

FFWPU Europe and the Middle East: Newspaper - Japanese Government Never Favoured Unification Church

Knut Holdhus
September 29, 2024



Sign at the entrance of the headquarters of the [Family Federation](#) of Japan in Shibuya, Tokyo



Sankei Shimibun: No favours ever granted to Family Federation by Liberal Democratic Party. Claim of "ties" is false.

In the Sankei Shimibun, one of Japan's top 5 dailies, 29th September 2024, Kazue Fujiwara (藤原かずえ) spells out an accurate criticism of the constant leftwing allegations of ties between the governing Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and the [Unification Church](#), now called the [Family Federation](#).



Asahi Shimibun 17th September 2024

Her [article](#) criticizes specifically a large Asahi Shimibun front page report 17th September, which brought up an 11-year-old photo of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (安倍晋三) meeting with senior officials of the former [Unification Church](#) in the president's reception room in the Liberal Democratic Party's headquarters. With its article that day the leftwing Asahi Shimibun aimed to show that the "organizational

relationship" between Abe's Liberal Democratic Party and the former [Unification Church](#) was "almost proven". The report and photo were published as the LDP presidential election entered its final stages, and Asahi likely wanted to challenge the LDP, which had declared it had "cut ties", by saying, "What about this?"



Kazue Fujiwara points out that Asahi unfairly demands proof of something that is impossible to prove (i.e., the non-existence of an organizational relationship), and that such reporting is deemed irresponsible.

Fujiwara believes Asahi is at fault for - without providing sufficient evidence - speculating about and criticizing a deceased individual who can no longer speak for himself.

The Sankei Shimbun writes,

"Firstly, there's no reason for the LDP to reject a visit from an organization made up of citizens with voting rights who express support for the party. Political parties exist to gather public support in order to realize their policies, and providing information to groups that align with their policies is a normal part of political activities. Voting rights are equally granted to all citizens, and criticizing people for exercising these rights based on their personal affiliations is a violation of basic human rights."

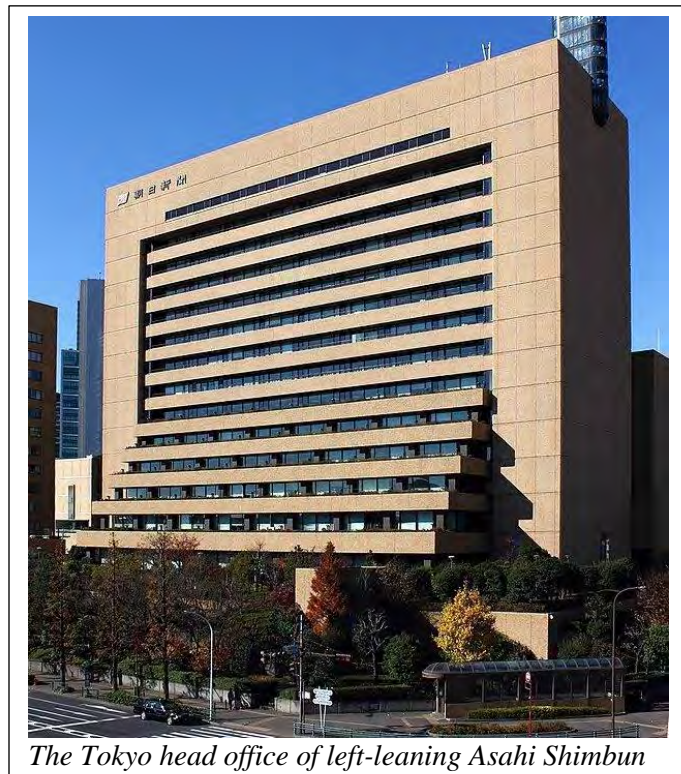


LDP HQ in Tokyo

Fujiwara emphasizes that if there were any issue with Abe meeting [Unification Church](#) leaders, it could only be if the Liberal Democratic Party government had offered "undue benefits" to the [religious organization](#) as a reward for election campaign support. The question of whether an organizational relationship exists should be based on whether any such benefits were provided.

In fact, far from rewarding the [Unification Church](#), the Abe-led government introduced policies that significantly disadvantaged the [religious movement](#) from South Korea. In 2018, the administration amended

the Consumer Contract Act, making contracts from spiritual sales activities invalid. National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales, an organization hostile to the [Unification Church](#), stated that consultations involving the [religious organization](#) drastically declined during Abe's time as Prime Minister. These facts demonstrate that the LDP has already addressed the issue and shown that it had no organizational relationship to the church.



The Tokyo head office of left-leaning Asahi Shimbun

Asahi Shimbun asks the Liberal Democratic Party to provide evidence that there are no organizational ties between the political party and the [Unification Church](#), but this is an impossible task, often referred to as a "devil's proof" - a requirement to produce an impossible proof. If the Asahi bases its assertion that there were organizational ties, on this meeting in the presidential reception room, then it is the newspaper's responsibility to prove that the governing party granted benefits to the [religious organization](#).

The Asahi Shimbun

In 2017, the Asahi repeatedly demanded the Abe administration provide such a "devil's proof" in relation to the Moritomo Gakuen (森友学園) and Kake Gakuen (加計学園) political scandals. [Editor's note: Scandals

where it was claimed that government officials had given preferential treatment to school operators with ties to the prime minister].

In her Sankei Shimbun article Kazue Fujiwara claims that the reporting by leftwing Asahi back then caused unnecessary political turmoil in Japan. And now, they again pursue a similar strategy by releasing an 11-year-old photo in order to upset the LDP leadership election. Fujiwara ends her article by stating that this kind of reporting, demanding an impossible "devil's proof", is irresponsible indeed and goes against journalistic ethics.

It's certainly tempting to take Fujiwara's reasoning a step further. The reason the Asahi Shimbun dedicated almost all of its front page and second page to this 11-year-old story from 2013, boils down to more than irresponsible and unethical reporting. It is clearly political mudslinging. Even when there is no mud to throw, they fabricate some. As Fujiwara pointed out there was "no reason for the LDP to reject a visit from an organization made up of citizens with voting rights who express support for the party." Shinzo Abe and the LDP did nothing wrong. The [Unification Church](#) did nothing wrong.

Just like the Japanese Communist Party, the Asahi has blamed the [Unification Church](#) for the killing of Abe all along. By portraying the [religious organization](#) as "evil" the large leftwing paper also manages to put the LDP in a bad light as it has had "ties" to the "cult".

But if the [Unification Church](#) has committed no crimes, and the LDP politicians had every right to associate with [Unification Church](#) members, then the Asahi Shimbun has very little ammunition to fire with.

But for the Asahi, the campaign where they paint both the [Unification Church](#) and the LDP black has to succeed. They have to keep up their allegations. Otherwise, the lies they base their narrative on may be exposed.

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• February 19, 2024 • Knut Holdhus

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Japanese media helping terrorist Yamagami accomplish his objectives

Tokyo, 16th February 2024 – Published as an article in the Japanese newspaper Sekai Nippo. Republished with permission. Translated from Japanese. *Original article*

Investigating the Request for an Order to Dissolve the Family Federation – Politics and Media out of Control

Part 3: Biased Media: "Information Disaster" Fueled by Terrorist

by the Editorial Department of Sekai Nippo

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

In the media coverage of the incident when former Prime Minister Abe was shot on 8th July 2022, there was extremely little criticism of the terrorist act itself committed by defendant Tetsuya Yamagami (山上徹也).



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On the contrary, the media outlets that had opposed Shinzo Abe's politics during his tenure as prime minister, rather focused on the **Family Federation for World Peace and Unification** (formerly the Unification Church). Those news channels were rather more critical of the **religious organisation**, **emphasizing Yamagami's feelings of being a victim** due to his mother's large donations to the **religious organisation**. The defendant claimed those feelings were his motive for committing the crime.

The press conferences of *National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales*, which is in dispute with the **religious organisation**, have been widely reported. At the same time, the **claims of the religious organisation and individual believers have hardly ever been mentioned**. Amidst this, there was a **widespread one-sided discourse** demanding sanctions against the **Family Federation**. Naturally, this had a negative impact on the Kishida cabinet's approval rating in public opinion polls.

On 19th October 2022, Fumio Kishida without much effort and **without Cabinet approval**, made a change in the interpretation of the *Religious Corporations Act*. The move was criticized as **"changing one's mind like the wind"**, yet both the ruling and opposition parties joined the Prime Minister in his **disregard for procedure**. At that time, the Japanese media stood by and watched as the **authorities readily violated the basic human right of "freedom of religion" guaranteed by the constitution**. This exposed a double standard that is in stark contrast to the openly opposing attitude of the media shown during the 2015 security legislation.

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Especially since the terror attacks on the United States 11th September 2001, terrorism has been regarded as one of the greatest threats to the security of modern society. Former New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, said of a terrorist [who was seeking notoriety], "We [...] will give him nothing, not even his name." However, the lessons learnt from that have not been heeded [in Japan]. By allowing the *Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology* to request a dissolution order – in other words, effectively giving the **religious organisation** a "death sentence" – the Japanese **media inadvertently has helped the terrorist accomplish his goals**.

At a public symposium held on 20th January 2024, author



Fumihiko Kato 20th Jan. 2024. Photo: Screenshot from video recording by UPF-Japan.

Fumihiko Kato (加藤文宏) analyzed big data using AI and announced that the huge amount of news coverage critical of the **religious organisation** was ultimately directed at the Kishida administration. In order to deflect this criticism, Fumio Kishida clearly demonstrated his stance by aiming to cut ties with the **Family Federation** and related organizations from then on, and by issuing a dissolution order against the **religious corporation** in an effort to avoid blame and regain support for his cabinet.

Under these circumstances, the **religious organisation** and ordinary believers have become targets of people's hatred. The above-mentioned Kato has **condemned the media's behavior**, which rather than checking the power, has allowed it to run amok. He calls this an "information disaster". At a press conference, the **religious organisation** revealed a number of **discriminatory incidents**, including members being fired at their workplace, cancellation of job offers, teachers criticizing the **religious organisation** during class, suicides, suicide attempts, and graffiti marking the facility as belonging to a "cult". Despite the Kishida Cabinet requesting a dissolution order, its support rate has decreased. Also, the opposition parties pursuing the matter, have been unable to escape from low approval ratings.

Some say that the one-sided media coverage bashing the **religious organisation** has led to a rift between executives and young reporters within major media outlets. 2nd-generation members of the **religious organisation** have held panel discussions with journalists and experts in open forums. In addition, meetings have been held steadily to denounce 4,300 members of the **religious organisation** being abducted and locked up in an attempt to forcibly break their faith. The **articles written by reporters who covered those events have not seen the light of day**.

However, it was reported that *Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology* Masahito Mori (森山正弘)



technology Masahito Moriyama (森山正広), who filed a request for a dissolution order with Tokyo District Court, had exchanged an "endorsement-affirming form" with a Unification Church-related organization in Hyogo Prefecture ahead of the 2021 House of Representatives election. Believers had actively made phone calls to support his election.



Masahito Moriyama, Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT). Photo (2023): 首相官邸ホームページ. License: CC Attr 4.0 Int. Cropped

As a result, **the very minister who received support from that organization ended up requesting a dissolution order.** That led to voices of discontent from employees and believers of related organizations being covered by various media outlets. In the future, it should be further examined whether his action violates the freedom of religion guaranteed by the constitution. In addition, his action raises issues regarding governance.

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

Featured image above: Positional relationship between former prime minister Shinzo Abe and the shooter Tetsuya Yamagami on his assassination. Sourced from Nikkei.com. Photo: Asanagi / Wikimedia Commons. License: CC CC0 1.0 UPDD

"Media Helping Terrorist Reach His Goal" – text: Religion and politics covering team of the Editorial Department of Sekai Nippo.

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