

## FFWPU Europe and Middle East: Church Youth Protest Horrifying Intimidations

Knut Holdhus  
January 15, 2025



A second-generation member of the [Family Federation](#) doing street-preaching - afternoon of January 13, 2024, Shibuya Ward, Tokyo



### Young victims of horrifying persecution speaking out against orchestrated campaign against minority faith Family Federation

Tokyo, 14th January 2025 - Published as an article in the Japanese newspaper [Sekai Nippo](#). Republished with permission. Translated from Japanese. [Original article](#).

"Let's Make Japan a Place Where People Can Freely Speak of Their Faith"

Family Federation members take to the streets in Shibuya, Tokyo

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

On 13th January 2024, members of the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) (formerly the [Unification Church](#)) held a rally and did street-preaching in front of Shibuya Station in Tokyo's Shibuya Ward to protest media coverage of their [organization](#).



The area around Shibuya station, Tokyo

A woman in her 20s, a second-generation member affiliated with a [Family Federation](#) place of worship in Tokyo and working as a nurse, shared her experiences of being hurt by critical media reports. She recalled,

"What saddened me most was when a colleague at work, after seeing news about the [Family Federation](#), said, 'I feel sorry for the second-generation members.'

I strongly felt the stigma of being labeled as 'someone people pity' just for being a second-generation believer. My dream is for Japan to become a place where anyone can confidently talk about their faith."

A man in his 20s, who joined the federation three years ago and has worked as a staff member at one of

the places of worship in Tokyo since April last year, defended the [organization](#). He emphasized,

"The media portrays us as anti-social, but that's not true. Coming to this place of worship has brightened my life and has had a positive impact. I want people to find out for themselves what is true or false, using their own eyes and feet. Despite opposition from various people, I am determined to continue down this path."

The rally also included a panel display highlighting cases where believers had been confined by members of their own family and others opposing the religious organization, in attempts to force the believers to renounce their faith.



*Young believer being abducted in order to have his faith broken*

[Editor's note: Forced de-conversion in Japan refers to the practice of coercively attempting to separate individuals from their religious affiliations or beliefs, typically through intervention by family members, professional faith-breakers (deprogrammers) or organizations hostile to new religious movements (NRMs). This phenomenon often targets members of such movements, e.g. relatively large faiths like the [Family Federation](#) or Jehovah's Witnesses, but also smaller groups like Happy Science (Kōfuku no Kagaku) and other newer religious movements. However, also Soka Gakkai, a Buddhist-based lay organization with more than 8 million Japanese members, and affiliated with Nichiren Buddhism, has occasionally been subject to de-conversion attempts.

The practice gained attention in the latter half of the 20th century, particularly in the 1980s

and 1990s. Parents or concerned family members often hired faith-breakers who taught them how to abduct and forcibly detain believers. Almost all such cases involved confining the individual believer and cutting him or her off from the religious community. During the confinement, the believer was subjected to intense questioning or indoctrination designed to break his or her faith. The aim was to "rescue" the person from what the family often had been tricked by faith-breakers or lawyers to regard as harmful influence from the religious organization.

Critics of forced de-conversion argue that it violates fundamental human rights, including freedom of thought, religion, and association. Reports of psychological trauma and accusations of unlawful detention have sparked debates over its ethical and legal implications. In response, some religious groups, particularly NRMs, have lobbied for greater protections against such practices.

Japanese courts have been inconsistent in addressing cases of forced de-conversion. While some verdicts have condemned the practice as illegal detention, others have been more lenient, citing family concerns about "mental health" or alleged "exploitation" as mitigating factors.]

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# Coercive Faith-Breaking In Prison-Like Set-Ups

• January 14, 2025 • Knut Holdhus



*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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*Dr. Hirohisa Koide, victim of kidnapping, forced detention, and attempted faith-breaking. Photo: FFWPU*

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 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> 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](#)."

Dr. Koide expressed his hope, saying,

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

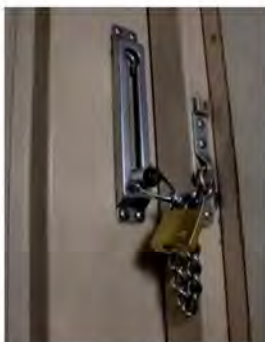


*An apartment block in Ogikubo, Tokyo where Hirohisa Koide was forcibly detained in 1992. Photo: Hirohisa Koide*

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. Photo: Japanese Victims' Association against Religious Kidnapping and Forced Conversion*

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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**Featured image** above: 11<sup>th</sup> January 2025, Sugunami Ward, Tokyo, Dr. Hirohisa Koide (小出浩久), a physician, talks about his experience of being abducted and confined. Photo: Reiwa Kato (加藤玲和).

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