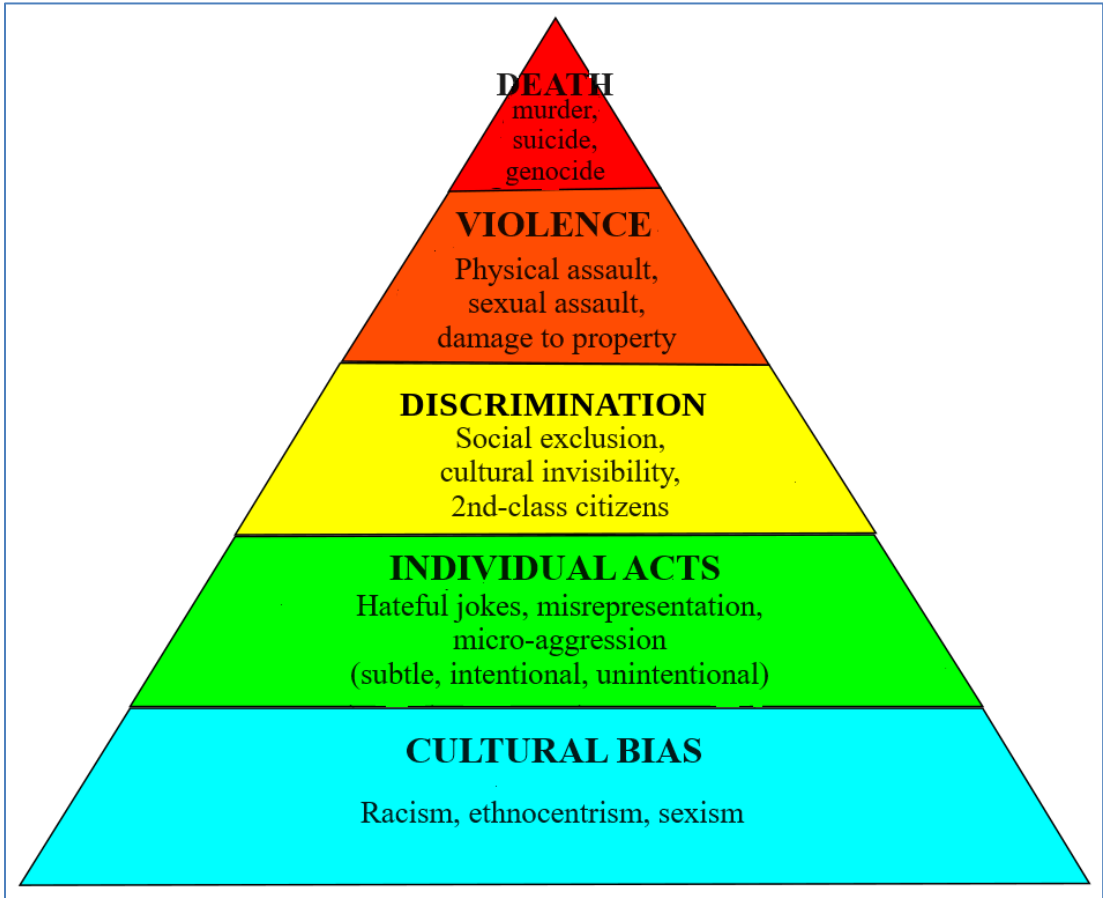


FFWPU Europe and the Middle East: Study Shows Japan's Government Wildly Exaggerated Anti-Unification Church Claims

Knut Holdhus
March 1, 2024



Pyramid of hate and discrimination, English version

Study based on Big Data reveals media and authorities spreading many exaggerated and unfounded claims against religious minority

What was the reporting intended to convey? Report with data on the hounding of the Unification Church

Part 3 of a presentation by Fumihiro Kato (加藤文宏), writer, author and and photographer, at a symposium on the theme "Why Did Reporting Go Astray? Thorough Examination by Journalists on Reporting on the Former [Unification Church](#)", (organized by UPF-Japan) held 20th January 2024 in Tokyo to investigate the media's continued coverage persecuting the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) (formerly known as the [Unification Church](#)).

See [part 1](#), [part 2](#)



English reconstruction of one of the slides Fumihiro Kato used 20th Jan. 2024

The media coverage fervently conveyed what is often referred to as the so-called "zubuzubu" (deeply involved) relationship between the [religious organisation](#) and national assembly members, criticizing both the Liberal Democratic Party and the government. However, it is not uncommon for believers, not just

from the [Unification Church](#), to have connections with politicians. There is absolutely no evidence of why it is wrong or illegal for religious groups and believers to get involved in politics, or what kind of impact it has. No evidence has been shown for any investigation or condemnation.

As a result of the assumption that the [religious organisation](#) and its members are evil, there have been - as pointed out in the report by the U.S. Department of State - instances of public opinion polls in favour of denying believers human rights and political rights. Steps taken to exclude [Unification Church](#) believers from local councils have been observed. Even when the identity of the believers was revealed publicly, the media didn't even question the practice of "outing".

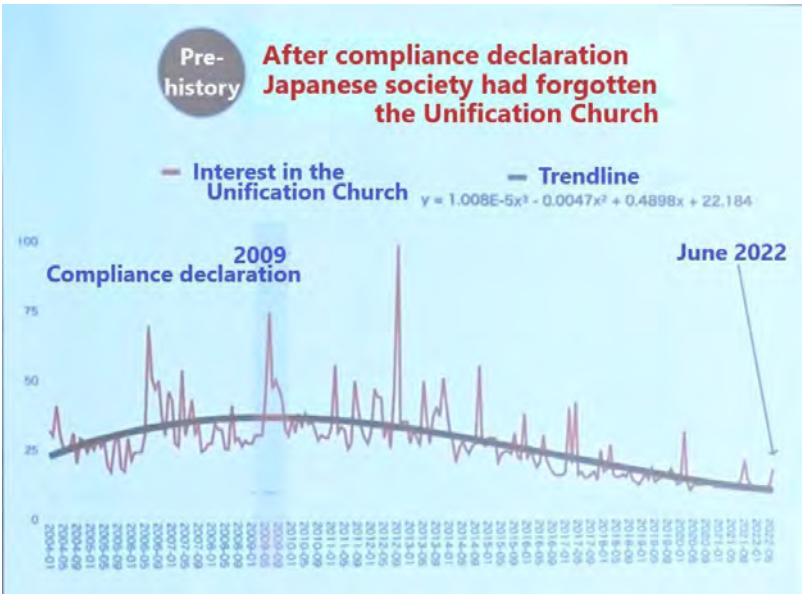


English reconstruction of one of the slides Fumihiro Kato used 20th Jan. 2024

Now, let's use Google search Big Data to reveal how the public perceived the "zubuzubu" (deeply involved) relationship between politicians and the [religious organisation](#). It was extensively reported as a major problem.

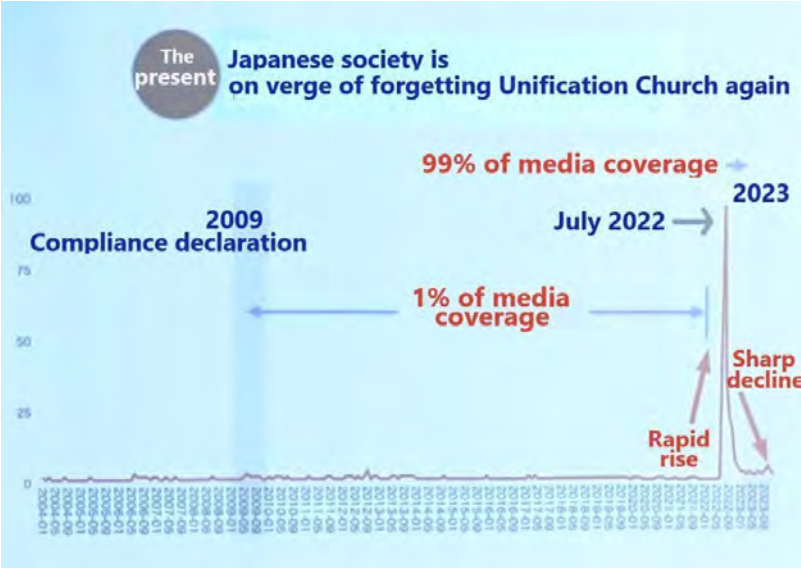
The advantage of using Google search Big Data lies in its vast number of users and the accumulation of data since 2004. The number of unique users - excluding duplicates from visiting the same website more than once, is referred to as the number of unique users.

Google's unique user count reaches a staggering 115.45 million in ten months. As it is the site with the highest number of users among those providing services in Japanese, and considering the keywords people use for internet searches, it's possible to infer what people wanted to know or what they were thinking.



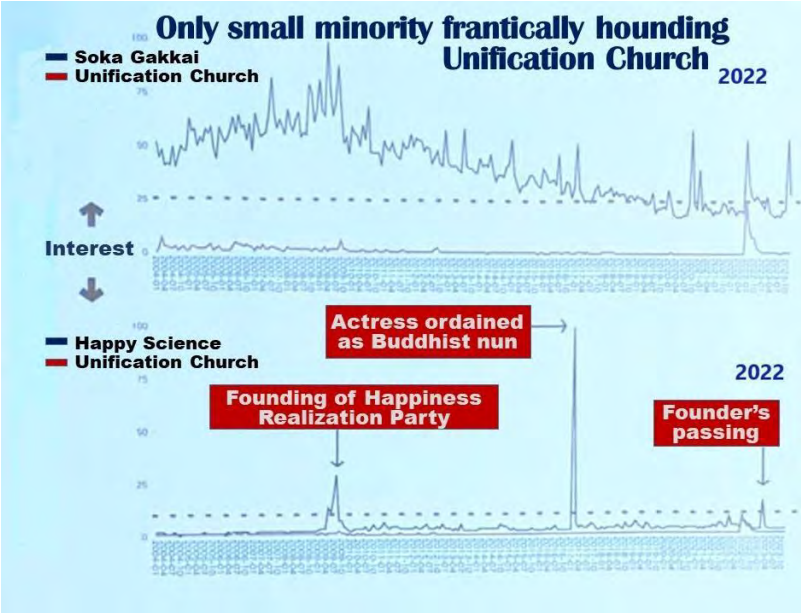
English reconstruction of one of the slides Fumihiro Kato used 20th Jan. 2024

This graph shows the number of searches for the [Unification Church](#) from 2004 until just before the assassination. The number of searches increased until 2008, but then declined after the compliance restrictions imposed by the [church](#) in 2009. As compliance began to be strictly enforced, society began to forget about the [Unification Church](#). During this period, the media hardly mentioned the [Unification Church](#) at all.



English reconstruction of one of the slides Fumihiro Kato used 20th Jan. 2024

This graph shows the change in the number of searches for the [Unification Church](#) from 2004 to the present. There is a significant increase in searches in July 2022. The search volume surged in July when investigative reporting began, but then sharply declined, and as we enter 2023, although the search volume is higher than before, it remains sluggish. The [Unification Church](#) is once again on the verge of being forgotten. The decrease in people's interest is closely related to the decrease in news tweets. It can be said that the news coverage was drawing people's interest to the [Unification Church](#) and created an uproar of criticism of the government.



English reconstruction of one of the slides Fumihiro Kato used 20th Jan. 2024

The blue line on the upper graph shows the trend for the number of searches for the Soka Gakkai. The blue line on the lower graph represents the trend for the number of searches for "Happy Science" [A new religious movement, founded 1986]. The red line represents the [Unification Church](#), with the red dashed line indicating its peak. As you can see, the interest in referrals to the [Unification Church](#) is very small compared to other religions, and interest in the [religious organisation](#) is not common.

Furthermore, despite an increase in searches during the commotion when the [Unification Church](#) was hounded in 2022, it wasn't significant. It is evident that the level of interest was overwhelmingly much lower than when Happy Science formed a political party [2009], when an actress became a nun, or when Ryuhou Okawa (大川隆法) passed away [2023]. Moriyama (森山), Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, said that the [Unification Church](#) caused anxiety and confusion to many people, but only a small minority showed interest in it. Soka Gakkai is familiar to people in both positive and negative ways, which is why there are so many searches.

If the [Unification Church](#) had caused harm on a regular basis locally, there would have been a large number of searches. Events surrounding the [Unification Church](#) were not a major issue in Japan. The hounding of the [religious organisation](#) was something that only a very small number of people became frantic about, due to media influence.

Let's consider the real nature of that frenzy.

To be continued. Part 4 coming soon.

See [part 1](#), [part 2](#)

Fumihiro Kato (加藤文宏) has contributed to various media outlets, including opinion magazines. Under the pen name Fumi Kato (かとう ふみ), he has published works such as "Chushi Ruro" (厨師流浪 - Wandering Chef), "Kakai Fuki" (花開富貴 - Blossoming, Prosperous and Noble), and "Denko no Otoko" (電光の男 - Lightning Man). Last year, he contributed with an article titled "[Can News and Talk Shows Determine Good and Evil?](#)" in the February issue of Monthly Seiron (月刊正論), challenging the approach to reporting on the [Unification Church](#).

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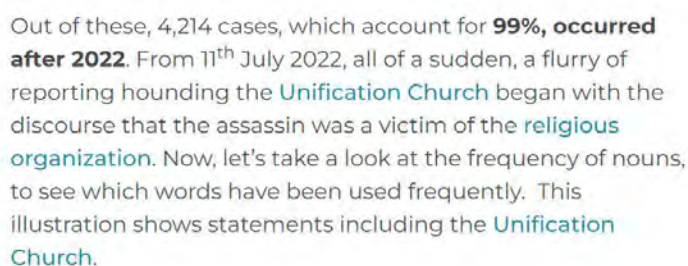
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Now, let's examine the content of the actions. Domestic newspapers and news agencies have accounts on Twitter (currently "X") to promote their own articles. The introductory texts are concise and organized to attract readers. Moreover, by sampling and analyzing tweets, it's possible to handle cases where articles even have been deleted. By monitoring statements which include the [Unification Church](#), from the article introduction sites of major news agencies, there were 4,246 posts from 2009 to 31st May 2023.



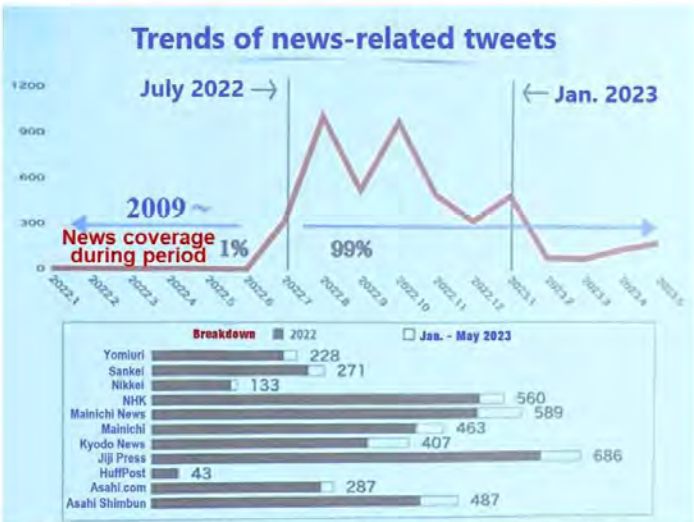
Here are the top 200 repeatedly used words out of the 4 246

Here are the top 200 repeatedly used words out of the 1270 cases, represented using a method called Word Cloud. Please understand that the larger the font, the more frequent its appearance. Among the repeatedly used words, the top-ranking words are these.

The words “**Unification Church**” themselves have been omitted. **What the reports frequently referred to was the Liberal Democratic Party and the Kishida administration.** The hounding of the **religious organization** was supposed to have started with the aim of helping those who had suffered damage, but as pointed out by believers, **almost all of it was criticism of the government.** [...]

What was discussed in the articles was, indeed, the relationship between the **Unification Church**, the *Liberal Democratic Party*, and the politicians, and that elections, events, and congratulatory telegrams were the points of contact. It is frequently questioned whether these connections were inspected, investigated, or disclosed. What deserves attention is that it hasn’t been explicitly explained why having connections with the **religious organisation** and its believers is considered bad, illegal, or what specific impact it had.

This is not limited to Asahi Shimbun [large newspaper, regarded as the flagship of Japan’s political left]. Religious groups and believers participating in election campaigns or lobbying politicians is not exclusive to the **Unification Church**. However, without showing the basis for the hounding, such so-called “zubuzubu” (deeply involved) relationships were reported without explaining why they were bad, whether they were illegal, and what kind of impact they had.



English reconstruction of one of the slides Fumihiro Kato used 20th Jan. 2024. Illustration: FFWPU

Next, let’s take a look at the frequency of tweets introducing articles that include the **Unification Church**. This graph represents the trend of tweets introducing articles written about the **Unification Church**. **The peak was in August 2022**, and except for October, when there was a national funeral, both the amount of coverage and promotional tweets have decreased. The *Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology* began exercising its right to ask questions on 22nd November 2022. The enthusiasm to report on the exercising of the right to ask questions and subsequent issues such as the second-generation problem was significantly lower compared to the **enthusiasm for criticizing the government.**

Let me just say that until the assassination, the press had barely reported on the **Unification Church**. Is this because they were pressured not only by the Liberal Democratic Party itself, but also by the *Liberal Democratic Party* administration? Did the mass media succumb to pressure from the administration and refrain from reporting out of deference to the administration? Confessions of such deference have not yet come from the mass media.

Continued in [part 3](#). See [part 1 “Author: Japan’s ‘Apartheid-Style Social Exclusion’”](#)

Featured image above: Japanese Word Cloud shown in one of the slides Fumihiro Kato used 20th Jan. 2024. Here with added English words translated from the most frequently

added English words translated from the most frequently occurring Japanese words. Illustration: [FFWPU](#)

Fumihiro Kato (加藤文宏) has contributed to various media outlets, including opinion magazines. Under the pen name Fumi Kato (かとう ふみ), he has published works such as “Chushi Ruro” (厨師流浪 – Wandering Chef), “Kakai Fuki” (花開富貴 – Blossoming, Prosperous and Noble), and “Denko no Otoko” (電光の男 – Lightning Man). Last year, he contributed with an article titled “[Can News and Talk Shows Determine Good and Evil?](#)” in the February issue of Monthly Seiron (月刊正論), challenging the approach to reporting on the [Unification Church](#).

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