

FFWPU Europe and the Middle East: A Sided, Prejudiced, Unfair Japanese Media

Knut Holdhus
January 3, 2024



Paul Becker / Becker1999

From a Stop Asian Hate demonstration in Columbus, Ohio, USA 21st March 2021 - The photo is purely for illustrative purposes, and the persons featured are, as far as we know, not related to the Family Federation / Unification Church.

Award-winning author exposes mountain of prejudice in Japanese media

Tokyo, 30th December 2023 - Published as an article in the Japanese newspaper Sekai Nippo. Republished with permission. Translated from Japanese. [Original article](#)

Conveying the Voice of Believers Without Being Prepared to Talk Behind Their Back

Part 2 of an interview with Masaki Kubota (窪田順生), author of "Infiltrating the Former Unification Church"

by Seisaku Morita (森田 清策)

- Even if you do not intend to defend a religious organisation that is denounced as an "anti-social" and "anti-Japanese cult", you can expect criticism just for posting its perspective on a website.

In fact, I have been told so (laughs). When I interviewed Masayoshi Kajikuri (梶栗正義), chairman of the International Federation for Victory over Communism, I was told by a media person that it was

meaningless to listen to such people as they would only tell you lies anyway.



Masaki Kubota. Photo (2023): Sekai Nippo

However, I was interested in what the people taking the side of the [religious organisation](#) would say. I thought it was only natural to include their perspective for the sake of fair reporting.

PRESIDENT Online

President [Japanese business management magazine] also understood this. However, after the interview article was published, there was a lot of criticism on the internet, such as "What is the point of including the arguments of these problematic people?" and "President has fallen to the ground by including the arguments of such people."

Even after that, I suggested to various media outlets that they include articles by lawyers who defend the [religious organisation](#), its affiliated organisations, and its followers, but I was refused with a "No way!" The reason given was that including such articles would "benefit the problematic religious group" and "It would be impossible to consider the feelings of the victims". Instead, I was often criticized with comments behind my back like, "Kubota is brainwashed," and "He is being paid".



Sekai Nippo

I'm not a reputable person in the first place, so I don't care too much about it (laughs). Because we live in a media world like this, I am used to people coming with various comments that is different from my own thoughts, principles, and beliefs. Media people tend to criticize more than ordinary people because media persons don't write what they themselves have researched.

Of course, there are rational people who say, "It's necessary." However, they evaluate it as "impossible for us to do". They acknowledge that what Kubota is doing is very meaningful. They think it's strange for the media not to report the other side's arguments. However, in the end, they just conclude by saying, "We support you".

I feel like saying, "Won't you like to work with me?" (laughs).

Everyone belongs to a media organization, so even if you think it's good [what you have produced], you are rejected by your superiors. The publishing plans were also rejected by various publishers. The responsible editors and close editors were enthusiastic, saying, "We should do it. If our publishing house doesn't do it, who will?" However, when we met after about a week, they hung their head and said, "I'm sorry. My boss is still [...]".

Oddly enough, it was the same with publishers who published yakuza [Japanese mafia] autobiographies and criminal confession books. Although I think that is a problem, this time around it's the former [Unification Church](#) that is having such an experience and strange things happening.

- You were prepared for an attack when the book was published.



The front cover of 'Infiltrating the Former Unification Church' by Masaki Kubota

I thought that some people might spread stories that would discredit my credibility in the media or tell them, "Don't use that person!"

However, the book I published expresses my opinion based on thorough research and having listened to the opinions of members of the [religious organisation](#). Even if someone points at you or insults you behind your back, you have something you can show them, in the form of a book, and say, "If you think so, please read this book and see if that's true."

If it is just an article on the internet or a YouTube documentary, people will think that a dubious writer is claiming whatever he wants. Therefore, it makes sense to put it together in the form of a book. It is expected to be criticised by lawyers going after the former [Unification Church](#). They may criticize it as PR for the [religious organisation](#), but I can also tell them, "Please read the book all the way to the end! Is it PR for them?"

The book also contains stories of believers who are critical of the [religious organization](#). I think that I, as an atheist, can argue with them, saying, "I just wrote it after interviewing them in the

usual way." (Interviewer, Seisaku Morita)

To be continued. Part 3 and 4 coming soon.

Text "A One-sided, Prejudiced, Unfair Japanese Media" - 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.

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.

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Disinformation Dispelled At Press Conference

November 11, 2023 • Knut Holdhus

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Disinformation dispelled as new proposal is made and positive contributions emphasized

Tomihiro Tanaka, the President of the [Family Federation of Japan](#), spoke at a press conference 7th Nov. 2023 at the [federation's](#) national headquarters in Shibuya, Tokyo. Representatives of most of the Japanese media world were present and heard his comments on the situation since the [Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology \(MEXT\)](#) submitted a request for a dissolution order against the

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Family Federation at Tokyo District Court.

Tanaka pointed out,

“As an organization, we cannot accept the recent measures taken by the *Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology* to request the dissolution of our **organization** from the perspective of freedom of religion and the rule of law. Therefore, we will continue to firmly assert our legal position. At the same time, we will proudly promote reform of our **religious organisation** based on the 2009 Compliance Declaration.”

Positive contributions

President Tanaka emphasized the positive contributions of the **Family Federation** to the Japanese society,

“We are a religious corporation that celebrates its 64th anniversary this year. There are about 100,000 active believers throughout Japan. They are ordinary Japanese citizens who pray sincerely in the morning and evening, go to church on Sundays to worship, study the Bible and the **Unification Principles**, our doctrine, work as members of society on weekdays, and socialize with their neighbors.



The family is important for the **Family Federation**.
Photo: Nathan Dumlao / Unsplash.

Through their studies at the **Family Federation**, many believers understand the importance of valuing 'living for others' while helping each other towards creating 'happy families' and a 'peaceful society', and they live their lives to the fullest while understanding the fact that they are working hard together.

We will continue to engage in activities that contribute to Japan's public and national interests while striving to comply with laws and regulations as Japanese citizens, so as not to cause any misunderstandings among the people. We would like to ask for your warm consideration and understanding regarding the 'freedom of religion' of our **Family Federation** members and believers.”

Complaints against members

Tanaka touched on the issue of complaints against members,

“It is possible that some of our believers in the past may have taken actions that went too far from social norms. However, we believe that they did not act out of self-interest, but rather out of a desire to help others in their own way.

We promise to do our best to thoroughly implement the Compliance Declaration and guidance based on church reform, comply with laws such as the new law enacted this year, and ensure that we will never again receive evaluations such as 'deviating from social appropriateness'.

Although it is unfortunate that we have received requests for refunds and consultations regarding donations up to now, we have resolved each case

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donations up to now, we have resolved each case sincerely. We will continue to respond carefully to various such consultation contents in the future.

Furthermore, we will thoroughly guide our members that donations should respect the autonomy and initiative of each individual and family, so as not to burden the families of our believers."

Effect of media disinformation

Tanaka also commented on the effect of a wave of media disinformation where the **Family Federation** is somewhat held responsible for the assassination of Shinzo Abe in July 2022,



*From the press conference in Tokyo 7th Nov. 2023.
Photo: Screenshot from live transmission by the **Family Federation of Japan**.*

"Since the incident involving former Prime Minister Abe last year, there have been many inquiries from former believers and some current believers who are anxious because of the media, asking if they can get their past donations back. We have responded to each and every one of these people with sincerity at our organization or each believers' group. [...]

Since the incident, we have responded to a total of 664 refund requests in the past year and four months, with a total refund amount of approximately 4.4 billion yen. The months of September and October immediately following the incident had the highest number of refund requests.

When we make a refund, we discuss it while considering individual circumstances and refund based on mutual agreement. We respond while taking into account the situation at the time of the donation, how it compared to the economic situation at the time, and the current family situation.

We will continue to respond carefully and appropriately to any future refund requests. However, donations are a very precious thing that was offered to **God** by our believers as a sign of gratitude and cooperation with **God's** will. We also have a responsibility to manage these precious donations appropriately, so we cannot simply return anything that has been requested for return. We hope you understand this."

Specific case brought by hostile lawyers

In his speech, President Tanaka also mentioned a specific case brought against the **Unification Church**, now called the **Family Federation**, by a hostile team of lawyers,



Masaki Kito, one of the hostile lawyers of Nationwide Unification

"I would like to talk a little about the request for a refund of approximately 3.9 billion yen made by 124 people in the form of 'group negotiations' by the Nationwide Unification Church Victims' Countermeasures Legal Team (全国統一教会被害対策弁護団). At press

Church Victims' Countermeasures Legal Team (全国統一教会被害対策弁護団). Photo: Screenshot / Bitter Winter

conferences and other events, they have claimed that our organization's response has been dishonest.

But we have already responded five times since May this year to the 99 persons for whom we have already completed an investigation into this matter. We continue to check the remaining individuals.

The total amount of money claimed by the 99 people we have responded to, is approximately 2.3 billion yen. Of that, about 800 million yen is legally valid and has been confirmed as received by our organization. Many of the other claims include some that have passed the exclusion period, some that cannot be confirmed by records, some that have already been settled, and some that have been claimed by someone else than the person himself.

Negotiations are currently stalled because they continue to insist on group negotiations for all of these claims and ignore our organization's responses. As we explained earlier, we have already responded to 664 requests. For each case, whether done personally or through a lawyer as an agent, we will continue to cooperate as organization or local congregation to respond to each and every one of them."

Freezing assets

Tanaka went on to comment 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. He said,

"Next, I will talk about overseas remittances. In discussions on the establishment of the law for the preservation of the assets of our organization, the overseas transfer of our organization's assets is often mentioned as one of the concerns.

Regarding this, at a press conference held by Hideyuki Teshigawara and our legal adviser in September of last year, we stated that we, as part of church reform, would significantly reduce support for overseas remittances. We have also stopped overseas support and missionary support. We do not plan to transfer our organization's funds overseas before the court ruling on the dissolution order is finalized.



Hideyuki Teshigawara. Photo: Screenshot from live transmission by the [Family Federation of Japan](#).

In fact, we have been instructed that overseas remittances are not possible except for those with reliable documents such as invoices from the transaction bank. Therefore, there is no need to worry about transferring our organization's assets overseas before the trial of the dissolution order begins."

New proposal

President Tanaka also made a new proposal to the government of Japan,

"As I have stated above, we are not worried about responding to requests for the return of donations or the overseas transfer, and we do not believe that the Property Preservation Measures Act which is being discussed in the current Diet is necessary at all.

discussed in the current Diet is necessary at all.

However, for those who are still concerned, we would like to propose a 'special deposit' from our organization. We are confident that our legal claims will be recognized in court, which has already begun proceedings on the dissolution order request. However, until a conclusion is reached in court, we have decided to prepare a deposit and deposit it with the government. The amount is expected to be between 6 billion and a maximum of 10 billion yen. After taking into account the annual budget adjustment, we were able to come up with a plan.

In the current situation where neither the victims nor the amount of harm has been identified, there is no system for depositing money under the current law. However, we are willing to prepare a deposit if the government can provide a system as a limited special measure.

Recently, the *Nationwide Unification Church Victims' Countermeasures Legal Team* pointed out that the potential amount of 'harm' is estimated to be around 120 billion yen. According to the results of a survey conducted by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, the cumulative amount of 'harm' over the past 43 years is one-sixth of that amount. Moreover, most of it has already been resolved by settlement or agreement, and there is no basis for the 120 billion yen. Therefore, we believe that our organization can respond sufficiently on its own in the future."

Wild allegations

Towards the end of his speech, President Tomihiro Tanaka dispelled certain wild allegations,

愛天.愛人.愛國

Love Heaven, love people, love country in Chinese characters. Photo: hpwords.com

"I would like to make one more comment in response to the criticism that the [Family Federation](#) is anti-Japanese. Since last year, we have received criticism that 'the [Family Federation](#) has an anti-Japanese ideology.' However, I would like to reiterate that this is not true at all. The core of the [Unification Church's](#) teachings is to love heaven, love people, and love the country. With the family as the basic unit, it aims to realize a peaceful world through love for Japan.

In fact, as one of its activities, we have been fighting on the front lines to protect Japan from the threat of international communism that denies the dignity of [God](#) and human beings. We have cooperated with the International Federation for Victory over Communism (IFVOC), a friendly organization, and have been actively engaged in volunteer activities in various regions with the desire to love the region.

The criticism of being 'anti-Japanese' that has been directed at the [Family Federation](#) by taking out of context our close ties with Korea and some of the founder's statements is nothing more than a groundless misunderstanding, and many of our followers are most puzzled by it."

President Tanaka ended his speech by mentioning several reforms that the [Family Federation](#) has implemented since 2009.

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Featured image above: Tomihiro Tanaka at press conference in Tokyo 7th Nov. 2023. Photo: Screenshot from live transmission by the [Family Federation](#) of Japan.

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