

FFWPU Europe and Middle East: Shocked Author Japan Ignores Basics of Justice

Knut Holdhus
March 26, 2026



Fumihiro Kato), here delivering a lecture 14th December 2024 in Ichikawa City, Chiba Prefecture.



Japanese author alarmed by lack of fairness in court ruling to dissolve Family federation as he finds glaring departure from the fundamentals of judicial process - namely, identifying, proving, and recognizing facts

Tokyo, 24th March 2026 - Published as an article in the Japanese newspaper [Sekai Nippo](#). Republished with permission. Translated from Japanese. [Original article](#).

Tokyo High Court Deviates from the Fundamentals of Trial Procedure

Dissolution Order Against the Family Federation

by Fumihiro Kato (加藤文宏), author



On 4th March, the Tokyo High Court [issued an order](#) to dissolve the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) as a religious corporation.

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After reading the 179-page decision along with Appendices 1 through 5, I was left holding my head in disbelief. It is vast and overwhelming, yet like a mirage, it lacks substance. Moreover, numerous longstanding issues were left unresolved and simply abandoned.

Neglect in Establishing the Facts

The most representative and deeply rooted problem was the political situation four years ago, which moved forward with dissolution as a foregone conclusion.

Politicians, intimidated by the emotional climate of society, sought to eliminate the [religious organization](#)

by including civil matters among the requirements for dissolution, while bureaucrats were pressured under dominant power dynamics.

However, no decisive civil case sufficient to force dissolution could be found. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology even resorted to [fabricating](#) written statements - likely because it recognized that the objective could not be achieved without [manufacturing wrongdoing](#).



Faithful believer offering donation, i.e. performing a religious act. Japanese anti-religious lawyers succeeded however to persuade the courts to treat donations as consumer issues on par with sales and contracts, subject to civil law. Illustration by Microsoft Designer Image Creator

Unable to correct course, the matter was handed over to the judiciary. Judges were then left with no choice but to treat donations not as religious acts, but as consumer issues on par with sales and contracts.

The High Court, compelled to prove that the solicitation of donations constituted systematic and continuous fraud, intervened in matters of doctrine - something inherently beyond judicial determination - and concluded that believers had been manipulated. As a result, all donations from the past became subject to scrutiny for malicious intent, and alleged damages accumulated.

The decision recognized approximately 7.4 billion yen [ca. 70 million US dollars in 2008] in donations made prior to the 2009 compliance declaration [See editor's note below] as confirmed damages constituting torts. For donations made thereafter, about 18 million yen [ca. 115,000 USD in 2026] were deemed to constitute torts, about 23 million yen [ca. 147,000 USD in 2026] were considered "likely" to constitute torts, and about 915 million yen [ca. 5,856,000 USD in 2026] were classified as cases where the possibility of torts "cannot be denied". These figures, however, are merely estimates based on the judges' impressions.

Comparing the confirmed damages before the compliance declaration [See editor's note below] with those after, it becomes evident that the [religious organization](#) reduced what is considered harm by roughly a factor of 400 through stricter discipline. Even so, the court concluded that there was no prospect of improvement in malicious conduct.

Furthermore, due to the use of abstract and complex classifications - such as "established", "likely", and "cannot be denied" - confusion arose. For example, four individuals included among cases definitively labeled as "damage" on page 63 of the decision are classified on page 124 as cases where the possibility "cannot be denied".



Swayed by the media and the authorities? Japanese judges. Illustration: Microsoft Designer Image Creator

Despite the court's persistent focus on the alleged systematic malicious nature of donations, no actual evidence was presented showing that the funds collected were used for illegal or improper activities. Nevertheless, the [organization](#) was deemed a religious corporation that "clearly harms the public welfare".

By departing from the fundamentals of judicial process - namely, identifying facts, proving facts, and recognizing facts - the High Court produced contradictions at every turn, ultimately straying not only from the Religious Corporations Act but also from the spirit of the Constitution.

As a result, believers have been barred from entering the churches they supported through their own donations and can no longer even pray together in their place of faith.

Since the [High Court's decision](#), criticism has erupted from political figures and experts overseas.

Some voices express concern that the ruling could end up justifying China's policies of religious suppression used as a means of ethnic cleansing.

Indeed, while attempts in European countries to deny legal status to new religions or seek their dissolution have consistently been overturned by the European Court of Human Rights, the [High Court's decision](#) runs counter to the broader trend in liberal societies and can only be described as highly abnormal.

People Unable to Speak Out



Dr. Martin Niemöller 27th May 1952

Meanwhile, within Japan, there are people who cannot speak out about issues related to the [Family Federation](#), even if they wish to.

Many religious figures have remained silent for the past four years out of fear of being branded as part of a "cult". Even among legal professionals, some choose to look the other way.

Martin Niemöller once wrote, "When the Nazis came for me, there was no one left to speak out for me." Due to the [High Court's decision](#), these words have ceased to be merely a warning and have instead come to reflect the reality of Japan today.

See also [Constitution: Dissolution Requires Public Trial](#)

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Text: Fumihiro Kato (加藤文宏), author. He has contributed to various media outlets, including opinion magazines. Under the pen name Fumi Kato (かとう ふみ), he has published works such as "Chushi Ruro" (厨師流浪 - Wandering Chef), "Kakai Fuki" (花開富貴 - Blossoming, Prosperous and Noble), and "Denko no Otoko" (電光の男 - Lightning Man). In 2023, he contributed with an article titled "[Can News and Talk Shows Determine Good and Evil?](#)" in the February issue of Monthly Seiron (月刊正論), challenging the approach to reporting on the [Unification Church](#).]

[Editor's note 2: 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](#).]

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A Story Of Reconciliation In A Divided Korea

March 25, 2026 • Knut Holdhus

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Beyond politics: A story of human connections, grassroots reconciliation, and rebuilding trust where ideology divides



On 23rd March 2026, a [column](#) published in the Korean newspaper [Segye Ilbo](#) by religious affairs reporter Jeong Seong-su (정성수) reflected on a pressing issue: the deepening

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reporter Jeong
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division on the Korean Peninsula and what it means for the future of peace. Rather than focusing solely on high-level politics, the [article](#) draws attention to the human dimension of division – how ideological conflict affects everyday lives – and highlights the work of one individual, Koo Mal-mo (구말모 – 1935-2022), as a powerful example of reconciliation in action.



Closeup of the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) that surrounds the Military Demarcation Line across the Korean peninsula, with the four North Korean infiltration tunnels that officially have been discovered by South Korea. More may exist. Illustration: Rishabh Tatiraju / Wikimedia Commons. License: [CC ASA 3.0 Unp](#)

To understand the significance of the [article](#), it is important to grasp the current context. Relations between North Korea and South Korea have deteriorated sharply. North Korea has recently described the two Koreas not as parts of a single nation moving toward reunification, but as two separate and hostile states. This marks a major shift away from decades of rhetoric that at least nominally supported peaceful reunification. Physical symbols of connection – such as railways and roads that once linked the two sides – have been cut or destroyed. The border between North and South, already heavily fortified, is increasingly seen not just as a line of division, but as an almost permanent barrier.

In such a situation, the [article](#) argues, it becomes crucial to focus on people rather than governments. When official dialogue stops, the risk is that human connections will also disappear. And when both political and personal ties are severed, the possibility of peace diminishes even further. Peace, the author suggests, does not begin in conference rooms alone – it also depends on relationships between ordinary individuals.

This human cost of division is especially visible in the Korean diaspora in Japan. After World War II, many Koreans remained in Japan, forming communities that were later split along ideological lines. Two major organizations emerged: one aligned with South Korea and another with North Korea. Although their members often shared common origins – sometimes even coming from the same hometowns – they became estranged over time. For decades, these groups lived parallel lives, rarely interacting. Social events, cultural celebrations, and even funerals were held separately. What should have been a shared community was fractured, with division shaping even the most personal aspects of life.

It was into this deeply divided environment that Koo Mal-mo (구말모) emerged as a figure of reconciliation. Born in Japan in 1935, he belonged to a generation that experienced both the legacy of Japanese colonial rule over Korea and the painful reality of national division. He pursued higher education in political science, studying at Waseda University in Japan and later at Yonsei University in South Korea. However, his life did not follow a straightforward academic path.

A defining moment came in 1971, during a period of authoritarian rule in South Korea. While studying at *Yonsei University*, Koo was accused of espionage and sentenced to 15 years in prison, of which he served 10. This experience could easily have led to bitterness or resentment. Instead, it became a period of deep reflection. While in prison, he confronted the larger tragedy of Korea's division and asked fundamental questions about why the nation had been split and whether reconciliation was possible.

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The Japanese headquarters of Chosen Souren (General Association of North Korean Residents in Japan) in Chiyoda, Tokyo, Japan. Photo: GcG / Wikimedia Commons. License: [CC Attr 3.0 Unp](#). Cropped



The central headquarters in Tokyo of the pro-South Korea Mindan (The Korean Residents Union in Japan). Photo (2010): Abasaa / Wikimedia Commons. [Public domain](#) image

After his release in 1981, Koo returned to Japan. The divisions within the Korean community there were still as strong as ever. Rather than attempting quick or dramatic solutions, he took a patient and long-term approach. Over several decades, he traveled extensively, meeting people from both sides of the ideological divide. He listened to their stories, their grievances, and their fears. Through roles connected to the South Korean embassy and advisory bodies on unification, he gradually built trust.

By the time he reached his late sixties, Koo had become a central figure capable of bringing people together. His approach was based on a key insight: ideological arguments alone could not resolve deeply rooted divisions. Debates about political systems or national legitimacy often reinforced existing positions rather than bridging gaps. What was needed instead was the restoration of relationships at a personal level.

In 2004, this philosophy took institutional form with the creation of an organization aimed at fostering unity within the Korean diaspora in Japan. Its goal was not immediate political unification, but something more basic and arguably more important: rebuilding trust between people who had long seen each other as enemies. Koo became its first leader.

His efforts were not without opposition. Some critics argued that engagement with the other side was naive or even dangerous. Nevertheless, he persisted, emphasizing that reconciliation must begin with direct human contact. He encouraged members of opposing groups to meet face-to-face, visit one another’s homes, and openly address their long-held grievances. This focus on emotional and relational healing was central to his work.

A major milestone came later that same year, when 1,200 Korean residents from Japan – representing both sides of the divide – traveled together to South Korea for a peace event – a “Peaceful Unification Rally” that took place in Seoul. According to [Jeong’s article](#), this initiative was made possible in large part by the



The logo of the

committed support of the *Interreligious and International Federation for World Peace* (IIFWP) [See editor's note 1 below].

For many participants, this was the first time they had interacted closely with those they had previously regarded as adversaries. They shared transportation, meals, and conversations. These simple acts carried profound meaning. People who had spent decades separated by ideology found themselves sitting side by side, often moved to tears.

The [article](#) presents this moment as something close to extraordinary – not because of any formal agreement, but because it demonstrated the power of human connection. It showed that trust could be rebuilt from the ground up, even after long periods of hostility. Importantly, it suggested that such grassroots efforts might succeed where official diplomacy struggles.

Our [True Mother](#) has dedicated her entire life to realizing a world of peace, yet she said,

Another key aspect of Koo's work was its philosophical and religious dimension. The [Segye Ilbo](#) column explains,

"Among the ideological resources that shaped him were the 'True Love Movement' (참사랑 운동) [See editor's note 2 below] and the 'vision of world peace' advocated by [Sun Myung Moon](#) (문선명) and [Hak Ja Han](#) (한학자), co-founders of the Peaceful Unification Alliance. Their transreligious teaching – to embrace even one's enemies as one's own body – and the philosophy of 'living for the sake of others' became the most powerful founding spirit sustaining the organization."



[Father Moon](#) and [Mother Han](#) advocated a [true love](#) movement and a vision for peace as solution not only for Korea, but the world. Photo: [FFWPU](#)

According to the [article](#), this perspective provided a crucial foundation for Koo's efforts. Where political logic tends to divide people into opposing camps, the concept of "[true love](#)" seeks to transcend such divisions. It encourages individuals to see one another not as representatives of conflicting systems, but as fellow human beings. In this sense, it functioned as both a bridge and a source of motivation.

The [column](#) concludes by returning to the present situation on the Korean Peninsula. With official relations at a low point and dialogue largely suspended, the lessons from Koo Mal-mo's work become even more relevant. His example suggests that peace is not something that can be achieved solely through grand political strategies. Instead, it often begins with small, everyday actions – sharing a meal, listening to another person's story, and acknowledging their pain.

In a time of increasing polarization, the [article](#) offers a reminder that reconciliation is both possible and necessary. By focusing on relationships rather than ideology, and by prioritizing empathy over division, individuals and communities can play a meaningful role in building a more peaceful future.

Text: *Knut Holdhus, editor*

Featured image above: *From the border between North and South Korea on 28th September 2012. Photo: pictures Jettcom. License: [CC Attr 3.0 Unp](#)*

[Editor's note 1: The *Interreligious and International Federation for World Peace* (IIFWP) was inaugurated on 6th February 1999 in Seoul by [Sun Myung Moon](#) (문선명) to bring together religious leaders and public figures from different faiths and nations to cooperate on peacebuilding and global dialogue. Its work was later reorganized and relaunched as the [Universal Peace Federation](#) (UPF), which was launched on 12th September 2005 in New York with [Sun Myung Moon](#) (문선명) and [Hak Ja Han](#) (한학자) as founders. This was essentially a restructuring or rebranding that

grew out of the IIFWP framework into a broader global network with a more formal institutional structure.]

[**Editor's note 2:** The **"True Love Movement"** (참사랑 운동) is not a single formal organization. Rather, it is a core theological and ethical concept associated with the teachings of **Sun Myung Moon** – also called **Father Moon** – and **Hak Ja Han** – also known as **Mother Han**.

The term "True Love Movement" refers to a moral and spiritual framework rather than a tightly defined institution. It emerges from **Father Moon's** and **Mother Han's** teaching that "true love" is selfless, **God-centered** love, not self-centered desire. It is fundamentally about **living for the sake of others**, and it applies at every level: individual → family → society → world.

In this sense, the "movement" is more like a normative ideal or campaign for ethical transformation than a membership-based movement with a single structure.

At the heart of this idea is a very specific definition of love: Self-centered love is seen as the root of human conflict and "the Fall" (in **Unificationism**). **True love** is defined as giving first, without expecting return. It mirrors what is understood as **God's** nature – initiating love toward others.

A distinctive feature is that "true love" is not abstract. It is supposed to be realized concretely in the family, with an **ideal progression**: child → sibling → spouse → parent. The family is seen as the training ground for universal love. From "true families", the model expands outward to society and the world. The **Unification Principles** and related teachings emphasize that the family is the basic unit of peacebuilding, not the state.

The "True Love Movement" refers to a broader effort to apply this philosophy to real-world conflicts (including the Korean division). It's called a "movement" because it has been promoted globally through interreligious initiatives, peace organizations like the **Family Federation for World Peace and Unification** (FFWPU) and the **Universal Peace Federation** (UPF), marriage and family programs, educational and cultural campaigns.

The idea is that **societal transformation begins with moral transformation**, especially through relationships.]

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