

“Spirit-Shaking” Ritual of Isonokami Jingū

For millennia, Isonokami Jingū Shrine has been known as a place of rejuvenation, resurrection, and revivification. Central to this association is the “spirit-shaking” or “spirit-quelling” ritual said to extend life and even revive the dead. The ritual (variously called the *chinkonsai*, *mitama-shizume*, *furu no koto*, or *tama-furi*) is conducted each year on November 22 and on the last day of winter. The ritual is open to the public.

The *chinkonsai* ritual is believed to originate from instructions received by Umashimaji no Mikoto, the supposed founder of the Mononobe clan. His father was the deity Nigihayahi no Mikoto, who received 10 divine artifacts from the heavenly deities when he descended to the human realm. The deities showed him how the artifacts could be used to resurrect the dead.

According to legend, Nigihayahi’s son performed the *chinkonsai* ritual for Emperor Jinmu, the first emperor of Japan. Since then, the ritual and its 10

artifacts have been passed down through the Mononobe clan as a method of ensuring the health of the imperial family and the well-being of the country.

The term “spirit-shaking” refers to the *tama-no-o*, a thread that links the human soul to the realm of the gods. The *tama-no-o* thread represents the source of human vitality, and “shaking” it stimulates the soul and promotes good health. The ritual is performed in winter, when the sun is weakest and the land is barren, to sustain the health and vitality of the country.