

FFWPU Europe and the Middle East: Japanese Media, a Tool of Hate and Bigotry

Knut Holdhus
July 18, 2026



Attorney Nobuya Fukumoto representing the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) respond to reporters after the [Tokyo High Court's decision](#) ordering the [religious organization's](#) dissolution, March 4, 2026, Chiyoda Ward, Tokyo



Public opinion warfare: Japanese author reveals how deliberate manipulation of narrative by activists assisted by the media and politicians created a climate of social exclusion for minority

Tokyo, 9th July 2026 - Published as an article in the Japanese newspaper [Sekai Nippo](#). Republished with permission. Translated from Japanese. [Original article](#).

[Part 2 (final) of interview with author Fumihiro Kato]

Places of Worship Are Integral to Religious Freedom

Four Years Since the Assassination of Former Prime Minister Abe

by Yoichiro Miyata (宮田陽一郎)

Human Rights Trampled with the Media as an Ally



Author Fumihiro Kato

Interviewer: Yoichiro Miyata (宮田陽一郎)

See part 1 of the interview: [Using Abe's Assassination Against Unificationism](#)

- There was little media coverage of "second-generation religious believers" during the 1980s and 1990s.

The events of the 1980s and 1990s were essentially scandals surrounding well-known public figures. Those watching were little more than spectators gawking at the commotion.

See also [Lawfare: State Uses Legal System in War on Faith](#)

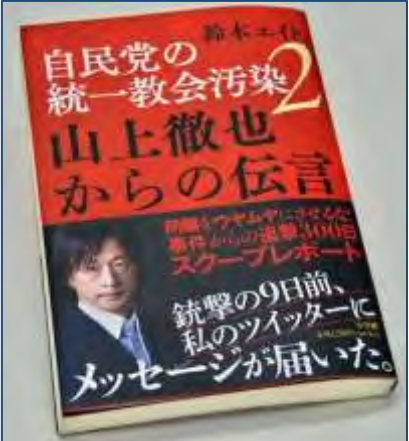
This time, however, anonymous people identified as second-generation religious believers [See editor's note below] brought forward issues that were fundamentally family disputes, yet they were presented as though they were universally true and representative of all such cases. As a result, society developed suspicions such as, "Could my own family become like that?" or "Will I be deceived the moment I step outside my home?" Once such suspicion takes root, it is very difficult to dispel. It spread into criticism and distrust directed at then-Prime Minister Fumio Kishida (岸田文雄), members of his cabinet, and Diet

lawmakers.

- On 4th March, the Tokyo High Court upheld the [dissolution order](#) against the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) (formerly the [Unification Church](#)), and on 22nd June the [Supreme Court finalized](#) that order. The [religious organization](#)'s facilities are now under the control of court-appointed [liquidators](#), and members can no longer freely use them. How do you view this situation?



Masaki Kito, one of the hostile lawyers of National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales and Nationwide Unification Church Damage Countermeasures Legal Team



Eito Suzuki - keen to publish the terrorist's message: The cover page of the book in Japanese by activist journalist Eito Suzuki titled "The LDP's Unification Church Contamination 2: A Message from Tetsuya Yamagami" (Shogakukan)

Initially, attorney Masaki Kito (紀藤正樹) and journalist Eito Suzuki (鈴木エイト), among others, argued that a dissolution order would merely strip the [religious organization](#) of its tax privileges. In reality, that was not the case.

Article 1 of the Religious Corporations Act begins by stating: "The purpose of this Act is to enable religious organizations to own, maintain, and administer places of worship and other property..." Article 2 defines a religious organization as one that possesses "places of worship, such as shrines, temples, churches, monasteries, and similar institutions."

In other words, places of worship are inseparable from the freedom of religion itself.

The three essential elements of a state are said to be territory, people, and sovereignty. If a [religious organization](#) can no longer use its facilities, isn't that analogous to a nation losing its territory? The government, politicians, and even the judiciary have never seriously reflected on religion. They speak of religious freedom, but they have never truly considered what religious freedom actually means.

A person's freedom of conscience cannot be violated. However, simply allowing someone to hold religious beliefs does not by itself mean that freedom of religion is guaranteed. Freedom of religion is inseparable from the ability to engage in real-world religious activities, such as worship in churches, temples, mosques, and other places of worship. The failure of the government, politicians, the judiciary, and society to recognize this was the real problem.

- What impact do you believe the [dissolution order](#) against the [Family Federation](#) will have on Japanese society going forward?

The issuance of the [dissolution order](#) has created an atmosphere in society suggesting that the assassination of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (安倍晋三) has now been settled and brought to a close. I find that extremely strange.

Another issue is how the grounds for the [dissolution order](#) kept shifting. At first, the issue was reframed as one concerning the relationship between religion and politics. Then it became about religion and [consumer disputes](#). Eventually, it was reframed again as an issue of religious freedom. As a result of these successive changes in justification, it ultimately came to be accepted that, because Mr. Abe had been shot and killed, it was only natural for the [Family Federation](#) to be dissolved. Isn't that an extremely serious matter?

Deliberate changes (人為的にすり替え) in the framing of the issue created a particular climate throughout society, politics, and the judiciary.

As a result, members of the [Family Federation](#) have become targets of violations of their fundamental human rights. Some find themselves [unable to hold funerals](#). They are subjected to [discriminatory treatment](#) and have been [excluded from society](#). This social climate has produced those outcomes. This has left a precedent demonstrating that, even without amending the Constitution or any laws, it is possible to bring about such [violations of human rights](#) simply by winning the mass media to one's side.

See also [Believers' Social Exclusion, Loss of Civil Rights](#)

For someone like me, who has observed this issue without being a member of the [Family Federation](#), the lesson is, "Tomorrow it could be me."



*A Japanese woman offering a donation at a meeting. A hostile group of lawyers used consumer laws and coined the term "spiritual sales" on donations given to religious organizations and try every trick to label donors as "victims".
Illustration: Microsoft Designer Image Creator*

I am not engaged in advocacy saying, "The [Family Federation](#)'s teachings are wonderful. Let's all make donations." Rather, I simply say, "These are the facts, and this is what is happening in society." Yet even for doing that, I have been excluded from the world of public commentary and the media. The [social exclusion](#) of people who are not even members has already begun.

Take the issue of foreign nationals, for example. It goes without saying that discriminating against foreigners is wrong. But there are also foreigners who come to Japan under circumstances that are not well understood, fail to follow Japanese law, and create social disorder. It is also true that if someone attempts to report on those cases, they are liable to be excluded.

If the media and politicians set events in motion, and the judiciary ends up legitimizing judgments, I would consider mistaken, then it becomes entirely possible for people who seek to communicate certain viewpoints to be excluded from society. I genuinely feel that

danger. And I believe there is no doubt that this will happen again.

See part 1 of the interview: [Using Abe's Assassination Against Unificationism](#)

See also [Lawfare: State Uses Legal System in War on Faith](#)

[Editor's note: The term 宗教2世 (shūkyō nisei, literally "second-generation religious believer") generally refers to people who were raised in a religion by parents who belonged to a religious organization, rather than joining it themselves as adults.]

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Using Abe’s Assassination Against Unificationism

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How the politics of reframing
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[Part 1 of interview with
author Fumihiko Kato]

Losing Sight of the Real Issue by Shifting the Focus

Four Years Since the Assassination of Former Prime Minister Abe

by Yoichiro Miyata (宮田陽一郎)

See part 2 of the interview: [Media Turning Public Opinion
Against a Minority](#)

The justification for ordering the dissolution of the Family Federation



Flower offering for Abe Shinzo 8th July 2023 at Osaka
Gokoku Shrines in Japan. Photo: Photo memories 1868 /
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8th July marks four years since the assassination of former
Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (安倍晋三). The shocking incident
– in which a former prime minister who had led the longest-
serving administration in Japan's constitutional history was
killed while delivering a campaign speech for the House of
Councillors election – led to intense public criticism of the
[Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#)
(formerly the [Unification Church](#)) after it became known
that the defendant's mother was one of its members. This
ultimately culminated in the [Supreme Court's confirmation](#)
of a [court order](#) to dissolve the [religious organization](#).

Why did this lead to what the interview describes as an
infringement of the constitutionally guaranteed freedom of
religion? We spoke with writer Fumihiko Kato (加藤文宏).

Interviewer: Yoichiro Miyata (宮田陽一郎)

“How do you view the four years since Abe's assassination?”

I think they have been four years during which we lost sight
of the essence of the issue. The starting point – and
ultimately the conclusion – of losing sight of the real issue
was that the shooting was reframed as a problem
concerning politics and religion.

As a result, Japanese society came to feel compelled to
justify the [dissolution order](#) against the [Family Federation](#)
and human rights violations committed against its
members. These four years have been marked by the
contradiction that people have become unable to criticize
those developments.

Even regarding the issue of religion and politics, there has



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even regarding the issue of religion and politics, there has never been any evidence that the *Liberal Democratic Party* was forced by the [religious organization](#) to adopt particular policies or submit specific bills, nor any evidence that the public actually suffered harm as a result. Yet society as a whole was swept along nonetheless.

In the end, even the judiciary found itself embracing contradictions in order to legitimize the prevailing social atmosphere and political decisions, and those contradictions ultimately took the form of the [dissolution order](#) against the [Family Federation](#).

In that sense, we continue to lose sight of the true nature of the issue that began with Abe's assassination.



Tetsuya Yamagami given life sentence. AI illustration: Chat GPT 25th January 2026.

“On 21st January, the *Nara District Court* sentenced Tetsuya Yamagami (山上徹也), who killed Abe, to life imprisonment. Although the defense appealed, do you think the case has now been resolved?”

I think it remains far from resolved because the judiciary, politics, and society as a whole have lost the ability to make fair judgments and assessments about the case. Even on appeal, the defense team will essentially have no choice but to make the same arguments they presented in the district court.

Immediately after Abe was assassinated, the discussion was shifted to the relationship between religion and politics. Then, using the keyword “donations”, it was shifted again into an issue of religion and [consumer problems](#). The subject changed once, then again, becoming something entirely different.

More about “consumer problems”: [Terms from Consumer Law Used to Rob Faith](#)

Even if the appeal leads to a new trial in the High Court, the issue will simply continue to be reframed repeatedly, so we will never get any closer to the core of the matter. Nor will it become an opportunity for society to reflect on what happened.

The framing of the issue as one of religion and [consumer problems](#) is something that Yamagami himself rejects. It was not that he was unable to attend university; rather, he had become so disillusioned with society at the time that he simply did not want to go.

His mother reportedly told him, “I’ll find whatever money is necessary, so please go to university. It’s fine even if you have to spend another year preparing.” That is beyond doubt.

Therefore, I do not believe the defendant himself was a victim of religion. Instead, the defense team’s courtroom publicity campaign led society’s understanding in the wrong direction, and it has become very difficult to correct that perception.





The scene of the assassination of Shinzo Abe in front of Yamato-Saidaiji Station in Nara City, Japan. Photo: (撮影) 一般社団法人板垣退助先生顕彰会 (アップロード) / Wikimedia Commons. License: [CC ASA 4.0 Int](#). Cropped

“After Abe’s assassination, the media harshly criticized the Family Federation. What do you see as the problems with that coverage?”

The sensational reporting and entertainment-style scandal coverage directed at what was then the [Unification Church](#) during the 1980s and 1990s was simply repeated after Abe’s assassination. The essential nature of the reporting did not change.

From the 2000s until the incident in 2022, the [Family Federation](#) had largely faded from public attention as a religious organization, and people generally did not criticize its members. Public memories of those who had been the subject of controversy in the 1980s and 1990s had also faded.

After Abe’s assassination, the issue was reframed as one involving religion and [consumer problems](#). However, because there were no such controversies in the 2020s, critics of the [Family Federation](#) had no new means of attacking it.

As a result, they had little choice but to recycle the gossip and scandals from the 1980s and 1990s.

There were, however, two important differences from that earlier period.

The first was that Abe’s public assassination was an extremely shocking event that had already created an atmosphere of widespread public shock.

The second was that the idea that ordinary people could easily become victims of severe [consumer problems](#) was presented as though it were a reality, by making use of Yamagami and other so-called “second-generation” members [\[See editor’s note below\]](#) of religious groups.

See part 2 of the interview: [Media Turning Public Opinion Against a Minority](#)

Profile: Fumihiro Kato

Fumihiro Kato (加藤文宏) was born in 1964 in Shizuoka Prefecture. In addition to publishing novels under the pen name *Fumi Kato*, he founded the magazine *Monthly IJ*, where he interviewed people from a wide range of backgrounds.

Following the *Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant* accident, he focused on reputational damage and issues affecting voluntary evacuees, paying particular attention to what he describes as “information disasters” caused by media coverage.

He has contributed analytical articles and essays – primarily concerning media-related issues – to opinion journals and other publications.

His book *Examining Runaway Media Coverage* organizes and analyzes developments from the assassination of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (安倍晋三) through the government’s request for a dissolution order against the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) (formerly the [Unification Church](#)).

Featured image above: Fumihiko Kato (加藤文宏) being interviewed. Photo: [Sekai Nippo](#)

[Editor's note: The term 宗教二世 (shūkyō nisei, literally "second-generation religious believer") generally refers to people who were raised in a religion by parents who belonged to a religious organization, rather than joining it themselves as adults.]

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When democratic South Korea seeks a much harsher sentence than Communism – a former East European political prisoner reflects on Mother Han trial

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New Law, New Standards For Religious Reporting

July 13, 2026

by PhDr. Juraj Lajda (Doctor of Philosophy), lecturer and publisher, former political prisoner under the communist regime in [Czechoslovakia](#).

Prague, 16th July 2026 – I was truly shocked when I heard the news that special prosecutors in South Korea had [requested a 13-year prison sentence](#) for 83-year-old [Hak Ja Han](#) (한학자), the co-founder of the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) and a spiritual leader whom I hold very dear.



Dr. Juraj Lajda today, Photo (2024): Personal

I was astonished that prosecutors in a democratic country would seek a much harsher punishment than the one imposed on me and [17 fellow young members](#) of the [Family Federation](#) by an East European communist regime in 1974. The [draconian sentence requested](#) in South Korea makes the three- and four-year prison terms we received in former Czechoslovakia seem almost “mild”. I myself was sentenced to three years and two months behind bars, while Alžbeta (Betka) Danišková, then the national leader of our [movement](#), received four years and four months.

The communist regime was well aware that many aspects of our teachings were incompatible with communist ideology.

During the Cold War, members of the *Victory Over Communism* movement, founded in 1968 by [Sun Myung Moon](#), were actively engaged – primarily in Japan, South Korea, and Western democracies – in exposing the true nature of communism and Marxism-Leninism while presenting their own alternative vision.

Despite opposition from left-wing groups on university campuses and in the media, our activists in democratic countries were able to continue their activities.

The situation was very different in communist countries. Members who spread [Rev. Moon's](#) teachings soon came into conflict with regimes founded on Marxism-Leninism, which generally regarded religion as the “opium of the people.”

Before long, [Rev. Moon's](#) followers in communist Czechoslovakia came into conflict with the authorities. They were arrested, interrogated, prosecuted, and convicted. In the main trial against a group of young believers, [18 individuals](#) received lengthy prison sentences in what was clearly a show trial. It was evident that the proceedings were politically motivated.

Years later, this was confirmed by the defense attorney representing the principal defendant, Alžbeta Danišková. He recalled that when he was assigned the case, he initially assumed that some mistake had been made. More than 20 young people had been taken into custody without sufficient evidence. When he argued before the court that there was no justification for such severe repression or prolonged pretrial detention, his objections were dismissed.

Over time, he came to understand that this was a



In communist prison 4 years and 4 months, despite serious health



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political trial in which the evidence was ultimately irrelevant. It had already been decided that these young people would not escape punishment.

condition: Alžbeta (Betka) Danišková, here in February 2024.
Photo: [FFWPU](#)

In July 1974, the court of first instance handed down its verdicts against [18 members](#) of the group.

Danišková, the principal defendant, was sentenced to four years and four months in prison, with no possibility of early release. This inevitably invites comparison with the sentence now being sought against [Hak Ja Han](#). If we do the math, the prosecutor's [request for a 13-year prison term](#) is almost exactly three times the sentence imposed by a communist regime on Alžbeta Danišková, despite the fact that South Korea is a democratic country. Thirteen years is equivalent to three times four years and four months.

Upon learning of the sentence sought against [Hak Ja Han](#), Danišková shared the following reflections:

"I am deeply upset that Dr. [Hak Ja Han](#), the Mother of Peace, has to face these accusations.

In the past, when communism ruled Czechoslovakia from 1948 to 1989, we – students and young people – were accused of anti-communist activities and sentenced to a combined total of [50 years in prison](#). We fought for democracy and freedom. One member of our [movement died in prison](#) at the age of 24.

It seemed that such things could never happen in a democracy.

More than fifty years have passed since [our arrest in 1973](#), and now, in democratic South Korea – the homeland of our movement's [founder](#) – his [wife](#), the mother of his 14 children, and a woman who has dedicated her entire life to promoting peace based on the ideal of the [Kingdom of Heaven](#), faces imprisonment.

What an incomprehensible twist of history!

We believe in the justice of the judiciary of the Republic of Korea, considering Dr. [Hak Ja Han](#)'s lifelong contribution to building a peaceful future for humanity."

See also [Shared Prison Experience: Resonance of Two Souls](#)

See also [Echoes of Communist Abuse in South Korea, 2025](#)

Text: Dr. Juraj Lajda (Doctor of Philosophy), lecturer and publisher, former political prisoner under the communist regime in [Czechoslovakia](#).

Featured image above: Mother Han trial echoing communist show trial. Illustration: ChatGPT, 17th July 2026. Images of persons inserted in illustration are by [FFWPU](#). From left: Dr. Juraj Lajda ca. 1973, Alžbeta Danišková in 1972, and [Mother Han](#) in 2025.



[Died in communist prison under mysterious circumstances: Marie Živná.](#)
Photo (1973): From the archive of [FFWPU Slovakia](#).

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