

Researcher

Kenzo Okawa

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Okawa (right) and Khamphay Xayasouk (left), Deputy Head of Technical Division of the Judicial Research and Training Institute of People's Supreme Court in Laos

I studied civil law at university and graduate school. When I was a graduate student, I participated in a survey on the personal status law in Laos as research commissioned by the Ministry of Justice under my professor. Thanks to this experience, I be-

came involved in JICA's cooperation for the Rule of Law Promotion in Laos as a member of the advisory group in 2014.

The project has several activities, and I assist with the development of the Civil Code. I present Japanese and foreign laws to local jurists and examine the content of the draft of the Civil Code together, while being careful not to force the Japanese way of thinking on them. Laos has its own way of thinking; we do not forcibly pursue ideas that are favored by Japan but disliked by Laos. Foreign laws are not necessarily appropriate for Laotian society either. Explaining laws of various countries in a manner that is easy to understand for our counterparts, instead of simply presenting them, is a challenge in the legal and judicial development project.

People in different positions such as prosecutors and lawyers are involved in the project. My role as a researcher is to objectively examine the discussion process during the project and the draft content to explore its significance and background, then spread it widely in Laotian society. It is also important to look back on the activities to reflect on points to improve or reconsider, and examine the content and policy of Japan's cooperation for the Rule of Law Promotion by comparing it with assistance from other countries.

The Civil Code is now nearly complete. Even after its completion, I will continue to give my opinion and advice on revising the content and problematic points in harmony with the economic and social development in Laos.



Objectively examining the meaning of the assistance

Legal Practitioner

Ryo Yukawa

Professor, International Cooperation Department, Research and Training Institute of the Ministry of Justice



The training in Japan. Yukawa (back left) discussed the system of civil provisional remedies with Cambodian legal professionals.

After becoming a judge in 2010 and working in district and family courts in Nagasaki and Hyogo, I was dispatched to the International Cooperation Department (ICD) at the Research and Training Institute of the Ministry of Justice in 2015. As part of the international cooperation of the Ministry of Justice,

Communicating from a common viewpoint as a legal practitioner

the ICD assists with the drafting and revision of laws, the development of legal systems and the training of legal professionals in Asia. The ICD also cooperates with JICA projects by conducting on-site surveys, organizing training and seminars for the local legal professionals.

Japan has been assisting with the drafting of the Cambodian civil code and civil procedure code; we often assist in teaching local legal professionals as the content is similar to Japanese law. We present the Japanese way of thinking and explain the problematic points with specific examples in order to provide information that responds to local needs. I prepare so that I can do my best to explain the core part in a clear manner and define what I need to convey. As our counterparts are practitioners who have

actual cases that need to be solved, idealism alone is quite futile. I convey what I would like to know if I were in their position and what can be immediately used at work. As a judge, I also feel the need to tell them that both the conclusions and the processes are in important in trials.

Cambodian legal professionals are very passionate and we spend nearly half of the time on Q&A sessions. Such is their desire to execute laws and legal systems appropriately on their own and make their country better. I was happy when I met again in Cambodia with a Cambodian judge who had participated in the training in Japan and he told me that the discussion of a case during the training turned out to be useful in a similar case. I hope that more and more people will have experiences like his.



So many roles! People who Support the Legal and Judicial Development Project

Project Coordinator

Tsugunori Teramoto

Project Coordinator for the 'Project to support legal and judicial reforms targeting 2020'



Teramoto (third from the left) celebrated the appointment of the new Minister of Justice, Le Thanh Long, with other experts in April 2016

I am involved in the 'Project to support legal and judicial reforms targeting 2020' in Viet Nam as a Project Coordinator. Japan began to assist the promotion of reform in Viet Nam in 1996 and has supported in drafting basic laws and regulations including the Civil Code as well as enhancing the capacity of human resources working in judicial organizations such as the courts

and procuratorates for about 20 years. The current project further enhances such work.

In Viet Nam, inconsistencies between laws and regulations, and differences in understandings among lawyers and judges have become problems in recent years. Therefore the project team is working to improve consistency so that the laws will be applied in a standard manner.

In the project, Japanese experts who are judges, prosecutors and lawyers visit places across Viet Nam to give advice through seminars and workshops for local judicial organizations, including the Ministry of Justice, The Office of Government and The Supreme People's Court. My role is to support such experts. Including the management of budget and accounting, my duties range widely, from confirming the appropri-

ateness of schedules and transportation methods for business trips, to evaluating the quality of interpreters and translators, so I need to consider a number of aspects. I work on such duties daily while I value the teamwork with experienced local staff and drivers.

Including new and former Ministers of Justice in Viet Nam, many people who received JICA assistance now work as core human resources in the legal field. I feel proud that Japan's steady contributions have been useful in developing human resources in Viet Nam.

I worked in a coal mining company as a mining engineer in Hokkaido for 30 years after graduating from university. Actually, I was working in Viet Nam as a JICA expert in a technical assistance project for coal mine safety then. I am happy to be involved again in technical assistance in Viet Nam.



Supporting experts for the smooth project operation



Outstanding human resources from a wide range of fields are the strength of the legal and judicial development project of Japan. Here are the personnel who support developing countries in making laws and training legal practitioners.

Interpreter and Training Coordinator

Yoshie Amakawa

Interpreter and Training Coordinator for the legal and judicial development project in Cambodia



Amakawa (in the middle) chatting with the Secretary of State for Ministry of Justice in Cambodia who visited Japan for training and a project expert who is a judge in Japan.

Just before graduating from junior high school, I took refuge in Viet Nam in 1975. Later, I learned Vietnamese and worked as an interpreter in a refugee camp for Cambodians in Viet Nam.

In 1984, I came to Japan as a Cambodian refugee, went to a language school and graduated from university. In my fourth year in Japan, I started working

as an interpreter in an organization that welcomes refugees from three Indochinese countries. Receiving a recommendation from the organization director, I started working as a training coordinator and interpreter for JICA since 1992.

Today, I am involved in the project to support the drafting of the Civil Code and the Code of Civil Procedure, which started in 1999 in response to a request from the Cambodian government. In addition to interpreting in the training to which Cambodian judicial professionals are invited to Japan, research and interpreting at the seminar in Cambodia are also part of my role.

Laws cannot be explained by charts or photos; therefore, legal interpretation requires extensive vocabulary. For example, in order to accurately communicate the subtle differences between Japanese terms such as approvals and

admissions, it is important to carefully study the meaning of the terms in both languages. When appropriate expressions cannot be found in Cambodian, I explain the meaning of the terms and let the participants themselves suggest suitable terms. As interpreters are expected to have vocabulary as well as an understanding of the contents of the laws, much time is required in advance for preparation and studying.

It was impressive that Cambodian civil servants had the strong will to rebuild their war-torn country at the beginning of the project. As a result of long-term assistance from Japan, the legal system in Cambodia has improved significantly and Cambodia has been developing excellent judicial professionals. Taking pride in these results, I am determined to push forward with this project.



Every word counts; communicating legal terms accurately