not public [2]

Safeguarding: the UK branch publishes safeguarding procedures [16]

External first: UK procedure: police for immediate danger; other allegations go first to an internal safeguarding team [16]

Removal: a four-year presidential term, renewed by a selection committee; no mid-term removal procedure found [17]

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

The glance table's answer to who chooses the top office is "Organizational process", and to who can remove its holder, "Internal". 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, 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.

- **name:** Keiko
- **when:** A Tuesday before an upper-house election
- **where:** Saitama

1. She does gongyo (the daily recitation of passages from the Lotus Sutra, together with the chanting of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, a phrase meaning devotion to the Mystic Law of the Lotus Sutra) at six. It has steadied her through two miscarriages and a layoff. It works. She is sure of that.

2. At ten the district leader calls with the list: twelve friends to contact for the candidate.

3. She buys a second copy of the newspaper for her sister, who does not read it.

4. At lunch a colleague asks, lightly, whether her religion tells her how to vote. She says no, and it is technically true.

5. At the discussion meeting in the evening, a young mother cries about her child's illness and is told to chant with more determination.

6. Walking home Keiko rehearses the calls she will make tomorrow, and notices she has never once asked who decided that this was the candidate.

Keiko is a composite drawn from documented patterns. No real person is depicted.

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 chant every morning and feel your life change. You may have marched for nuclear disarmament. Your movement's founder died in a prison cell rather than bow to a state god. This page asks what happens when a religion builds a political party, and whose unpaid work turns out the votes.

THE UNANSWERED QUESTION

Who decides which candidate is kosen-rufu?

The strongest objection, answered

- *Attack:* "Persecuted since the war, smeared by rivals, tabloids and a French blacklist."
- *Concede:* The founder died in prison [7]. The 1999 French report, which discusses Soka Gakkai, was contested: it led to a defamation complaint against the commission president, Jacques Guyard, who was discharged in 2001 on the ground of good faith [10].
- *Answer:* The findings here rest on the organization's own 1970 apology [3] and on university-press scholarship about its electoral work [5], not on tabloids or blacklists.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Try answering the unanswered question yourself: *Who decides which candidate is kosen-rufu (the movement's term for the widespread propagation of the Lotus Sutra for world peace)?* 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 Soka Gakkai, 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.

> Soka Gakkai reports 8.27 million member households in Japan and around 3 million members elsewhere, in 192 countries and territories (2021 announcement) [1]. It is a lay Buddhist organization practising the chanting of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo in the tradition of the 13th-century teacher Nichiren. It is known for peace, culture and education work (Soka University, UN-affiliated NGO activity) and a strong local discussion-meeting culture [1].

- The organization carries out peace, anti-nuclear and education activism.
- The founder refused to bow to State Shinto (the state-sponsored form of Shinto promoted in wartime Japan), at the cost of his life [7].
- It has been a lay-led religion without priestly fees since the 1991 break [9].
- The organization made a public apology in 1970 and adopted a formal policy separating religion and party after the scandal [3].
- Where it operates as a registered charity, as SGI-UK does, its accounts are public [2].

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.

The movement's key stages: - **1930:** The educators Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and Josei Toda founded the movement as the Soka Kyoiku Gakkai, an education reform society [7]. It later aligned with Nichiren Shoshu (the Japanese Nichiren school whose priesthood the lay group followed) [9]. - **1943–44:** Makiguchi was arrested in 1943 for refusing to accept a State Shinto talisman and died in prison in November 1944 [7]. - **1950s:** Under Toda, the movement grew explosively through aggressive conversion (shakubuku). - **1960–2023:** Daisaku Ikeda led the movement from 1960, founded Soka Gakkai International (SGI, the network of Soka Gakkai organizations outside Japan) in 1975, was honorary president from 1979, and died on 15 November 2023 [6]. - **1991:** The Nichiren Shoshu priesthood excommunicated the organization on 28 November 1991 [9]. - **Since 2006:** Minoru Harada is president [1].

Timeline

DATE	EVENT	READING
1930	Two educators found the movement as an education reform society [7].	It begins as an educators' society, not yet a Buddhist lay body.
1943–44	Makiguchi arrested for refusing a Shinto talisman; dies in prison, Nov 1944 [7]	Refusing the state is the founding story.
1950s	Toda leads a mass-conversion drive.	The movement grows through aggressive shakubuku.
1964	Komeito (the Clean Government Party) is founded [3].	A religion acquires a party.
1969–70	The publisher, distributors and bookstores of a critic's book are pressured; Ikeda makes a formal apology (3 May 1970); a policy of separating religion and party follows [3].	Church–state questions are raised in public.
1975	SGI is founded.	The movement expands globally.
1991	Nichiren Shoshu excommunicates the organization (28 Nov) [9].	A lay organization loses its priesthood and keeps its members.
1995–99	France's parliamentary commission (chair: Jacques Guyard) publishes a 1995 report listing 172 movements and a 1999 report that discusses Soka Gakkai [10]	It is a state classification abroad, itself controversial [10].
1999	Komeito enters a coalition with the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) [4].	The partnership lasts twenty-six years, about twenty-three of them in government; Komeito was in opposition from 2009 to 2012 [4 19].
2023	Ikeda dies on 15 Nov [6].	The mentor era ends.

Oct 2025	Komeito leaves the coalition, citing political-fundraising reform [4].	Komeito leaves government.
2026	Komeito's lower-house members join the Centrist Reform Alliance in January; the Alliance disbands in September and they return [18] [19].	Komeito is an opposition party.

Moments in the room

YEAR	TITLE	WHAT HAPPENED	WHY IT MATTERS
1944	The prison	The founder died refusing the state [7].	It is the standard the page applies.
1970	The apology	A publisher was pressured, Ikeda apologized, and a separation policy was adopted [3].	It named the religion–party question.
2025	The exit	Komeito leaves government [4].	A twenty-six-year partnership with the governing party ends.

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

Soka Gakkai 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.

Soka Gakkai and Nichiren Shoshu, the priesthood, have been separate since 1991 [9].

BODY	WHERE	WHAT DIFFERS ON THIS PAGE'S QUESTIONS
Soka Gakkai (Japan)	It has 8.27 million member households (2021 announcement) [1].	It founded Komeito (1964), which was the LDP's coalition partner from 1999 to 2025, apart from 2009–12 in opposition [3] [4] [19].
Soka Gakkai International (SGI)	It has about 3 million members in 192 countries and territories (2021 announcement) [1].	It consists of national organizations; SGI-UK, for one, is a registered charity [2].
Nichiren Shoshu	It is the priesthood the lay movement belonged to until 1991.	It excommunicated Soka Gakkai on 28 November 1991 [9].

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

If you know one community of Soka Gakkai, 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:** Soka Gakkai self-reports 8.27M households in Japan and ~3M members outside Japan (2021 announcement) [1].
- **regions:** The organization is present in Japan, the United States, Brazil, Korea, Taiwan, Europe and India [1].
- **branches:** Soka Gakkai and Nichiren Shoshu, the priesthood, have been separate since 1991 [9].
- **trend:** No source on this page establishes the direction of membership; the figures above date from 2021.
- **participation:** Local activity in Japan is high, centering on meetings, the newspaper and election work [5].

Authority

- The organization has a president, Minoru Harada, in office since 2006 [1]. The late Ikeda remains the central "mentor", and his writings (*The Human Revolution*) are foundational [6].
- It has a dense local structure of districts, chapters, and youth and women's divisions [5].
- In Japan it is a registered religious corporation, subject to the Religious Corporations Law as revised in 1995 [II].

The top of the chain

OFFICE	WHO SITS IN IT NOW	CHOSEN BY	REMOVABLE BY
President	Minoru Harada has held the office since 2006 [1].	The president is chosen by an organizational process.	Removal is internal.
Mentor (honorary president)	Daisaku Ikeda held the title from 1979 until his death on 15 November 2023 [6]. This page does not record a successor.	—	—

Who holds what

ENTITY	TYPE	HOLDER	HOLDS	SECTOR	RECEIPT
Soka Gakkai	It is a religious corporation.	President Minoru Harada holds it [1].	It holds the organization and its assets.	It operates in your district.	OFFICIAL POLICY
Komeito	It is a political party.	The party leader holds it. Tetsuo Saito led it in 2025 [4]. In January 2026 its lower-house members joined the Centrist Reform Alliance, which disbanded in September 2026; Komeito, now in opposition, decided on 30 September 2026 to appoint Mitsunari Okamoto as its leader [18] [19].	It holds seats in the Diet (Japan's parliament).	It acts in national law.	OFFICIAL POLICY
Seikyo Shimbun	It is a daily newspaper.	The organization holds it.	It carries members' main news.	It supplies what you read.	ACADEMIC SOURCE [5] [8]
Soka University	It is an educational institution.	The organization holds it.	It holds the university itself.	—	OFFICIAL POLICY

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Daisaku Ikeda led the movement from 1960 and died in November 2023. Minoru Harada has been president since 2006. The page asks a question most members haven't had to face: now that the mentor has died, who holds authority, and how would a member know? If you chant daily, your practice is yours. Is the organization's direction something you have any say in?

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.

COUNTRY (continued)	WHAT THE LAW DOES	THE ACCOUNTABILITY QUESTION
Japan — religious corporations	The Religious Corporations Law was revised on 8 December 1995, after the attack by Aum Shinrikyo (the religious group that released sarin gas on the Tokyo subway in 1995), moving oversight to central government and giving it more access to religious bodies' records [11] [12]	An LDP spokesman said on television the purpose was "to take measures against Soka Gakkai" [11]
Japan — politics	Religious bodies may support parties.	Soka Gakkai founded Komeito in 1964; after the 1969–70 book-suppression affair the two were formally "separated" [3]
France	A 1995 parliamentary report listed 172 movements, and the commission's 1999 report discussed Soka Gakkai [10]	The commission's work was itself controversial: a defamation complaint against its president ended in 2001 with his discharge on the ground of good faith [10]
United Kingdom	Charity law governs it [2].	SGI-UK files public accounts [2]

Who can compel an answer

In Japan, the Religious Corporations Law, the tax authorities and elections can compel an answer.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

The founder, Makiguchi, was arrested in 1943 for refusing a State Shinto talisman and died in prison. That is the page's standard. Then, in 1964, the religion founded a party, Komeito, which was the LDP's partner for twenty-six years, about twenty-three of them in government, until October 2025. If you are a Japanese voter, you have lived under a government that included a religion's party. Would you have wanted to know which of your neighbors were campaigning because their faith asked them to?

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

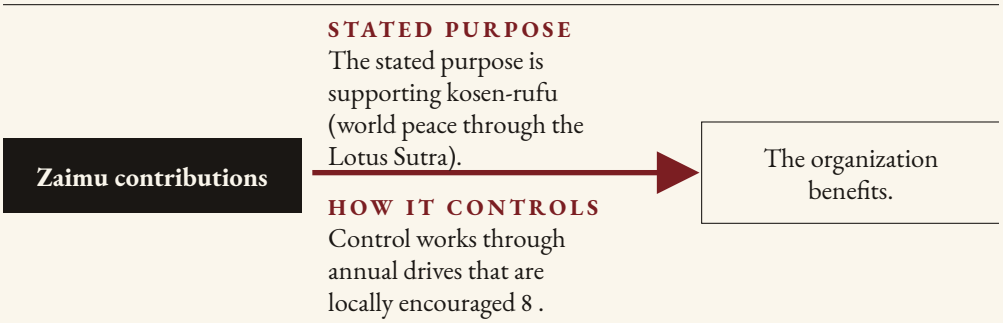
- The organization solicits financial contributions (zaimu, 財務) from members. Former members and commentators describe the major annual drives as larger in the past [8]. Current practice is not established from a primary source.
- The daily *Seikyo Shimbun* claimed a circulation of about 5.5 million in 1997 [8]. That figure is unverifiable: the paper is outside Japan's official circulation-audit system [8]. Members' work selling subscriptions is documented in scholarship [5].
- Income also comes from publishing, cultural centres and Soka University [1].

Former members and commentators describe the major annual drives as larger in the past.

Follow the money

FLOW	STATED PURPOSE	HOW IT CONTROLS	WHO BENEFITS
Zaimu contributions	The stated purpose is supporting kosen-rufu (world peace through the Lotus Sutra).	Control works through annual drives that are locally encouraged [8].	The organization benefits.
Seikyo Shimbun	The stated purpose is faith and news.	Members sell the subscriptions, and the circulation is unaudited [5 8].	The publishing arm benefits.
Election work	The stated purpose is kosen-rufu through politics.	Control works through members' unpaid campaign labor [5].	Komeito benefits, and until 2025 so did its coalition partner [4].

WHERE THE MONEY GOES, AND WHAT IT HOLDS

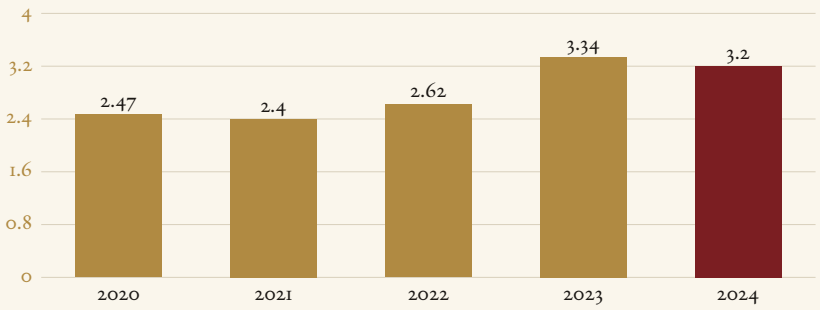


Seikyo Shimbun	**STATED PURPOSE** The stated purpose is faith and news. **HOW IT CONTROLS** Members sell the subscriptions, and the circulation is unaudited 5 8 .	The publishing arm benefits.
Election work	**STATED PURPOSE** The stated purpose is kosen-rufu through politics. **HOW IT CONTROLS** Control works through members' unpaid campaign labor 5 .	Komeito benefits, and until 2025 so did its coalition partner 4 .

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

Money in numbers

SOKA GAKKAI INTERNATIONAL — UK: INCOME



£ million, years to 31 December — Public because SGI-UK is a registered charity; spending exceeded income every year shown. [2]

- **SGI-UK, 2024:** £2.36m of its £3.20m income came from donations, and it spent £4.12m [2].
- **Japan:** The money comes from contributions (*zaimu*) and the *Seikyo Shimbun*, whose claimed 5.5 million circulation (a 1997 claim) is outside the official audit system [8].
- **The 1995 law** increased the government's access to religious corporations' records [11].

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Members are asked for annual contributions (zaimu), and the page notes that current practice is not established from a primary source. The daily *Seikyo Shimbun* claimed a circulation of about 5.5 million in 1997, but it sits outside Japan's official audit system, so the figure can't be checked. In the day inside, a member buys a second copy for a sister who doesn't read it. How many copies does your household buy, and why? In the UK, SGI-UK files public accounts, which shows it can be done.

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?

1. **A religion with a party** - *Origin:* The rule began with Toda's and Ikeda's vision of kosen-rufu, which included politics, and Komeito was founded in 1964 [3]. - *Then:* It gave protection from a hostile state, in memory of the founder's death in prison [7]. - *Expired?* A party in a governing coalition for most of 26 years [4] [19] is not a persecuted minority's shield. - *Benefits now:* The party gains legislative power and the organization gains standing.

2. **The mentor–disciple relationship** - *Origin:* It began in Nichiren's teaching, reframed around Ikeda [6]. - *Then:* It gave inspiration and unity. - *Expired?* Since 2023 [6], the question is who inherits the authority. - *Benefits now:* The organization's leadership benefits.

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

- The *Seikyo Shimbun* and the organization's own publications are the main information sources for members [5][8].
- Members receive a strong mentor–disciple framing around Ikeda [6].

Children

- Membership is multi-generational and includes youth-division activities [5]. No documented harms specific to children were found.

Bodies

- The Women's Division is large and influential, and central to local organization and electoral work, per scholarship [5]. This page has no source on the gender of its top leadership.

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?

The Seikyo Shimbun and the organization's own publications are the main information sources for members.



12

The 30 techniques

How the thirty techniques are established here

3	2	17	3	5
DOCUMENTED	TAUGHT	CULTURAL	CONTESTED	UNGRADED

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

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

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.

Newcomers meet warm discussion meetings and testimonies of changed lives.

What it asks of you: Is the warmth for you, or for your vote?

1 · Love Bombing

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

How it shows here

- Discussion meetings welcome newcomers warmly.

The strongest defense. Buddhist friendship.

The counter. Warmth is fine; watch whether it survives saying no to a campaign.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The warm welcome at discussion meetings is ordinary practice; no rule ties it to campaigns.

2 · Weaponized Generosity

Giving help that installs unspoken obligation.

How it shows here

- The district gives support in hardship.

The strongest defense. Mutual care.

The counter. Care that later asks for a vote is a loan.

EVIDENCE GRADE

CULTURAL Weak. District support in hardship is reported practice, and its link to later requests is a pattern, not a rule.

Stage 2 · Hook

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

The doctrine of human revolution (personal transformation) promises happiness through chanting and practice.

What it asks of you: Why are the promised benefits attributed to practice but never audited?

3 · Future Faking

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

How it shows here

- The movement promises the benefits of practice and "human revolution".

The strongest defense. Faith and experience.

The counter. Benefits are attributed, never audited.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> TAUGHT The benefits of practice and "human revolution" are the movement's own teaching.

4 · Hoovering

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

How it shows here

- Leaders visit lapsed members.

The strongest defense. Encouragement.

The counter. Encouragement that carries a list is recruitment.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL Visits to lapsed members are ordinary district practice.

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.

Unhappiness is attributed to insufficient practice.

What it asks of you: Who decides what is "insufficient"?

5 · Devaluation

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

How it shows here

- Suffering is attributed to insufficient practice.

The strongest defense. Take responsibility.

The counter. It is a diagnosis only the organization can treat.

EVIDENCE GRADE

TAUGHT Attributing suffering to insufficient practice is taught by leaders.

6 · Gaslighting

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

How it shows here

- Doubts are reframed as weak faith.

The strongest defense. Faith grows through doubt.

The counter. Then let the doubt stand.

EVIDENCE GRADE

CONTESTED Whether doubt is reframed as weak faith is disputed; the page records no published instruction.

7 · Double Bind

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

How it shows here

- The organization is "separate" from the party, yet campaigns for it [35].

The strongest defense. Members act as citizens.

The counter. The campaigning is organized by districts.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> **DOCUMENTED** The stated separation and the campaigning are both on record [35].

Stage 4 · Confuse

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

The organization is "separate" from the party, yet campaigns for it [35].

What it asks of you: Which is it?

8 · Intermittent Reinforcement

Unpredictable reward that creates addictive emotional dependency.

How it shows here

- Members receive recognition for campaign and subscription results [5].

The strongest defense. Honoring effort.

The counter. The recognition is given by quota.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL Recognition for campaign and subscription results is described in scholarly fieldwork [5].

9 · Moving the Goalposts

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

How it shows here

- Each election brings a new target.

The strongest defense. Every campaign matters.

The counter. There is always another election.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL A new target for each election is how campaigns run in practice.

10 · Strategic Ambiguity

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

How it shows here

- The organization announces a "separation" of religion and party [3].

The strongest defense. A formal policy since 1970.

The counter. A policy is not a practice [5].

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> DOCUMENTED The announced separation is on the record [3].

11 · Projection

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

How it shows here

- Critics are cast as enemies of peace.

The strongest defense. Persecution by rivals.

The counter. Critics include scholars [5].

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL Casting critics as enemies of peace is a pattern in the movement's messaging.

12 · DARVO

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

How it shows here

- The 1970 apology denied any intent to obstruct speech [3].

The strongest defense. No intent.

The counter. The pressure was documented [3].

> EVIDENCE GRADE
> CONTESTED The apology and the documented pressure are both on record, so the reading is disputed [3].

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

- Campaigning is treated as ordinary faith practice [5].

The strongest defense. Engaged Buddhism.

The counter. The engagement is with one party only.

EVIDENCE GRADE

CULTURAL Campaigning as ordinary faith practice is described in scholarly fieldwork [5].

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.

Isolation is weak here: social life is centered on the district, but no formal shunning was found [5].

What it asks of you: How much of your social life runs through the district?

14 · Isolation

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

How it shows here

- Social life is centered on the district.

The strongest defense. Community.

The counter. The technique is weak here.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL Weak. A district-centred social life is a pattern, not a rule.

15 · Triangulation

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

How it shows here

- Family, district and mentor align.

The strongest defense. Shared purpose.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The alignment of family, district and mentor is reported practice.

Stage 6 · Extract

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

Members give contributions, newspaper sales and election labor [58].

What it asks of you: Whose time funds whose seats?

16 · Flying Monkeys

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

How it shows here

- Members contact friends for votes.

The strongest defense. Sharing our values.

The counter. The friend becomes a target.

EVIDENCE GRADE

CULTURAL Contacting friends for votes is described as ordinary campaign practice.

17 · Smear Campaign

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

How it shows here

- The 1969–70 pressure on a critic's publisher is the instance [3].

The strongest defense. Defending our reputation.

The counter. Reputation is defended by answers.

EVIDENCE GRADE

CONTESTED The 1969–70 pressure on a critic's publisher is the instance; its reading is disputed [3].

18 · Silent Treatment / Stonewalling

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

How it shows here

- Accounts are not published to members in Japan, while national charities abroad publish theirs [2].

The strongest defense. Private religious matters.

The counter. Members pay; members may ask.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL Members in Japan are not shown accounts, while charities abroad file theirs [2]; this is practice, not a published rule.

19 · Manufactured Consent

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

How it shows here

- Votes are "freely" given within organized drives [5].

The strongest defense. Citizens choose.

The counter. The choice is made inside a quota.

EVIDENCE GRADE

CULTURAL Votes given within organised drives are described in scholarly fieldwork [5].

20 · Trauma Bonding

The wound and the bandage come from the same hand.

How it shows here

- No instance of this technique was found.

EVIDENCE GRADE

UNGRADED No instance of this technique was found for this tradition.

21 · Learned Helplessness

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

How it shows here

- No instance of this technique was found.

EVIDENCE GRADE

UNGRADED No instance of this technique was found for this tradition.

22 · Benevolent Control

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

How it shows here

- District leaders give guidance.

The strongest defense. Encouragement.

The counter. Guidance you can decline is fine.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL Guidance from district leaders is ordinary practice.

23 · Infantilization

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

How it shows here

- No instance of this technique was found.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> UNGRADED No instance of this technique was found for this tradition.

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

- Selfhood is framed through the mentor–disciple bond [6].

The strongest defense. Inspiration.

The counter. A self defined through a mentor is a self someone else can direct.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The mentor–disciple bond is the movement's own framing [6]; it is not a formal rule.

25 · Spiritual Bypassing

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

How it shows here

- Illness or crisis is answered with "chant more".

The strongest defense. Faith gives strength.

The counter. Chanting is not a treatment.

EVIDENCE GRADE

CULTURAL Answering illness or crisis with "chant more" is reported practice.

26 · Financial Control

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

How it shows here

- Members give zaimu and pay for newspaper subscriptions [58].

The strongest defense. Voluntary support.

The counter. Publish the accounts.

EVIDENCE GRADE

CULTURAL Zaimu and newspaper subscriptions are described in fieldwork and reference summaries [58].

Stage 7 · Discard

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

No formal mechanism was found.

27 · Manufactured Crisis

Creating urgency to suppress critical thinking and generate loyalty.

How it shows here

- Elections create urgency.

The strongest defense. Every vote counts.

The counter. The urgency follows a schedule.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL Urgency around elections is a pattern in campaign practice.

28 · Discard

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

How it shows here

- No formal mechanism was found.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> UNGRADED No formal mechanism of discard was found for this tradition.

Stage 8 · Replace

Your seat is filled before the door shuts, and nobody is responsible for any of it because the authority was attributed to the Law and the mentor.

The district continues.

29 · Replacement

Your seat is filled before the door closes behind you.

How it shows here

- No instance of this technique was found.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> UNGRADED No instance of this technique was found for this tradition.

30 · Plausible Deniability

The institution is never responsible, because the authority is attributed to the Law and the mentor, which no one can cross-examine.

How it shows here

- The organization says "members vote freely" and "the party is separate" [35].

The strongest defense. Formal separation.

The counter. The voting is organized by the religion's own structure [5].

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> DOCUMENTED The organisation's statements are on record [35].

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 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 where its fact is recorded. The page rates the second loop, Fear, as weak.

1 · Money



I

Contributions and newspaper sales fund the organization that teaches their value [58].

How it runs.

1. The organization presents contributions (zaimu) as support for kosen-rufu (section 9).
2. Members give contributions and sell subscriptions to the *Seikyo Shimbun*, work that scholarship documents (section 9).
3. The money funds the organization, its publishing arm, its cultural centres and Soka University (sections 7 and 9).
4. The newspaper is members' main source of news (sections 7 and 11).
5. Members read it, are recognized for subscription results, and the giving continues (section 9; technique 8).

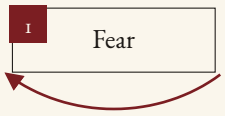
Techniques that feed it. 3 · Future Faking, 8 · Intermittent Reinforcement, 26 · Financial Control.

Why it closes. The organization that asks for the money also publishes the paper members read and sell. Neither side is audited in public: the Japanese organization's accounts are not public (section 1 scorecard) and the paper's circulation is outside the official audit system (section 9).

Where it could be broken, and by whom. It weakens wherever the money becomes visible. Section 20 names the changes that would break it: published accounts and an audited circulation. SGI-UK already files public accounts (section 8). A member can ask for them before giving. This paragraph is analysis, not a documented finding.

An example from this page. In section 2, Keiko buys a second copy of the newspaper for a sister who does not read it.

2 · Fear



2

The page rates this loop weak: hardship is answered with more practice, and no formal penalty for leaving was found.

How it runs.

1. Hardship or doubt arises (section 2; technique 6).
2. It is read as insufficient practice or weak faith (techniques 5 and 6).
3. The answer offered is "chant more" (technique 25; section 14).
4. The remedy is more of the same practice, directed by the organization.

Techniques that feed it. 5 · Devaluation, 6 · Gaslighting, 25 · Spiritual Bypassing.

Why it closes. Only partly. The practice supplies both the diagnosis and the remedy, but the page found no formal shunning (section 15) and learned helplessness is ungraded (section 12).

Where it could be broken, and by whom. It weakens where hardship is met with help other than more practice, and where doubt is allowed to stand, as technique 6 puts it. This paragraph is analysis, not a documented finding.

An example from this page. In section 2, a young mother cries about her child's illness at the discussion meeting and is told to chant with more determination.

3 · Children



3

Multi-generational membership [5].

How it runs.

1. Membership runs through families, and youth-division activities draw in children (section 11).
2. Social life is centered on the district (technique 14; section 15).
3. Family, district and mentor align (technique 15), so leaving carries a family cost as well as a social one (section 15).
4. Children raised in the district take part in the same activities as adults, and the pattern repeats.

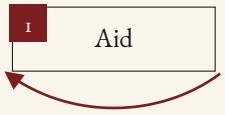
Techniques that feed it. 13 · Normalization, 14 · Isolation, 15 · Triangulation.

Why it closes. The people who make up the family are the same people who make up the district, so leaving one means loosening the other.

Where it could be broken, and by whom. It weakens where membership is a choice made by an adult and where families accept a member who steps back. The page records no formal shunning (section 15), so the break lies with families and districts. No documented harms specific to children were found (section 11). This paragraph is analysis, not a documented finding.

An example from this page. The ledger of exit in section 15 records a family cost: multi-generational expectations.

4 · Aid



4

Peace work and UN status build legitimacy.

How it runs.

1. The organization carries out peace, anti-nuclear and education activism, including Soka University and UN-affiliated NGO activity (section 4).
2. That work is part of the organization's public record (section 4).
3. The standing it earns supports the answer to critics, who are cast as enemies of peace (technique 11).
4. Engagement with the public is presented as ordinary faith practice, "engaged Buddhism" (technique 13).

Techniques that feed it. 11 · Projection, 13 · Normalization.

Why it closes. The peace work is real, and the same record becomes the defense against criticism. Each criticism can then be read as an attack on the work.

Where it could be broken, and by whom. It weakens where critics are answered with records rather than with the peace record, and where standing is separated from party politics. Section 3 shows the answer the page itself gives: the findings rest on the organization's own apology and on university-press scholarship. This paragraph is analysis, not a documented finding.

An example from this page. Section 4 lists peace, anti-nuclear and education activism among what works here.

5 · Labor



5

Election labor built political power [5].

How it runs.

1. District leaders organize meetings and campaigns (section 18).
2. Members contact friends for votes, unpaid (section 9; technique 16).
3. Women's Division leaders are asked to deliver votes and subscriptions (section 18).
4. The votes gave Komeito legislative influence, and the organization standing (sections 10 and 16).
5. Recognition for results draws further labor (technique 8).

Techniques that feed it. 8 · Intermittent Reinforcement, 16 · Flying Monkeys, 19 · Manufactured Consent, 27 · Manufactured Crisis.

Why it closes. The labor is unpaid and organized by the religion's own structure (technique 30), while the product, votes, accrues to the party and the organization rather than to the members who give it.

Where it could be broken, and by whom. Section 18 names where it could be refused: district leaders could refuse to pressure members to vote, and Women's Division leaders could refuse to turn faith into a quota. Komeito's exit from the coalition in October 2025 (section 5) changed what the votes buy. This paragraph is analysis, not a documented finding.

An example from this page. In section 2, Keiko's district leader calls with a list of twelve friends to contact for the candidate.

6 · Scandal



6

1970: apology plus a formal separation policy, while the campaigning continued [35].

How it runs.

1. In 1969–70 the publisher, distributors and bookstores of a critic's book were pressured (sections 5 and 19).
2. The matter became a public church–state question (section 5).
3. Ikeda made a formal apology on 3 May 1970, and a policy separating religion and party was adopted (section 5).
4. Members' campaign work for Komeito continues, and scholars document it extensively (section 14).
5. The page asks what written rule now prevents a repeat (section 23).

Techniques that feed it. 7 · Double Bind, 10 · Strategic Ambiguity, 12 · DARVO, 17 · Smear Campaign, 30 · Plausible Deniability.

Why it closes. The apology and the separation policy answer the public demand, while the practice stays organized by districts (technique 10). The structure that produced the case is left as it was.

Where it could be broken, and by whom. Section 20 names the changes that would break it: published accounts, an audited circulation, and a public statement that members' votes are their own. That statement lies with the organization's leadership. This paragraph is analysis, not a documented finding.

An example from this page. The say-do table in section 14 sets "Religion and party are separate (since 1970)" beside the scholarship documenting members' campaign work for Komeito.

7 · Persecution



7

The founder's martyrdom [7] and the 1991 excommunication [9].

How it runs.

1. Makiguchi refused a State Shinto talisman and died in prison in November 1944 (sections 4 and 5).
2. Nichiren Shoshu excommunicated the organization on 28 November 1991 (section 5).
3. The movement describes itself as persecuted, and critics are cast as enemies of peace (technique 11; section 3).
4. Criticism is answered as "persecution by rivals" (technique 11).
5. Findings are received as attacks, and the next finding is met the same way.

Techniques that feed it. 11 · Projection, 17 · Smear Campaign.

Why it closes. The founding history is real, so the claim of persecution cannot be dismissed. It can also be applied to any criticism, which makes the next finding easier to set aside.

Where it could be broken, and by whom. It weakens when members read findings as the organization's own record, not an outsider's attack. Section 3 notes that the findings here rest on the organization's own 1970 apology and on university-press scholarship, and that critics include scholars (technique 11). This paragraph is analysis, not a documented finding.

An example from this page. Section 3 sets the attack, "Persecuted since the war, smeared by rivals, tabloids and a French blacklist", beside the concession that the founder died in prison and the answer that the findings do not rest on tabloids.

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?

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
"Religion and party are separate (since 1970)." [3]	Members' campaign work for Komeito is extensively documented by scholars [5].	ACADEMIC SOURCE
"We never intended to obstruct free speech." [3]	Publisher, distributors and bookstores were pressured before a critic's book printed [3].	ACADEMIC SOURCE

Accountability or theatre?

- **Last ran:** A critic's book was pressured; the organization apologized and formally separated from the party [3].
- **Chair now:** The president, Minoru Harada, holds the chair, after Ikeda [16].
- **Predict:** The post-Ikeda authority question is likely to be settled administratively: the president is reappointed by a selection committee, and no member vote is recorded [17]. This is a prediction, not a finding.

Words used here

TERM	INSIDE MEANING	WHAT IT DOES	SAID PLAINLY
Kosen-rufu	It means the widespread propagation of the Lotus Sutra for world peace.	It can cover campaigning, sales and giving.	"This is for world peace."
Human revolution	It means personal transformation.	It attributes success to practice and failure to insufficient practice.	"If it isn't working, chant more."
Mentor and disciple	It is the bond with Ikeda.	It frames leadership as spiritual lineage.	"Follow the mentor's successors."

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

- The main costs of leaving are social (tight local districts) and familial (multi-generational membership) [5]. PATTERN OBSERVED
- **No formal shunning doctrine was found.** That lower formal exit cost is a relative strength.

That lower formal exit cost is a relative strength.

The ledger of exit

COST	DOCUMENTED?	DETAIL	THE OFFICIAL DENIAL
Social	Yes, in scholarship [5].	Leaving means loosening district ties.	"Practice is voluntary."
Family	It is an observed pattern.	Expectations run across generations.	—
Formal	None was found.	—	No official denial is recorded.

How the cost is denied

CHANNEL	LEVEL	NOTE
Explicit policy	Medium	Party ties are public, and mobilization is informal [5].

Informal enforcement	High	Election work is carried by members [5].
Leadership distance	High	The organization has been formally "separate" from Komeito since 1970 [3].
Doctrinal ambiguity	Not assessed	No source on this page supports a level.
Cultural outsourcing	Not assessed	No source on this page supports a level.
Volunteer enforcement	High	Local leaders organize meetings and campaigns and are asked to hit targets and deliver votes (section 18) [5].
Sacred secrecy	Not assessed	No source on this page supports a level.
Exit cost denial	Not assessed	The ledger of exit records only "Practice is voluntary" as a denial; no source supports a level.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

There is no formal penalty for leaving. The cost is the density of it all: meetings, the newspaper, election work and multigenerational family ties. If you stopped doing election work but kept chanting, would anyone treat you differently? The closing line of the questions section puts it simply: you can chant every morning and vote however you choose.

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 organization benefits, and so does the party it founded, Komeito (founded 1964) [3].
- Komeito was the Liberal Democratic Party's coalition partner from 1999 until it withdrew on 10 October 2025, apart from 2009–12 in opposition [4][19].
- The two were formally "separated" in 1970 after the book-suppression scandal [3].
- The organization's publishing and institutional enterprises benefit too [5].

Money out, leverage back

- Organized votes gave a religious corporation legislative influence for decades [3][4][5].

Who pays

- Members pay, pressed into election work and subscription sales [5].

- How far contributions strain households is not established on this page; no primary or scholarly source for it was found.

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 on the people who do the organization's unpaid work. The table names who carries the most, how, and what the burden compounds with.

WHO	HOW	COMPOUNDS
Active members in Japan	They carry election work, newspaper subscriptions and contributions [58].	The burden compounds with multi-generational family ties.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

The table has one row: active members in Japan, carrying election work, newspaper subscriptions and contributions, compounded by family ties across generations. That is not the harm of other pages in this book. It is the cost of an organization asking a lot, over many years, and members finding it hard to say no. Where is your limit, and have you ever told anyone?

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.

Local leaders carry the organization's meetings, campaigns and drives [5]. District leaders and Women's Division leaders each stand at one point where a request could be refused. The table sets out what each does, sees, is asked to do and could refuse.

ROLE	DOES	SEES	ASKED	COULD REFUSE
District leaders	They organize meetings and campaigns [5].	They see who is active.	They are asked to hit targets.	They could refuse to pressure members to vote.
Women's Division leaders	They mobilize members [5].	They see everyone.	They are asked to deliver votes and subscriptions.	They could refuse to turn faith into a quota.

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.

1. **The 1969–70 "publication obstruction incident" and Ikeda's apology of 3 May 1970** [3]. ACADEMIC SOURCE
2. **The 1999 French National Assembly commission report (Guyard), which discusses Soka Gakkai** [10]. GOVERNMENT REPORT · contested
3. *No adjudicated case concerning internal coercion was found.*

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

These are not hypotheticals. Two 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	COST
The organization made a public apology and adopted a formal separation policy [3].	The organization, under public pressure	1970	No cost is recorded.
Members carry out peace and anti-nuclear advocacy.	Members	Ongoing	No cost is recorded.
Komeito left the coalition over fundraising reform [4].	Komeito	2025	It lost its governing role.

What would change this page

This page would change with published accounts, an audited newspaper circulation, and a public statement that members' votes are their own.

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

People from inside Soka Gakkai who raised the hard question publicly, often at real cost. They answer the objection that criticism only ever comes from outsiders.

- **Tsunesaburo Makiguchi.** He was the founder, and he refused a State Shinto talisman and died in prison in 1944 [7].
- **The religious groups that opposed the 1995 law** ranged from the United Church of Christ to the Kyoto Buddhist Association. They

opposed it because it expanded state supervision of all religions [11].

- **Scholar Levi McLaughlin** wrote a study that documents members' work for the newspaper and in elections [5].
- **Former members** describe social and family costs rather than formal shunning [5].

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Were these people traitors, or the most loyal members their tradition had? Most were treated as the first at the time, and some are honored as the second now. If someone in your community raised one of these questions tomorrow, how would they be treated, and by you?

They opposed it because it expanded state supervision of all religions.

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

APEX: The apex is President Minoru Harada, in office since 2006 [1].

LAW: The law is the Religious Corporations Law as revised in 1995 [11][12].

DOCUMENTED: The documented record covers Komeito and its coalition years (1999–2025, except 2009–12) [4][19] and the 1969–70 affair [3].

EXIT: Exit is legally free, with social costs in tight local districts [5].

REGULATOR: The regulator is the central government, to which the 1995 revision moved oversight [11].

TELL: A law passed in the name of Aum was described by an LDP spokesman as aimed at Soka Gakkai [11].

United Kingdom

APEX: The apex is SGI-UK's board, within SGI [2].

LAW: Charity law governs it [2].

DOCUMENTED: The documented record is SGI-UK's public accounts [2].

EXIT: Exit is legally free.

REGULATOR: The regulator is the Charity Commission [2].

TELL: Outside Japan, the movement is organized as national bodies, such as the registered charity SGI-UK [2], and has no political party.

France

APEX: The apex is SGI's French organization.

LAW: The relevant texts are the 1995 and 1999 parliamentary reports [10].

DOCUMENTED: The documented record is the 1999 report's discussion of Soka Gakkai and the controversy [10].

EXIT: Exit is legally free.

REGULATOR: —

TELL: It is a parliamentary report that discussed a movement and was itself disputed [10].

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

This page covers Japan, the United Kingdom and France. 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

Does your district ask you to campaign? Who decided that was faith?

WHY THIS IS ASKED

A religion asking members to campaign turns faith into a political resource. The question asks who made that decision, and whether it is really faith.

EXAMPLE ALREADY ON THIS PAGE

The say-do table sets "Religion and party are separate (since 1970)" beside the record: members' campaign work for Komeito is "extensively documented by scholars" [5].

QUESTION 2 OF 6

Can you see the organization's accounts?

WHY THIS IS ASKED

A member giving money is entitled to know where it goes. The question asks whether that is possible where you live.

EXAMPLE ALREADY ON THIS PAGE

The law table records that SGI-UK files public accounts under charity law [2]. The precedent section lists published accounts first among the changes that would revise this page.

QUESTION 3 OF 6

How many copies of the newspaper does your household buy, and why? Why is its circulation unaudited [8]?

WHY THIS IS ASKED

A circulation figure outside the audit system cannot be checked by anyone. The question asks why the paper is outside the official audit system.

EXAMPLE ALREADY ON THIS PAGE

The money section records the claimed circulation of about 5.5 million, and that the figure "is unverifiable: the paper is outside Japan's official circulation-audit system" [8].

QUESTION 4 OF 6

Who holds authority now that the mentor has died [6]?

WHY THIS IS ASKED

When a founding mentor dies, authority has to go somewhere. The question asks where it has gone.

EXAMPLE ALREADY ON THIS PAGE

The history section records Ikeda's death on 15 November 2023, and that Minoru Harada has been president since 2006.

QUESTION 5 OF 6

In 1969–70 the organization pressured a publisher to stop a critic's book [3]. What written rule prevents that today?

WHY THIS IS ASKED

An apology is a statement, not a safeguard. The question asks what written rule now prevents a repeat.

EXAMPLE ALREADY ON THIS PAGE

The history section records the 1969–70 pressure on the publisher, distributors and bookstores of a critic's book, Ikeda's formal apology on 3 May 1970, and the separation policy that followed [3].

QUESTION 6 OF 6

The founder refused the state. Is a party in government what he refused, or what he wanted?

WHY THIS IS ASKED

The founder refused the state's claim on his conscience. The question asks whether a party in government honors that refusal or contradicts it.

EXAMPLE ALREADY ON THIS PAGE

The history section records that Makiguchi was arrested in 1943 for refusing a State Shinto talisman and died in prison in 1944. It also records Komeito's twenty-six years of partnership with the LDP (1999–2025), about twenty-three of them in government.

In closing

1. Your founder's courage is the standard: refuse the state's claim on conscience [7]. That includes a religion's claim on a member's vote.
2. You can chant every morning and vote however you choose.

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.

How many copies of the newspaper does your household buy, and why?

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. **Leaving is legally free,** and no formal shunning doctrine was found [5].
2. **Stop contributions and subscriptions** in writing if you are asked to renew.
3. **Expect social costs** in close local districts and multi-generation families [5].
4. **Find support** [13] [14] [15].

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.

ORGANIZATION	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) [13]
Recovering from Religion	People questioning or leaving faith	US, Canada and online	**(844) 368-2848** (aims to offer a 24-hour service; no fixed hotline hours are published) [14]
ICSA	Former members of high-control groups; families	International	Via website [15]

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.

1. Soka Gakkai (global), "Soka Gakkai Buddhist Organization Adopts New Charter; New Membership Figures Announced" (press release). https://www.sokaglobal.org/contact-us/media-room/press-releases/sg-charter-announced.html — and "A Global Organization." https://www.sokaglobal.org/about-the-soka-gakkai/at-a-glance/a-global-organization.html — self-reported membership; president.
2. Charity Commission for England and Wales, Soka Gakkai International – UK (charity 1104491), financial history 2020–2024. https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/en/charity-search/-/charity-details/4009008/financial-history
3. Nippon.com, "Kōmeitō Turns Fifty: A History of Political Twists and Compromises." https://www.nippon.com/en/currents/d00145/ — founding (1964); the 1969–70 incident; the 3 May 1970 apology and separation policy. Also WRSP, "Sōka Gakkai." https://wrldrels.org/2016/10/08/soka-gakkai/
4. Nippon.com, "An End to 26 Years of LDP–Kōmeitō Cooperation." https://www.nippon.com/en/japan-data/h02574/ — and The Japan Times, 10 Oct 2025. https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2025/10/10/japan/politics/takaichi-komeito-coalition-meeting/
5. McLaughlin, Levi. *Soka Gakkai's Human Revolution: The Rise of a Mimetic Nation in Modern Japan*. University of Hawai'i Press, 2019. https://uhpress.hawaii.edu/title/soka-gakkais-human-revolution-the-rise-of-a-mimetic-nation-in-modern-japan/ — review: H-Net (Metraux). https://networks.h-net.org/node/20904/reviews/3917943/metraux-mclaughlin-soka-gakkai%E2%80%99s-human-revolution-rise-mimetic-nation — also McLaughlin, "Komeito's Soka Gakkai Protesters and Supporters," *Asia-Pacific Journal*. https://apjjf.org/levi-mclaughlin/4386 — electoral mobilization; newspaper subscriptions; the Women's Division.

6. Soka Gakkai (global), "Passing of President Ikeda." https://www.sokaglobal.org/in-society/news/passing-of-president-ikeda.html — Tricycle obituary. https://tricycle.org/article/daisaku-ikeda-dies/

7. Tsunesaburo Makiguchi Website, "Biography." https://www.tmakiguchi.org/biography.html — Introvigne, "The Detention of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and Josei Toda," *The Journal of CESNUR* 9(5), 2025. https://cesnur.net/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/tjoc_9_5_6_introvigne.pdf

8. Wikipedia, "Seikyo Shimbun" (reference summary: the 5.5M claim; outside the official audit bureau) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seikyo_Shimbun — and "Soka Gakkai" (zaimu). These are reference summaries, so the claims that rest on them are limited on this page to what the summaries state.

9. Soka Gakkai (global), *The Basics of Nichiren Buddhism*, ch. 10 (excommunication, 28 Nov 1991). https://www.sokaglobal.org/resources/study-materials/buddhist-study/the-basics-of-nichiren-buddhism-for-the-new-era-of-worldwide-kosen-rufu/chapter-10.html

10. Wikipedia, "Parliamentary Commission on Cults in France" (reference summary: the Guyard report of 22 Dec 1995 listing 172 movements; the 1999 report, which discusses Soka Gakkai; the controversy and the defamation complaint against Guyard, discharged in 2001 on the ground of good faith). https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parliamentary_Commission_on_Cults_in_France — the Assemblée nationale report is no. 2468. CESNUR critique: https://www.cesnur.org/2003/vil2003_dericquebourg.htm

11. Tokihisa Sumimoto, "Religious Freedom Problems in Japan: Background and Current Prospects," *The International Journal of Peace Studies* 5(2) — the December 1995 revision of the Religious Corporation Law; Shizuka Kamei's statement. https://www3.gmu.edu/programs/icar/ijps/vol5_2/sumimoto.htm

12. Religion in Modern Asia Newsletter (Kokugakuin University), "Revised Religious Corporations Law (Japan)" (1 Jan 1996) — passed by the Diet on 8 Dec 1995. http://www2.kokugakuin.ac.jp/ijcc/asia-nl/news/news000050.html

13. 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/

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

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

16. SGI-UK, *Adults at risk protection guidelines and procedures* (2024–2025). https://members.sgi-uk.org/sites/default/files/AdultsAtRiskProtectionGuidelinesAndProcedures2024_2025.pdf

17. Soka Gakkai (global), "Minoru Harada Reappointed as Soka Gakkai President" (26 Oct 2023): reappointed by the Soka Gakkai President Selection Committee; "The term of president is four years"; the term began 18 Nov 2023. https://www.sokaglobal.org/in-society/news/soka-gakkai-president-reappointed.html

18. Nippon.com, "Komeito to appoint former policy chief Okamoto as new leader" (30 Sep 2026) — Komeito described as an opposition party; lower-house members who had moved to the Centrist Reform Alliance returned to Komeito after the Alliance disbanded; Toshiko Takeya succeeded by Mitsunari Okamoto. https://www.nippon.com/en/news/yjj20260930001 14/

19. Wikipedia, "Komeito" (reference summary) — junior coalition partner of the LDP from 1999 to 2025 except 2009–12, when it was in opposition; agreed in January 2026 to merge its lower-house members with the Constitutional Democratic Party into the Centrist Reform Alliance, which won 49 seats in the 2026 election. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Komeito

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 "twenty-six years in government" claim: the partnership with the governing party lasted twenty-six years, about twenty-three in government, with Komeito in opposition from 2009 to 2012. Added Komeito's 2026 position (the January merger into the Centrist Reform Alliance, its September end, and the new leader). Corrected the 1930 founding (an education society, later aligned with Nichiren Shoshu) and the French reports (Soka Gakkai is discussed in the 1999 report, and the complaint against the commission president followed that report). Removed an unsupported claim that households are strained by contributions, the unsourced membership trend, the vacancy claim for the honorary presidency and the Agency for Cultural Affairs as a named regulator. Dated the membership figures (2021) and the newspaper claim (1997), regraded one technique, replaced five unsupported levels in the cost table, and added opening hours for two help lines. Sources 18 and 19 are new.
- **2026-09-27:** Added Branches, Law & state, Money in numbers (SGI-UK accounts 2020–2024), Voices from inside, three regional cards, Leaving safely and Where to get help.
- **2026-09-29:** Disclosure scorecard added: safeguarding, police-first reporting and removal are rated from SGI-UK's published procedures and the organization's own 2023 announcement of the president's term [16] [17]; accounts from the UK charity register [2]; leaders' pay and on-the-record replies to critics are not established from any public source.

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.