

## FFWPU Europe and the Middle East: Japan's Constitution Exploited for Pol's Gain

Knut Holdhus  
February 28, 2026



*The Japanese constitutional debate*



[Sekai Nippo](#)

**Public welfare and the Family Federation case: When religious freedom is obviously violated in the name of ambiguous concept that is easily exploited politically**

Tokyo, 27th February 2026 - Published as an article in the Japanese newspaper [Sekai Nippo](#). Republished with permission. Translated from Japanese. [Original article](#).

**The Hidden Issue in Constitutional Revision: Freedom of Religion and "Public Welfare"**

by Seisaku Morita (森田 清策)

Published 28th February at 23:24, updated 1st March at 06:52

In the recent House of Representatives election, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) secured the two-thirds majority necessary to initiate constitutional revision. Although the ruling coalition remains a minority in the House of Councillors, pro-revision forces - including opposition parties - reach the two-thirds threshold there as well. Recent public opinion polls show that more than half of the public express expectations for constitutional revision debates in the Diet.

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As constitutional revision becomes increasingly realistic, I reread the LDP's Q and A Supplement to the Draft Amendment of the Constitution of Japan (2013 edition) and took renewed interest in a particular keyword. When constitutional revision is discussed, topics such as explicitly recognizing the Self-Defense Forces or establishing emergency powers clauses are often highlighted. However, the draft also proposes amendments concerning citizens' rights and duties. In particular, it addresses the ambiguity of the concept of "public welfare" found in Article 13 of the current Constitution.

Last year in this column (26th September edition), I examined the constitutional draft proposed by the

Sanseito party. That draft likewise argues for the need to revise the Constitution on the grounds that the concept of "public welfare", used to justify restrictions on individual rights, is vague and could be conveniently interpreted by the government in power at any given time.

		
<p><i>Secured the two-thirds majority necessary in February 2026 election to initiate constitutional revision: Sanae Takaichi, Prime Minister of Japan since October 2025</i></p>	<p><i>Former Prime Minister Fumio Kishida swayed by hostile media campaign and <a href="#">changed the law overnight</a>. (April 16, 2023)</i></p>	<p><i>Shinzo Abe in March 2022, few months before he was assassinated</i></p>

The LDP draft similarly asserts that "public welfare" is ambiguous and presents a proposed revision. In my previous article, I cited as an example of interpretation changing to suit the government's convenience the request for a dissolution order against the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) (formerly known as the [Unification Church](#)). With the Tokyo High Court scheduled to rule on March 4 regarding whether dissolution is appropriate, I would like to reconsider this issue using the LDP draft as a reference.



**International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights**

*The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which Japan has ratified, does not use the term "public welfare" as grounds for restricting rights such as freedom of religion. Instead, it employs more explicit terms such as "public safety", "public order", and "public health". The Human Rights Committee under the Covenant has requested that Japan clarify the definition of "public welfare" and demonstrate compatibility with the treaty. Although constitutional amendment provisions concerning human rights restrictions may not attract as much attention as other issues, they are of critical importance and deserve far greater scrutiny.*

The Religious Corporations Act stipulates that a religious organization may be dissolved if it "violates laws and regulations and significantly harms public welfare". On the other hand, freedom of religion is regarded as one of the most important human rights and is guaranteed under Article 20 of the current Constitution. Because dissolving a religious organization constitutes a restriction on that freedom, the prevailing view has been that such action should be limited to unavoidable cases. Accordingly, the requirement of a legal violation for dissolution had been limited to criminal offenses, placing a check on expansive interpretation.

The decision to request a dissolution order [was made in October 2023](#) under the administration of Prime Minister Fumio Kishida ((岸田文雄)). However, until one year prior, the government had maintained that it could not file such a request against the [Family Federation](#), as it had not committed criminal offenses. Then, overnight, the [interpretation was changed](#) to include civil violations within the scope of "legal violations", and the government proceeded with the [dissolution request](#).

Following the assassination of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (安倍晋三), the media criticized the LDP over its connections with organizations related to the [Family Federation](#), including electoral support. With the administration placed in a difficult position, the government likely sought to preserve itself by declaring a "break" with the group and [filing for a dissolution order](#).

This can be described as a clear example of "public welfare" being politically interpreted in a manner convenient to the government of the day. Given that the LDP itself recognizes the

ambiguity of the concept and the need for revision, one cannot avoid pointing out the heavy political responsibility borne by Prime Minister Kishida for adopting such an expansive interpretation.

Article 13 of the current Constitution states that the people's rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness shall be respected "to the extent that they do not interfere with the public welfare." The LDP's draft amendment proposes replacing this with "to the extent that they do not interfere with the public interest and public order." However, this too reveals the LDP's insufficiency in its approach to human rights. The concept of "public interest" is likewise ambiguous, and there are concerns that it could in fact broaden the scope of permissible restrictions on human rights.

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# Big Loss For Anti-Church Centrist Alliance

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February 27, 2026 • Knut Holdhus



*Behind the Scenes of Japanese politics: Centrist Alliance suffered big loss in parliamentary election after urging left-leaning activist to make hostility against Family Federation an election issue*



Tokyo, 27<sup>th</sup> February 2026 – Published as an article in the Japanese newspaper *Sekai Nippo*.  
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**Centrist Bloc Used Anti-**

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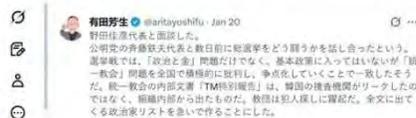
# Takaichi Strategy in Lower House Election, Asked Mr. Arita to Make the “Unification Church” an Election Issue

by the editorial department of Sekai Nippo

See also [Japan: When “Public Welfare” Is Used Politically](#)

See also [Malicious Statistical Manipulation by Lawyers](#)

It has recently come to light that the *Centrist Reform Alliance* [See [editor's note 1 below](#)] – formed through a merger of the *Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan* (CDP) and *Komeito* [See [editor's note 2 below](#)] prior to the *House of Representatives* election – instructed Lower House member Yoshifu Arita (有田芳生) to make the relationship of Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi (高市早苗) with the *Family Federation for World Peace and Unification* (formerly known as the **Unification Church**) a campaign issue. Arita disclosed this in his email newsletter dated 20<sup>th</sup> February.



**有田芳生** @aritayoshifu · Jan 20

I met with Representative Yoshihiko Noda. He said that a few days earlier he had discussed with Komeito leader Tetsuo Saito how to fight the upcoming general election. During the campaign, they agreed that in addition to the “politics and money” issue, they would actively criticize the “Unification Church” issue nationwide and make it a central point of contention – even though it is not included in their basic policy platform.

*Partial translation of a message by Yoshifu Arita on X 20th January 2026. At the top, screenshot of the original Japanese.*



**Yoshihiko Noda**, Prime Minister of Japan 2011-2012, a member of the Lower House in the National Diet for the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) 2000-2016, as an independent, and for the Constitutional Democratic Party (CDP) 2021-2026. Official Photo by Simon Liu / Office of the President (總統府). License: [CC Attr 2.0 Gen](#). Cropped

According to the newsletter, on 19<sup>th</sup> January Arita met in the office of then-Co-Representative Yoshihiko Noda (野田佳彦) at the House of Representatives Members' Office Building. Noda reportedly told him that he had discussed with then-Co-Representative Tetsuo Saito (齊藤鉄夫) how to fight the election and asked Arita, “Although it is not written in our policy platform, we would like you to campaign nationwide to make the **Unification Church** issue a focal point.”

Arita is a former journalist known for his criticism of the Unification Church. This suggests that from the time Noda and Saito reached their party formation agreement on 15<sup>th</sup> January, the Centrist bloc had envisioned launching a negative campaign against Takaichi through Arita and others.

In his newsletter, Arita wrote:

“Regarding the criticism of the **Unification Church**, which was a mission from Mr. Noda, on 2<sup>nd</sup> February young Komeito members filmed a video explanation at the *Constitutional Democratic Party* headquarters of the top-secret document ‘TM Special Report.’ A digest of that video is still available on my X account.”

Arita also posted about making the “**Unification Church** issue” a campaign focus on X.

The “TM Special Report” refers to documents that became a topic in South Korean media at the end of last



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year. Of several thousand pages compiled by aides to Hak Ja Han (한학자), President of the Family Federation, summarizing reports from affiliated religious groups in various countries, 3,200 pages were leaked. The Japanese branch of the church issued a press release regarding the report's contents, stating that "it has been pointed out that there is a high possibility that intentional omissions, alterations, and additions are included," listing multiple factual errors and assessing the report as "lacking credibility."



**Tetsuo Saito**, Japanese politician and chief representative of Komeito 2024-2026. Photo: Cabinet Public Affairs Office (首相官邸) / Wikimedia Commons. License: [CC Attr 4.0 Int.](#) Cropped

### Linked to China's Cognitive Warfare?

Meanwhile, according to reports by the online edition of the *Nikkei* and the *Yomiuri Shimbun*, China mass-produced numerous fake X accounts during the Lower House election and flooded the platform with posts criticizing Takaichi, attempting to influence public opinion. Analysts say that a major theme of these posts was to link Takaichi to the "Unification Church" through the TM Special Report.

In the Lower House election, in addition to the Centrist bloc, *Reiwa Shinsengumi* [See editor's note 3 below] and the *Japanese Communist Party* also made the "Unification Church" an election issue, and some media outlets such as *Weekly Bunshun* ran related campaigns. In what appeared to be an effort to "add fuel to the fire," the Chinese side allegedly deployed large numbers of fake X accounts to conduct cognitive warfare, aiming for a synergistic effect.

See also [Japan: When "Public Welfare" Is Used Politically](#)

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**Featured image** above: **Yoshifu Arita** (有田芳生), born 1952, a long-time communist and activist campaigning against the [Family Federation](#), member of the House of Councillors (Upper House) in the National Diet for the Democratic Party of Japan 2010-2017 and for the Constitutional Democratic Party (CDP) 2017-2022. he was also a member of the House of Representatives (Lower House) from 2024 to 2026. Here giving a speech on the street in front of Hachioji Station in Tokyo 14th October 2024. Photo: [Noukei314](#) / Wikimedia Commons. License: [CC ASA 4.0 Int.](#) Cropped

**[Editor's note 1:** The **CDP and Komeito merged** just before the parliamentary election in February 2026 to form the *Centrist Reform Alliance* (CRA) for the Lower House race. This merged party suffered a major defeat: It won only 49 seats in total. The party's previous combined strength (before the election) was around 167 seats, meaning it lost a very large number of seats. Of the 49 seats won by the CRA: 28 were held by former Komeito members, and 21 by former CDP members.]

**[Editor's note 2:** The large Buddhist lay organization Soka Gakkai founded the **Komeito** party in 1964 (now known as **New Komeito** or simply **Komeito**) in order to actualize ideals and principles of Nichiren Buddhism in governance. The party's purpose was to translate Buddhist-based humanistic values into public policy. While legally separate from Soka Gakkai, Komeito has long been backed by members of Soka Gakkai and focuses on **peace-oriented diplomacy** (e.g., supporting Japan's pacifist constitution); **social welfare policies** (benefiting education, healthcare, and the elderly); **grassroots democracy** (reflecting the voice of ordinary citizens)

From 1999 to 2025, Komeito was a coalition partner with the governing Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), influencing policies while maintaining a centrist stance.

Despite its contributions, Soka Gakkai's political role has been controversial, with critics accusing it of blurring the lines between religion and politics. Some also argue that Komeito's alliance with the conservative LDP compromises its original pacifist ideals.

Soka Gakkai envisions an ideal world through personal empowerment, education, and political engagement. While its approach is rooted in Buddhist ethics, its political involvement remains a complex and debated issue.]

**[Editor's note 3: Reiwa Shinsengumi** (れいわ新選組) is a left-wing populist political party in Japan, founded in 2019 by actor-turned-politician **Taro Yamamoto**. Reiwa Shinsengumi is a **minor party** in terms of seats but has gained visibility through a strong social media presence and high-profile campaign tactics.]

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