

# Doomsday cult

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Police in Japan have arrested Shoko Asahara, leader of the Aum Shinri Kyo cult suspected of the nerve gas attack on the Tokyo underground. The gas attack left 12 dead and injured more than 5,500

## Aum Shinri Kyo

**Leader:** Asahara (above) preaches a mixture of Buddhist and Hindu doctrines and predicts World War 3 – between Japan and America – will begin in 1997. Asahara, a professed admirer of Hitler, claims he will build 'astral hospitals' and spaceships to save his followers

**Shoko Asahara:** Born 1955

**Real name** Chizuo Matsumoto

**Date cult formed:** 1987

**Membership:** 10,000 in Japan  
30,000 in Russia

Mostly university graduates

**Operations:** Japan, Russia, U.S., Australia, South Korea and Sri Lanka