

FFWPU Europe and the Middle East: Author From Media World Exposes Japan's Huge Bias

Knut Holdhus
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Masaki Kubota

Author with savvy from the media world reveals its huge bias when covering the Unification Church / Family Federation

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Journalists relying on biased information sources

Part 1 of an interview with Masaki Kubota (窪田順生), author of "Infiltrating the Former Unification Church"

Feeling uneasy about the expression "dark relationship" with Shinzo Abe

by Seisaku Morita (森田 清策)

Masaki Kubota (窪田順生) is a non-fiction writer who has contributed to weekly and monthly magazines. He has also worked first as a producer, then as an advisor for TV-documentaries. He is journalist for a weekly magazine and a newspaper, and editor of a monthly magazine. In addition, he works as a media consultant, having conducted over 200 public relations consultations and media training sessions (training on how to handle interviews).

His books include

"Spin Doctor - Techniques of Information Manipulation Used by Professionals Who 'Hush up Bad Information'" (Kodansha Alpha Bunko - 2009), which deals with Japan's political and corporate public relations strategies, and

"14 Stairs - Reportage on the Niigata Girl's 9 Years and 2 Months Confinement Case" (Shogakukan - 2006), which won the 12th Shogakukan Non-fiction Award for Excellence.



The front cover of 'Infiltrating the Former Unification Church' - Tankobon Softcover, Nov. 2023), by Masaki Kubota

His new book, "Infiltrating the Former Unification Church - the Complete Story of the Request for a Dissolution Order and the Deepest Secrets of the 'No Good Coverage'", is currently on sale.

Since the shooting of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, there have continuously been reports critical of the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) (formerly the [Unification Church](#)). There are many books with "Former [Unification Church](#)" in their title on the bookstore shelves, but they are all critical. In such a landscape, a book that conveys a true image of the religious organization and the voices of current members was published at the end of November - "Infiltrating the Former Unification Church". Why did the author, non-fiction writer Masaki Kubota, infiltrate an organization that has been requested to be dissolved? I asked him about it. (Interviewer: Seisaku Morita).

- It has been about a month since the publication of "Infiltrating the Former Unification Church".

Fortunately, sales are going well. At Amazon, it was temporarily out of stock and had to be reprinted in a hurry.

- What made you interested in the former Unification Church?

The reason was that I was interested in the International Federation for Victory over Communism (IFVOC - a political organization that is friendly with the [Unification Church](#) and is anti-communist). Since I had also covered politics, I naturally knew that the IFVOC had worked with conservative politicians in the Liberal Democratic Party for a long time. There was nothing shady about it.

The media had been talking about the relationship between Shinzo Abe and the former [Unification Church](#), saying, "There exists something like that." Journalist Eito Suzuki (鈴木エイト), who continuously has criticized the organization, has pursued this on the net and elsewhere. However, I felt really uneasy after the shooting incident when the media made a lot of noise reporting that the relationship was "shady", and as if it were a "new fact".



Masayoshi Kajikuri

There is an episode that symbolizes the fact that the information that is being published is too biased. It happened right after the publication of an article I wrote where I interviewed Masayoshi Kajikuri (梶栗正義), chairman of the International Federation for Victory over Communism. It was published on President Online in August last year.

I have been in the media industry for a long time, so I have many acquaintances who work in newspapers and television. At a dinner party, there was a famous journalist from a major media outlet, whom I respect for his interviewing skills. That senior colleague said, "I saw the article. They do mind-control! That organization is outrageous!"

When I asked him how much he had covered the former [Unification Church](#), he said, "I've read Eito Suzuki's book" (Kubota laughs).

I was surprised what was going on.



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- Is the media's reporting biased because there is only one source of information?

That journalist, who has a career and has been pursuing political corruption, did not do the interview himself, but picked up a biased book. Because he believed what was written in it, he got all worked up with a sense of justice, saying, "Those guys are outrageous, and I can't tolerate them."

Too many media people make judgments that "that religious organization is a problem" without conducting any interviews, and despite having no acquaintances who are believers. That might be fine for ordinary people, but it is something really frightening.

At the time of Aum Shinrikyo (オウム真理教), there were interviews with spokesperson Fumihiro Jyoju (上祐史浩), and believers appeared on TV to debate "Your doctrine is strange". This time, people who have never met or seen a believer all criticize the religious organisation.

So, the source of information is the claims of some five or six persons, including lawyers who represent people claiming to be victims, and Eito Suzuki. Therefore, it is called "reporting on the former [Unification Church](#)", but it has become "victim reporting". This situation is not only unfair; it is abnormal. I wanted to make a difference by writing a book against this. Therefore, biased media coverage has become the theme of the book.

The book starts with a report on "sacred sites" in South Korea. The aim was to highlight the fact that Eito Suzuki and Seiji Miyane (宮根誠司 - the host of Yomiuri TV's "Miyane-ya") reported on the religious facilities from a distance. Of course, they could only go so far, but that scene was very symbolic [not getting to the depth of the matter].

Whether you say it's about "spiritual sales" or "mind control", you should ask current believers, not former ones. Suzuki and Miyane are saying, "Please look at that gorgeous facility" from the outside. The current media coverage is not asking insiders, so my book starts with a report from the inside of the sacred site to symbolize that fact [the insider view].



Eito Suzuki (鈴木エイト), born as Kiyofumi Tanaka

Text "Author from Media World Exposes Its Huge Bias" - Seisaku Morita

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Important principles of human rights and religious freedom at risk as Japan is urged to do a U-turn

14 important leaders of organisations championing human rights and religious freedom issued 29th October an urgent **statement** where they protest the recent attempt by elements within the Japanese government to pass legislation that would immediately freeze the assets of the **Family Federation** of Japan and appoint a trustee to manage them. Such legislation would make it virtually impossible for the **Family**

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Federation to defend itself well in the ongoing legal battle that has just commenced, where the **Family Federation** is fighting the Japanese government's request to the courts to have the minority religious organization dissolved.

The 14 leaders point out in the **statement**, which was published on **Bitter Winter** 31st October 2023,

"It



Activist leftwing lawyer Masaki Kito from National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales, an organisation hostile to the **Family Federation**. Photo: Screenshot / **Bitter Winter**



Taro Kono, government minister who brought extreme leftwing lawyer Masaki Kito, who is hostile to the **Family Federation**, in as special advisor to the Kishida government. Photo (2019): Kuhlmann / MSC / Wikimedia Commons. License: **CC Attr 3.0 Ger**

seems that, rather than protecting the alleged victims, the measure is aimed at putting the **Family Federation** immediately out of business in Japan and preventing it from organizing an effective defense against the liquidation suit by depriving it of the necessary resources. It also proves that the claim that the **Family Federation**, once dissolved, will continue to enjoy religious liberty and will 'only' be deprived of its tax-exempt status as a religious corporation is false. In fact, the request to freeze the assets and appoint a trustee shows that the real intent of the opponents is to prevent the **Family Federation** from continuing its normal activities in Japan."

The protest from the 14 emphasize that freezing the assets of the **Family Federation** and liquidating it would set a dangerous precedent for the authorities to introduce similar steps against many other religious movements that certain political groups or anti-religious lawyers are opposed to. Already groups like the Jehovah's Witnesses have been mentioned in this context.

The champions of religious freedom and human rights make it clear that they see the attack on the **Family Federation** as part of a larger campaign against religion generally,

"Scholars have studied how campaigns against religion start by targeting comparatively small and unpopular groups. Measures against them are supported by the media and applauded by public opinion (whose ideas about these groups are, of course, largely shaped by the same media). However, these measures become precedents and establish general principles soon applied against dozens of other religions."

There are examples of such



A public warning against the Jehovah's Witnesses in the town of Torzhok in Tver Oblast, Russia in 2012. The headline says "Caution, sect!!!"

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Photo: In 2012, the headlines say: "Russia, 2012". The text goes on to say, "Brothers and sisters! As became known recently, near the walls of our holy monastery, followers of the sect Jehovah's Witnesses secretly preach their teachings. Be careful and vigilant! Don't let yourself be fooled! You can get answers to all questions about faith and the Church from the brotherhood of the monastery at any time and every Sunday within the framework of Boris-Glebsk conversations." Photo: Artyom Svetlov / Wikimedia Commons. License: CC ASA 4.0 Int. Cropped

campaigns in states like Russia and China. The Jehovah's Witnesses were targeted at an early stage there, but little by little oppressive measures were introduced against other faiths. In the urgent [appeal](#) by the 14 leaders they state,

"[...] our experience demonstrates that ideologies that are in power in these regimes, including Communism, are often also at work in democratic countries. That the opposition to the [Unification Church](#) in Japan had one of its political roots in Communist campaigns targeting its conservative ideas and activism has been acknowledged by scholars who have studied the issue."

The urgent [statement](#) appeals to the politicians and courts of Japan to turn down the proposed law to freeze the assets of the [Family Federation](#) and to rethink the dissolution order. In addition, the 14 call on "the democratic allies of Japan and the United Nations to make their voice heard as a voice of reason, freedom of religion or belief, and human rights."

The experts on human rights and religious freedom also urge "all churches and religions that have a presence in Japan to speak out against the new asset-freezing law and the dissolution."

The 14 leaders from organisations championing human rights and religious freedom are

- Sam Brownback, who served as U.S. Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom from 2018 to 2021 and is currently Co-chair of the International Religious Freedom Summit.
- Katrina Lantos Swett, former chair of the US Commission on International Religious Freedom, currently President of the Lantos Foundation for Human Rights and Justice.
- Dr. Massimo Introvigne, Italian sociologist of religion, Co-founder and Managing Director of Center for Studies of New Religion (CESNUR).
- Dr. Aaron Rhodes, Executive Director of the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights (IHF) between 1993 and 2007, currently President of Forum for Religious Freedom of Europe (FOREF).
- Willy Fautré, Co-founder and Director, HRWF – Human Rights Without Frontiers.
- Marco Respinti, Director-in-charge, "Bitter Winter," a daily magazine on freedom of religion and human rights.
- Thierry Valle, President, CAP-LC – Coordination des Associations et des Particuliers pour la Liberté de Conscience.
- Eric Roux, Chairman, EIFRF – European Inter-Religious Forum for Religious Freedom.
- Francesco Curto, Co-founder, Fedinsieme [Faiths Together].
- Alessandro Amicarelli, President, FOB – European Federation for Freedom of Belief.
- Hans Noot, Director, Gerard Noodt Foundation for Freedom of Religion or Belief.
- Raffaella Di Marzio, Managing Director, LIREC – Center for Studies on Freedom of Religion, Belief, and Conscience.
- Rosita Šorytė, President, ORLIR – International Observatory of Religious Liberty of Refugees.
- Camelia Marin, Deputy Director, Soteria International.

Featured image above: Left: Sam Brownback in 2015. Photo: Gage Skidmore / Wikimedia Commons. License: CC ASA 2.0 Gen. Cropped. Right: Katrina Lantos Swett in 2017. Photo: Netherlands U.S. Embassy / Wikimedia Commons. License: CC Attr 2.0 Gen. Cropped.

"Japan Urged to Make U-turn" – text: Knut Holdhus

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