

FFWPU Europe and Middle East: Zen Chief Priest says FFWPU Case a Warning to All Religions

Knut Holdhus
March 17, 2025



Shindo Mizuta was born in 1980 in Nishimamon, Numazu City, Shizuoka Prefecture as the eldest son of the chief priest of Kongō-ji Temple, a temple of the Myōshin-ji school of the Rinzai sect [See editor's note 3]. Graduated from Tohoku University's Faculty of Engineering and completed graduate studies at the same university. Trained for two years at Zuigan-ji Monastery in Matsushima Town, Miyagi Prefecture. Became vice chief priest of Kongō-ji and has served as chief priest since 2014



Could your religion be next? Buddhist chief priest warns of dissolution of other religions based on FFWPU case

Tokyo, 17th March 2025 - Published as an article in the Japanese newspaper [Sekai Nippo](#). Republished with permission. Translated from Japanese. [Original article](#).

Concern Over Dissolution Request Based on Civil Code

Precedent Set in Case Against the Family Federation May Affect Other Religions

Shindo Mizuta (水田真道), Chief Priest of Kongo-ji Temple, interviewed by Nobuo Kubota (窪田伸雄)



Shinzo Abe in March 2022, months before he was assassinated

Interview Summary: Following the assassination of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (安倍晋三) on 8th July 2022, the media intensely criticized the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) (formerly the [Unification Church](#)) and its political connections. Under the administration of Prime Minister Fumio Kishida (岸田文雄), the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) filed a dissolution request against the [Family Federation](#) with the Tokyo District Court. As the [Family Federation](#) has never been sentenced in any criminal case, MEXT instead cited "civil unlawful acts".

Chief Priest Shindo Mizuta (水田真道) of Kongō-ji Temple (金剛寺) in Numazu City, Shizuoka Prefecture, shares his concerns about the potential impact on other religious organizations.

Question: What are your views on the media coverage and the [Family Federation](#) after the Abe assassination?

Answer: To be honest, just based on what I saw on TV and read in the newspapers, I just took it for granted that some people were calling them a cult and that they were selling vases and books at high prices. I thought that if that was the case, it was only natural that they would be asked to be dissolved.

Until last summer, I didn't have any particular doubts about the reports that the son of a [Unification Church](#) follower shot Abe because of these things, and I just thought that it was unfortunate that Abe was shot.

Question: Around last Summer, you say?

Answer: Members of the [Family Federation](#) visited me, saying,

"The media is saying many things, but most people don't really know the details, so we'd like you to understand."

At first, I was cautious. However, since I have a stance of listening to anyone, I decided to hear them out. After that, I did my own research online and through other sources.

It's possible that 30 or 40 years ago, the [Family Federation](#) engaged in aggressive recruitment tactics. However, I learned that since the [organization](#) issued a compliance declaration in 2009, there have been no reported incidents or cases of coercive solicitation.



Tetsuya Yamagami, the man who killed Shinzo Abe, the former prime minister of Japan

When I think about it, what Tetsuya Yamagami (山上徹也) did was irrational. If he had targeted the leader of the [Family Federation](#), that would have been somewhat understandable. But Abe was the one who was shot, and yet the media launched an intense attack on the [Family Federation](#). I can't help but feel a strong sense of discomfort with the way this has been reported.

Question: The Ministry of Education's exercise of its right to question the [Family Federation](#), its request for a dissolution order, and the hearings at the Tokyo District Court are all being conducted behind closed doors. However, the process has been heavy-handed, and even in the National Diet, concerns have been raised about false or fabricated statements in the submitted evidence.

Answer: To put it simply, it's outrageous. Christianity, the [Family Federation](#), and Buddhism all have different doctrines, but that's not the issue here. What I'm concerned about is the legal aspect. If this dissolution request is accepted, then in the future, other religious organizations like ours could also face dissolution requests based on similarly flawed reasoning, leaving us unable to defend ourselves.

Since World War II, dissolution orders for religious corporations have only been issued to Aum Shinrikyo and Myokaku-ji, both of which violated criminal law. However, this case expands the interpretation to include "civil unlawful acts".



When I read the PDF document from the Agency for Cultural Affairs regarding the dissolution request for the [Family Federation](#), phrases like "large donations" and specific monetary figures stand out. But who determines what qualifies as a "large donation" or an excessive contribution?

For example, 10 million yen is a significant amount for me, but for a billionaire, it may be a trivial sum. For an elderly person living alone on a pension, even 50,000 yen could be a considerable amount. If a temple were to solicit a 100,000-yen donation for reconstruction, some might consider it reasonable, while others might find it burdensome.

If this case sets a precedent, then 20 years from now, the grandchild of someone who donated 10 million yen could file a civil lawsuit claiming,

"My grandfather was brainwashed by the chief priest into making that donation, so return the money."

And if that argument were used to demand the dissolution of a temple, we would have no way to counter it.

Question: By including "civil law" as a condition for filing a dissolution request, hasn't the government's administrative power over religion effectively increased?

Answer: The state now holds a powerful card. I suspect that at some point, they will begin taxing

religious corporations, perhaps by imposing partial taxes on items like memorial tablets [See editor's note 1] or protective charms [See editor's note 2]. I am deeply concerned that the dissolution request and the exercise of the right to question religious organizations might be used as bargaining tools for such measures.



Buddhist memorial tablets in Daisenji Temple in Numazu City, Shizuoka Prefecture, Japan

[Editor's note 1: Buddhist memorial tablets, known as "ihai" (位牌) in Japanese, are wooden plaques used in ancestor worship and memorial services in Buddhism, particularly in Japan and other East Asian cultures. They serve as a spiritual representation of the deceased and are commonly placed on household altars (butsudan) or in temples. The ihai plays a central role in Obon (お盆) and death anniversaries, when families pay respects to their ancestors through offerings and chanting. Obon is an annual Buddhist festival for commemorating one's ancestors, whose spirits

are believed to temporarily come back to our world.]

[Editor's note 2: Buddhist protective charms, known as "omamori" (お守り) in Japanese, are amulets or talismans believed to offer protection, good fortune, and blessings. They are commonly sold at Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines in Japan and other Buddhist cultures.]

[Editor's note 3: The Rinzai sect is one of the major schools of Zen Buddhism in Japan, alongside the Sōtō and Ōbaku sects. It was founded in Japan by the monk Eisai (1141 - 1215), who introduced it from China during the late 12th century. Rinzai Zen is known for its use of kōans (paradoxical riddles or statements) to help students break through conventional thinking and attain sudden enlightenment (satori). Rinzai Zen had a significant influence on Japanese culture, inspiring ink painting, tea ceremony, calligraphy, and rock gardens.]

Related to precedent in FFWPU case may affect other religions: ["Poorly Compiled Evidence Including Falsehoods"](#)

Also related to precedent in FFWPU case may affect other religions: [Disputed Verdict Sets Anti-Religious Precedent](#)

Also related to precedent in FFWPU case may affect other religions: [Huge Scandal: "Ministry Is Falsifying Affidavits"](#)

Also related to precedent in FFWPU case may affect other religions: [Alleged Forgery: State Faces Criminal Complaint](#)

And also related to precedent in FFWPU case may affect other religions: [Flawed, Deceptive Evidence Gathering by State](#)

And more, related to precedent in FFWPU case may affect other religions: [Alleged Evidence Tampering in Dissolution Case](#)

And still more, related to precedent in FFWPU case may affect other religions: [Big Paper: State Accused of Altering Evidence](#)

Also related to precedent in FFWPU case may affect other religions: [Japan's New Laws to Curb New Religious Movements](#)

And also related to precedent in FFWPU case may affect other religions: [New Law Designed to Bankrupt Family Federation](#)

Also related to precedent in FFWPU case may affect other religions: [Terms from Consumer Law Used to Rob Faith](#)

And also related to precedent in FFWPU case may affect other religions: [New Law Manufacturing "Victims", Dividing Families](#)

More, related to precedent in FFWPU case may affect other religions: [Maverick Minister Lets "3 Foxes in the Henhouse"](#)

Even more, related to precedent in FFWPU case may affect other religions: [Journalist Reveals Ugly Leftwing Conspiracy](#)

And more, related to precedent in FFWPU case may affect other religions: [Militant Lawyers Dictate Government Policy](#)

And more, related to precedent in FFWPU case may affect other religions: [Courts Using Debunked Concepts Against Minority](#)

Also related to precedent in FFWPU case may affect other religions: [Dissolution Case: Wild Claims, Illegal Actions](#)

Also related to precedent in FFWPU case may affect other religions: [2nd-Generation Members Protesting Persecution](#)

Also related to precedent in FFWPU case may affect other religions: [Inhuman Government-Supported Mass Deprogramming](#)

And also related to precedent in FFWPU case may affect other religions: [Bias: No Right to Respond for Religious Minority](#)

More, related to precedent in FFWPU case may affect other religions: [Collusion to Rob Minority of Its Rights](#)

And more, related to precedent in FFWPU case may affect other religions: [State and Media Creating "Today's Non-Citizens"](#)

Still more, related to precedent in FFWPU case may affect other religions: [Japan Criticized for Glaring Rights Violations](#)

Even more, related to precedent in FFWPU case may affect other religions: [Two European Scholars Warning Japan](#)

And yet more, related to precedent in FFWPU case may affect other religions: [Japan Censured at Religious Freedom Event](#)

And still more, related to precedent in FFWPU case may affect other religions: [Lawyer Exposes Dirty Leftwing Plot](#)

And even more, related to precedent in FFWPU case may affect other religions: [Inhuman Government-Supported Mass Deprogramming](#)

And still more, related to precedent in FFWPU case may affect other religions: [Malicious One-Sided Government Source Selection](#)

More, related to precedent in FFWPU case may affect other religions: [Government's Foul Play Pointed Out](#)

More, related to precedent in FFWPU case may affect other religions: [Kishida Has Opened Can of Worms](#)

Court Dismisses Religious “Mind Control” Claims

• March 16, 2025 • Knut Holdhus

Share:













Family Federation wins appeal in donation case as Sapporo High Court rejects ‘mind control’ claims advocated by activist lawyer

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

Plaintiff Drops Claims in “Donation Lawsuit”

Sapporo High Court Confirms Victory for Former Unification Church



by the editorial



Logo of the *Sekai Nippo*

More Posts

- 

Zen Head: “FFWPU Case A Warning To All Religions”

March 17, 2025
- 


Disputed Verdict Sets Anti-Religious Precedent

March 15, 2025
- 

State Questioned On Alleged Evidence Tampering

March 14, 2025
- 

Religious Faith Framed As Mental Health Concern

March 13, 2025
- 

Alleged Forgery: State Faces Criminal Complaint

March 12, 2025
- 

New Video: State Persecution In Communist State

March 11, 2025
- 

Persecuted Believers Urged: “Use Online Platforms”

March 10, 2025

Search...





Location of the city mentioned, located on the southern island of Kyushu.
Illustration: Maximilian Dörrbecker (Chumhwa) / Wikimedia Commons.
License: CC ASA 3.0 Unp

department of *Sekai Nippo*

In an appeal trial at the *Sapporo High Court*, a lawsuit filed by the relatives of a husband against him, his wife, and the *Family Federation for World Peace and Unification* (FFWPU, formerly the *Unification Church*) came to an end on 12th March 2025, after the plaintiffs withdrew their claims. The plaintiffs had argued that they had suffered harm

because the couple donated money from the deceased father’s estate to the *religious organization*. As a result of the withdrawal, the *Family Federation*’s victory was confirmed. The first trial, held at the *Sapporo District Court* in March of last year, had also ruled in favor of the *Family Federation*.

On 13th March, the *Family Federation* released a statement regarding its “complete victory in the donation-related lawsuit at the Sapporo High Court,” emphasizing that already the district court had “entirely rejected” claims based on “mind control”.



Anti-religious legislation allows relatives of donors to claim refund decades later! Here, a Japanese woman offering a donation at a meeting. Illustration: Microsoft Designer Image Creator, 10th February 2025.

The statement also criticized attorney Masaki Gouro (郷路征記), who represented the plaintiffs, arguing that his claims were effectively advocating for the “mind control” theory. As an example, it cited his written arguments, which stated that “a person’s entire personality is transformed into a *Unification Church*-type personality (統一協会的人格) for life” and that “through the process of missionary work and indoctrination, individuals are made to engage in unlawful activities and become subservient (隷属) to the *Unification Church*.”

Additionally, the *Family Federation* urged the *Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology* (MEXT) to carefully consider the implications of civil court rulings in cases where former *Unification Church* members, who allegedly were victims of *abduction and coercive faith-breaking* (forced de-conversion) [See editor’s note below], acted as plaintiffs. The *organization* pointed out that of the 32 civil lawsuits cited as evidence in the ministry’s dissolution request filed with the *Tokyo District Court*, four were handled by attorney Gouro, all of which promoted the “mind control” theory.

[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

Categories

Send us a message

First Name * Last Name

Email *

Email Address

Your Message *

Submit

had been threatened 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.]

Featured image above: Photograph of Sapporo High and District Court in Chuo-ku, Sapporo, Hokkaido, Japan. Photo: J o / Wikimedia Commons. License: [CC ASA 3.0 Unp](#)

Related to dismissal of "mind control" claims: ["Poorly Compiled Evidence Including Falsehoods"](#)

Also related to dismissal of "mind control" claims: [Huge Scandal: "Ministry Is Falsifying Affidavits"](#)

And also related to dismissal of "mind control" claims: [Flawed, Deceptive Evidence Gathering by State](#)

And more, related to dismissal of "mind control" claims: [Alleged Evidence Tampering in Dissolution Case](#)

And still more, related to dismissal of "mind control" claims: [Big Paper: State Accused of Altering Evidence](#)

Also related to dismissal of "mind control" claims: [Japan's New Laws to Curb New Religious Movements](#)

And also related to dismissal of "mind control" claims: [New Law Designed to Bankrupt Family Federation](#)

Also related to dismissal of "mind control" claims: [Terms from Consumer Law Used to Rob Faith](#)

And also related to dismissal of "mind control" claims: [New Law Manufacturing "Victims", Dividing Families](#)

More, related to dismissal of "mind control" claims: [Maverick Minister Lets "3 Foxes in the Henhouse"](#)

Even more, related to dismissal of "mind control" claims: [Journalist Reveals Ugly Leftwing Conspiracy](#)

And more, related to dismissal of "mind control" claims: [Militant Lawyers Dictate Government Policy](#)

And more, related to dismissal of "mind control" claims: [Courts Using Debunked Concepts Against Minority](#)

Also related to dismissal of "mind control" claims: [Dissolution Case: Wild Claims, Illegal Actions](#)

Also related to dismissal of "mind control" claims: [2nd-Generation Members Protesting Persecution](#)

Also related to dismissal of "mind control" claims: [Inhuman Government-Supported Mass Deprogramming](#)

And also related to dismissal of "mind control" claims: [Bias: No Right to Respond for Religious Minority](#)

More, related to dismissal of "mind control" claims: [Collusion to Rob Minority of Its Rights](#)

And more, related to dismissal of "mind control" claims: [State and Media Creating "Today's Non-Citizens"](#)

Still more, related to dismissal of "mind control" claims: [Japan Criticized for Glaring Rights Violations](#)

Even more, related to dismissal of "mind control" claims: [Two European Scholars Warning Japan](#)

And yet more, related to dismissal of "mind control" claims: [Japan Censured at Religious Freedom Event](#)

And still more, related to dismissal of "mind control" claims: [Lawyer Exposes Dirty Leftwing Plot](#)

And even more, related to dismissal of claims: [Inhuman Government-](#)

[Supported Mass Deprogramming](#)

And still more, related to dismissal of claims: [Malicious One-Sided Government Source Selection](#)

More, related to dismissal of claims: [Government's Foul Play Pointed Out](#)

More, related to dismissal of claims: [Kishida Has Opened Can of Worms](#)

« Previous Disputed Verdict Sets Anti-Re... Zen Head: “FFWPU Case A Wa... Next »



GET STARTED

[Home](#) [Privacy Policy](#)

SUBSCRIBE TO OUR NEWSLETTER

☐ I support or agree that people have the right to know the truth about the truth and to express their opinions.

Follow us

