

FFWPU Europe and the Middle East: Japanese Donations Issue - God Does Indeed Need Money

Knut Holdhus  
February 10, 2024



Miniature pagoda sold by members of the [Unification Church](#) in Japan

Investigative journalist unravels the donations issue central to claims against Family Federation in Japan

旧統一教会問題の核心！  
文科省も洗脳  
全国弁連こそ解散を

もはやオカルトの世界

つけ、教団を「国民の敵」に仕立て上げること成功したのが、全国霊感祖・文鮮明師への敵愾心は凄まじい。

福田ますみ  
ノンフィクション作家

Hanada-2024年2月号 ● 98

Facsimile from page 98 of the February 2024 issue of Monthly Hanada

Masumi Fukuda, award-winning Japanese author and investigative journalist, has written an in-depth report titled "Dissolve the Anti-Cult Lawyer Group, Not the [Unification Church](#)." She is referring to a group of leftwing activist lawyers who have specialized in fabricating false "victims".



In a series of four articles, [Bitter Winter](#), the online magazine for human rights and religious freedom, has published her report originally written in Japanese and published by the magazine Monthly Hanada in its February 2024 issue.

On 29th January 2024, [Bitter Winter](#) published the second of its four articles in English. It was headlined "[Myth and Reality of the 'Spiritual Sales'](#)".

On [part 1](#) of Masumi Fukuda's report

The current case where the Japanese authorities have requested Tokyo District Court to issue an order to dissolve the [Family Federation](#), is based on a media outcry surrounding "victims", largely orchestrated by an organization of activist lawyers of National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales, an organization founded 37 years ago to eliminate the [Unification Church](#).

According to Masumi Fukuda, many individuals voluntarily donated to the [Family Federation](#), but later, due to a loss of faith or familial pressure, requested refunds. Historically, the [Family Federation](#) has typically honored such refund requests, which is uncommon for religious organizations and may inadvertently lead to unintended

consequences.

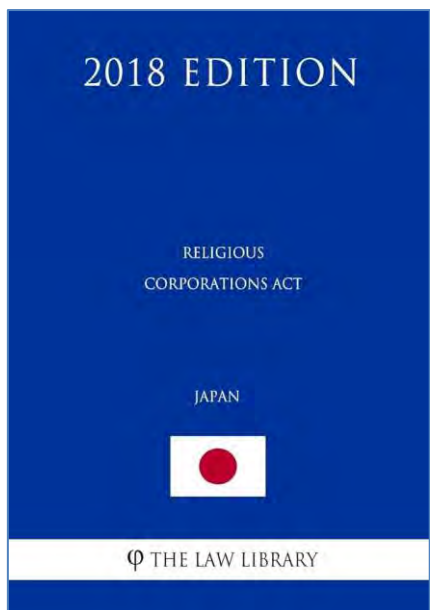
The investigative journalist writes,

"National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales (NNLASS) is fabricating new "victims" by provoking individuals with statements like, "Let's negotiate for a refund. Let's sue. If you do that, you will get your money back." Thus, there are two types of plaintiffs: ex-believers who are instigated by NNLASS lawyers who say, "You can easily recover the money you donated," and those who are victims of deprogramming - ex-believers who were kidnapped and confined by

their families and then persuaded to sue by the deprogrammers."



Masumi Fukuda speaking 20th January 2024 in Tokyo



Front page of 2018 English version of Religious Corporations Act of Japan

On the other hand, it's likely shocking for the [Family Federation](#) to hear that their "systematic solicitation of donations" is cited as grounds for a dissolution order, potentially violating Article 81, Paragraph 1, of the Religious Corporations Act. Critics argue that excessive donations to the [Family Federation](#), deemed unnecessary by some, contradict the true purpose of religious organizations. However, donations are crucial for fulfilling the fundamental purposes of religious groups such as spreading teachings, conducting ceremonies, and educating believers.

Fukuda writes,

"Opponents often criticize the high donations to the [FFWPU](#), claiming condescendingly that "[God](#) doesn't need money." However, for religious organizations to fulfill these purposes, donations are essential. Actually, [God](#) does indeed need money."

Additionally, donations are the primary income source for non-profit religious corporations. Despite this, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) views systematic donation solicitation as deviating significantly from a religious organization's purpose, a conclusion seen as shortsighted and lacking understanding of religious dynamics.

The [Family Federation](#) asserts that donations mainly support overseas missionary activities and educational expenses, aligning with the core purposes of religious corporations. They maintain that donation collection aims to support these activities rather than financial gain.

Masumi Fukuda maintains that in essence, soliciting donations for religious purposes should be acceptable as long as it's not coercive or extortionate. Unlike cases where dissolution orders were granted, such as the Myokaku-ji [temple near Osaka belonging to Nichiren Buddhism] case,

the [Family Federation](#) hasn't faced criminal charges or fraud allegations under the Penal Code or Civil Code.



Front cover page of Monthly Hanada Feb. 2024

Fukuda interviewed four individuals who had made significant donations to the [Family Federation](#), formerly known as the [Unification Church](#). The donation practices of the [church](#) were a central factor in the request for its dissolution. Among these followers, three were women and one was a man.

Michiko Tsuji, a 73-year-old woman residing in Tokyo, joined the [Family Federation](#) in August 1983. She recounted how a fellow believer visited her home that same year to sell a personal seal. There were no coercive tactics used, and Tsuji, who was expecting a child at the time, was intrigued by the believer's fortune-telling and name analysis services. She ended up purchasing a set of seals for 240,000 yen, considering it a mysterious guidance. Subsequently, she and her husband attended [Family Federation](#) exhibitions and eventually purchased a pagoda.

Tsuji, who had been leading a prosperous life, often faced jests from acquaintances questioning her involvement with the [Unification Church](#). However, she was searching for deeper meaning in her life since the age of 15. The [Unification Church](#)

provided answers to her existential quest.

After acquiring the pagoda, Tsuji had several spiritual experiences, such as feeling a sensation of

ascending from hell to heaven while climbing a historic temple staircase in Korea. She experienced "spiritual movement" and saw her maternal grandmother's face, which led her to pray for causes like the reunification of Korea and world peace.



[Father Moon](#) receiving an honorary doctorate from Bloomfield College, New Jersey, USA in the year 2000

Learning about Reverend [Sun Myung Moon](#)'s sacrificial efforts to save humanity, Tsuji adopted the teaching to [live for the sake of others](#). Over the forty years of her membership, she and her husband have donated a total of 100 million yen.

While Tsuji emphasizes that donations are not compulsory, she believes that understanding the importance of [God's providence](#), which is [God's](#) plan for humanity's salvation, naturally leads to contributions. [Providence](#), as explained by the [Unification Church](#), guides believers on how to act for humanity's salvation, particularly in the context of combating ideologies like communism. However, Tsuji acknowledges the potential issues if excessive donations lead to neglecting family responsibilities.

She reflects on how some early believers, driven by their zeal for achieving world peace and paradise on earth, neglected their families. This serves as a point of introspection for the [Family Federation](#) according to Tsuji.

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On [part 1](#) of Masumi Fukuda's report

"Donations Issue: 'God Does Indeed Need Money'" - text: Knut Holdhus

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Yet more on donations issue: [Undercover Study Found Allegations Untrue](#)

Even more on donations issue: [No Reasons for Dissolution](#)

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# Militant Lawyers Dictate Government Policy

February 9, 2024 • Knut Holdhus


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*Militant lawyers known to fabricate false “victims” allowed to dictate policy of Kishida administration*


In a series of four articles, [Bitter Winter](#), the online magazine for human rights and religious freedom, has published an in-depth report originally written in Japanese by investigative journalist Masumi Fukuda and published by the magazine Monthly Hanada in its February 2024 issue. The report by Fukuda, who is also an award winning author, is titled

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Lawyer Exposes Dirty Leftwing Plot

February 1, 2024



Fukuda, who is also an award-winning author, is cited “Dissolve the Anti-Cult Lawyer Group, Not the [Unification Church](#).” She is referring to a **group of leftwing militant lawyers specializing in fabricating false “victims”**.



On 27<sup>th</sup> January 2024, [Bitter Winter](#) published the first of its four articles in English. It was headlined “[Attorneys Against Religious Liberty](#)”.

On [part 2](#) of Masumi Fukuda's report.

A group of fanatical activist leftwing lawyers, in league with a media willing to listen, has **managed to paint a horrendous picture** of the former [Unification Church](#), now known as the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#), as a fraudulent group posing as a religion. This group is perceived to exploit innocent Japanese individuals for their wealth and subject second-generation believers to unimaginable hardships.

The fanaticism of *National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales* (NNLASS) is in many ways **reminiscent of how the Jews were portrayed by the Nazis** before and during World War II. Masumi Fukuda points out how the activist network has successfully collaborated with the media to shape this negative perception, painting the former [Unification Church](#) as an “enemy of the people”. However, in her opinion, the NNLASS’s actions appear more akin to a left-wing political movement disguised as a campaign to rescue victims of fraudulent activities.

Attorney Hiroshi Yamaguchi, a member of the *Second Tokyo Bar Association*, played a pivotal role in establishing the NNLASS and appears to harbour an intense animosity towards Reverend [Sun Myung Moon](#), the founder of the [Unification Church](#). Yamaguchi’s involvement stems from his deep-seated disdain, as evidenced by his declaration at an NNLASS gathering where he vehemently denounced [Reverend Moon](#).



*Hiroshi Yamaguchi, activist leftwing lawyer and leading member of National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales. Photo: Screenshot / [Bitter Winter](#)*

Fukuda writes,

“At a gathering after an NNLASS meeting, Attorney Yamaguchi, surrounded by like-minded lawyers, reportedly shouted, ‘[Sun Myung Moon](#), go to hell!’ Other lawyers raised their fists and echoed in agreement, shouting, ‘Yes!’”



*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](#)*

Taro Kono, Minister for Digital Transformation and Minister for Consumer Affairs and Food Safety since August 2022, just after the Abe assassination, **insisted on including Masaki Kito, one of the leading militant lawyers from the hostile network, in a study group set up by Kono** to investigate the [Unification Church](#). This gave the activist lawyers a key position to dictate their fierce anti-[Unification Church](#) plans to the government.

[More about Taro Kono appointing Masaki Kito.](#)

From the beginning, the goal of the lawyers had been to dissolve the [Unification Church](#). And on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2023, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) made a historic announcement, seeking the dissolution of the [church](#), now called the [Family Federation](#).

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Fukuda explains,

"For Attorney Yamaguchi [another leading activist leftwing lawyer and founder of the hostile network], this news marked a momentous occasion, undoubtedly filled with deep emotions.

In February 1987, just before the formation of>NNLASS, he had declared his intention to ask the then Ministry of Education to 'investigate the anti-social activities of the [UC](#) and demand the revocation of its religious corporation status.' This was even before tackling the actual details of the alleged spiritual sales fraud ('Shakai Shinpo', February 20, 1987). It has been a long journey of thirty-six years, a passage through time."

Yamaguchi's sentiments upon the announcement reflected a mix of emotions, as he expressed his extreme views and hope that current followers would seize the opportunity to redefine their paths in life. **His hope is of course that all followers abandon their beliefs.** However, his words were met with skepticism and criticism from believers and neutral observers alike, who indeed questioned his sincerity and motives.

The>NNLASS's bizarre claim that all Japanese [Unification Church](#) followers are victims of deceptive evangelism and mind control may not only be viewed as unwarranted interference by believers. In addition, this is sheer **peddling of outdated concepts**, abandoned by most serious scholars a long time ago and **regarded as pseudoscience**. Dr. Massimo Introvigne, leading sociologist of religion, has this to say,



Dr. Massimo Introvigne in April 2023. Photo: [FOREF](#)

"The Abe assassination is now used for reviving the dead horse of brainwashing and of theories claiming that bad 'cults', unlike good 'religions', recruit members and donors through mental manipulation. Just as it happened during the European witch hunts and the Japanese persecution of Christians for which Abe apologized, accusations of black magic – of which brainwashing is only the secularized version – and of operating an 'evil cult' lead to dehumanize, discriminate and persecute those so accused.

Today, they come for the [Unification Church](#). Tomorrow, they may come for any religion that has among its enemies, lobbies powerful enough to persuade the media it is a 'cult'." (Quoted from [The Abe Assassination. The Word 'Cult' Is A Tool for Discrimination](#), an article by Dr. Massimo Introvigne, published by [Bitter Winter](#), a magazine on religious liberty and human rights, 2<sup>nd</sup> Sept. 2022.)

Yamaguchi's call for followers to "reclaim themselves" raises doubts about his true intentions and the extent of his commitment to their well-being.

In light of these developments, Yamaguchi's obvious advocacy for individuals to break free from perceived mind control and regain their autonomy raises eyebrows and prompts further scrutiny into his motivations and the broader agenda of the>NNLASS.

Yamaguchi and Kito, as well as the other members of the network believe that all members of the [Unification Church](#) ought to be deprogrammed. Of course, only by "experts" approved of by those lawyers. And the Kishida administration has already allowed such an extreme network to set the agenda, like it does in communist China with its war on religion. One almost gets the feeling that the **network of**

**lawyers regards themselves as saviours, come to save people who cannot think for themselves.**

During a press conference on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2023, MEXT Minister Masahito Moriyama elucidated the rationale behind the court petition for the dissolution of the [Family Federation](#). According to the Hanada article republished by [Bitter Winter](#), he disclosed,

“After November of last year [2022], the Agency for Cultural Affairs exercised the ‘report collection and right of questioning’ of the Religious Corporations Law seven times, considering the possibility of filing a dissolution order and gathering relevant materials. Concurrently, it conducted hearings with the>NNLASS and individual victims, numbering over 170 nationwide.”



Masahito Moriyama, Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT). Photo (2023): 首相官邸ホームページ. License: [CC Attr 4.0 Int](#). Cropped

It is of course extraordinary that the authorities conduct 170 hearings with the anti-[Unification Church](#) lawyers and so-called victims, and yet **refuse to hold even one hearing with current believers.**

Building upon these premises, Moriyama highlighted that

“the former [UC](#), at least since around 1980, has continuously imposed restrictions on the free decision-making of numerous believers, causing significant damage by inducing contributions and purchases of goods under conditions where normal judgment is impeded, and disturbing the peace of their lives.”

Claims about imposing “restrictions on the free decision-making of numerous believers” is simply another way of saying that the [Unification Church](#) uses mind control. As mentioned above, “mind control” is a concept discredited by the majority of scholars of religion.

Moriyama also detailed around 32 cases where liability for damages stemming from activities post-1980 was recognized, involving a cumulative tally of 569 supposed victims.

Attorney Tatsuki Nakayama points out that many of the so-called victims, were forced by the activist lawyers to file for damages,

“Deprogrammers in consultation with leftwing lawyers deprogrammed as many as more than 4,000 believers and **forced those poor believers to file a lawsuit** against the [Family Federation](#) for donation refunds. The lawyers said something like this, ‘**Unless you file a lawsuit, we continue to take you as mind-controlled by the [Family Federation](#).** So do file an action against the [Family Federation](#). Otherwise, we will continue to confine you and imprison you for deprogramming.’”



Attorney Tatsuki Nakayama in January 2024. Photo: Screenshot from live transmission.

The [Family Federation](#) challenges Moriyama's claims and emphatically maintains that its activities in no way meet the criteria warranting a dissolution order. The [federation](#) disputes the government's claims of organizational (e.g., led by leaders), “malicious,” or continuous misconduct. Additionally, the [Family Federation](#) criticizes the>NNLASS, alleging that the “scale of damage” disclosed by the MEXT amounted to only



approximately 5% in terms of cases and 16% in terms of financial amount, compared to figures asserted by the>NNLASS over the past 35 years, highlighting what they perceive as **significant exaggeration by the>NNLASS regarding the extent of damages.**

Notably, the bulk of these purported “damages” have already been resolved. Additionally, a crucial aspect to consider is that despite the MEXT’s claim of individually interviewing over 170 alleged victims nationwide, they **have not conversed with any current member** of the [Family Federation](#). This investigation is perceived as severely lacking in fairness, prompting doubts about how the MEXT plans to verify the credibility of the testimony of the “victims” under these circumstances.

**Featured image** above: Masumi Fukuda speaking 20th January 2024 in Tokyo. Photo: Screenshot.

On [part 2](#) of Masumi Fukuda's report.

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