

FFWPU Europe and the Middle East: Japan uses Fake News to harass innocent Unificationists

Knut Holdhus
July 17, 2024



Omission of key events from news picture about faith minority part of larger strategy based on news intentionally manipulated



Fake news and malicious manipulation of public opinion created by the media's "cover-up"

Tokyo, 16th July 2024 -
Published as an article in the Japanese newspaper [Sekai Nippo](#). Republished with permission. Translated from Japanese. [Original article](#)

by Tsukasa Masuki (増記代司)

Denounced as a "Conspiracy Theory"

There is a "guide" on NTT-related websites [*Editor's note: The Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Corporation (NTT) is a Japanese telecommunications holding company headquartered in Tokyo. It is the fourth largest telecommunications company globally in terms of revenue. NTT was established in 1952 by the Japanese government.*] to avoid being deceived by 'fake news.' It emphasizes that fake news isn't just information constructed without basis in fact or based on rumors; it can also be intentionally manipulated by individuals to influence public opinion. Developing "media literacy" is essential to avoid falling for such deception.



Cognitive decline? President Joe Biden 16th Feb. 2020

The term '隠蔽' (inpei) [*Editor's note: The Japanese term "隠蔽" refers to concealment, suppression, or hiding. In the context of the media world, it can imply covering up information, manipulating facts, or intentionally obscuring certain details.*] also plays a role in spreading fake news.

An article in our paper's edition dated 10th July reported suspicions that liberal media in the United States had been complicit in concealing President Biden's cognitive decline (as reported by Yosuke Yamazaki in Washington). When conservative media raised this issue, they were accused of promoting conspiracy theories. It might be fair to say that '隠蔽' (inpei - concealment) is a common tactic used by left-leaning media to create fake news.

This concept of '隠蔽' (inpei) can also be observed in an article from the Asahi Shimbun's series titled "Deep Current: Two Years Since the Shooting of Shinzo Abe" (from 9th to 11th

July). The front-page headline on 9th July reads, "Secret Meeting: Prime Minister's Reversal of Dissolution Order Requirements." It discusses Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's sudden change in the requirements for a dissolution order related to the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) (formerly the [Unification Church](#)). The question remains: What was the basis for altering these requirements overnight, especially since no cabinet meeting had taken place during that time?

The overnight change refers to this: On 14th October 2022, the Kishida Cabinet made a Cabinet decision that "acts deemed wrongful according to the Civil Code are not included" in the requirements for dissolution. In a Diet reply on the morning of 18th October 2022, Prime Minister Kishida stated this clearly, only to reverse his position in a Diet reply on the morning of 19th October when he indicated that civil law would indeed be included. There was no Cabinet meeting during this period, raising questions about the basis on which the dissolution requirements were abruptly changed.

Bringing Up the "Secret Meeting"

According to an Asahi newspaper article, on the afternoon of the 18th October 2022, there was a secret emergency meeting held in a room at the Prime Minister's official residence. During this meeting, the Prime Minister's secretary, officials from the Ministry of

Justice, and officials from the Agency for Cultural Affairs discussed and made adjustments to the Prime Minister's response.



Yoshihiko Isozaki, 24th July 2022

Previously, the available information suggested that there was only a meeting with Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihiko Isozaki (磯崎仁彦) on the morning of 19th October regarding dissolution requirements, leading to questions about the sudden change in interpretation due to the meeting.

However, there is no evidence that the Prime Minister or other ministers were involved in this meeting. The Asahi article does not mention their participation. It appears to be a discussion between the Prime Minister's secretary and some bureaucrats. Whether this can truly be called a "meeting" that altered cabinet decisions remains uncertain. Even if the discussion was factual, it seems more like a routine gathering. Yet, for some reason, Asahi specifically refers to it as a "meeting", raising suspicions of concealment.

So, what is being hidden? It relates to the "political misconduct" involving a "collusion" between House of Councillors member Hiroyuki Konishi (小西洋之) of the Constitutional Democratic Party (CDP) and Prime Minister Kishida, as reported in our paper on the 5th (the series "[Freedom of Religion Under Threat - The Kishida Administration's Reckless Actions](#)" ⑤ [Changing of rules overnight undermines the foundation of the rule of law](#)). In a YouTube video on 22nd August 2023, Konishi revealed the behind-the-scenes story of the interpretation change, saying,



Hiroyuki Konishi in March 2020

"The day before (18th Oct.), I had contacted the Prime Minister's Office, advising them to retract the interpretation. I even gave them the reasons for doing so and suggested they should say that the entire Kishida administration had re-discussed the matter. I promised not to pursue that part further if they did so. Prime Minister Kishida said exactly that. However, this is a lie."

The lie was the claim that it had been "discussed by the entire Kishida administration."

The Asahi Shimbun does not mention the visit

In reality, the parliamentary questioning on 19th October 2022, unfolded exactly as negotiated between Senator Konishi and Prime Minister Kishida. Our newspaper, in an article dated 5th July 2024, even introduced details about Prime Minister Kishida meeting with Senator Konishi just before the parliamentary session.

However, Asahi completely avoided mentioning these points. Like Senator Konishi, they went along with "let's just say the entire Kishida administration had re-discussed the matter. We won't pursue that part further." Asahi abruptly introduced the concept of a "secret meeting" as if to provide evidence for their claims. Not only that, but without hesitation they chronicled various instances of "reckless political action". Unfortunately, space constraints prevent us from delving into all of these details.

The advice on combating fake news introduced at the beginning of this article suggests that "one way is to obtain information from media with clear sources". However, in reality that is far from enough. Even when the sources are clear, "manipulation of public opinion by persons with malicious intentions" continues unabated.

Text: Tsukasa Masuki (増記代司)

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Kishida Follows Anti-Family Federation Minister

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October 12, 2023 • Knut Holdhus



Anti-Family Federation minister central in seeking court order

Several Japanese papers reported 12th October that the Japanese authorities will seek a court order to dissolve the Family Federation. If the court rules as the government wishes, the Family Federation would lose its religious corporation status. It is expected that the Tokyo District Court will receive the court order already on Friday 13th October. Although the district court will reach a verdict within months, the entire legal process could last for several years.



The Japan Times reports 12th October that members of the Family Federation made a last minute appeal to the authorities by submitting signatures from 53,499 members urging the Japanese leadership not to go for a dissolution order. The paper quotes a statement from the petitioners,

submitting signatures from 53,499 members urging the Japanese leadership not to go for a dissolution order. The paper quotes a statement from the petitioners,

"If an actual order is issued (by the court), all assets, including real



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estate such as church worship facilities and training centers, will be confiscated and liquidated, resulting in a significant limitation on the freedom of religious activities for followers."

Journalist Makoto Fukatsu wrote in the *Mainichi Shimbun*, Japan's oldest paper



The logo of the *Mainichi Shimbun*



Kunihiko Shibamura, initiator of *Family Federation* signature campaign. Photo (2021): Screenshot from *FFWPU* YouTube video.

and one of its largest, on 11th October that

"from the perspective of ensuring the legitimacy of the request, the ministry would like to proceed with the procedure after obtaining the approval of the council members [Council of Religious Corporations]."

And the ministry did consult with the council before making its decision. But not everyone on the council agreed that the request to the court is legitimate. In another article the same day, the *Mainichi* published a statement by one of the members of the *Council of Religious Corporations*, who expressed his concern that purely political motives may well be behind the current process initiated by Prime Minister Fumio Kishida. The council member points out, "the dissolution order is a 'death sentence' against a religious corporation, and the request for dissolution should follow a careful procedure."

He emphasized that political intentions could be involved, saying,

"We do not want to be influenced by the political agenda. Politics tries to use what it can"

Mainichi explains that the obvious reason for Kishida's actions against the *Family Federation* is that the government is hoping that the dissolution request will lead to an increase in support.

Many are in fact wondering why Prime Minister Kishida is in a hurry to get the dissolution order. Little has been written about that in the Japanese media. One who has made a good analysis of the situation, is Kazuhiro Aoyama, political journalist and part-time lecturer at the private distance learning university Seisa. In an article in the weekly business and finance magazine *Toyo Keizai* (*Oriental Economist*) 17th October 2022, he asks the question,



"Why did Prime Minister Kishida, who remained cautious about the dissolution order from the viewpoint of 'freedom of religion', change his policy in a hurry?"

The answer, according to Aoyama, is connected to one leading politician within the Kishida administration, Taro Kono, *Minister for Digital Transformation* and *Minister for Consumer Affairs and Food Safety* since August 2022, just after the Abe assassination. Aoyama explains,

"On August 8, at his first press conference since taking office as minister, Kono announced the establishment of a study group on the issue of the former Unification Church in the Consumer Affairs Agency. Two days after the Cabinet reshuffle, it was a lightning-fast move without instructions from Prime Minister Kishida."

The *Toyo Keizai* article points out that Kishida considered Kono a key player to win over public opinion in the aftermath of the terror attack on Shinzo Abe. But Prime Minister Kishida "had concerns about his arbitrary and exclusive actions. When Prime Minister Kishida heard about the launch of the study group, he asked the people around Kono if they were okay with it."



Masaki Kito. Photo: Screenshot / *Bitter Winter*

One worrying point for Kishida and members of the Consumer Affairs Agency, was the fact that Kono appointed Masaki Kito, an activist radical leftwing lawyer who had been campaigning against the *Family Federation / Unification Church* since a long time. But Taro Kono insisted on Kito's inclusion in the agency and did not want to reconsider it when faced with criticism.

Although Aoyama does not mention it, it turns out that Kito and Kono have a long history together. Taro Kono himself, along with his father Yohei

Kono, a leading LDP politician for many years, and leftwing Masaki Kito – all friendly towards China – were vehemently fighting the espionage prevention bill that Abe and other LDP politicians had tried to introduce. An organization founded by Sun Myung Moon called *Victory over communism* (VOC) was actively supporting the introduction of the anti-

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espionage legislation. Since then, Kono has had a rather cold relationship to the [Family Federation](#).

Taro Kono is a contender for the LDP leadership, but is by many considered a political maverick, even eccentric.

Featured image above: Taro Kono 15th August 2022. Photo: デジタル庁
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