

FFWPU Europe and the Middle East: Japan Condones Coercive Faith-Breaking In Prison-Like Set-Ups

Knut Holdhus
January 14, 2025



11th January 2025, Suginami Ward, Tokyo, Dr. Hirohisa Koide (小出浩久), a physician, talks about his experience of being abducted and confined



Japanese physician recounts his harrowing ordeal at the hands of unscrupulous faith-breakers in prison-like set-ups

Tokyo, 13th January 2025 - Published as an article in the Japanese newspaper [Sekai Nippo](#). Republished with permission. Translated from Japanese. [Original article](#).

Panel Exhibition Highlights Forced Renunciation of Faith in Prison-Like Conditions

by the editorial department of [Sekai Nippo](#)

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Mr. Hirohisa Koide, victim of kidnapping, forced detention, and attempted faith-breaking

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Christian pastors and activists opposed to the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) (FFWPU, formerly the [Unification Church](#)) have stirred up fear among the families of members of the [religious organization](#) and forced members to renounce their faith, often involving abduction and confinement of believers. A panel exhibition organized by the "North Tama District Association for the Protection of Freedom of Religion and Fundamental Human Rights", was held on 11th and 12th January in Tokyo exposing the realities of the harm caused to kidnapped members.

The exhibition featured panels detailing incidents where churches were attacked with stun guns and iron pipes to abduct members, cases of forced psychiatric hospitalizations, and other abuses. It also showcased a confinement manual compiled by Christian pastors known as "faith-breakers", who advised families on forcing believers to renounce their faith.

Additionally, Dr. Hirohisa Koide (小出浩久), who was confined for over a year, gave a lecture at the exhibition. He testified,

"I was locked up in a Japanese-style room resembling a zashiki-rō (a type

of confinement room, see editor's note below) from morning until night. Although the confinement locations changed, they all felt the same."

He also recounted conversations with former members of the religious organization who said,

"I can't let go of anti-[Unification Church](#) books to avoid being drawn back into the [organization](#)."



An apartment block in Ogikubo, Tokyo where Hirohisa Koide was forcibly detained in 1992

Dr. Koide expressed his hope, saying,

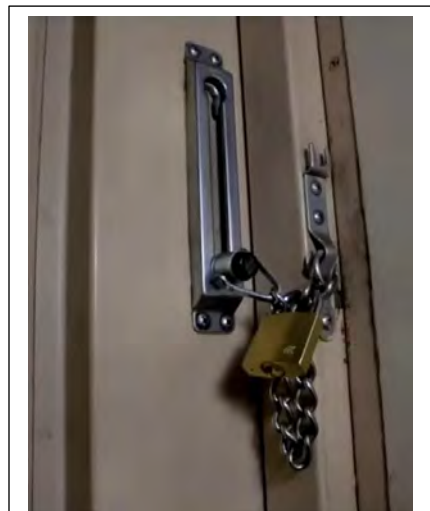
"I wish people could have the opportunity to be honest with themselves and recover their faith."

For a visual overview of the panel exhibition, you can watch the following video:

[Editor's note: A zashiki-rō (座敷牢) is a traditional Japanese confinement room used historically for restraining individuals, typically within a private household. Zashiki (座敷) refers to a Japanese-style tatami-matted

room. Rō (牢) means a jail or cell.

Historically, these rooms were used for confining family members who were mentally ill, violent, or otherwise considered disruptive or dangerous to the household or community. The practice was more common in the Edo (1603 - 1868) and Meiji (1868 - 1912) periods, before modern mental health care systems were established.



The door was chained

A Zashiki-rō was typically equipped with sturdy sliding doors reinforced with bars or locks, ensuring the person inside could not escape. It was located within a family home or a secluded part of the property, ensuring privacy. The confined individual was often left alone in this small, sparse room with minimal furnishings, and their basic needs were provided through a small opening or at designated times.

The term "zashiki-rō" today is often used metaphorically to describe situations of coercive confinement or control, as it evokes the idea of being trapped in a restrictive, oppressive environment. Such imagery is sometimes applied to cases of forced detainment or isolation, like in the more than 4,300 instances of members of the [Family Federation](#) being abducted and confined.]

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Japan: Exhibition Exposes Horrors Of Persecution

• November 19, 2024 • Knut Holdhus



Panel exhibition reveals the horrors of persecution in Japan, the land of abduction, confinement, and forcible faith-breaking

Tokyo, 19th November 2024 – Published as an article in the Japanese newspaper *Sekai Nippo*. Republished with permission. Translated from Japanese. [Original article](#).

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A panel exhibition showcasing the reality of religious persecution faced by members of the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) (FFWPU, formerly known as the [Unification Church](#)) was held on 17th and 18th November on the second floor of the south exit of Kokura station in Kitakyushu. The exhibition, titled "Abduction, Confinement, and [Forcible Faith-Breaking](#)", was organized by the "[Kitakyushu Citizens' Association to Protect Human Rights and Religious Freedom](#)". Many members of the association provided explanations of the panels to passersby, highlighting the horrors of abduction and forcible detention.

Among the panels depicting the intensity of the persecution was an image of Toru Goto (後藤 徹), who was [held in confinement](#) by his relatives in a single apartment room for [12 years and 5 months](#) but still refused to renounce his faith. The panel showed his emaciated appearance. One of the organizers said,

"When people saw the panel of Toru Goto, they were shocked to realize that something like this could happen so close to home. And when we told them about cases like a woman who developed severe atopic dermatitis due to her confinement and passed away at the age of 48, they listened attentively."



Photo used at the panel exhibition: Toru Goto in 2008, barely able to move after being held in forcible detention by his own family in league with professional faith-breakers for more than 12 years. Photo: Kazuhiro Yonemoto / [Japanese Victims' Association against Religious Kidnapping and Forced Conversion](#)

On Sunday, with many tourists and shoppers passing by, 750 flyers introducing the activities of the above-mentioned association were distributed. The person in charge said,

"We want people to understand our daily activities. Currently, there is an ongoing dispute due to the Kitakyushu City Council's resolution to sever ties with the [Family Federation](#). We want people to understand the details of that issue as well."

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Featured image above: A panel exhibition on victims of abduction held at the south exit of Kokura Station in Kitakyushu City on the southern island of Kyushu, Japan on 18th November 2024. Photo: Kennosuke Teraguchi (寺口賢之介)

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