

FFWPU Europe and the Middle East: Japanese Government Minister Lets 3 Foxes In The Henhouse

Knut Holdhus
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Known as a maverick politician -
Taro Kono in 2019



Sekai Nippo

Kishida lets maverick minister Taro Kono appoint hostile activists to government investigation committee

Tokyo, 15th November 2022 - Originally published as an article in the Japanese newspaper Sekai Nippo. Republished (with permission) now due to actuality. Translated from Japanese. [Original article](#)

Religion and Politics: The Injustice of Kono's Investigation Committee Endorsed by National Network of Lawyers Against

Spiritual Sales

Interview with Seishiro Sugihara, Professor Emeritus at Musashino Women's University (武蔵野女子大)

by Editorial Department of Sekai Nippo, interviewer: Head of politics section Shigeki Takeda (武田滋樹)

The ruling and opposition parties are debating a damage relief bill and the use of the right to ask questions in order to request a dissolution order for the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) (formerly the [Unification Church](#)). Seishiro Sugihara (杉原誠四郎) points out that the separation of religion and politics is not properly understood in Japan. We asked him about current trends in the political world from the perspective of religion and politics.

- The exercise of the right to ask questions in order to request a dissolution order against the [Family Federation](#) and the contents of a relief bill for victims have become one of the focal points in the political arena.



Professor emeritus Seishiro
Sugihara

The one who took the initiative was Taro Kono (河野太郎), the Minister in charge of Consumer Affairs. Immediately after taking office on 10th August 2022, he briskly launched the "Investigation Committee on Measures against Malicious Practices such as Spiritual Sales" (hereinafter referred to as the Investigation Committee) within the Consumer Affairs Agency. He submitted a report in time for the full-scale discussions in the House of Representatives Budget Committee on 17th October 2022, suggesting measures such as "the need to exercise the right to collect reports and ask questions based on Article 78-2 of the Religious Corporations Act, with a view to requesting the dissolution of the former [Unification Church](#)."

- What is the problem with the so-called Kono Investigation Committee?

It's riddled with problems, from the selection of its members to the way deliberations are conducted and the content of the

report.

Since damage caused by the former [Unification Church](#)'s spiritual sales methods has been pointed out, it is understandable if the Consumer Affairs Agency wants to investigate and remedy any damages, but in order to do so, it must objectively choose individuals.

However, like a Trojan horse, Minister Kono brought the following to serve as members of the government's countermeasures Investigation Committee:

Masaki Kito (紀藤正樹), a lawyer from National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales (全国靈感商法被害対策弁連 - Zenkoku benren), which aims to dissolve the former [Unification Church](#);

Kimiaki Nishida (西田公昭), a professor at Rissho University and representative director of the Japan Anti-Cult Association;



Shiori Kanno in 2016



Masaki Kito, one of the hostile lawyers of National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales and Nationwide Unification Church Damage Countermeasures Legal Team

Shiori Kanno (菅野志桜里), a lawyer who has been critical of the former [Unification Church](#) and has worked on spiritual sales issues during her time as an opposition lawmaker.

This is clearly not a fair appointment.

In reality, Masaki Kito and Shiori Kanno have led the discussions in the Investigation Committee. They invited lawyer Masaki Gouro (郷路征記) from National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales. For 35 years, he has kept suing the former [Unification Church](#) for damages. He was invited to give an explanation based on materials that even went into the details of the doctrine.

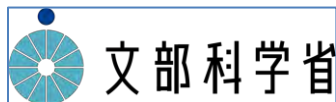
On the other hand, there has been no hearings on the objections or explanations from members of the former [Unification Church](#) at all. Furthermore, regarding the request for dissolution, which amounts to the deprivation of fundamental rights of religious corporations, there has been no attempt to seek opinions from impartial constitutional scholars, criminal law scholars, or religious scholars. It is highly unjust that such a deliberation is by an administrative agency. It poses significant issues concerning the rule of law and the fairness of the law.

- What is the content of the report?

Clearly, it is a proposal that is outside the jurisdiction of the Consumer Affairs Agency, and it is an act of overreach. At that time, it was the National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales that argued that the former [Unification Church](#) deserved an order to dissolve, and only a portion of the media outlets reported the claim as it was. It had not been officially determined, and one could say it was only at the stage of suspicion.

Nonetheless, through its report, the Kono Investigation Committee gave the government's endorsement to the claims of the National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales. This can be seen as a typical example of populist politics catering to

the masses. It resulted in pouring oil on the fire of searching for "connections" between the Liberal Democratic Party and the former [Unification Church](#), even plunging the Liberal Democratic Party into great confusion. This amounts to a serious negligence that could be called a political crime carried out by Minister Kono.



Symbol of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan

Prime Minister Fumio Kishida cannot ignore Kono's proposal because it is a proposal of a government Investigation Committee that is headed by Kono's ministry. It could be pursued by the Budget Committee as a "Cabinet disagreement." In the end, on the day the report was submitted (17th October 2022), Kishida instructed the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology to investigate the former [Unification Church](#) (exercising the right to ask questions).

The Prime Minister changed his interpretation to be in line with the recommendations of the report, stating that acts unlawful according to the Civil Code which were deemed not to satisfy the conditions for a dissolution request, were suddenly overnight interpreted as "potentially satisfying the conditions", thus aligning with the suggestions of the report.

- The report also proposes to expand the scope of the right of revocation based on the theory of mind control in order to remedy the damage to victims of spiritual sales practices.

Mind control is a term used by non-believers to describe the state of mind of believers of a religion. It is too far-fetched to claim that donations and contributions based on faith, are made in "a state where

rational judgment cannot be made" due to mind control. Why should only the state of faith of the former [Unification Church](#) be defined as mind control? If applied broadly to other religions, it would mean that all faith is mind control. This is an extreme and dangerous argument that threatens religious freedom.

Seishiro Sugihara was born in Hiroshima Prefecture in 1941. He completed his master's degree program at the Graduate School of Education, University of Tokyo in 1967. He has served as professor at Josai University [private university in Saitama] and at Musashino Women's University (now Musashino University - in Tokyo). His publications include "Ideal Separation of Religion and Politics and Constitutional Amendment" (理想の政教分離規定と憲法改正 - Jiyusha, 2015). He has co-authored works such as "The Disease Called Yoshida Shigeru" (吉田茂という病 - published in 2011).

"Maverick Minister Lets '3 Foxes in the Henhouse'" - text: Shigeki Takeda, Sekai Nippo. Published 21st Feb. 2024 at 1:36 pm, updated 10:05 pm.

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January 28, 2024 • Knut Holdhus

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Some of Fumio Kishida's administration, 13th Sep, 2023. Photo: 首相官邸ホームページ / Wikimedia Commons. License: CC BY 4.0 Int. Cropped

Extreme China-inspired leftwingers rejoicing as Kishida administration introduces laws for mass deprogramming tens of thousands with "wrong views"

In an article in Bitter Winter, the leading online magazine for human rights and



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Journalist Reveals Ugly Leftwing

online magazine for human rights and religious freedom, Dr. Massimo Introvigne points out in an article 25th Jan. 2024 what extreme anti-religious measures the Kishida administration are introducing.



The headline is "Is Japan Introducing State-Sponsored Deprogramming?"

Read the [whole Bitter Winter article](#).

Kishida and his government ministers have apparently bought the anti-religious narrative of a network of radical leftwing lawyers, *National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales*.

The background to the proposed government-supported faith-breaking is a cabinet meeting on 19th January, where suggestions were put forth to encourage current members of the [Unification Church](#) to leave the group, aided by individuals who have left the organization, known as apostates.



Dr. Massimo Introvigne, april 2023. Photo: FOREF

The Italian sociologist of religion explains how such extreme plans stem from events starting on 8th July 2022, when former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe was assassinated. The assassin's motivation was attributed to his mother's involvement with the [Unification Church](#), leading to her financial ruin due to excessive donations to the group. This incident sparked a media frenzy against the [Unification Church](#), supported by anti-cult organizations.

Subsequently, the Japanese government sought legal action to dissolve the [Unification Church](#) and passed laws targeting "cults", including measures to recover donations and prevent the indoctrination of minors. Introvigne emphasizes that these efforts are fueled by a belief in the discredited theory of brainwashing.

He mentions how the laws represent a serious infringement on religious freedom and aim to not just control the [Unification Church](#), but also other religions. Introvigne spells out how one of the laws,

"ordered religious groups not to 'indoctrinate' minors, with provisions clearly targeting not only the [Unification Church](#) but also the Jehovah's Witnesses and conservative Christian groups. A third law offered assistance to 'victims' of 'cults'. Recent draft guidelines proposed a very extensive notion of 'victim', also including those who deny having been victimized – again, because of 'brainwashing'. In practice, every member of the [Family Federation](#) is a 'victim', including those who say they are perfectly happy to remain in the movement."

Despite deprogramming being declared illegal by the *Japanese Supreme Court* in 2015, recent proposals suggest reintroducing a form of state-sponsored deprogramming. This proposal is based on the idea that all members of the [Unification Church](#) are victims of brainwashing and need rescuing through deprogramming.

Introvigne describes the reasoning behind the extreme measures,

"Now, however, Japan is considering re-introducing a state-sponsored form of deprogramming. This is a logical consequence of the broad notion of 'victim' being proposed and of the Japanese government's support of the pseudo-scientific theory of brainwashing. If all Japanese [Unification Church](#) members are 'victims' who do not realize they are 'victims' because they are under the effect of 'brainwashing', the only way to 'rescue' them is deprogramming."

Conspiracy

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This approach mirrors practices in authoritarian states like China and Russia, where state-sponsored



Artistic rendering created by AI Image generator of Chinese communist party indoctrination.

deprogramming is common. Japan's plan involves collaborating with apostate ex-members to train counselors who will provide support to current members, including approaching second-generation members in schools. Additionally, there are proposals to establish "shelter homes" for second-generation members, purportedly to assist those in poverty but likely aimed at isolating them from their families and facilitating deprogramming efforts.

These measures draw parallels to China's "Love Homes", where individuals are subjected to Communist Party indoctrination.

Introvigne writes,

"The 'shelter homes' are very similar to the 'Love Homes' where the Chinese Communist Party deprograms 'cultists' and their children, teaching them to repudiate the 'cult' and learn to 'firmly believe in the Communist Party, love the Party and follow the Party!'"

The Japanese Communist Party has expressed support for actions against the [Unification Church](#), suggesting a concerning trend towards government intervention in religious affairs reminiscent of authoritarian regimes.

The Italian scholar makes plain the connection to the Japanese Communist Party,

"In fact, we learn from the official website of the Japanese Communist Party that on October 16, 2023, the 'Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology Masahito Moriyama visited the office of Akira Koike, Secretary General of the Japanese Communist Party, at the House of Councilors, and reported that he had requested the Tokyo District Court to order the dissolution of the



For mass deprogramming: Akira Koike, 30th March 2023. Photo: [首相官邸ホームページ / Wikimedia Commons](#). License: [CC Attr 4.0 Int](#). Cropped



[Unification Church \(Family Federation for World Peace and Unification\)](#). Koike demanded that the government and the ruling party take responsibility for the care of active believers.'

What this 'care' is all about


For mass
deprogramming:
Masahito Moriyama, 8th
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can be easily guessed.
Perhaps Koike shared with
the Minister the good
example of China's 'Love
Homes!'"
Massimo Introvigne is an
Italian sociologist of religions
and founder and managing
director of Center for Studies

on New Religions (**CESNUR**), an international network of
scholars who study new religious movements. Introvigne is
also author of some 70 books and hundreds of articles in the
field of sociology of religion.

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