

FFWPU Europe and Middle East: Japan's FFWPU Dissolution Built on Fabrication

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How the state engineered the dissolution of a religious organization: A show trial disguised as due process but based on fabrications and speculation

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[Interview Feature]

Following the Pattern of the National Network of Lawyers

Part 2 of Interview with Masumi Fukuda, Author of "A Sacrifice to the State"

by Susumu Fujihashi (藤橋進)

See also part 1: [Dissolution, System of Faith-Breaking, Lawsuits](#)



*Fabricated affidavits: The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan. Here, its symbol*

– As the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) pushed forward on the premise of dissolving the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (formerly the Unification Church), it even went so far as to fabricate affidavits submitted to the Tokyo District Court.

In the end, that shows there was no evidence that would constitute legitimate grounds for dissolution. That is why they resorted to such actions.

– The claims of the so-called "victims", including fabricated affidavits from former members, follow the logic and patterns created by the National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales (commonly known as the National Lawyers Network).

To begin with, the National Lawyers Network is not a neutral organization, yet it has been brought into MEXT as an advisor. Even the fabricated affidavits follow the same writing patterns that the Network has used in documents it has produced in the past.

– Media organizations that routinely claim it is their mission to monitor government and power and to report in a neutral and fair manner have instead continued one-sided attacks on the [Family Federation](#).

Regrettably, in the push to dissolve the [Family Federation](#), the media, the state, and government ministries are all perfectly aligned in the same direction. When I wrote the chapter titled "MEXT's Suppression of Speech", I was reminded of GHQ's press code, the "Press Code for Japan" (Nihon ni atauru shinbun junkoku). Although GHQ guaranteed freedom of speech and expression under the Japanese Constitution that it itself helped draft, it did not allow publication of anything inconvenient to GHQ.



GHQ (General Headquarters of the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers) around 1950. After World War II, the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP), a role held by General Douglas MacArthur from 1945 to 1951, was responsible for overseeing the occupation and reconstruction of Japan. The SCAP had broad authority and was tasked with implementing the terms of Japan's surrender and facilitating its transition into a peaceful, democratic nation. Key responsibilities included demilitarization, democratization, economic reconstruction, war crime trials, social reforms, rehabilitation and reconstruction. The occupation formally ended in 1952 with the signing of the Treaty of San Francisco, which restored Japan's sovereignty.

claims in recent times has decreased considerably." Nevertheless, it goes on to say that it is "assumed" that there are "a considerable number" of latent, hidden victims. A court that should be making judgments based on evidence is instead relying on speculation to issue its ruling. One cannot help but wonder what has become of the Japanese judiciary.



*Attorney Nobuya Fukumoto, here at press conference on 8th September 2023*

well.

Attorney Nobuya Fukumoto (福本修也), counsel for the [religious organization](#), has forcefully explained that mind control [See editor's note 2 below] does not exist, so the term itself does not appear in the [judgment](#). However, it has simply been replaced with different wording that conveys almost exactly the

As if an invisible press code now blankets society as a whole, the media has stopped even attempting neutral reporting on the [Family Federation](#). This is because there is blatant speech suppression by MEXT, and free reporting on matters related to the [Family Federation](#) can no longer be expected.

– In such circumstances, the judiciary should be the last line of defense.

Before the [first-instance ruling](#) was issued, many legal experts believed that the likelihood of a dissolution order being granted was low. I am not a legal expert, but having reviewed court materials from numerous lawsuits involving the [Family Federation](#), and having seen many cases that appeared to be unjust rulings, I consistently said there was no room for optimism. Even so, I have never seen a judgment as terrible as that one. It is little more than sophistry, hair-splitting, and nitpicking.

– Courts, which are supposed to render strict and impartial judgments, are piling inference upon inference.

Since the 2009 compliance declaration [See editor's note 1 below], the number of "victims" has declined markedly. The decision itself acknowledges that "the number of damage

– Do Japanese people have a negative image of religion?

To begin with, the word "religion" does not leave a very positive impression on many Japanese people. I was the same way myself, and especially when it comes to new religious movements, people tend to see them as suspicious. It is not easy to dispel such impressions. Moreover, the Aum Shinrikyo incident was decisive. The impact that incident had on society was enormous, and it firmly entrenched an unfavorable image of religion.

It is said that people do not listen to the [religious organization's](#) side because its members are "mind-controlled" [See editor's note 2 below], but the concept of mind control is no longer used in the West, where it is regarded as pseudoscience.

For those opposed to the [Family Federation](#), "mind control" [See editor's note 2 below] has become a power word – a convenient magic phrase. Believers are mind-controlled; therefore, it is acceptable to abduct and confine them. The courts believe this as

same idea. When it comes to religion, Japan has now completely fallen away from the standards of advanced Western nations.

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See also part 1: [Dissolution, System of Faith-Breaking, Lawsuits](#)

**[Editor's note 1:** The 2009 compliance declaration of the [Unification Church](#) of Japan (now the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#)) was a formal commitment by the [organization](#) to reform its practices in response to longstanding public criticism and legal challenges.

The [Unification Church](#) in Japan had faced numerous allegations related to recruitment tactics and donation solicitation, termed "spiritual sales" (靈感商法) by a hostile network of activist lawyers who had declared the [religious organization](#) an enemy. These issues led to multiple lawsuits orchestrated by the activist lawyers and significant media backlash. This prompted the [organization](#) to take measures to restore its reputation and demonstrate compliance with legal and ethical standards.

The [religious organization](#) pledged to stop possibly unethical donation practices, including what the hostile network of lawyers claimed amounted to "pressuring members into making large financial contributions under spiritual pretexts."

This was in response to accusations from the same activist lawyers that followers "were being manipulated into giving away substantial amounts of money or property."

The [Unification Church](#) stated it would enhance internal oversight to ensure compliance with ethical and legal standards. Measures included better training for leaders and stricter guidelines for evangelization and solicitation of donations.

After this compliance declaration, there was a significant decrease in the number of lawsuits against the [Unification Church](#) - since 2015 called the [Family Federation](#). The [religious organization](#) has used this as evidence that it has improved its practices and should not be subject to [dissolution](#).]

**[Editor's note 2:** In Japan, the "mind-control" myth has been a powerful tool used to stigmatize and suppress new religious movements (NRMs), particularly since the 1980s. The concept suggests that NRMs manipulate or "brainwash" their followers, depriving them of free will and rational thought. This narrative gained traction after the 1995 Aum Shinrikyō sarin gas attack, when public fear of dangerous cults intensified. Although Aum was an extreme and violent exception, the incident cast suspicion on all NRMs, allowing critics, media, and the government to label diverse groups as manipulative or psychologically coercive.

The "mind-control" myth serves multiple social and political functions. It simplifies complex questions of belief, making it easier to portray converts as victims rather than as individuals exercising spiritual agency. This framing justifies legal and social intervention, including the coercive "[deprogramming](#)" of believers - sometimes involving confinement or psychological pressure to force renunciation of faith. Lawyers, ex-member groups, and certain media outlets have used the idea of mind control to construct NRMs as threats to family stability and national order, reinforcing social conformity and Japan's preference for established, non-controversial religions such as Buddhism and Shinto.

In recent years, the myth resurfaced following the 2022 assassination of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, whose attacker cited resentment toward the [Unification Church](#). A public outrage largely created by media reignited scrutiny of NRMs, and politicians and journalists revived "mind-control" rhetoric to explain the [Church](#)'s fundraising and recruitment practices. Critics argue that this framing discourages genuine religious tolerance and critical examination of Japan's restrictive religious climate. Overall, the "mind-control" myth functions less as a scientific or psychological concept and more as a moral panic - a cultural weapon used to delegitimize minority faiths and to reaffirm mainstream social norms about religion, obedience, and the boundaries of acceptable belief.]

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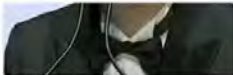






In his [opinion piece](#), Jeong writes,

"Recently, a senior pastor who served the [Family Federation](#) in pastoral ministry for 47 years published a piece in Paris titled 'Regrets over the [Unification Church Gate](#)'. In it, he stated that during his lifetime, Reverend [Sun Myung Moon](#) strictly and categorically prohibited any financial transactions with politicians, treating this as an inviolable principle."



**Detained: Yoon Yeong-ho**, former head of the [Family Federation](#)'s world HQ, here 9th August 2020. Screenshot from video by [FFWPU](#)

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For the millions of members worldwide, the situation is both shocking and painful. They see themselves not as political operatives, but as believers who have participated in peace initiatives, humanitarian projects, and interfaith efforts in alignment with their religious convictions and, often, in cooperation with government policies aimed at stability and reconciliation.

The central difficulty the [Family Federation](#) now faces is what the [article](#) describes as a "frame" – specifically, a narrative frame of church-state collusion. Once such a frame takes hold in public discourse, every activity, regardless of intent or historical context, tends to be interpreted through that lens. Explanations are dismissed as self-serving, and long-standing peace initiatives are reinterpreted as political maneuvering. This is the environment in which the current controversy is unfolding.

To understand why the [Family Federation](#) ever engaged with political leaders at all, the [article](#) argues that one must return to the original worldview of its co-founder, [Reverend Moon](#). His approach to politics was not rooted in a desire for power or influence in the conventional sense, but in a broader philosophical vision of peace. [Reverend Moon](#) believed that lasting peace could not be achieved through political systems alone, nor through religion acting in isolation. Instead, he saw religion and politics as complementary spheres that must cooperate while maintaining distinct roles.



[Sun Myung Moon](#). Photo: [FFWPU](#)

In his conceptual framework, religion represented the "mind" of society – the source of moral values, conscience, and ultimate purpose – while politics and economics represented the "body", responsible for implementing policies and managing material realities. Just as a healthy individual requires harmony between mind and body, [Reverend Moon](#) believed that a peaceful world required moral guidance and political authority to work together, centered on universal ethical principles.

This perspective shaped his view of Korea's role in the world. Emerging from colonialism, war, and ideological division, South Korea stood at the fault line between communism and capitalism. [Reverend Moon](#) argued that Korea had a unique historical mission: to overcome ideological conflict not by choosing one extreme over another, but by articulating a higher, [God](#)-centered ethic emphasizing mutual coexistence, shared prosperity, and justice. In his view, this approach could resolve internal polarization within South Korea, enable peaceful reunification with the North, and ultimately position Korea as a model for global peace.

The [article](#) also



From the science conference in Seoul in November 1981 where [Father Moon](#) suggested the Japan-Korea tunnel. Photo: [ICUS](#)

emphasizes that [Reverend Moon](#)'s peace vision extended far beyond abstract theology. One of his most ambitious ideas was that physical connectivity – literally building roads and bridges between nations – could help dismantle psychological and political barriers. This belief culminated in the proposal of an "International Peace Highway", first introduced in 1981 at a major global science conference in Seoul attended by hundreds of scholars, including Nobel Prize winners.

The idea was bold: begin with an "Asian Peace Highway" linking China, the Korean Peninsula, and Japan, and then expand it into a global network connecting continents. Most famously, this included the concept of an [undersea tunnel](#) between Korea and Japan. While such a project might sound utopian, the proposal attracted serious attention from respected academics, engineers, and policymakers. For them, the appeal lay not only in infrastructure development, but in the project's symbolic and practical potential to foster reconciliation, economic cooperation, and long-term stability in a historically tense region.

Importantly, Reverend Moon did not treat this vision as mere rhetoric. Organizations were established to study feasibility, conduct research, and gather expert input. Prominent figures in Japan and South Korea – from polar explorers and university professors to civil engineers and former government officials – participated in these discussions. Over time, the idea gained enough legitimacy that multiple heads of state in South Korea publicly referenced it as one possible avenue for improving relations with Japan. Japanese political leaders, too, expressed interest and even suggested alternative names to emphasize its international character.

The [Segye Ilbo](#) [article](#) points out that as deliberations on the Korea-Japan [undersea tunnel](#) progressed, political attention increased accordingly. In South Korea, Presidents Roh Tae-woo (노태우), Kim



[Kim Dae-jung](#) (김대중)



[Roh Moo-hyun](#) (노무현)



[Lee Myung-bak](#) (이명박)



Daeh-jung (대정), Roh Moo-hyun (노무현), and Lee Myung-bak (이명박) each referred to the project as a potential instrument for advancing Korea-Japan reconciliation.

(대정) – President of South Korea 1998–2003. Photo: [대한민국 국가기록원](#). License: [Korea Open Government License](#)

대정) – President of South Korea 2003–2008. Photo: U.S. State Department. [Public domain](#) image. Cropped

대정) – President of South Korea 2008–2013. Photo (2010): Government of Chile. License: [CC Attr 2.0 Gen](#). Cropped



Yoshiro Mori (森喜朗), Prime Minister of Japan 2000-2001. Photo: White House. [Public domain](#) image

In Japan, Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori (森喜朗) went so far as to suggest calling it the “ASEM Tunnel.” Numerous political leaders, including former Justice Minister Daizo Nozawa (野沢 太三) and Takeo Kawamura (河村 建夫), secretary-general of the Japan-Korea Parliamentarians’ Union, likewise expressed strong support for the concept.

From the perspective presented in the [article](#), this history is crucial. The engagement between the [Family Federation](#) and political figures did not emerge from partisan ambitions or covert influence, but from long-term peace projects that inherently required governmental cooperation. Large-scale infrastructure, international reconciliation, and regional integration are, by definition, impossible without dialogue with political authorities.



Roh Tae-woo (노태우 – 1932-2021), President of South Korea 1987-1993. Photo (1989): Cherie A. Thurlby / US Federal Government. [Public domain](#) image

This does not mean, the [article](#) cautions, that any unlawful or unethical behavior should be excused. Allegations of improper financial dealings must be investigated and judged on their own merits. However, the author argues that it is a mistake to conflate the entirety of the [Family Federation](#)’s peace-oriented vision with specific accusations against individuals. To do so risks discarding decades of intellectual, moral, and practical efforts aimed at reducing conflict and fostering cooperation.

[Jeong’s article](#) appeals to a broader historical perspective. Many of humanity’s most transformative achievements – from international institutions to cross-border infrastructure – began as controversial dreams. They were often criticized, misunderstood, or dismissed before becoming part of accepted reality. Regardless of how the current legal and political disputes conclude, the aspiration for peace that motivated these initiatives should not be abandoned. Dreams of cooperation, reconciliation, and shared prosperity, the author reminds us, are not naïve indulgences. They are the starting point of nearly all meaningful human progress.

See also [When Probes Risk Becoming Collective Judgment](#)

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Text: Knut Holdhus, editor

**Featured image** above: [Mother Han](#) at the Sunhak Peace Prize award ceremony 11th April 2025 in Seoul. The Sunhak Peace Prize is one of numerois peace projects she and her late husband [Sun Myung Moon](#) founded. Screenshot from PeaceLink TV.

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