

# FFWPU Europe and the Middle East: Japan's Top Bigots - Politicians, Lawyers, and Faith-Breakers

Knut Holdhus

December 23, 2024



From the official website of the Constitutional Democratic Party (CDP) where it 18<sup>th</sup> August 2022, published news regarding a public hearing to which professional faith-breaker Takashi Miyamura was invited, the seventh meeting of the party's task force on alleged harm caused by the former Unification Church. Photo: Screenshot



**Tokyo paper exposes how members of the Diet and network of lawyers have close ties to professional faith-breakers earning large amounts on abductions, forcible detentions, and coercive manipulation of members of the Family Federation in Japan**

Tokyo, 21st December 2024 - Published as the 54th article in a series in the Japanese newspaper [Sekai Nippo](#). Republished with permission. Translated from Japanese.  
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**Series: Freedom of Religion Under Threat - Part 7: Religion in Japan in a Global Context**

**The Constitutional Democratic Party (CDP) invited to a public hearing faith-breaker Miyamura, found guilty of being involved in abductions**

**A perverted sense of human rights**

by the Religious Freedom Investigative Team of the editorial department of [Sekai Nippo](#)

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*Faith-breaker: pastor Yasutomo Matsunaga of the Niitsu Evangelical Christian Church*

In cases involving [abduction and confinement](#), members of the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) (formerly the [Unification Church](#)) were subjected to daily "persuasion" by their parents, faith-breakers, pastors, former members, and others. Even when these individuals held captive had "realized what the 'errors' of the [church](#) and its doctrines were" and expressed a desire to leave, their freedom was not immediately restored. This was because numerous "tests of commitment" were imposed to confirm their intent to leave.

This process can be described as rewriting the lives of "former members" from an anti-[Family Federation](#) perspective. At this stage, the media and lawyers play crucial roles.

In the case of Dr. Hirohisa Koide (小出浩久), he was given specific instructions by pastor Yasutomo Matsunaga (松永堡智):

1. Organize and correct the errors of the Divine Principle (the church's doctrine).
2. Learn the correct interpretation of the Bible.
3. Restore trust in parent-child relationships.
4. Recover from harm.
5. Reintegrate into society.

Of these, particular attention is drawn to points 1, 4, and 5.



*Hirohisa Koide telling his story Sep. 10, 2023 in Tokyo*

For "organizing errors," individuals were made to read critical works such as *The Fear of Mind Control* (published by Koyu Shuppan) by Sadao Asami (浅見定雄), a leading critic of the [church](#), and other similar materials. They were then required to write reflective essays, summarize their personal experiences of faith (e.g., divine encounters, spiritual experiences), and state how they currently felt about these.

For "recovery from harm", individuals had to first write a "resignation statement" and list the names, affiliated churches, and addresses of [church](#) members they knew. They were also required to list the names of people who introduced them to products from companies related to the Unification Movement and the amounts they spent on such items. These lists were used to manipulate other believers into leaving and to sue the [Family Federation](#) for compensation.

Through this process, after confirming the intent to leave the [church](#), individuals would gradually gain their freedom, such as being allowed to go out accompanied by their parents. At the same time, full-

fledged efforts toward "recovery from harm" and "social reintegration" (rehabilitation) would begin.



*Yoshifu Arita giving a speech on the street in front of Hachioji Station in Tokyo October 14, 2024*

At this stage, journalist Yoshifu Arita (有田芳生 - currently a member of the House of Representatives for the Constitutional Democratic Party) and a reporter for the *Weekly Bunshun* "interviewed" Dr. Koide by going through Takashi Miyamura. [Editor's note: Arita was born 1952, named Yoshifu after Joseph Stalin, and is journalist, writer, anti-religious activist and politician for Japanese Communist Party 1990-2007, elected to House of Councillors (Upper House) in the Diet 2010-2022 for Constitutional Democratic Party and to House of Representatives (Lower House) for the same party in 2024]

Around July 1993, they conducted a 3 to 4-hour interview, after which, Koide recalls,

"Both of them (Arita and the *Weekly Bunshun* reporter) said, 'It's

amazing that you endured being confined for a year."

They were aware that Koide had been abducted and confined. However, the article published in the 16th September 1993 issue of the magazine made no mention of the abduction or confinement.



*Chinami Nishimura from the Constitutional Democracy Party (CDP), Sept. 11, 2023*

Arita described Miyamura as "pure like a child, unpretentious, [...]" suggesting a close relationship. Indeed, on 18th August 2022, Miyamura participated in the seventh meeting of the CDP's task force - (led by Representative Chinami Nishimura (西村智奈美) - on damages caused by the former [Unification Church](#). According to the CDP's official website, Miyamura attended as "Takashi Miyamura, who has been supporting individuals in leaving the former [Unification Church](#)." Arita was also present.

After the mass media reported on a daily basis that the shooter of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (安倍晋三) had spoken out about his hatred for the [Family Federation](#), the CDP set up a task force and conducted hearings with various government agencies. Simultaneously, starting with Miyamura on the same day, they began interviewing former members, their families, and second-generation individuals. Miyamura was the first to testify.

Miyamura was found liable in a civil suit brought by Toru Goto (後藤徹氏), who was confined for 12 years and five months starting in September 1995 and coerced to leave the [church](#) (Supreme Court ruling on 29th September 2015). The court recognized Miyamura's unlawful acts of "instigation" or "aiding and abetting" the abduction and confinement carried out by Goto's relatives and ordered Miyamura to pay compensation. The CDP must have been aware of this fact. Even if they had the backing of Arita, who also served as a member of the House of Councillors for the CDP, it is fair to say that the CDP's sense of human rights has fallen to new lows.



*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*

After the hearing, Michihiro Ishibashi (石橋通宏), a CDP member of the House of Councillors, told reporters, "We received valuable insights from Takashi Miyamura on how difficult it is to leave when completely under mind control."

While the theory of mind control has long been dismissed in Western countries, in abduction and



confinement cases, it becomes according to Toru Goto "a highly convenient theory for justifying forcible faith-breaking, as individuals are considered incapable of thinking for themselves and thus unable to leave voluntarily." This claim entirely disregards the human rights of [Family Federation](#) members, but the biased nature of such hearings seems to prevent any acknowledgment of this reality.



Miyamura also set a condition for Koide's attendance at his younger brother's wedding, scheduled for September 1993:

"You must appear on an upcoming TBS [Tokyo Broadcasting System] special report and clearly demonstrate a confrontational stance against the church and the hospital."

Koide agreed, and a recording session took place on the banks of the Shinano River on 5th September. The program was aired on 13th September.

During this process, the TBS director remarked,

"Miyamura has been guiding us on various matters related to the [Unification Church](#)."

# TBS

After the filming, staff members commented,

"We've had a long relationship with Miyamura. [...] we'd love to create a special feature program about him someday."

Given this mutually beneficial relationship with Miyamura, it would be highly unlikely for TBS to address the issue of abduction and confinement.

## Collaboration between lawyers' network and faith-breakers: A double standard on human rights



A similar mutually beneficial relationship with Takashi Miyamura can also be observed among the lawyers of the National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales (NNLASS). These lawyers often relied on Miyamura and others to introduce them to "victims", former [church](#) members seeking "recovery from damages".

Around late September of that year, Koide was finally allowed to attend services accompanied by his father at pastor Yasutomo Matsunaga's church. Miyamura introduced him to two NNLASS lawyers, Hiroshi Yamaguchi (山口広) and Masaki Kito (紀藤正樹). Initially, they met at a lawyer's office in Niigata, as requested by Miyamura. Afterward, they met monthly in Tokyo.

At each meeting, the two lawyers would say,

"It should be okay to let him act freely by now. Well, it's best to check with Miyamura about that."

This indicated that they were well aware of Koide living under his parents' surveillance and understood Miyamura's role. Yamaguchi and Kito were not unaware at the time that Miyamura had incited and assisted in the abduction and confinement of [Family Federation](#) members.

Yoshiro Ito (伊藤芳朗), another lawyer who worked with Yamaguchi and Kito at>NNLASS, addressed this in a testimony submitted for Toru Goto's trial. In an interview, Ito recounted that he told Yamaguchi,

"Miyamura's methods are problematic."

Then, Yamaguchi replied,

"Our role is to get involved after members leave. We should not involve ourselves in what happens before they leave."

When asked whether Yamaguchi knew about Miyamura's abduction and confinement tactics, Ito answered, "Of course!" He described Yamaguchi's response as "cunning".

Furthermore, Ito testified that Miyamura exclusively referred multi-billion-yen "high-value cases" involving lawsuits against the [church](#) to Masaki Kito, indicating a close relationship between the two.

Yoshiro Ito stated,

"Takashi Miyamura's activities for encouraging members to leave were nothing more than profit-driven schemes disguised as 'exit assistance'. In reality, they amounted to abduction, confinement, and forcible faith-breaking."

Backed by support from Yamaguchi and Kito, among others, Yoshiro Ito testified that he was able to exclude Miyamura from the National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales (>NNLASS) from 1994 until 2005, when Ito himself resigned from the organization. However, he also noted that Masaki Kito maintained contact with Miyamura, and after Ito's resignation, Miyamura seemingly regained his connection with>NNLASS.

NNLASS included lawyers such as Masaki Gouro (郷路征記), who led a defense team of 122 attorneys to oppose a habeas corpus petition [See editor's note below] filed on behalf of Tadashi Yoshimura (吉村 正). Yoshimura, a Kyoto University graduate and member of the [Unification Church](#), was abducted in Kyoto in 1987 and confined in an iron-barred apartment belonging to Mitsuo Toda (戸田実津男), a professional faith-breaker, in Hokkaido.

Due to the defense team's delays, Yoshimura was forced to escape on his own and filed a criminal complaint. Toda admitted in a written apology dated 10th November 1988, that he had engaged in "abduction, confinement, and coercive faith-breaking", acknowledging that such actions violated criminal law. This admission spared him from criminal punishment. However, Gouro consistently denied any involvement in abduction or confinement.

The coercive methods used against thousands of [Family Federation](#) members to force them to renounce their faith serve as a stark indicator of Japan's human rights situation.

Since the assassination of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, the mass media - including television and newspapers - has extensively reported on the [Family Federation](#), with the government and various political parties also addressing the issue. While the media has highlighted problems such as donation-related controversies and issues faced by "second-generation members", it has completely avoided reporting on the issue of abduction and confinement except for coverage in a few weekly magazines, and if the issue was raised by some Diet members. This demonstrates a clear double standard in addressing human rights issues.

Additionally, lawsuits and claims for damages filed by former members against the [church](#), following their renunciation of faith after abduction and confinement, have garnered significant attention from the government, political parties, and the media. However, these claims stem from a background of prolonged confinement and deprivation of freedom. Accepting such claims at face value raises questions about fairness and legitimacy. How is this different from the methods used in countries like China and North Korea to extract confessions through prolonged detention? It is difficult to view such practices as consistent with the values of a nation that prides itself on human rights and democracy.

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[Editor's note: A habeas corpus petition is a legal request to a court, usually made by someone who is detained or imprisoned, asking the court to determine whether their detention or imprisonment is lawful. The main purpose of a habeas corpus petition is to protect individuals

from unlawful or arbitrary detention.

The detainee, or someone acting on their behalf (such as a lawyer or family member), files the petition with a court. The court reviews the petition and may issue a writ of habeas corpus, compelling the custodian (such as a prison warden or government authority) to bring the detainee before the court. At the hearing, the custodian must provide legal justification for the detention. If the court finds the detention unlawful, it may order the detainee's release.

Habeas corpus is considered a cornerstone of individual liberty and rule of law. It is enshrined in many constitutions and international human rights frameworks, including the U.S. Constitution (Article I, Section 9).]

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# Harrowing Rights Abuses Against Minority Faith

December 22, 2024 • Knut Holdhus

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**Abduction, confinement, and faith-breaking: The harrowing rights abuses perpetrated against Family Federation members in Japan**

Tokyo, 20th December 2024 – Published as the 53rd article in a series in the Japanese newspaper *Sekai Nippo*. Republished with permission. Translated from Japanese. [Original article](#)

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by the Religious Freedom Investigative Team of the editorial



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Members of the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) (formerly the [Unification Church](#)) who are abducted face two desperate situations. The first is the harsh reality of confinement, where all freedoms are suppressed. In the case of Dr. Hirohisa Koide (小出浩久), chains were wrapped around the door handles, windows were sealed and boarded up, and his living space was confined to a single six-tatami-mat room [*Editor's note: In Japan, a tatami mat is a standard unit of area used for measuring rooms. 6 such mats would cover ca. 9 or 10 square meters*]

A guard was stationed in the adjacent room (also six tatami mats). He was denied access to TV, radio, or newspapers and was only allowed to read the Bible or books approved by Takashi Miyamura (宮村峻), a faith-breaker.

In this enclosed space, Miyamura and former church members (including acquaintances) frequently visited, aggressively criticizing the doctrines, the church, and its founder.

Added to this was "abnormal behavior and actions from the family". While abducting and confining one's child is inherently abnormal, when the persuasion to leave the church did not proceed as planned, "they would lose control emotionally and suddenly hit or kick me." Agreements that had been painstakingly reached were often broken overnight.

The emotional pain inflicted by one's own parents – who had raised and supported him through university but now wholly denied his identity – cannot be overstated. Such abnormal behavior by parents is not unique to Dr. Koide; there are many cases where even worse treatment was inflicted.



Professional faith-breaker and advisor to the Constitutional Democratic Party (CDP): **Takashi Miyamura** (宮村峻). Photo: FFWPU



Faith-breaker: pastor **Yasutomu Matsunaga** (松永康智) of the Niitsu Evangelical Christian Church. Photo: FFWPU

Although the perpetrators are parents or relatives, what enables them to engage in such inhumane acts? The reason is that individuals like Takashi Miyamura and cooperating pastor Yasutomu Matsunaga (松永康智) conducted extensive education sessions with the family members of believers, during which they intensely criticized the church and actively "coached" (incited or aided) them how to carry out abduction and confinement.

Koide's parents visited pastor Satoshi Moriyama (森山諭) in 1984 and participated in his Saturday study



**Satoshi Moriyama** (森山諭 - 1908-1996), Japanese pastor and co-founder of

sessions, although they eventually stopped attending. However, after being approached by Takashi Miyamura, whom they met under pastor Moriyama, they began attending Miyamura's study group. Miyamura skillfully manipulated the emotions of parents concerned for their children. Through former members of the church, he

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spread one-sided information such as, "The church is an anti-social organization, and your children are living miserable lives." He taught, "They've been deceived." Eventually, he gained the trust of Koide's mother to the extent that she said, "Even if I would have to cling to him, I decided to follow this man [Miyamura]."

and its founder, Ogikubo Glory Church. Photo: [日本イエス・キリスト教団 荻窪栄光キリスト教会 / Wikimedia Commons](#). *Public domain image.*  
*Cropped*

On this foundation of trust, Miyamura "advised" parents on methods of coercing their children to renounce their faith through abduction and confinement. Koide's father reportedly consulted and reported to Miyamura daily and acted according to his instructions.



Koide himself testified that, during his second false

*Niitsu Evangelical Christian Church, where faith-breaker Yasutomo Matsunaga was pastor. Apparently, the church was renovated with money from huge kidnapping and deprogramming fees that relatives of members of the Family Federation had been tricked to pay by faith-breakers and lawyers telling horrendous lies about the Family Federation. Photo: [Japanese Victims' Association against Religious Kidnapping and Forced Conversion](#)*

renunciation of the faith, he assisted pastor Matsunaga in the "Parent Study Group", held every Saturday at 6 PM for three hours at Matsunaga's church. At that time, around 50 relatives from Niigata, Nagano, Yamagata, and Toyama gathered. These sessions not only involved intense criticism of the church's activities and doctrines but also provided instructional videos explaining how parents should interact with their children before and during confinement and after attempting to convince them to leave the church. The videos covered step-by-step instructions for abduction, confinement, and post-confinement interactions.

These study sessions included lectures by Pastor Matsunaga and testimonials from former members about their experiences – touted as "success stories" of persuasion during confinement. Additionally, consultation meetings for relatives and former members were held once or twice a month. At these meetings, relatives were encouraged to believe that "The Unification Church is an anti-social criminal organization, and children who join are also criminals. Saving these children is the most important duty of a parent." The parents were convinced that abduction and confinement were the only ways to "rescue" their children.

For those determined to resort to abduction and confinement, intensive two-day seminars called "2DAYS" were held, where participants received concrete instructions and practiced mock scenarios for executing these actions.

It is not inherently problematic for Miyamura or pastor Matsunaga to express their beliefs about the church, its founder, or its doctrines to gain the trust of parents. However, they exploited that trust to incite parents and relatives into committing crimes of abduction and confinement, coercing children to renounce their faith in a manner that violated their human rights and tore apart family bonds. Former members who became victims were then involved in perpetrating similar crimes, perpetuating a cycle of egregious human rights violations.

**Featured image** above: Hirohisa Koide (小出浩久) speaks about the harm caused by abduction and confinement. 20<sup>th</sup> January 2024, in Miyazaki City. Photo: Tsuyoshi Toyoda (豊田剛).

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