

FFWPU Europe and the Middle East: Japan's Gross State Violations of Freedom of Conscience

Knut Holdhus
June 25, 2025



Demonstrators in Takasaki, Japan June 22, 2025, protesting state violations of their freedom of conscience



[Sekai Nippo](#)

Japan: Debate grows over unjust dissolution of Family Federation as Buddhist publication points out blatant state violations of more than half a million believers' freedom of conscience

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An Attack on "Freedom of Conscience"
The Issue of the Family Federation's Dissolution

by Seisaku Morita (森田 清策)

Nearly three years have passed since the shooting of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (安倍晋三) on 8th July 2022. The incident sparked legal proceedings seeking the dissolution of the religious corporation known as the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) (formerly the [Unification Church](#)).



Judges ignoring freedom of conscience. Image

This March, the Tokyo District Court issued an [order for its dissolution](#). The [religious organization](#) has deemed the ruling unjust and immediately [appealed](#) to the Tokyo High Court.

Since the shooting, a wave of criticism against the [Family Federation](#) has surged through the mass media. At the same time, some conservative circles have published analyses arguing that the government's actions amount to unjust intervention in religious freedom, and that the dissolution effort is a [leftist attempt by lawyers](#) and journalists to crush a conservative religious group.

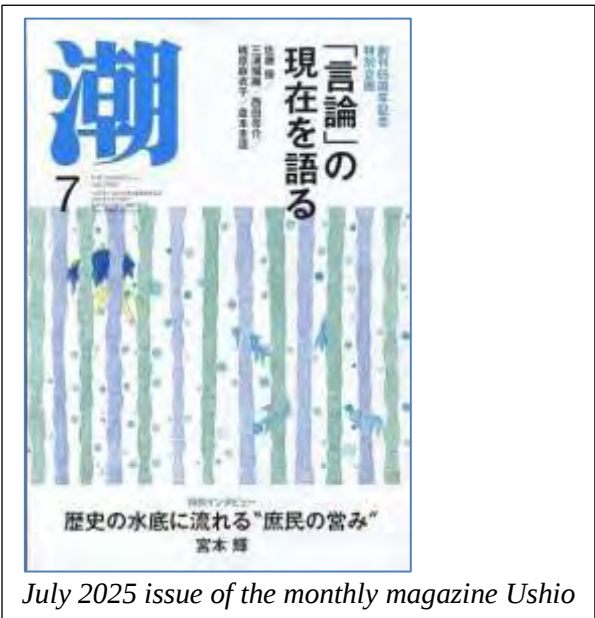
Meanwhile, the Komeito party and Soka Gakkai [See editor's note below] - who should be most sensitive to incorrect interpretations of the principle of separation of religion and state - seemed to respond sluggishly. Perhaps they feared the anti-church "frenzy" might eventually be directed at them.



Masaru Sato 2013

Possibly due to the decline in media frenzy, the July issue of Ushio (潮), a monthly magazine closely associated with Soka Gakkai and Komeito [See editor's note below], has published two essays addressing the issue of the [Family Federation](#)'s dissolution. The first, by author Masaru Sato (佐藤優), is titled "The Contemporary Mission of Monthly Ushio in an Age of Confusion (Dialogue)". The second is by Sayuri Saito (齋藤小百合), professor at Keisen University's Department of Human and Social Studies, titled "Freedom of Religion and the Principle of Church-State Separation as the Foundation of a Harmonious Society."

Sato, in his reflection on Ushio's role on the 65th anniversary of its founding, touches on the dissolution issue. He emphasizes, above all, the principle of separation of religion and state. This principle prohibits the state or public authority from intervening in the activities of religious organizations or the beliefs of individuals. He firmly asserts,



July 2025 issue of the monthly magazine Ushio

"It is entirely constitutional for religious organizations or individuals to engage in political activity - there's no way that Soka Gakkai's support of Komeito [See editor's note below] is unconstitutional."

Based on this, Sato expresses indignation at what he sees as "extremely aggressive attacks on the [Family Federation](#) and assaults on the individual's freedom of conscience" following the Abe shooting. What he says next is important and worth quoting at length:

"From the perspective of Soka Gakkai [See editor's note below], the former [Unification Church](#), which engaged in 'spiritual sales' tactics, is an entirely different religion with nothing in common. Even so, to trample on the sanctity of what members hold dear in their inner world and label the former [Unification Church](#) a 'perverse and heretical cult' is to violate the

freedom of conscience."



Freedom of conscience - woman praying. Illustration

Sato, who is known to be a Christian, is expressing his deep conviction that "freedom of conscience" is inviolable, regardless of religious differences. This underpins his stance:

"I cannot sympathize at all with those shouting that the Ministry of Education (MEXT) should issue a [dissolution order](#) to the former [Unification Church](#)."

While asserting that freedom of conscience must not be violated, he acknowledges the need to address specific misconduct. He argues that individuals involved should be held socially, morally, and criminally responsible. However, he warns that "mocking not only the individuals who caused problems, but also all believers and even the belief system itself" must not be tolerated.

I (Morita, author of this article) agree. If the [Family Federation](#) has committed misconduct, moral and legal responses are necessary to correct it. But considering that the number of civil lawsuits and public consultations has significantly decreased, suggesting a major reduction in such misconduct, is it really necessary to dissolve the [organization](#)?

On the other hand, Professor Saito's essay presents a more ambiguous line of reasoning. She begins by saying that freedom of religion and the principle of separation of religion and state originated as a way to protect minority believers from "oppression by the state intertwined with religion". However, she also argues that, given the realities of "spiritual sales" and large donations, the Tokyo District Court's

[dissolution order](#) "cannot be seen as an infringement on religious freedom and might even be considered overdue."

Yet, after stating that, she prefaces her next point with a disclaimer that "up until now I've expressed rather harsh opinions," and adds:

"What I still feel compelled to say is that when public authority intervenes in religious freedom on the grounds of 'seriously harming public welfare', it must exercise the utmost caution."



A Family Federation member handing out information in Umeda, Osaka in February 2025

She also notes that the timing of the court's [dissolution order](#) - coinciding with the 30th anniversary of the 1995 Tokyo subway sarin attack by Aum Shinrikyo - left her with "an indescribably eerie feeling". She further argues that, while the "victims" of "spiritual sales" and large donations have suffered greatly, "trying to equate the problems of the [Unification Church](#) with the indiscriminate terrorism of Aum Shinrikyo is completely off the mark." These statements undercut the "harsh criticisms" she made earlier toward the [church](#).

Unlike Sato, who is a writer free to express his opinions, Saito is an academic within a university. It seems the core of her true message came in the second half of her essay. Her need to include critical remarks toward the [religious organization](#) in the beginning may reflect the precarious position of academics today - highlighting the pressures they face to maintain credibility while navigating controversial topics.

[Editor's note: Soka Gakkai, a global lay Buddhist organization originating in Japan, aims to create an "ideal world" based on the principles of Nichiren Buddhism, which emphasizes individual empowerment, inner transformation, and societal harmony. Their vision is often framed as kosen-rufu, meaning the widespread propagation of Buddhist values to establish peace and happiness for all.

Soka Gakkai promotes peace, culture, and education through initiatives that focus on personal transformation (human revolution) - the belief that changing oneself positively impacts society; peace activism - anti-nuclear campaigns, human rights advocacy, and interfaith dialogue; education - institutions like Soka University emphasize value creation and global citizenship; community engagement - social welfare programs, disaster relief, and environmental sustainability efforts.



To actualize these ideals in governance, Soka Gakkai founded the Komeito party in 1964 (now known as New Komeito or simply Komeito). The party's purpose was to translate Buddhist-based humanistic values into public policy. While legally separate from Soka Gakkai, Komeito has long been backed by members of Soka Gakkai and focuses on peace-oriented diplomacy (e.g., supporting

Japan's pacifist constitution); social welfare policies (benefiting education, healthcare, and the elderly); grassroots democracy (reflecting the voice of ordinary citizens)

Since 1999, Komeito has been a coalition partner with the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), influencing policies while maintaining a centrist stance.

Despite its contributions, Soka Gakkai's political role has been controversial, with critics accusing it of blurring the lines between religion and politics. Some also argue that Komeito's alliance with the conservative LDP compromises its original pacifist ideals.

Soka Gakkai envisions an ideal world through personal empowerment, education, and political engagement. While its approach is rooted in Buddhist ethics, its political involvement remains a complex and debated issue.]

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75 Years Since Eruption Of Infernal Korean War

• June 24, 2025
• Knut Holdhus



Eruption of war on Korean peninsula in 1950 was not only about territory but formed a distinct part of the cosmic battle between good and evil

75 Years Since Vicious Attack on Chosen Nation



On 25th June, it is 75 years since the eruption of the Korean War, when North Korea launched a surprise attack on the South and started the bloody and brutal war that killed almost

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North Korean ground force unit stands in formation in 1950. Photo: Wikimedia Commons. [Public domain image](#)

two million and completely laid the peninsula in ruins.

In numerous speeches, [Sun Myung Moon](#) and [Hak Ja Han](#), the founders of the [Family Federation](#), mention the significance of the Korean War. They emphasize that Korea holds a central, [providential](#) role in [God's](#) plan for human history. Within their spiritual worldview, the Korean War and the broader Cold War, as well as historical and geopolitical events, are not merely political conflicts but expressions of a larger cosmic struggle between good and evil. And Korea is the battleground for a pivotal phase in divine history.

In several speeches, [Hak Ja Han](#), [Holy Mother Han](#), points out that Korea has been chosen by [God](#) not only as the birthplace of the Second Coming of Christ, but also as the land where his bride was specially prepared.



Supply warehouses and dock facilities at this important east coast port feel the destructive weight of para-demolition bombs dropped from Fifth Air Force's B-26 Invader light bombers. Wonsan, North Korea ca. 1951. Photo: US Air Force / Wikimedia Commons. [Public domain image](#)

The outbreak of the Korean War in 1950 is interpreted as Satan's attempt to destroy the chosen nation before the Messiah and his bride, known as the [True Parents](#), could fulfill their mission. The war was a critical test, with [God's](#) side defending the spiritual foundation necessary for salvation history to progress.

The intervention of the United States and UN forces in defense of South Korea is viewed [providentially](#) as [God](#) using democratic nations to protect the chosen nation from destruction. The near-collapse of South Korea early in the war, followed by the dramatic reversal through the Inchon landing and UN counteroffensive, is generally perceived by members of the [Family Federation](#) as evidence of divine intervention.



US soldiers in combat during Korean War in 1950. Photo: Wikimedia Commons. [Public domain image](#)

The Korean Peninsula, divided between North and South, symbolically represents the division between good and evil, Cain and Abel, or satanic and heavenly authority. The division of Korea after World War II was thus not accidental, but a reflection of the cosmic struggle between [God's](#) side and Satan's side.

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In the teachings of the [Family Federation](#), the Korean War represents a cosmic struggle between good and evil. The Cold War was not simply an ideological or military standoff between communism and democracy, but rather the final global conflict between Satanic communism and [God's providential](#) will working through democratic nations.

Communist North Korea, backed by the Soviet Union and later Communist China, was seen as representing Satan's dominion – a denial of [God](#), family, and spiritual values. Democratic South Korea, although flawed, was the territory where [God](#) could work, ultimately providing the environment for the appearance of the [True Parents](#) in [1960](#), seven years after the Korean War ended.

According to Unification theology, [Sun Myung Moon](#) was born in 1920 in what is now North Korea, under Japanese occupation. He taught that his early life and persecution – including imprisonment by both the Japanese and later the North Korean regime – mirrored the path of the Messiah.

The persecution he faced under communism and his [escape from a North Korean labor camp](#) in 1950 during the war may be seen as symbolic of the Messiah's victory over Satanic forces. The intervention of the UN forces soon after the war broke out in 1950, protected the foundation for [God](#) to be able to work in South Korea not just by sending a second Messiah but by allowing him to expand the foundation through [marriage](#) and family and build a solid national foundation before the global outreach could commence.

The Korean War, in such a theological view, was not just about the fate of one nation, but about the cosmic stage on which [God](#) was preparing to establish his [Kingdom of Heaven](#) on Earth, beginning with Korea.

The survival of South Korea was critical because it preserved the spiritual womb through which [God's providence](#) could unfold in the modern era. The broader Cold War can be seen as a global extension of this [providential](#) conflict, culminating in the eventual collapse of communism in Europe in 1989–1991 – an important victory for [God's](#) side.

The Korean War was a divinely significant event, a clash between good and evil on the soil of [God's](#) chosen nation, with the survival of South Korea ensuring that the two sent to become [True Parents](#) could fulfill their mission. The Cold War was thus not just geopolitical but a spiritual battle culminating in the dawn of a new [providential](#) age centered on Korea.

Text: Knut Holdhus

Featured image above: *Sniper patrol returns – Marine Sergeant Albert L. Ireland, a Marine squad leader, leads his squad back to the front lines in Korea following a patrol. Following Sgt. Ireland up the steep, snow covered ridge are Private First Class Lindon L. Brown, center, and Private First Class Robert D. Glover, Jr. Photo (1951): United States Marine Corps / Wikimedia Commons.* [Public domain](#) image

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