

**Second-Generation Unification Church Believers Discriminated in Japan. 4
Punishing Volunteers**

Masumi Fukuda
March 10, 2025

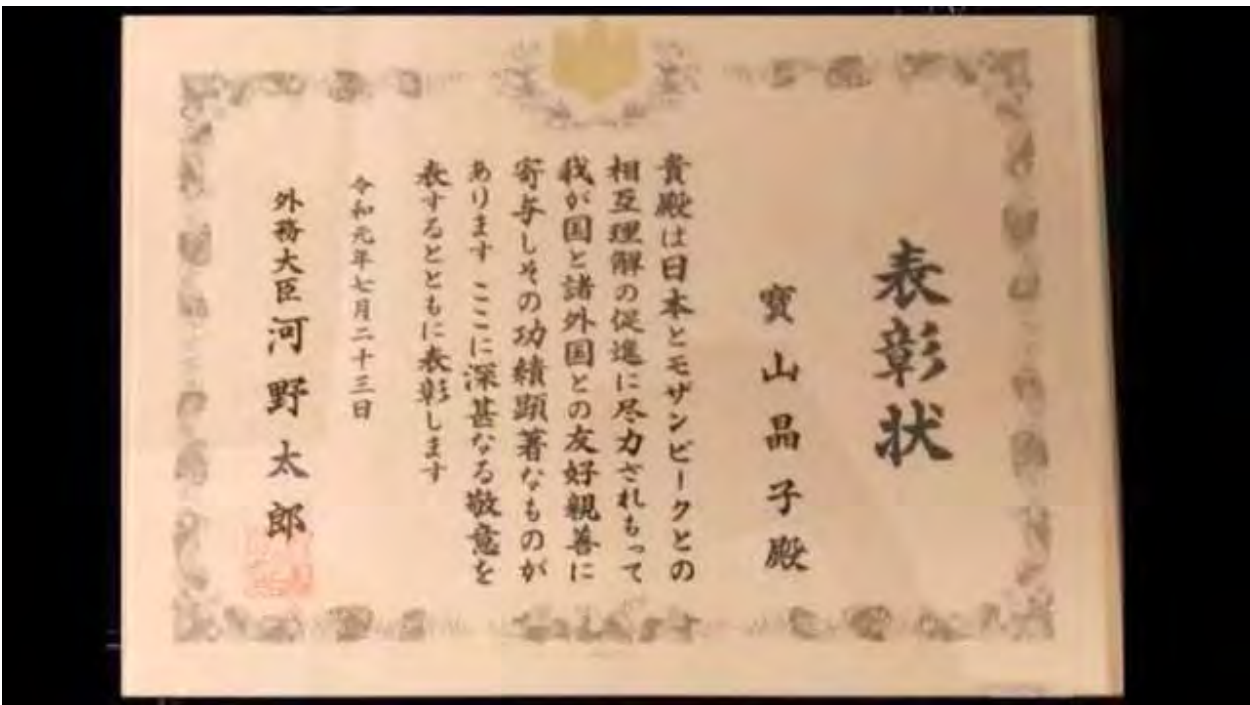


Youth members of the Women Federation for World Peace (WFWP), an organization connected with the Family Federation and heavily discriminated in Japan after the Abe assassination, help in a disaster area in the northern part of Kyushu in Japan damaged by the 2017 heavy rain.

Even those Family Federation members who perform valuable volunteer work have been harassed based on dubious theories spread by anti-cult lawyers. [Original Story](#)

The Family Federation and its affiliated organizations have long been enthusiastic about volunteer activities.

Kojima is from Hokkaido. When the Great East Japan Earthquake hit, she stayed overnight in the disaster area, and worked day after day to clear away the debris. Although the work was hard, it was very meaningful to her because she was able to put into practice the church's teaching of "living for the sake of others," and was able to build relationships with other people. In fact, the dedication of the Family Federation and its affiliated organizations was greatly appreciated by the local victims.



The Mozambique commendation revoked by the Japanese Foreign Ministry

However, these activities are now discriminated against simply because the Family Federation is involved. In the African country of Mozambique, a woman from a Unification Church affiliate

organization, while being continuously attacked by local bandits and suffering from malaria, managed to build a school attended by hundreds of local children.

She was highly appreciated by the Mozambican government. Her achievements over the years were also recognized in Japan, and she received the Foreign Minister's Commendation in 2019. However, the commendation was quickly revoked when a parliament member from the Japanese Communist Party (JCP) denounced her as "problematic."

Similarly in Japan, local governments have revoked commendations for the volunteer activities of Unification-Church-affiliated organizations. Prefectures and municipalities have returned small donations from the Family Federation and affiliated organizations, and have revoked the prefectural and municipal volunteer registrations.

The former Unification Church has become a "stain" on Japanese society. If an order to dissolve the church is issued, its believers may be stoned and expelled from our society.

"The media are irresponsible in insisting that it would not be a big deal to dissolve the Family Federation, Kojima told me. 'Just' the religious corporation will not exist and the churches will 'just' pay taxes. But once the government recognizes that a religious organization deserves to be dissolved, it will actually cease to exist. The damage would be tremendous."

And, if the dissolution is not such a big deal, it is difficult to explain why the National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales has persistently called for the dissolution of the former Unification Church for thirty-six years since it was established.

The former Unification Church is a new religion, and it is from South Korea. This in itself has become a controversial issue. The believers suffer when they are heartlessly called "anti-Japanese" and "traitors." The women are particularly hurt by these insults. "We are really frustrated when people call us 'anti-Japanese,' Ueda said. We have been educated to love our country, so we really have a passion for Japan, and we are proud to be genuine patriots."

I have come into contact myself with many believers of the Family Federation. I feel they look very much similar to the average Japanese conservatives. And I wonder who is really anti-Japanese. For instance, the Japan Federation of Bar Associations and the National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales are adamantly opposed to the Anti-Espionage Law.

The United Church of Christ in Japan has been actively involved in the abduction and confinement of members of the former Unification Church to "deconvert" them from their faith, and also systematically sides with South Korea on hotly debated issues such as the indemnification Japan is requested to pay for having recruited "comfort women" and conscripted workers during World War II. Some may argue they are the real anti-Japanese organizations.

We know, the anti-Unification-Church camp loudly proclaims that "the damage caused by the former Unification Church is serious and continues to this day." But they have not proved this to be true.



Volunteers from WFWP Japan have been cleaning up Marugame Castle in Kagawa Prefecture for seven years continuously

With regard to "spiritual sales," after the declaration of compliance with the law the Unification Church issued in 2009, the sales of goods (seals, statues of the Buddha, and others) whose price was regarded as extravagant by Family Federation believers has stopped. As for marble vases and two-stories miniature pagodas, the import and commercial companies accused of "spiritual sales" had already stopped importing and selling these items in 1987, when the National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales was founded. Nevertheless, the Network claims that there are still "damages" caused by the Unification Church/Family Federation after 2009, but what they mean when they say that "there are damages" is that "they receive requests for consultation."

The statistics of "damages" (in fact, "requests for consultation") supplied by the Network show that there were nine requests for consultation for seals, five for pots, and one for Buddha statues in 2020. There was only one request for consultation for seals and one for pots in 2021. The amount of the so-called "damages" was 22,786,500 yen (\$166,154) in 2020 and only 910,000 yen (\$6,636) in 2021.

Since the amount of "damages" caused by the spiritual sales, even considering all claims in the requests for consultation they received as well-founded, has been drastically decreasing in recent years, the Network has decided to add to its calculation even the "damages" (meaning, again, the claims about which they receive requests for consultation) for monetary donations. They call the latter "spiritual sales that do not involve the exchange of goods," thereby inflating their figures of the "damages" allegedly caused by the "spiritual sales."

However, in recent years the lawsuits to recover the alleged damages caused by those donations have almost disappeared. Tatsuki Nakayama, a newly appointed lawyer representing the Family Federation's world headquarters, analyzed 169 civil lawsuits filed against the church. He found that 165 cases concerned donations made, or started, before the declaration of compliance. Only four cases were for donations made after the declaration of compliance. Furthermore, there have been no lawsuits over new donations the church has received from believers after March 2016.

How can the government file a request for dissolution based on these figures? If the MEXT rushes forward with the dissolution request following the inputs of Prime Minister Kishida, even without having found evidence of any definite illegal act by the Family Federation, then Japan will no longer be a country governed by the law. Japan will be stigmatized internationally as a country where religion is persecuted.

The Family Federation's second-generation believers active in the church just want to do something useful for their country and society. Japan should not answer by humiliating, discriminating and persecuting these young women and men.

Masumi Fukuda was born in Yokohama in 1956. She graduated from the Department of Sociology of Rikkyo University. After working for a specialty magazine and a magazine production company, she became a freelance journalist. She has reported and written about crime, Russia, and other topics. Her books include "Stalin: A Portrait of His Family" (Bungei Shunju), "Russia, an Assassination State: In Search of a Missing Journalist" (Shinchosha), "The True Nature of Political Correctness" (Hojosha), and others. In 2007, she won the 6th Shincho Documentary Award for "Fabrication: The Truth About the 'Murder Teacher' in Fukuoka" (Shinchosha).

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03/17/2023 MASUMI FUKUDA

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by Masumi Fukuda.

Article 4 of 4. Read [article 1](#), [article 2](#), and [article 3](#).



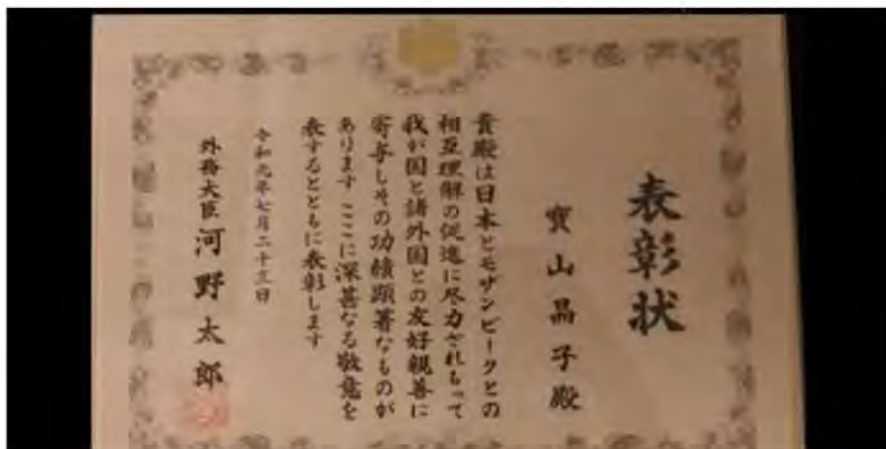
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The Mozambique commendation revoked by the Japanese Foreign Ministry. From Twitter.

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Masumi Fukuda

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