

FFWPU Europe and Middle East: Japan's Cruel Orchestrated Campaign to Break Believers

Knut Holdhus
May 11, 2025



One of the many confinement apartments that existed all across Japan. Here, the location of the 8th floor apartment in Ogikubo, Tokyo where Toru Goto was held captive and dehumanized



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

Victim held locked up for for over 12 years reveals dark reality of orchestrated campaign made up of abductions, forcible detention and dehumanizing faith-breaking

Part 4 of a talk given 10th 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](#), [part 3](#)

This did not happen only to me. As I mentioned earlier, the peak of [abduction and confinement](#) cases was in 1992. That was the year when celebrities participated in a [mass wedding](#), and the media sensationalized the event on talk shows. At that time, there were 375 cases in a single year - more than one per day. Can you imagine? At that time, these confinement apartments existed all across Japan. They were everywhere, and there were over 100 people undergoing forced de-conversion (faith-breaking) at the same time. The reality was that these confinements were

happening simultaneously across the country.



Ms. T., in the middle, with two other members of the [Unification Church](#) in 1995

In such closed-off spaces, truly tragic events occurred. This woman, known as Ms. T, received a [marriage blessing](#) with a Korean man in 1995 and moved to South Korea to start her family. She was living a happy newlywed life when she returned to Japan temporarily in 1997. It was at that time that she was [abducted and confined](#) in an apartment in Kyoto. It is known that a certain pastor in Kyoto was involved. We do not know exactly what happened to her during her confinement. However, she attempted suicide in the bathroom and was taken to the hospital, where she ultimately passed away.



"Our Unpleasant Neighbors: The Tragedy of the 'Rescue' of a Female Believer from the [Unification Church](#)" by Kazuhiro Yonemoto (2008)



Asako Shukuya. She passed away 15th Oct. 2012 at age of 48

She may have feared that if she remained confined, she would be destroyed. Perhaps she thought that by being taken to a hospital, she could escape. I personally believe she had no intention of dying - after all, she had a husband waiting for her in Korea. She was only 27 years old. If not for the [abduction and confinement](#), her life would not have been lost. The greatest tragedy was for her husband, who had bid her farewell in Korea with a smile, only to receive sudden news of her death. The depth of his grief, anger, and suffering is unimaginable.

(Showing image) This is Asako Shukuya (宿谷麻子). She is

featured prominently in a book titled *Our Unpleasant Neighbors*, written by Kazuhiro Yonemoto (米本和広), a former anti-cult journalist. Ms. Shukuya was confined for five months and was forced to renounce her faith. I knew her personally and heard her story.

The trauma she suffered was immense. She developed severe PTSD, bipolar disorder, insomnia, and nightmares. She also suffered from atopic dermatitis. The photograph above shows how she suffered terribly, almost to the point of death. However, she was fortunate to have a supportive husband, and over time, she reconciled with her parents. The lower photograph shows her after she had recovered significantly.

Although she was a former believer who had left the [Unification Church](#), she was committed to ensuring that no one else would suffer as she had. She even became involved in my legal case as a supporter and fought alongside us to eradicate [abduction and confinement](#). However, after making efforts to reintegrate into society, she tragically passed away at a young age.



Asako Shukuya delivering an address at a meeting to stop abduction and confinement, 21st February 2010

This photograph was taken when Ms. Shukuya was actively working to address the issue of [abduction and confinement](#). I am the one holding my head on the right. On the far left is Dr. [Hirohisa Koide](#) (小出浩久).

About 15 years ago, Ms. Shukuya organized a gathering called "Severing and Repairing Parent-Child Relationships". The woman to the right is her mother. Despite being a former believer herself, she dedicated herself wholeheartedly to confronting individuals one by one and working to resolve the issue of [abduction and confinement](#). I want to express my deepest gratitude to her.

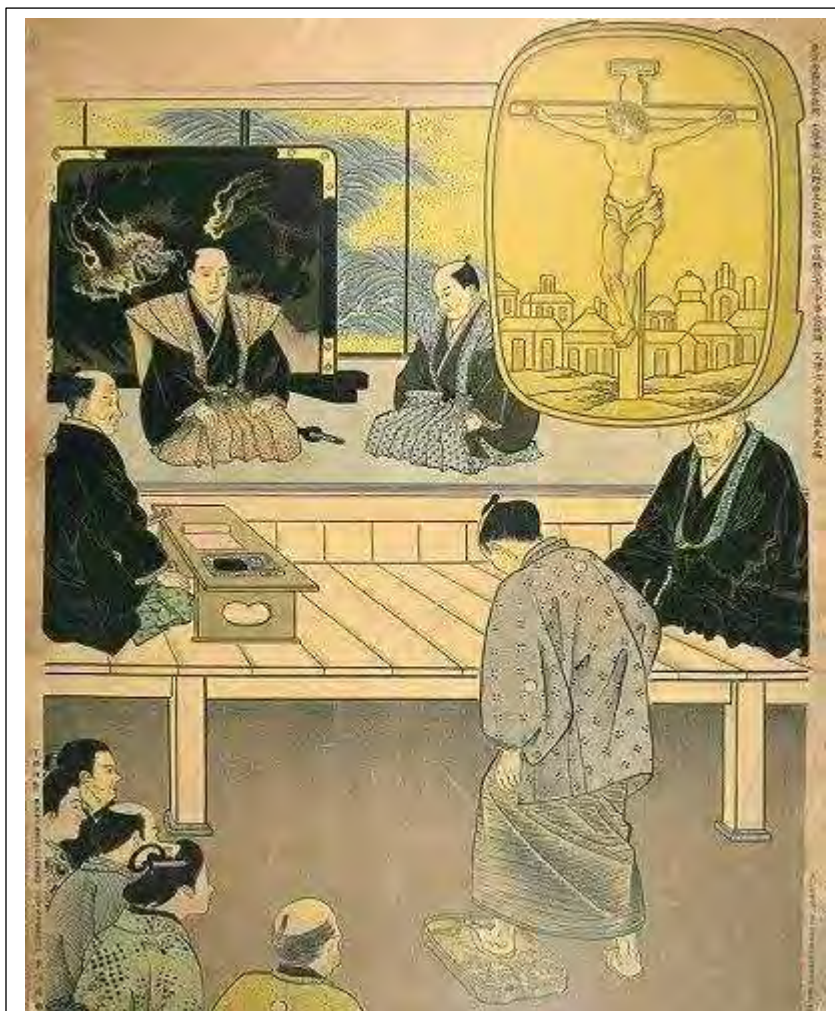


The first gathering of Association to Stop Abduction and Confinement, 15th November 2009. Asako Shukuya is 2nd from left, her mother on the right

Why did the damage caused by [abduction and confinement](#) spread so widely? It was because the practice became organized, information was shared, and methods were systematized. No matter which victim you speak to, their experiences are strikingly similar. The methods of abduction, the timing of when pastors would appear, and even the way they were forced to trample on religious images (fumi-e) [See editor's note below] - all of this was coordinated among the many deprogrammers (faith-breakers). Through shared information, they became increasingly organized, leading to widespread suffering.

To be continued. Part 5 coming soon.

See [part 1](#), [part 2](#), [part 3](#)



Fumi-e (踏み絵: fumi "stepping-on" + e "picture"); step on a picture with the likeness of e.g. the Cross of Jesus or the Virgin Mary

[Editor's note: The illustration to the left depicts a fumi-e (踏み絵), which literally means "stepping-on picture" - typically an image of the Cross, Jesus Christ, or the Virgin Mary. The Tokugawa Shogunate used this practice to identify hidden Christians (known as Kirishitan) and their sympathizers during a time when Christianity was banned in Japan. While the act of stepping on these images was originally called efumi (絵踏), the term fumi-e is now commonly used to refer to both the practice and the object itself.

Those who hesitated or refused to step on the images were suspected of being Christians. They were taken to Nagasaki and ordered to renounce their faith. If they refused, they faced torture - and if they continued to resist, execution, often by burning at the stake.

This systematic persecution began in 1614 and was enforced by regional authorities. By the mid-17th century, the

Tokugawa Shogunate had escalated its crackdown, ordering the expulsion of all European missionaries and the execution of Japanese converts. The suppression of Christianity continued for more than two centuries.]

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Psychological Lynching: Coercive Faith-Breaking

- March 9, 2025
- Knut Holdhus



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

Young Japanese man forcibly detained and isolated for over 12 years exposes the psychological lynching that is major part of dehumanizing coercive faith-breaking

Part 3 of a talk given 10th 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](#), [part 4](#)

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



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(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.

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.



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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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

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](#)

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.”

Continued in [part 4](#).

See [part 1](#), [part 2](#), [part 4](#)

[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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