

**FFWPU Europe and the Middle East: Japan's Many Persecuted Believers Urged to Use Online Platforms**

Knut Holdhus  
March 10, 2025



*Takashi Tachibana (right), leader of the "Party to Protect the People from NHK", and lawyer Shinichi Tokunaga as guest speakers at a symposium on the afternoon of 8th March 2025, in Chiba City*



**Persecuted believers from religious minority advised at symposium to use digital strategy and social media push**

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**"Spread the Truth via Social Media"**

**NHK Party's Tachibana Speaks in Chiba on Dissolution Request Issue**

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

On 8th March 2025, the Chiba Citizens' Association for Protecting Freedom of Religion and Human Rights, primarily composed of followers of the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) (formerly the [Unification Church](#)), held a symposium in Chiba City.



*Takashi Tachibana*

Takashi Tachibana (立花孝志), leader of the Party to Protect the People from NHK [See editor's note 1 below], who appeared as a guest speaker, urged attendees to "use social media and YouTube to spread the truth" regarding issues surrounding the [religious organization](#).

Tachibana emphasized,

"We need to make sure that people who refuse to listen to our opinions will actually hear us out."

He pointed out that the [Family Federation](#) already has a "weapon" in the form of claims regarding coercive faith-breaking [See editor's note 2 below] through [abduction and confinement](#). He said,

"If they present this issue effectively, they will gain more allies. The key is how to use this strategically."

He noted that in the past, the only way to get coverage was through television and newspapers, but now, he insisted,

"The internet exists. If you create videos and invest money, you can advertise. That's where you should start."



*Attorney Shinichi Tokunaga*

Attorney Shinichi Tokunaga (徳永信一) also took the stage, discussing a lawsuit in which he represented the plaintiff [against journalist](#) Eito Suzuki (鈴木エイト). In the case, a [Family Federation](#) member had allegedly been confined for [over 12 years](#) by his family members opposed to his faith. He had been referred to as a "hikikomori" (social recluse), which was deemed defamatory. In January of this year, Suzuki was [ordered to pay](#) ¥110,000 in damages. Tokunaga highlighted the role of social media in spreading awareness of the court ruling, stating,

"There's an appeal coming up, so this is another chance to get the message out. It's crucial to think strategically about how to appeal to public opinion."

During their discussion, Tokunaga reflected on Tachibana's efforts in the Hyogo gubernatorial election, describing him as someone who is "battling against the times". Tachibana, in turn, likened YouTube to a "black ship" from the perspective of TV stations, explaining that traditional media is wary of the rise of new digital platforms.

**[Editor's note 1: The Party to Protect the People from NHK** (NHKから国民を守る党, NHK kara Kokumin wo Mamoru Tō, often abbreviated as N-Koku) is a minor political party in Japan. It was founded in 2013 by Takashi Tachibana, a former NHK employee, with the primary goal of opposing Japan's public broadcaster, NHK (Nippon Hōsō Kyōkai). The party criticizes NHK's mandatory subscription fees and has campaigned to allow people to avoid paying for NHK if they don't watch it.

Over time, the party has shifted its focus, rebranding multiple times and addressing broader issues, but its core stance remains opposition to NHK. It has gained attention for its unconventional campaigning methods and populist rhetoric but has had limited electoral success.]

**[Editor's note: Coercive faith-breaking** 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 faith-breaking 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 coercive faith-breaking. 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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# Psychological Lynching: Coercive Faith-Breaking

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Dissolution



Toru Goto's new book "Deadly Struggle: Surviving 4,536 Days of Confinement"

breaking  
Part 3 of a talk given 10<sup>th</sup> February 2025, in Tokyo, at the official launch of the book "Deadly Struggle: Surviving 4,536 Days of Confinement" by Toru Goto (後藤徹), held captive for 12 years and 5 months in an attempt to have his faith broken.

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

In my case, the deprogrammers were two individuals – Takashi Miyamura (宮村峻), a company president, and Yasutomo Matsunaga (松永康智).

(Points to screen – see image to the right) This is what it looks like when deprogrammer Takashi Miyamura arrives at the apartment. This scene is the same in almost all cases. Miyamura sits in front of me, surrounded by my family and former believers. A group of former believers, who had left their faith under similar circumstances, formed a ring around me. It was truly a terrifying sight.

Among them was a "sister" of faith who had once taken great care of me. With tears in her eyes, she said,

"Goto-kun [[See editor's note below](#)], you've done some ridiculous things, haven't you?"

She tried to persuade me while crying. And in that setting, every imaginable criticism, slander, and attack was hurled at me – against Reverend [Sun Myung Moon](#), against the [Unification Church's](#) doctrine. Every day, without fail. It was a form of psychological lynching. They told me constantly,

- "You are being mind-controlled."
- "You won't be allowed to leave here until your brain starts working normally."
- "You idiot, fool, devil."

Of course, I had no way to contact the outside world. I couldn't make phone calls or send letters. The information control was absolute. At one point, I asked Miyamura,

"Alright, I understand. But I'd like to look up a word – could you bring me a dictionary?"

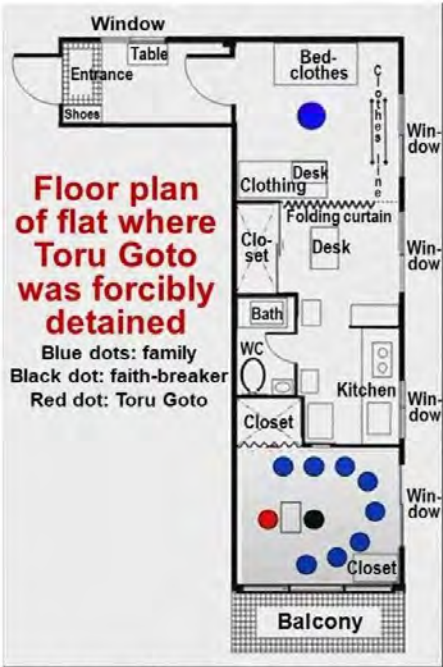
He immediately dismissed me, saying, "That's not necessary."

But one day, he brought me a book, saying, "You must be bored, so read this."

It was a book about early North Korean defectors. I immediately understood what he meant,

"Ah, I see. He wants me to wake up and escape my faith, just as these defectors escaped North Korea."

Through extreme manipulation of information, they sought to reprogram my mind.



Floor plan of the Tokyo flat where Toru Goto was forcibly detained for about 10 years. For two and half years he was locked up somewhere else, in the city of Niigata. Illustration: [National Association of Victims of Abduction, Confinement, and Forced Deconversion](#)



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Of course, my ID had expired, and I had no legal proof of my identity. One day, while taking a bath, I noticed a small ventilation hole in the wall. I could faintly hear the voices of people on another floor. Thinking that I might be able to reach someone, I climbed onto the edge of the bathtub, pressed my mouth against the vent, and screamed as loud as I could:

*"Help me! I'm being held captive here! Please call the police!"*

I screamed until my throat was hoarse. But suddenly, I was forcefully yanked down from behind. As you can see in the diagram (see floor plan above to the right), the bathroom led to the kitchen.

I was dragged violently from the bathroom, past the kitchen, knocking over everything in my path – electrical appliances, furniture – until I was pulled into the innermost room of the flat. Who was it? It was Takashi Miyamura. My family had contacted him immediately. Whenever my relatives could no longer control me, he would show up and use violence to subdue me. That's what happened inside the detention site.



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



**How Toru Goto was treated.**

Illustration: [National Association of Victims of Abduction, Confinement, and Forced Deconversion](#)

By this time, I had been confined for six or seven years. Two weeks before my abduction, I had been filled with joy by my engagement, which I had been looking forward to so much. I wondered,

*"What is my fiancée doing now? She must be desperately searching for me."*

The thought made my chest feel like it was being torn apart.

In my overwhelming loneliness and despair, there was only one small moment of comfort each day. It was when I heard the distant chimes of the song "Yuyake Koyake" from the neighborhood security broadcast in the evening. ("Yuyake Koyake" is a classic Japanese children's song played at sunset to tell children it's time to go home.) Around 5 PM, the faint melody drifted in from afar, urging children to return home. It seeped into my heart. Even in my isolation and despair, for just a brief moment, I felt comforted.

But there were times when I truly thought, "I just want to die here."

*To be continued. Part 4 coming soon.*

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

[Editor's note: In Japanese, "**kun**" (君 or くん) is an honorific suffix used after a person's name. It is typically used in the following contexts: **For boys and young men** – "Kun" is commonly used for boys, younger men, or male subordinates. For example, a teacher might call a male student "**Taro-kun**", or an older coworker might address a younger male colleague this way. **In workplaces** – In professional settings, a senior might use "kun" to address younger male colleagues or



[subordinates.\]](#)

**Featured image** above: Psychological lynching by professional faith-breaker Takashi Miyamura and deconverted believers. Illustration: [National Association of Victims of Abduction, Confinement, and Forced Deconversion](#)

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