

FFWPU Europe and the Middle East: Harrowing Rights Abuses Against FFWPU

Knut Holdhus
December 22, 2024



Hirohisa Koide speaks about the harm caused by abduction and confinement. January 20, 2024, in Miyazaki City, Japan



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

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Series: Freedom of Religion Under Threat - Part 7: Religion in Japan in a Global Context

Faith-Breakers Give Instructions on Abduction and Confinement, Violating Human Rights

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

See part 1 of the series: The Kishida Administration's Reckless Actions: [1st article](#), [2nd article](#), [3rd article](#), [4th article](#), [5th article](#), [6th article](#)

See part 2: Ripples to Local Assemblies: [7th article](#), [8th article](#), [9th article](#), [10th article](#), [11th article](#), [12th article](#), [13th article](#), [14th article](#), [15th article](#)

See part 3: Believers Suffering Discrimination and Human Rights Violations: [16th article](#), [17th article](#), [18th article](#), [19th article](#), [20th article](#), [21st article](#), [22nd article](#)

See part 4: Media Crossing the Line: [23rd article](#), [24th article](#), [25th article](#), [26th article](#), [27th article](#), [28th article](#)

See part 5: The Distorted Image of the "Second-Generation": [29th article](#), [30th article](#), [31st article](#), [32nd article](#), [33rd article](#), [34th article](#), [35th article](#), [36th article](#), [37th article](#), [38th article](#)

See part 6: Voices of Religious Leaders: [39th article](#), [40th article](#), [41st article](#), [42nd article](#), [43rd article](#), [44th article](#), [45th article](#), [46th article](#)

See part 7: Religion in Japan in a Global Context: [47th article](#), [48th article](#), [49th article](#), [50th article](#), [51st article](#), [52nd article](#), [54th article](#)



Professional faith-breaker and advisor to the Constitutional Democratic Party (CDP) Takashi Miyamura



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



Satoshi Moriyama (1908-1996), Japanese pastor and co-founder of Ogikubo Glory Church

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.

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 Yasutomo 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 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 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]."

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 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.



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](#)

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.

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See part 3: Believers Suffering Discrimination and Human Rights Violations: [16th article](#), [17th article](#), [18th article](#), [19th article](#), [20th article](#), [21st article](#), [22nd article](#)

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See part 6: Voices of Religious Leaders: [39th article](#), [40th article](#), [41st article](#), [42nd article](#), [43rd article](#), [44th article](#), [45th article](#), [46th article](#)

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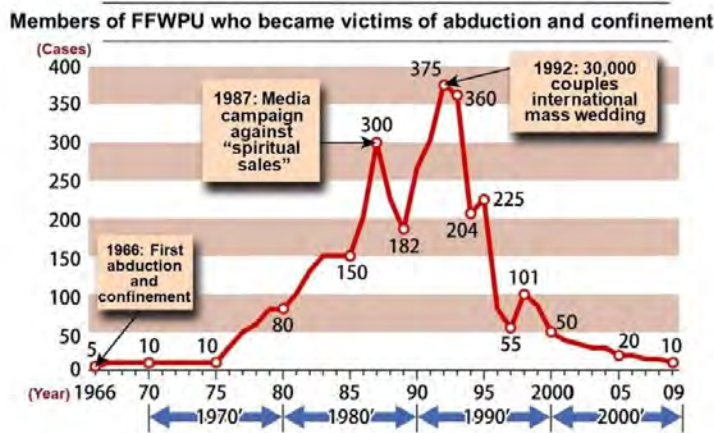
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Victim Of Faith-Breaking Bares Criminal Set-Up

• December 21, 2024 • Knut Holdhus

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Japanese Doctor of Medicine reveals how criminal set-up organized his abduction, confinement, and attempted faith-breaking

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See **part 3: Believers Suffering Discrimination and Human Rights Violations**: [16th article](#), [17th article](#), [18th article](#), [19th article](#), [20th article](#), [21st article](#), [22nd article](#)

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See **part 6: Voices of Religious Leaders**: [39th article](#), [40th article](#), [41st article](#), [42nd article](#), [43rd article](#), [44th article](#), [45th article](#), [46th article](#)

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There is an issue regarding the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) (formerly known as the [Unification Church](#)) that Japan's media has considered taboo and failed to report: the forced renunciation of faith through abduction and confinement of the organization's members.

"It is absolutely unacceptable as parents, siblings, or relatives to allow you to participate in and act on behalf of a criminal group like the [Unification Church](#). [...] We have prepared a separate place where we can talk without interference. Let's discuss it thoroughly there."

In June 1992, Hirohisa Koide (小出浩久), a 29-year-old doctor, was summoned back to his family home by his mother. He found himself surrounded by nearly 20 relatives, with his father starting the conversation with the above declaration.

Despite having a prior obligation with staff at the hospital where he worked, Koide attempted to inform them before heading to the "discussion place". However, everyone present firmly refused, unanimously saying, "Absolutely not!" Sensing the abnormal atmosphere, Koide tried to leave but was immediately subdued.

"At that moment, the male relatives jumped on me, carried me out of the house, and forced me into a van parked outside."

Koide first encountered the teachings of the [Family Federation](#) in September 1983 during his time as a medical student, through a close friend. This led him to adopt the faith. After graduating in March 1988, completing his residency, and beginning work at a Tokyo hospital in 1990, he continued his faith practices.

However, in June 1992, he was **abducted by his parents and relatives** and confined in a series of apartments, completely isolated from the outside world, for nearly two years. During this time, he was pressured to abandon his faith.

His ordeal is meticulously documented in "Escape from the 'Kidnappers': A Doctor's Testimony of Enduring Two Years of Illegal Confinement" (Kogensha), first published in November 1996 and revised in September 2023. The opening excerpt summarizes the events leading to his abduction.



According to the [religious organization](#), the practice of forcing members to



Hirohisa Koide telling his story 10th Sep. 2023 in Tokyo. Photo: Screenshot from YouTube video by [Japanese Victims' Association against Religious Kidnapping and Forced Conversion](#).



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Satoshi Moriyama
(森山諭 – 1908-1996),
Japanese pastor
and co-founder of
Ogikubo Glory
Church. Photo: 日本
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renounce their
faith through
abduction and
confinement
began in 1966
with Pastor
Satoshi Moriyama (森山諭) of the *Ogikubo Glory
Church* (荻窪栄光教会). From the 1980s to 1999,
this occurred at an annual rate of over 80 cases
(except for 55 cases in 1997). By 2020, this
practice had been carried out for more than 50
years, totaling **over 4,300 cases**.

Of these cases, “70% of the individuals left the
church” (as reported by Tomihiro Tanaka (田中富
広), President of the [Family Federation](#) in Japan,
in [this newspaper](#) on 2nd December 2024). Even

considering that some individuals were abducted multiple times, an
overwhelming number of people were forced to change the course of
their lives through abduction and confinement. Those who maintained
their faith were left deeply scarred.

This enormous violation of human rights – particularly freedom of
religion, freedom of thought, and personal liberty – persisted within
Japan for over half a century, a reality that cannot be taken lightly.

Initially, the method involved confining believers in church facilities for a
few days to a week while pastors attempted to persuade them.
However, as the practice expanded nationwide, so-called “faith-
breakers” emerged, making a business out of forced renunciations. The
methods became increasingly malicious and sophisticated.

By the winter of 1987, a nearly systematic process had developed:

1. Parental education →
2. Abduction and confinement →
3. Persuasion and coercion to renounce faith →
4. Expression of intent to leave the church →
5. Confirmation of withdrawal →
6. Release from confinement →
7. Participation in “rehabilitative activities,” such as assisting in
persuading others or lawsuits against the [church](#).

Hirohisa Koide was abducted in 1992, the year with the highest number
of cases (375 – see featured image above), occurring at a pace of over
one per day. He experienced the system almost to its final stage,
including two instances of “fake renunciation,” before returning to the
[church](#).

Koide



**Hiroshi
Yamaguchi**,
activist leftwing
lawyer. Photo:
Screenshot /
[Bitter Winter](#)



Masaki Kito (紀藤
正樹), leading
activist leftwing
lawyer of
National
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Lawmaker for
the
Constitutional
Democratic
Party (CDP) and
hostile activist
against [Family
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Yoshifu Arita
(有田芳生),
former House of
Councilors
member for
CDP, the party
professional
faith-breaker
Miyamura was
advisor to.
Before that,
Arita was a
communist
politician 1990-
2007. Photo: [碧
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encountered
key figures
involved in his
forced
renunciation,
such as
Takashi
Miyamura (宮
村峻), a faith-
breaker who
directly
coerced him;
Yasutomo
Matsunaga
(松永堡智), a
Christian
pastor; former
church
members
who collaborated with these
individuals; journalist Yoshifu
Arita (有田芳生 – now a
member of the House of
Representatives for the
*Constitutional Democratic
Party*); and lawyers Hiroshi



Professional
faith-breaker,
pastor
**Yasutomo
Matsunaga** (松
永康智) of the
*Niitsu
Evangelical
Church*. Photo:
[FFWPU](#)



Family, and lawyers Hiroshi Yamaguchi (山口広) and Masaki Kito (紀藤正樹) of the National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales. These individuals actively

 Professional faith-breaker **Takashi Miyamura** (宮村峻). Photo: FFWPU

participated in the abduction and confinement process. Koide even spoke and acted with them during his confinement, making him uniquely familiar with the full extent of this system.

These individuals, who became vocal critics of the **Family Federation** and frequently appeared in the media, were directly involved in the abduction system. This may explain why media outlets, dependent on their information, have hesitated to cover the issue critically.

Despite the claims detailed in Koide's book, "Escape from the 'Kidnappers': A Doctor's Testimony of Enduring Two Years of Illegal Confinement" (*Kogensha*) – first published 28 years ago and never the subject of a lawsuit for defamation or falsehood – no legal actions have been taken against him.

Featured image above: Overview of number of cases where members of the **Family Federation / Unification Church** have become victims of abduction and confinement. Illustration: [Sekai Nippo](#)

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