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AFP (10.12.2009) / HRWF (11.12.2009) - Website: <http://www.hrwf.net> - Email: info@hrwf.net - Japan's Supreme Court rejected an appeal on Thursday against the death penalty handed to a senior member of the doomsday cult behind the 1995 deadly sarin nerve gas attack on the Tokyo subway.

The ruling makes Yoshihiro Inoue, 39, the ninth member of the Aum Supreme Truth cult awaiting execution after final rulings by the country's highest court.

Among 13 Aum members originally sentenced to death, he was the only defendant whose earlier rulings were divided between a lower court's life sentence and a death sentence given by the Tokyo High Court.

Four sect members are awaiting rulings on appeals against their death sentences. The Supreme Court upheld the high court's verdict on Inoue, deciding that he 'played an essential and significant role on his initiative' in the 1995 sarin attack, said presiding judge Seishi Kanetsuki.

According to the ruling of the high court, Inoue plotted the attack, which killed 12 people and injured thousands, with Aum Supreme Truth sect leader Shoko Asahara. The court also ruled he kidnapped and murdered Kiyoshi Kariya, then 68, who tried to shelter his sister after she escaped from the sect.

The bearded guru was revered as a god by his sect, which preached a blend of Buddhist and Hindu dogma mixed with apocalyptic visions. He was obsessed with Nazi-invented sarin gas and paranoid his enemies would attack him with it.
