

## FFWPU Europe and the Middle East: Bigoted Attitude In Major Japanese Media

Knut Holdhus  
January 4, 2024



From a large demonstration in Seoul 18th August 2022 against the persecution of the [Family Federation / Unification Church](#) in the Japanese media after the assassination of Shinzo Abe 8th July 2022

### Author from the media world reveals the bigoted attitude he found in Japanese media



Sekai Nippo

Tokyo, 31st December 2023 - Published as article in the Japanese newspaper Sekai Nippo. Republished with permission. Translated from Japanese. [Original article](#)

#### Big Media's Sense of Justice Is at Risk

Part 3 of an interview with Masaki Kubota (窪田順生), author of "Infiltrating the Former Unification Church"

by Seisaku Morita (森田 清策)

- The publication of "Infiltrating the Former Unification Church" has also to do with your beliefs about journalism.

I have been in this business for a long time, but I am careful not to advocate my own ideology. This is my theory, but whether it's the media or journalists, they will always be biased.

One of the ways I do this is to present what I see and hear as just "my opinion". I do not take stances such as "I am absolutely right," or "This is the truth about the [religious organisation](#) as I see it." As much as possible, I want to leave it up to the reader to judge, and I continue to work with that attitude.

- Do you mean that you present material for the reader to consider?

I'm just throwing this in here. You become self-righteous when you say, "This is it!" Journalists who proclaim "anti-authority" and emphasize "standing with the weak," can be very authoritative. Those who say, "diversity is important," are the ones who impose their own values and justice. I question such things.

It's okay if an individual does this, but it's scary if it's big media. It's dangerous if Asahi Shimbun, NHK, etc. start saying, "It's we who are right!" Even as a freelance writer in a weak position, I am careful not to become like that.

- Protecting the human rights of the vulnerable is said to be an important role of journalists. However, the media rarely reports on the forced de-conversions and faith-breaking (abduction and confinement) carried out by deprogrammers, Christian pastors and families of members of the [Family Federation for World](#)

[Peace and Unification](#) (formerly [Unification Church](#)), who have sued for damage.



Masaki Kubota. Photo (2023)

I understand the stories of former believers who are now suing for damages from spiritual sales and large donations. However, in the past, there were not only those issues, but also problems of abduction and confinement. Rather than taking sides on these issues, the journalist I envision should discuss them from a broader perspective.



Called "recluse" by journalist Eito Suzuki. Here Toru Goto (後藤徹) in 2008 barely able to move after being held in forcible detention by faith-breakers for more than 12 years. Photo: [Japanese Victims' Association against Religious Kidnapping and Forced Conversion](#)

However, now Eito Suzuki (鈴木エイト), who goes after the former [Unification Church](#), is aggressively against the [church](#), calling a victim of abduction and confinement a "recluse" (引きこもり - hiki komori), which is a hugely extreme thing to say.

It's wonderful to stand by those who claim to be victims, as an ally of the weak. Then why can't we take the same stance towards believers who claim to be victims of abduction and confinement? Not to do so is so unnatural that one might think that the stance has been decided from the beginning.

- Do some become aggressive because they only talk about things that are convenient for them?

Yes, I feel like it's a position talk [when people say things that are convenient or advantageous to themselves from their respective positions, without consistency in their claims or policies]. I don't think people suing for damages from the [religious organisation](#) are liars. In any organization, people who quit tend to harbor a strong resentment against that organization. When it comes to faith, you may not be able to live a new way of life unless you deny the faith, so I understand their point.

On the other hand, there are many members who believe in the teachings of the [religious organisation](#) and make it the pillar of their lives. We need to listen to both viewpoints and find a balance. However, it is unfair to ignore the arguments of believers who sue because they were abducted and locked up, and dismiss them with the words "mind control".

When I say balance, I don't mean that I personally am a balanced freelance writer, but that we should be balanced as a whole. As for damages caused by the [religious organisation](#), Sayuri Ogawa (pseudonym) and others continue to complain, and there are journalists who listen to them. On the other hand, there are freelance writers like me who listen to active believers. Both exist, and it's up to everyone in society to judge. I don't think there is a good balance at the moment. (Interviewer: Seisaku Morita)

"Scary Bigoted Attitude in Big Media" - text: Seisaku Morita



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

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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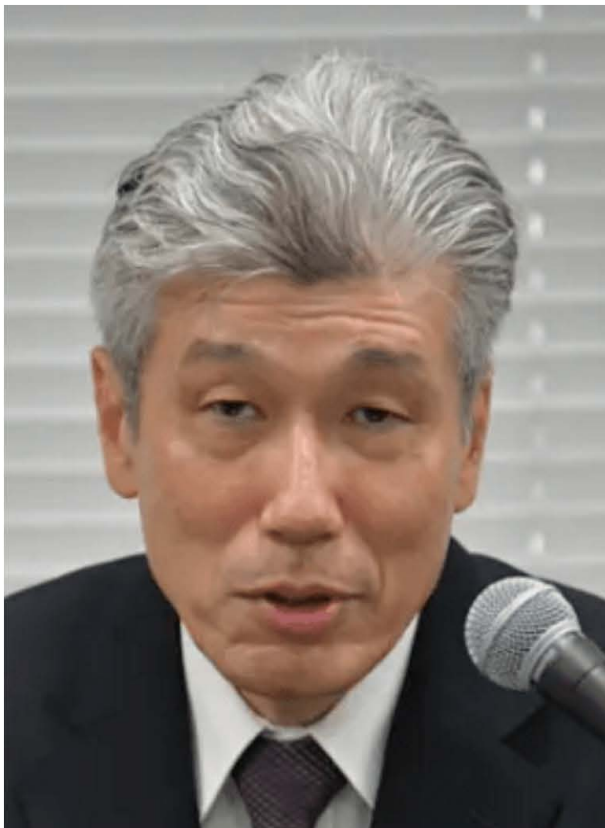
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## Kidnapping Victim Sues Activist Journalist

October 5, 2023 • Knut Holdhus

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*Victims of kidnapping and forcible detention mocked and insulted by activist journalist*

4<sup>th</sup> October 2023 – Published as an article in the Japanese newspaper *Sekai Nippo*. Republished with permission. Translated from Japanese. [Original article](#)

**Toru Goto, victim of abduction and confinement, files lawsuit**

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# against Eito Suzuki over his remark that Goto is a “recluse” (hiki komori).

By Sekai Nippo Editorial Department, 4<sup>th</sup> Oct. 2023

**“He is not qualified to talk about human rights,” Goto alleges in tears**



The logo of the Sekai Nippo

Toru Goto, 59, a member of the *Family Federation for World Peace and Unification* (Family Federation, formerly the Unification Church) was abducted and confined by his family and faith-breaking experts in order to force him to give up his faith. On 4<sup>th</sup> October, he filed a lawsuit against journalist Eito Suzuki at the *Tokyo District Court*, seeking damages for defamation. He is seeking 11 million yen [\$ 74,000] as compensation for emotional distress.

According to the complaint, Suzuki criticized Goto on the news website *Yaya Nikkan Cult Shimbun*, where Suzuki is the main writer, as “a male believer who stayed in his flat and became a NEET [Not in Education, Employment, or Training] after recuperation, becoming just a ‘recluse.’”

On Nippon TV's *Information Live Miyaneya*, he repeatedly criticized Goto, such as commenting that he was a “recluse” (引きこもり – hiki komori). Furthermore, Suzuki also defamed Toru Goto at a symposium held in July this year. When Suzuki was asked about the fact that he referred to Goto as a “recluse” (hiki komori), Suzuki replied, “I don't care.” He also posted on X (formerly Twitter) that Goto was a puppet forced to play the “role of a victim”.



The head table at the briefing in Tokyo 4th Oct. 2023. From left: Attorney Tatsuki Nakayama, plaintiff Toru Goto, Attorney Shinichi Tokunaga. Photo: Sekai Nippo. Published with permission.

At a briefing session held in Tokyo after filing the lawsuit, Goto emphasized, “Eito Suzuki's remarks are truly terrible. He is not qualified to talk about human rights.” “I simply cannot tolerate insulting and mocking remarks about women who committed suicide while in captivity, rape victims, and people who are victims of PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder),” he said in a choked voice. Explaining his motive for filing the lawsuit, he stated, “If we allow this to continue, the number of victims of abduction and confinement will increase even more.”

According to the *Family Federation*, more than 4,300 believers were abducted and held captive. Among them, Toru Goto was confined to a room in an apartment in Tokyo and other areas for 12 and a half years. He filed a civil lawsuit against relatives, a faith-breaking activist and a Christian pastor, who were all involved in his abduction and confinement. The *Supreme Court* ruled in 2015 in Toru Goto's favour.



Regarding the government's request for an order to dissolve the *Family Federation*, Shinichi Tokunaga, a lawyer representing the plaintiffs, said that the trial would be a

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Attorney Shinichi Tokunaga.  
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good opportunity to make the reality of the abduction and confinement known to the public, which could work to the advantage of the [Family Federation](#).

Separately, on the same day, the *Universal Peace Federation* (UPF), a collegial group of the [Family Federation](#), filed a lawsuit with the *Tokyo District Court* against Suzuki seeking 11 million yen in damages for defamation caused by Suzuki's comments about former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

Abe sent a video message to an international conference held by the UPF in September 2021. Suzuki wrote on X on 1<sup>st</sup> July this year that he had "inside information of 100 million yen to President Trump and 50 million yen to former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe." Suzuki made the same claims in lectures and magazines. UPF insists that it has neither paid Shinzo Abe nor any of his affiliated organisations.

Featured image above: Toru Goto at briefing in Tokyo 4th October 2023. Photo: [Sekai Nippo](#). Published with permission

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