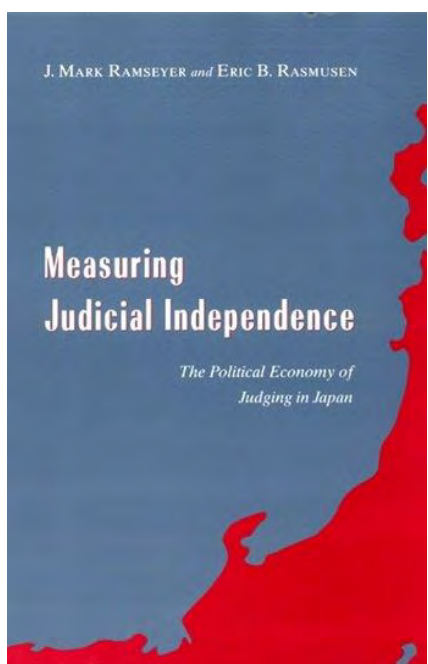


FFWPU Europe and the Middle East: Japan's Judge Admits Defamation But Still Dismisses Victim's Case

Knut Holdhus
March 19, 2024



Front cover page of "Measuring Judicial Independence: The Political Economy of Judging in Japan" by J. Mark Ramseyer and Eric. B. Rasmusen

Judge admits defamation and that group behind it is hostile to victim, but still dismisses victim's strong case.



Masumi Fukuda speaking in Tokyo
20th Jan. 2024

Professor J. Mark Ramseyer at Harvard Law School points out the strong bias in Japanese judicial practice and a lack of judiciary independence. He explains that government prosecutors win 99.9% of criminal cases and 98% of appeals. As a consequence, a presumption of guilt culture is prevalent. He described his observations in several articles later published as "Measuring Judicial Independence: The Political Economy of Judging in Japan,"

Another observer of the Japanese legal system is Masumi Fukuda, investigative journalist and award-winning author. She unveils startling disclosures concerning the deceitful legal actions initiated by anti-cult attorneys targeting the [Family Federation](#) in Japan. Her exposé published in [Bitter Winter](#), the online magazine on religious freedom and human rights, illustrates the attorneys' utilization of fabricated or exaggerated allegations, accusing the [federation](#) of practices such as brainwashing and extortion.

In the third of a series of four articles published by [Bitter Winter](#) from 23rd to 27th June 2023, Fukuda elucidates the prejudiced and inequitable treatment by the courts towards the [Family Federation](#), highlighting instances where evidence presented by the federation has been disregarded or summarily dismissed by certain judges. These lawsuits have been marked by injustice and illegality, inflicting significant harm and anguish upon the [federation](#)'s members.

The concluding installment of the [Bitter Winter](#) series sheds light on the true "anti-social" entity: the anti-cult lawyers striving to dismantle the [Unification Church](#) / [Family Federation](#) in Japan. In this article Fukuda reveals the orchestrated falsehoods and underhanded tactics employed by these lawyers, who have been disseminating misinformation and propaganda about the [federation](#). We gain insight into the covert motives and affiliations of these lawyers, who have aligned themselves with anti-cult factions, ex-members, and media platforms to undermine and intimidate the [Family Federation](#).

All this became apparent in a recent defamation court case at Tokyo District Court brought by the [Family Federation](#) against a leading activist lawyer known for his hostility towards the [religious organization](#), but is still accepted as advisor to the government.

Here is a press release (translated from Japanese) issued by the [Family Federation](#) in Japan on 15th March 2024 after losing the case even though the judge stated the wild claims the [federation](#) found defamatory were indeed defamatory. The [Family Federation](#) will according to the press release appeal the case.



From the header of ffwpu.jp, the official homepage of the [Family Federation](#) of Japan

"The verdict in the defamation lawsuit against Attorney Masaki Kito regarding his statement about 'prostitution' made on Yomiuri Television.



When attorney Masaki Kito (紀藤正樹) appeared on Yomiuri Television's information program 'Information Live Miyane-ya' (情報ライブ ミヤネ屋), he made statements about our [organization](#) such as 'because there is no money, they made believers engage in prostitution.'



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

In the lawsuit where our [organization](#) sought damages against the lawyer and the TV company for these statements, the Tokyo District Court delivered a ruling on 13th March 2024, completely dismissing our [organization's](#) claims. The statement made by attorney Kito, which became the point of contention, is as follows: 'Since 2012, the [Family Federation](#) has significantly divided into three factions, and within Japan, believers are further subdivided into four or six factions. In the most severe cases, the responsible individuals have been involved in incidents where they forced believers into prostitution due to financial constraints.'

In response to this statement, media outlets and viewers swiftly interpreted it as implying that our [organization](#) was actually forcing believers into prostitution. Consequently, the internet was flooded with accusations against our [organization](#). However, I want to emphasize that there is absolutely no factual basis for the claim that our [organization](#) has been engaged in such practices with its followers.

In his ruling, Presiding Judge Mikiichiro Dozono (堂蘭幹一郎) stated that the above remarks by Attorney Kito 'should be

considered as contributing to lowering the social reputation of the plaintiff (our [organization](#)) as a whole.' He judged that it constituted defamation against the [corporation](#).

In response to Kito's statement, Presiding Judge Mikiichiro Dozono acknowledged that the group making the claims that believers are forced into prostitution due to financial constraints, consists of approximately 15 individuals who are in opposition to our [organization](#). However, the judge stated that the court cannot definitively confirm the truthfulness of the claims that our [organisation](#) actually did force believers into prostitution due to financial constraints.

However, in determining the truthfulness (of Kito's defamatory statement, whether there is substantial reason to believe that the content of the statement is true), the court acknowledged that there was substantial reason for Attorney Kito to believe that the specific [organization](#) mentioned above was indeed engaging in making believers participate in prostitution due to lack of funds. Consequently, the court rejected any negligence on the part of the attorney and ultimately dismissed our [organization's](#) claims in their entirety.

However, it is an undeniable fact that due to Attorney Kito's statement, which was considered 'difficult to interpret clearly', criticism against our [organization](#) flooded the internet. Despite submitting evidence demonstrating how ordinary viewers perceived the program, the judges did not acknowledge any responsibility on Kito's part.

In the context of a television program where scenes change rapidly, interspersed with commercials, it is unreasonable to expect ordinary viewers to 'comprehensively consider the content of a special feature'. Therefore, there are even suspicions that the attorney deliberately made 'unclear' statements in an attempt to mislead viewers. Hence, the verdict that did not recognize any negligence on his part at all does not escape criticism.

Due to these circumstances, our [organization](#) intends to appeal this case and continue to fight.

Multiple media outlets published articles about the recent court ruling that completely omitted the fact that the court did recognize that the claim that believers are forced into prostitution due to financial constraints, is coming from a group composed of approximately 15 individuals who are hostile to our [organization](#). These articles created an impression that our [organization](#) was actually involved in such matters. However, such reporting, which misleads viewers, significantly damages our [organization](#)'s reputation and undermines the trust of ordinary viewers who expect accurate information. Therefore, our [organization](#) intends to lodge strong protests against such reporting."

Introductory text: Knut Holdhus

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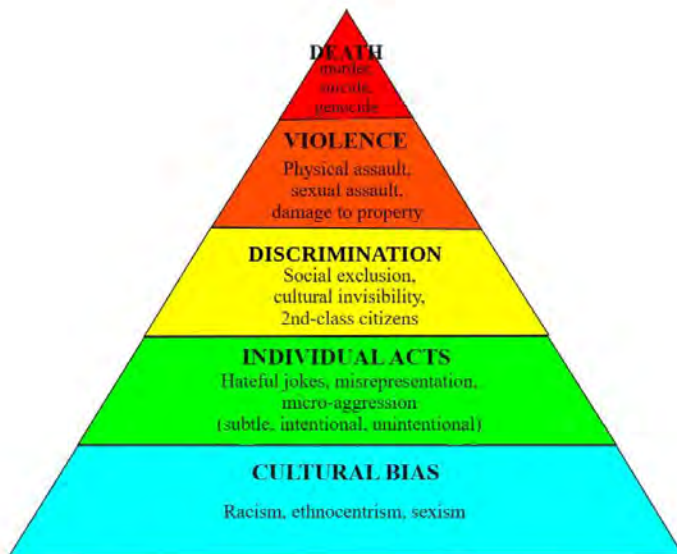
More about defamation: [Study Shows Wildly Exaggerated Unfounded Claims](#)



Study Shows Wildly Exaggerated Unfounded Claims

March 1, 2024 • Knut Holdhus

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Study based on Big Data reveals media and authorities spreading many exaggerated and unfounded claims against religious minority

What was the reporting intended

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to convey? Report with data on the hounding of the Unification Church

Part 3 of a presentation by Fumihiko Kato (加藤文宏), writer, author and and photographer, at a symposium on the theme "Why Did Reporting Go Astray? Thorough Examination by Journalists on Reporting on the Former Unification Church", (organized by UPF-Japan) held 20th January 2024 in Tokyo to investigate the media's continued coverage persecuting the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (formerly known as the Unification Church).

See [part 1](#), [part 2](#), [part 4](#), [part 5](#)



Only emphasized how evil it was.
Members called names and said to be involved in corrupt relationships difficult to cut. (labeling, exclusion, and human rights violations)

English reconstruction of one of the slides Fumihiko Kato used 20th Jan. 2024. Illustration: FFWPU

The media coverage fervently conveyed what is often referred to as the so-called "zubuzubu" (deeply involved) relationship between the religious organisation and national assembly members, criticizing both the Liberal Democratic Party and the government. However, it is not uncommon for believers, not just from the Unification Church, to have connections with politicians. There is **absolutely no evidence of why it is wrong or illegal for religious groups and believers to get involved in politics**, or what kind of impact it has. No evidence has been shown for any investigation or condemnation.

As a result of the assumption that the religious organisation and its members are evil, there have been – as **pointed out in the report by the U.S. Department of State** – instances of public opinion polls in favour of **denying believers human rights and political rights**. Steps taken to **exclude Unification Church believers from local councils** have been observed. Even when the **identity of the believers was revealed publicly**, the media didn't even question the practice of "outing".



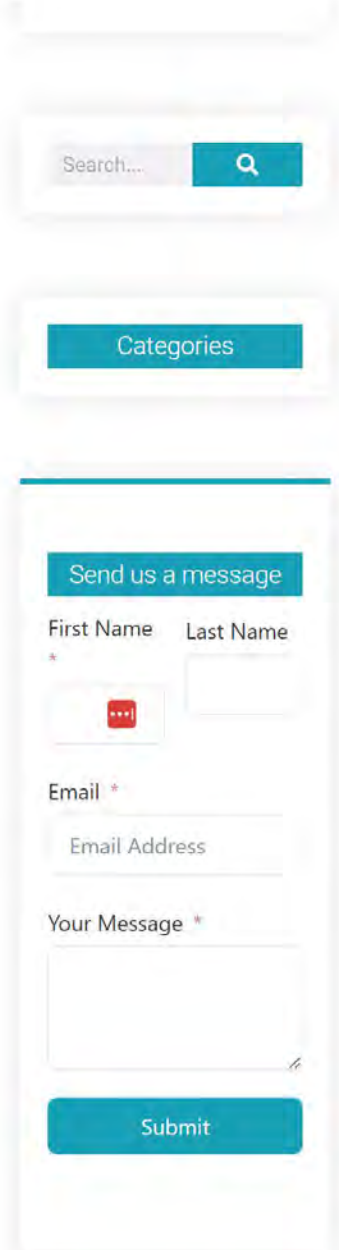
Now, let's use Google search Big Data to reveal how the public perceived the

English reconstruction of one of the slides Fumihiko Kato used 20th Jan. 2024. Illustration: FFWPU

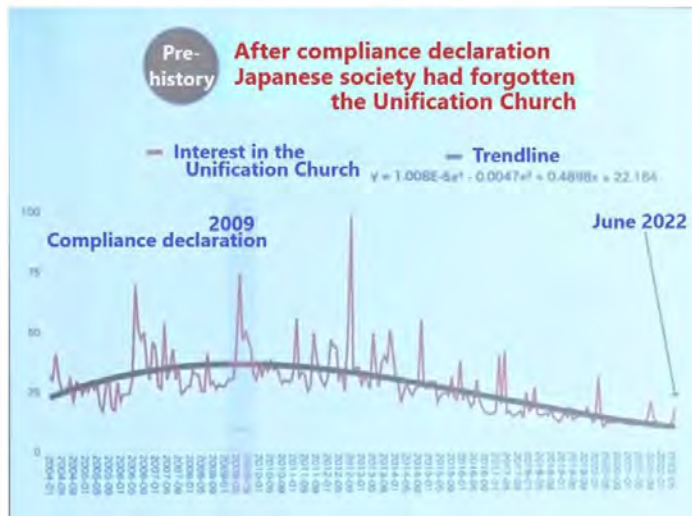
"zubuzubu" (deeply intvolved) relationship between politicians and the religious organisation. It was **extensively reported as a major problem**.

The advantage of using Google search Big Data lies in its vast number of users and the accumulation of data since 2004. The number of unique users – excluding duplicates from visiting the same website more than once, is referred to as the number of unique users.

Google's unique user count reaches a staggering 115.45 million in ten months. As it is the site with the highest number of users among those providing services in Japanese, and considering the keywords people use for internet searches, it's

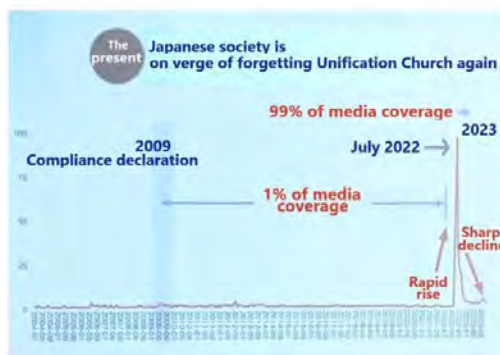


possible to infer what people wanted to know or what they were thinking.



English reconstruction of one of the slides Fumihiko Kato used 20th Jan. 2024. Illustration: FFWPU

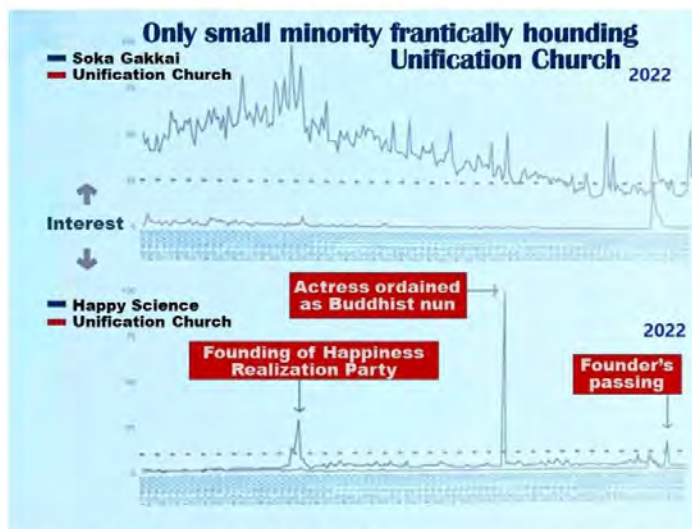
This graph shows the number of searches for the **Unification Church** from 2004 until just before the assassination. The number of searches increased until 2008, but then declined after the compliance restrictions imposed by the church in 2009. As compliance began to be strictly enforced, society began to forget about the **Unification Church**. During this period, the media hardly mentioned the **Unification Church** at all.



English reconstruction of one of the slides Fumihiko Kato used 20th Jan. 2024. Illustration: FFWPU

This graph shows the change in the number of searches for the **Unification Church** from 2004 to the present. There is a significant increase in searches in July 2022. The search volume surged in July

when investigative reporting began, but then sharply declined, and as we enter 2023, although the search volume is higher than before, it remains sluggish. The **Unification Church** is once again on the verge of being forgotten. The **decrease in people's interest is closely related to the decrease in news tweets**. It can be said that the news coverage was drawing people's interest to the **Unification Church** and created an uproar of criticism of the government.



English reconstruction of one of the slides Fumihiko Kato used 20th Jan. 2024. Illustration: FFWPU

The blue line on the upper graph shows the trend for the number of searches for the *Soka Gakkai*. The blue line on the lower graph represents the trend for the number of searches for "Happy Science" [A new religious movement, founded 1986]. The red line represents the **Unification Church**, with the red dashed line indicating its peak. As you can see, the interest

in referrals to the [Unification Church](#) is very small compared to other religions, and interest in the [religious organisation](#) is not common.

Furthermore, despite an increase in searches during the commotion when the [Unification Church](#) was hounded in 2022, it wasn't significant. It is evident that the level of interest was overwhelmingly much lower than when Happy Science formed a political party [2009], when an actress became a nun, or when Ryuhou Okawa (大川隆法) passed away [2023]. Moriヤマ (森山), *Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology*, said that the [Unification Church](#) caused anxiety and confusion to many people, but **only a small minority showed interest** in it. Soka Gakkai is familiar to people in both positive and negative ways, which is why there are so many searches.

If the [Unification Church](#) had caused harm on a regular basis locally, there would have been a large number of searches. Events surrounding the [Unification Church](#) were not a major issue in Japan. The hounding of the [religious organisation](#) was something that only a very **small number of people became frantic about, due to media influence**.

Let's consider the real nature of that frenzy.

Continued in [part 4 "Media and Activists Creating False Narrative"](#).

See [part 1 "Author: Japan's 'Apartheid-Style Social Exclusion'"](#), [part 2](#), [part 4](#), [part 5](#).

Featured image above: *Pyramid of hate and discrimination, English version. Illustration: HB / Wikimedia Commons. License: [CC ASA 4.0 Int](#). Translated.*

Fumihiko Kato (加藤文宏) has contributed to various media outlets, including opinion magazines. Under the pen name Fumi Kato (かとう ふみ), he has published works such as "Chushi Ruro" (厨師流浪 – Wandering Chef), "Kakai Fuki" (花開富貴 – Blossoming, Prosperous and Noble), and "Denko no Otoko" (電光の男 – Lightning Man). Last year, he contributed with an article titled "[Can News and Talk Shows Determine Good and Evil?](#)" in the February issue of *Monthly Seiron* (月刊正論), challenging the approach to reporting on the [Unification Church](#).

"Study Shows Wildly Exaggerated Unfounded Claims" – text: Fumihiko Kato

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