

【Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research(S)】

Integrated Science and Innovative Science (Comprehensive fields)



Title of Project: Development of an Environment to Share Legal Information of Countries of Chinese Ideograms in Plain Language

Yoshiharu Matsuura

(Nagoya University, Graduate School of Law, Professor)

Research Area : Comprehensive fields

Keyword : Legal Information; Comparative Law, Standard Translation Dictionary

【Purpose and Background of the Research】

There is a growing demand for sharing legal information of Japan, China, Korea and Taiwan (the countries of Chinese ideograms). This project will develop full-scale standard translation dictionaries (STD) of these four countries and link them for cross reference. The project will promote joint research on various topics and produce useful annotations about relevant statutes, cases and social information.

In order to achieve deeper understanding of legal information and to encourage more sophisticated study of comparative law, three conditions are essential: (1) development of STDs that will help consistent translation, (2) effective link of STDs and (3) inclusive information about legislation, cases, and contextual information about each state, society, history, culture and social reality.

The project has already developed a tool to display aligned legal text in two languages and a work flow to develop STD from the statutory texts. Legal text is widely perceived as “hard to read” or “abstruse.” If we translate abstruse Japanese legal text into English, we will not be able to achieve global sharing of legal information in plain language. The European Union practices translation of its laws into all languages of member countries. Their manuals for plain legal drafting and sophisticated translation system are very inspiring. The project will attempt to develop an environment, learning from the experience of the EU.

【Research Methods】

The project will pursue its research under four headings.

(1) Development of STDs will be promoted based on MOU between the project and the Ministry of Government Legislation, Korea, and National Chung Cheng Univ. of Taiwan. Research team consists mainly of lawyers and information scientists.

(2) The project will digitize the English edition of the Japanese Gazette published postwar days. The project will also digitize translation of European laws during the late 19 century Japan and will use the processed results to trace how legal concepts in Chinese ideograms were coined, exported and imported in Asia.

(3) The project will develop standard formats to add annotations (English and other languages) to share the information in Asia. An environment to assist translation will be researched.

【Expected Research Achievements and Scientific Significance】

An extended comparison of STDs will clarify similarities and differences of basic legal concepts represented by Chinese ideograms. It will lead to more precise comparison of laws in Asian countries and will produce deeper understanding of Asian laws.

Proposed comparative study of law assisted by IT tools is a first attempt in Asia and will contribute to harmonization of legal concepts in Asia, particularly in countries of Chinese ideograms.

The project will add annotations to legal texts by international cooperation. The annotation offered in some languages will include the relevant information such as legislative history, cases, and social background of a new legislation. The result will be useful as a common basis of advanced comparative law.

STDs of Asia will be linked to the EU legal terminology in 23 languages and become an important source of information about legal concepts of the world.

【Publications Relevant to the Project】

Y. Matsuura, “Translation of Japanese Statutes and Cases and Its implications for Transparency of Japan” 1394 *Juristo* 24-28 (2010). (in Japanese)

Y. Matsuura, “A Perspective: Significance of the Project of Japanese Law Translation—Global Marketability of Japanese Law and Institutions” 1377 *Juristo* 2-7 (2009). (in Japanese)

【Term of Project】 FY2011-2015

【Budget Allocation】 162, 600 Thousand Yen

【Homepage Address and Other Contact Information】

<http://jalii.law.nagoya-u.ac.jp/>