

Chinowa

Large rings of interwoven grasses (*chinowa*) are regarded as auspicious and are thought to cleanse evil and impurities from those who pass through them. Some scholars believe *chinowa* rings represent the birth canal, and that the people who go through them are symbolically reborn. Visitors may pass through this ring at any time, but it is mainly used for spiritual purification ceremonies held every year on June 30th and December 30th.

Chinowa are typically installed at Shinto shrines only twice a year, and they are usually made of a type of cogon grass called *chigaya*. At Hakusan Jinja Shrine, however, the ring is on permanent display and is made of bamboo branches, which last much longer than *chigaya*.