

FFWPU Europe and Middle East: Dehumanizing Abuse Enabled by Mind Control Myth

Knut Holdhus
April 26, 2025



A reenactment of Yukie Kanamori (pseudonym) having been forced into a sleeping bag and abducted into a van by several men. Image provided by the person involved, partially edited.



Abduction disguised as rescue: Tokyo paper exposes dehumanizing abuse as "mind control" pretext is used by faith-breakers and anti-religious lawyers

Tokyo, 25th April 2025 - Published as an article in the Japanese newspaper [Sekai Nippo](#). Republished with permission. Translated from Japanese. [Original article](#).

How "Deprogrammers" Justify Faith-Breaking

The Dark World of Deprogramming Spreading Amid the Move to Dissolve the Family Federation (2)

by the Religious Freedom Investigative Team of the editorial department of [Sekai Nippo](#)

See [article 1](#)

It's based on "mind control"



*Toru Goto, here at the [official launch 10th February 2025](#), of his book *Deadly Struggle: Surviving 4,536 Days of Confinement**

"Parents are told that their children are under mind control, and that it's difficult for them to escape solo."

said Toru Goto (後藤徹), representative of the "[National Association of Victims of Abduction, Confinement, and Forced De-Conversion](#)", during a [commemorative lecture](#) on 10th February 2025, for the [release](#) of his [autobiography](#) *Shitō* (Deadly Struggle), published by Sogei-sha. Goto himself was confined in an apartment for [12 years and 5 months](#) by his family members who opposed his faith in the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) (formerly the [Unification Church](#)).

Christian pastors and activists known as "deprogrammers" (faith-breakers) are often involved in the [confinement](#) of [Family Federation](#) believers, acting on requests from families to forcibly make the believers renounce their faith. Parents are told that only specialists can help and, under the guise of "protection", end up resorting to [abduction and confinement](#). Goto explained this, describing such actions as "[faith-breaking](#)" [See editor's note below] and "[psychological lynching](#)".

One of the reasons why parents commit [these acts](#), Goto says, is the belief in the "mind control theory". This theory not only justifies [abductions](#) but is also used as a defense in court by those who carried out [such acts](#).

In July 2014, a couple in Hiroshima Prefecture who were members of the [Family Federation](#) were

[abducted](#) on the same day and separated from their children. The husband was tied up with ropes and had a black cloth bag placed over his head when he was forced into a vehicle. The wife, while visiting her parents, was tied by her wrists and ankles, shoved head-first into a sleeping bag, and transported by car to an apartment used for confinement.

The couple was released within a few days after managing to report the incident to the police. In May 2016, they filed a [civil lawsuit](#) in Hiroshima District Court seeking damages from the relatives and Christian associates involved in [their confinement](#).



Arguing in court based on mind control theory: Attorney Masaki Goro

The defendants, represented by attorney Masaki Goro (郷路征記) from the National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales, argued based on mind control theory. They claimed the couple had been through a "transformation of personality" due to their faith in the [Family Federation](#) and always ran away from discussions. There, a minimal physical force was used to "give them a chance to think for themselves." Goro (Gouro) argued that without isolating them from the [religious organization](#), escaping mind control was impossible.

The lawyer also claimed the [religious organization](#) violated the couple's rights to freedom of thought, religion, property, and the pursuit of happiness, asserting these conditions would persist for life unless the couple left the [organization](#). Thus, Goro (Gouro) justified the [abduction and confinement](#) as lawful.

However, none of these claims were accepted by the court. In 2020, the Hiroshima High Court ruled that the [confinement](#) was a "malicious criminal act that posed a serious threat to life and physical safety." It concluded that the act could by no means be called "minimal physical force" and was not justifiable. The court ordered the defendants to pay approximately 1.7 million yen in damages. The mind control theory was completely disregarded in court.

Though relatives claimed the couple was "constantly running away", the wife, Yukie Kanamori (pseudonym, in her 50s), said they had been in frequent contact before the [abduction](#). She said,

"The discussion just went nowhere because our parents wanted us to leave the [church](#), and we absolutely didn't."

She also recalled feeling a deep fear from her parents [during confinement](#) - as if they believed they had to make her leave the [religious organization](#) before they themselves became "criminals".

If the prejudiced view that "the [Family Federation](#) is evil" is being stoked by mind control theory and used to justify [deprogramming](#) (faith-breaking) [See editor's note below], then one might ask,

"Who is really being 'controlled'?"

See [article 1](#)

[Editor's note: Coercive faith-breaking ("deprogramming") in Japan refers to the practice of coercively attempting to separate individuals from their religious affiliations or beliefs, typically through intervention by family members, professional faith-breakers (deprogrammers) or organizations hostile to new religious movements (NRMs). This phenomenon often targets members of such movements, e.g. relatively large faiths like the [Family Federation](#) or Jehovah's Witnesses, but also smaller groups like Happy Science (Kōfuku no Kagaku) and other newer religious movements.

However, also Soka Gakkai, a Buddhist-based lay organization with more than 8 million Japanese members, and affiliated with Nichiren Buddhism, has occasionally been subject to faith-breaking attempts.

The practice gained attention in the latter half of the 20th century, particularly in the 1980s and 1990s. Parents or concerned family members often hired faith-breakers who taught them how to abduct and forcibly detain believers. Almost all such cases involved confining the individual believer and cutting him or her off from the religious community. During the confinement, the believer was subjected to intense questioning or indoctrination designed to break his or her faith. The aim was to "rescue" the person from what the family often had been tricked by faith-breakers or lawyers to regard as harmful influence from the religious organization.

Critics of forced de-conversion argue that it violates fundamental human rights, including freedom of

thought, religion, and association. Reports of psychological trauma and accusations of unlawful detention have sparked debates over its ethical and legal implications. In response, some religious groups, particularly NRMs, have lobbied for greater protections against such practices.



Also subject to faith-breaking attempts: Members of Soka Gakkai. Here students belonging to the faith in 2001

Japanese courts have been inconsistent in addressing cases of coercive faith-breaking. While some verdicts have condemned the practice as illegal detention, others have been more lenient, citing family concerns about "mental health" or alleged "exploitation" as mitigating factors.]

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Faith Broken By Force: Secrets Of Shady Network

• April 25, 2025
• Knut Holdhus



Statements reveal the coordinated efforts of shady network to force believers out of religious organization and use "their testimonies" in court



Logo of the Sekai Nippo

Tokyo, 23rd April 2025 – Published as an article in the Japanese newspaper *Sekai Nippo*. Republished with permission. Translated from Japanese. *Original article.*

Statements Revealing Criminal Technique of Coercive Faith-Breaking

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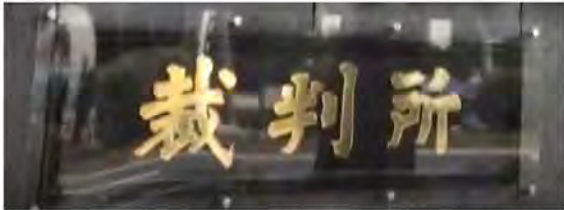
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by the Religious Freedom Investigative Team of the editorial department of [Sekai Nippo](#)

See [article 2](#)

Tokyo District Court used former court cases (including settlements) as basis for its [court order](#) to



Sign outside Tokyo District Court. Photo: Screenshot from [FFWPU](#) video.

dissolve the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) (formerly the [Unification Church](#)). It has become clear that among the individuals who filed victim claims in such cases, there are many who were actually victims of “[deprogramming](#)” involving [abduction](#), [confinement](#), and [coercion](#) to [break their faith](#).

Sequence of confinement, faith-breaking, and lawyer introduction



文部科学省

Symbol of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan. Photo: [文部科学省](#) (MEXT Japan) / Wikimedia Commons. License: [CC Attr 4.0 Int](#)

The statements submitted by the [Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology](#) (MEXT) to the district court include several that vividly depict the inhumane conditions of abduction, confinement, and [coercive faith-breaking](#) [See editor's

[note 1 below](#)].

Recently, [this newspaper](#) obtained detailed information about three statements from current members who wrote rebuttals to the statements made by former



Professional faith-breaker and victim. Illustration: [Grok xAI](#), 20th April 2025

members who had been [abducted and confined](#) and their families. The reports reveal that a process has been established in which former members, professional faith-breakers, Christian pastors, and lawyers [work together](#) to make people renounce their faith and then sue the [religious organization](#), like a modern version of the “fumi-e” (forced renunciation test) [See [editor's note 2 below](#)].

In one case, a former believer using the pseudonym Yukie Funabashi, from Nagano Prefecture returned to her family home at the end of 2010. While helping clean a storehouse at her family's request, she was locked inside from the outside and made to leave the [religious organization](#) while [confined](#).

Although the statement says, “the living conditions such as meals were not poor,” the storehouse was a storage building far from the house, not intended for living. There, she was forced to read books criticizing the [religious organization](#).

Her [abduction and confinement](#) began after her younger sister contacted someone who had already left the [church](#). This led to an introduction to a professional “deprogrammer” (faith-breaker) referred to as a “supporter” in the statement.

According to a current believer from Nagano who wrote the rebuttal, Funabashi had been joyfully attending [church](#) and even invited three coworkers to join. The current believer strongly asserts that “it's undeniable she was forcibly persuaded to leave the [religious organization](#).”



It is suspected that the “House of Life” (いのちの家) in Komoro City, Nagano was involved – an organization for a long time directed

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Pastor and faith-breaker
Noriko Kawasaki (川崎経子).
Illustration: Grok xAI, April 2025.

by the late pastor Noriko Kawasaki (川崎経子), who allegedly forced hundreds of believers to leave the **Unification Church**. The testimony says the younger sister even “quit her job” to help her sibling leave the **church**, a common tactic used by deprogrammers (faith-breakers) to make it harder for family members to back out once the **process** had begun.

After deciding to leave

the **church**, Funabashi was introduced to lawyer Hiroshi Yamaguchi (山口広) in Tokyo by the “supporter”. There, she negotiated a refund with the former **Unification Church** and had a “notice of quitting the **religious organization**” sent on her behalf. The refutation also states that afterward, Funabashi helped the same “supporter” de-convert the three people she had previously introduced to the **church**.



Hiroshi Yamaguchi (山口広), activist leftwing lawyer and founder and leading member of National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales (NNLASS). Photo: Screenshot / **Bitter Winter**

Another testimony: Parents deconvert daughter through confinement

Another statement describes how parents **abducted and confined** their daughter, a believer, to force her to leave the **church**. According to this couple who lived in Tokyo, they first learned of their daughter’s involvement with the **church** in 1988 after being contacted by Pastor Noriko Kawasaki (川崎経子), based on information from a former believer.

The parents had multiple people watch over their daughter to make sure she did not escape from a hotel room in Tokyo and then forced her to leave the **church**. The pastor had told them, “You can’t undo the brainwashing just by talking, so proceed carefully.” The father sacrificed his job to “make sure he had enough time.” He was told, “This is the parents’ responsibility.” He even spent over half a year attending **church**-related events to get his daughter to leave the **church**.

A year after she left the **religious organization**, the daughter was encouraged by the pastor to “provide advice to people who want to get their family members who have joined the **Unification Church** to leave and consult with people who try to leave the **church**.” She came to play a “significant role” in such activities.

Testimony of a man who deconverted his mother

Included among the documents is a written statement from a man who **abducted and confined** his own mother in an attempt to make her leave the **religious organization**. With the help of relatives, he forcibly took his mother – who was a devoted follower – and **confined** her in a hotel for three months in an effort to get her to leave the **organization**.

However, before this coercive “**faith-breaking**” attempt, the mother had actually encouraged her daughter as well – the man’s younger sister – to join the **religious organization**. The sister eventually did join, following her mother’s recommendation.



Pastor and faith-breaker
Mamoru Takazawa (高澤守) of the Christian Truth Church of Kobe (キリスト教神戸真教会).
Illustration: Grok xAI, April 2025

Upset by his wife’s involvement in the **group**, the sister’s husband sought help. Through a relative in Kobe, he was introduced to a pastor who conducted “**exit counseling**”, and he succeeded in getting his wife to leave the **organization**.

Soon after, under the pretext of reuniting the now-unreachable sister with her mother, the man forcibly brought his resistant mother from Tokyo to Osaka. There, she was **confined** in a business hotel and supervised by multiple people for about two weeks to prevent her from escaping. After returning to Tokyo, she underwent “**counseling**”, left the **religious organization**, and was later baptized as a Christian.

In all these cases, after leaving the **Unification Church**, the individuals

In all these cases, after leaving the [Christian Church](#), the individuals either became believers in the pastor's church or turned into "apostates" who began to participate in activities to force active members to leave the [religious organization](#).

Apostate testimonies used as basis for dissolution

The statements of such apostates – who were turned against the [church](#) through "[deprogramming](#)" – have become the basis for the [dissolution order](#). However, religious scholar Toshihiro Ota pointed out in an interview with [this paper](#) that globally, such statements are widely considered unreliable and inadmissible in court because they come from individuals [coerced into apostasy](#) and harboring hostility toward their former religion.

A staff member of the [Family Federation](#) lamented, "It's outrageous that MEXT staff did not see [abduction and confinement](#) as violations of our religious freedom but instead treated them as evidence for [dissolution](#)."

Deprogramming (Definition)

The term refers to "removing the mental programming instilled in believers by cults." Professional deprogrammers argue that since "cult members are brainwashed," they must be "[de-brainwashed](#)".

See [article 2](#)

Featured image above: A current believer living in Nagano Prefecture who wrote a rebuttal to the testimonies. Photo: [Sekai Nippo](#)

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Japanese courts have been inconsistent in addressing cases of coercive faith-breaking. While some verdicts have condemned the practice as illegal detention, others have been more lenient, citing family concerns about "mental health" or alleged "exploitation" as mitigating factors.]

[Editor's note 2:

The illustration to the right depicts a **fumi-e** (踏み絵), which literally means "stepping-on picture" – typically an image of the Cross, Jesus Christ, or the Virgin Mary. The Tokugawa Shogunate used this practice to identify hidden Christians (known as



Kirishitan) and their sympathizers during a time when Christianity was banned in Japan. While the act of stepping



This print shows Fumi-e (踏み絵 fumi "stepping-on" + e "picture"); step on a picture with the likeness of e.g. the Cross of Jesus or the Virgin Mary. Photo: Unknown author. [Public domain](#) image. Cropped

on these images was originally called **efumi** (絵踏), the term **fumi-e** is now commonly used to refer to both the practice and the object itself.

Those who hesitated or refused to step on the images were suspected of being Christians. They were taken to Nagasaki and ordered to renounce their faith. If they refused, they faced torture – and if they continued to resist, execution, often by burning at the stake.

This systematic persecution began in 1614 and was enforced by regional authorities. By the mid-17th century, the Tokugawa Shogunate had escalated its crackdown, ordering the expulsion of all European missionaries and the execution of Japanese converts. The suppression of Christianity continued for more than two centuries.]

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