

FFWPU Europe and Middle East: Dangerous Flaws in Japan's FFWPU Dissolution Order Decried

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The front cover page of the September 2025 issue of Monthly Hanada, beside Attorney Nobuya Fukumoto (screenshot) and Professor Emeritus Seishiro Sugihara



Facsimile of headline on page 274 of Monthly Hanada's September 2025 issue. In English, the headline reads: The Former Unification Church - the Irregularities of the Dissolution Order

Exposing "Reckless" Flaws

Large Japanese Monthly Magazine Publishes Searing Critique of the Tokyo District Court's Dissolution Order Against Family Federation

In the September 2025 issue of the Japanese monthly magazine Hanada - out already 25th July - former prosecutor and attorney Nobuya Fukumoto delivers a searing critique of the Tokyo District Court's [decision to issue a dissolution order](#) against the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) (formerly the [Unification Church](#)). In English the headline of their article reads: "The Former Unification Church - the Irregularities of the Dissolution Order".

Speaking with legal scholar Seishiro Sugihara, professor at the former Musashino Women's University, Fukumoto makes the case that the [ruling](#) is not only procedurally and legally unsound but signals a dangerous erosion of the principles of evidence-based justice and the rule of law in Japan.

At the heart of Fukumoto's argument is a clear and forceful claim: the court's [decision](#) rests not on verified facts or lawful findings, but on speculation, presumption, and selective interpretation of evidence. This, he argues, renders the [judgment](#) not merely flawed, but an affront to the basic tenets of legal fairness.

Speculation in Place of Proof



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Fukumoto's primary concern is that the court abandoned its obligation to base judgments on concrete evidence. Even if one accepts, as Sugihara does, that civil torts (unlawful acts according to civil law) could potentially justify a religious corporation's dissolution under Japanese law, the question remains: Did the alleged conduct of the [Family Federation](#) meet those legal requirements? According to Fukumoto, the answer is clearly no.

He notes that in response to the allegations brought by Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), the [Family Federation](#) submitted detailed rebuttals and evidence - including contradictions in witness statements and documentation that allegedly exposed errors and fabrications in the Ministry's report. These responses, he claims, were strong

enough to cast significant doubt on the reliability of the Ministry's case.



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Yet, rather than engage with this counterevidence, the Tokyo District Court effectively side-stepped it, declining to rely on the very witness testimony it should have evaluated most rigorously. Fukumoto interprets this as a deliberate move to avoid dealing with the weaknesses in the state's case: if the witnesses were discredited, the foundation for the allegations would collapse. By ignoring them, the court avoided this confrontation entirely.

The Dangerous Use of Settlements as "Proof"

What particularly shocks Fukumoto is the court's reliance on settlement records - both in-court and out-of-court - as a surrogate for proof of harm or unlawful conduct. In his view, this is a gross distortion of legal logic. Settlements, by their nature, do not establish fault or liability; they are compromises made to avoid lengthy legal battles and often do not reflect admissions of wrongdoing by either party.



Also denouncing the [dissolution order](#): A group of young protesters at a demonstration in front of the Diet, the national parliament of Japan, on 4th May 2025

Nevertheless, the court treated the mere existence of settlements - and especially the monetary sums involved - as de facto evidence of harm. This, Fukumoto argues, is an extraordinary and dangerous leap of reasoning. If such a standard were applied broadly, any organization that settles disputes could be retroactively branded as engaging in unlawful behavior - a clear perversion of justice.

A "Death Sentence" Without a Trial

The culmination of this critique is Fukumoto's argument that the [dissolution order](#) is tantamount to a "legal death sentence" for the [religious organization](#). Such an extreme action, he argues, demands the highest standards of evidentiary scrutiny - far beyond what the court exhibited. Indeed, he notes that even in routine civil lawsuits, a judge cannot simply issue a ruling based on the plaintiff's complaint alone. That the court would do so in a case with such profound implications is, in the words of Fukumoto, "absurd" and "reckless".

Conclusion: A Threat to Legal Norms

Fukumoto's analysis warns that if this [ruling](#) sets a precedent, the consequences could be dire - not just for religious organizations, but for any group facing politically or socially motivated scrutiny. His concern is not narrowly about the [Family Federation](#), but about the erosion of legal standards and due process in Japan. Ultimately, he suggests, if speculation is allowed to stand in for evidence, the rule of law itself is imperiled.

Text: Knut Holdhus, editor, written based on an English translation of the original Japanese text.

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Categories

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"We won't let our freedom of faith be taken away!" – On 30th July, the "Tokyo Citizens' Association to Protect Basic Human Rights and Freedom of Religion," composed of members of the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) (formerly the [Unification Church](#)), held a rally at the *Hibiya Park Open-Air Concert Hall* (Chiyoda Ward, Tokyo) to call for a society where people can freely practice their faith.



Tomihiko Tanaka being interviewed on 30th July 2025.
Photo: [FFWPU](#)

According to the organizers, about 1,000 people participated. After the rally, they marched through the streets of Kasumigaseki, where many government ministries are located, chanting slogans.

Tomihiko Tanaka (田中富広), President of the [Family Federation](#) in Japan, who was invited as a guest speaker, claimed that communist ideology, which denies religious values and traditional family structures, is spreading throughout Japanese society.

He stressed,

"Those with anti-Japanese ideologies are labeling us as anti-Japanese."

He continued,

"([Family Federation](#) believers) have been standing firmly against communism. No matter how we're perceived, let's continue to raise our voices with pride and confidence."

Also speaking at the rally was Fumiya Sakeo (酒生文弥), Chief Priest of *Kōjūin Temple* of the *Jōdo Shinshū* school of Buddhism [See [editor's note below](#)]. He declared,

"Right now, 'freedom' is like a flickering candle about to go out. Your march today, in this intense heat, is not merely for one religious group – it is a fight to protect the precious 'freedom' that is under threat."



Fumiya Sakeo addressing the rally 30th July 2025. Photo: [FFWPU](#)

After the rally, participants began their protest march from the park, walking past the *Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology* (MEXT) and other government buildings while chanting slogans like,

- "Don't take our [church](#) away!"
- "We love Japan!"

See also [Protesters Warn of Wider Impact of Dissolution](#)

Featured image above: [Family Federation](#) believers parading in front of the *Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology* (MEXT) — afternoon of 30th July 2025, Chiyoda Ward, Tokyo. Photo: Takahide Ishii (石井孝秀).

[Editor's note: Jōdo Shinshū (浄土真宗), often translated as the "True Pure Land School" is one of the largest and most widely practiced

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Pure Land School, is one of the largest and most widely practiced schools of *Pure Land Buddhism* in Japan. It was founded by the monk Shinran (1173–1263), a former disciple of Hōnen, who also promoted *Pure Land teachings*.

The central tenet is reliance on the compassionate vow of Amida Buddha, who promised to save all beings who sincerely entrust themselves to him and recite his name (*nembutsu* – “Namu Amida Butsu”, meaning “I take refuge in Amida Buddha”).

Unlike some other Buddhist traditions that emphasize rigorous meditation or ascetic practices, Jōdo Shinshū teaches that salvation cannot be achieved through one's own efforts (self-power, *jiriki*), but only through Amida's grace (*tariki*, or “other-power”).]

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