

NATIONAL REPORT : JAPAN

Japan Legal Support Center

Tomoki Ikenaga

Naoyuki Takizawa

Yoshiaki Hirai

1 National Statistics

(1) Population

- The Population of Japan was about 127,510,000 in 2010 and 10% of them lived in Tokyo.
- The number of attorneys was 28,789 in 2010(about 48% of them were in Tokyo). It has increased by about 70% since 2000.
- The number of judges was 3,611 in 2010.
- The number of prosecutors was 2,621 in 2010.

(2) Economical situation

- The substantial GDP was about 526 trillion yen in 2010 (approximately 6.4 trillion US dollars as of May 2011).
- The substantial GDP per capita was about 4,125,166 yen in 2010(approximately 50,000 US dollars as of May 2011).

(3) Budget

- National Budget expenditures for 2010 was about 92 trillion yen (approximately 1.1 trillion US dollars as of May 2011).
- Budget expenditures for civil legal aid was about 19.6 billion yen(approximately 239 million US dollars as of May 2011) in 2010. (This doesn't include administration costs.)
- Budget expenditures for criminal legal aid was about 12.7 billion yen(approximately 154 million US dollars as of May 2011) in 2010. (This doesn't include administration costs.)
- In 2010 , expenditure on legal aid per capita was about 253 yen(approximately 3 US dollars as of May 2011. This doesn't include administration costs.).

The transition of Legal Aid Budgets (except administration costs) (million USD)

	2007	2008	2009	2010
Civil Legal Aid	156	167	219	239
Criminal Legal Aid	91	101	154	154

total	247	268	373	393
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(4) Court cases

- The number of cases handled by courts in 2009 was as follows:
 - A. Civil Case(include administrative case) 2,408,566(After the peak of 2003 , it has decreased recently)
 - B. Family Case 799,572 (The number has gradually increased since 2000.)
 - C. Criminal Case 1,215,147(The number has gradually decreased for 7 years.)

2 The history of Legal Aid in Japan

1946 New Constitution was enforced. Under the Constitution, indigent criminal defendants had the right to be represented by court-appointed lawyers at the government's expense. But suspects didn't have the right.

1952 Japan Legal Aid Association (hereinafter referred to as "JLAA", which is an incorporated foundation sponsored mainly by Japan Federation of Bar Associations, hereinafter referred to as "JFBA") was established.

1958 JLAA started to receive a subsidy for civil legal aid from Ministry of Justice.

1992 JLAA started to provide a legal aid for suspects in criminal cases at JFBA's expense.

1999 The Judicial Reform Council was established within the government to conduct a research and discuss the future judicial system.

2000 The Civil Legal Aid Act was enacted and enforced. It prescribed the responsibility of government to expand civil legal aid for the first time. Since 2000, the governmental subsidy for civil legal aid has increased sharply. The subsidy more than tripled in 2000, to 2.1 billion yen. The number of legal aid provided by JLAA also increased rapidly. In 2004, the number of legal representations was 48,435, about 5 times as many as that of 1998.

2001 The statement which included fundamental reform of legal aid system was released by the Judicial Reform Council. It was the beginning of the biggest judicial reform after World War II.(Details of the judicial reform are described in Section 3.)

2004 The Comprehensive Legal Support Act¹ was enacted. The purpose of the act is prescribed as follows:

(Purpose)

Article 1 Owing to the changes in the social and economic situation at home and

¹ The translation of this act is available at < <http://www.japaneselawtranslation.go.jp/> >

abroad, the settlement of disputes based on laws has become increasingly more important. Bearing such in mind, the purpose of this Act shall be to contribute to the formation of a freer and fairer society by providing not only the basic principles, the responsibilities of the national and local government and other basic matters, but also the organization and operation of the Japan Legal Support Center which is the core body of comprehensive support (hereinafter referred to as “comprehensive legal support”), with respect to the implementation and the establishment of systems of comprehensive legal support to further facilitate the use of judicial decisions and other systems for the settlement of disputes based on laws, and to make it easier to receive support from attorneys at law and legal professional corporations, as well as judicial scriveners and other related legal experts and specialists (parties or persons who are not attorneys at law or legal professional corporations but who are authorized to engage in the practice of handling other persons' legal affairs based on laws; the same shall apply hereinafter).

2006 Japan Legal Support Center (hereinafter referred to as “JLSC”) was established in April under the Comprehensive Legal Support Act. And JLSC started the operation in October. (Details of JLSC are described in Section 4.)

2007 JLAA was dissolved in March.

3 Recent Judicial Reform in Japan

For over the past decade, the Japanese judicial system has been in the midst of major reforms.

In 1999, the government established a Judicial Reform Council to study basic policies and programs to achieve a judicial system that is more accessible to the general public, encourage greater participation of the general public to the judicial procedures and improve the skills and abilities of legal professions. Since its inception, it had met 63 times and in 2001 issued an opinion paper calling for fundamental reforms.

These reforms advocated the transition from “small-scale justice” to “large-scale justice.” They seek to extend the rule of law to every part of society and, within the context of deregulation, to orient Japanese society away from “prior regulation” to “after-the-fact relief,” as well as expanding the number of people involved in the judiciary which takes on a greater role as the institution for providing “after-the-fact relief.”

The Council's opinion paper, together with subsequent discussions in the Judicial System Reform Promotion Headquarters, resulted in the passage of 24 Acts that were related to the judicial reform by the end of 2004.

One specific issue for judicial reform was achieving a substantial increase in the number of legal professions (Total number of lawyers has increased from 17,126 to 28,789 between 2000 and 2010. This represents a significant acceleration; in the past it took approximately 33 years for the number of legal lawyers to double.)

In 2004, the first graduate-level law school was established to provide professional legal training and education for law school students. The aim of "law school" is to shift the focus from the single event of the bar examination to legal training through the broader process of professional legal education at law schools.

Second, in 2009, Saiban-in(Lay Judge) System was also introduced. It allows ordinary citizens to participate in the judicial processes. In Saiban-in system, six lay judges are chosen to serve alongside three professional judges in examining cases involving certain serious criminal cases. Lay judges involved in criminal proceedings determine facts and decide sentences with an authority basically equivalent to that of professional judges. The procedure for electing lay judges is similar to a jury system in that lay judges are chosen at random from voters lists and assigned to serve on specific cases. And it also resembles a lay judge (Schöffe or échevin) system in that citizens participate in trials alongside professional judges.

Third, in 2006, government-funded legal aid organization "Japan Legal Support Center" started to operate. The center was established as a "quasi-incorporated administrative agency"² (Details of JLSC are described in Section 4). It provides 5 main services to help citizens to get access to justice. The services are: (1) Information Service, (2) Civil Legal Aid Services, (3) Services related to Court-Appointed Defense Counsel, (4) Services for Areas with insufficient Legal Services, (5) Criminal Victims Support.

These reforms also include : various systemic reforms regarding the criminal justice system such as provision of court-appointed attorneys to suspects; reforms of the

² "An incorporated administrative agency is a judicial person that acts independently of the state and manages business operations such as research, inspection and trade insurance that were formerly performed by the state. A particular feature of such agencies is that they can independently consider how to perform their operations, and run these operations in a better, more efficient manner on their own responsibility. Specially, each minister sets objectives to be attained by agencies under his or her jurisdiction, and each agency draws up a plan to achieve the objectives and carry out operations in line with the plan. The results obtained are evaluated by external experts, and the evaluation is reflected in management plans for subsequent years."

<http://www.meti.go.jp/english/aboutmeti/data/aOrganization/keizai/dokuritugyousei/01.htm>

administrative litigation system such as expansion of the range of parties qualified to file suits; reforms of the intellectual property system such as establishment of the Intellectual Property High Court; reforms of the system concerning judges such as appointment and evaluation of judges; establishment of a system where judges and prosecutors experience other professions; liberalization of profit-earning activities of attorneys; deregulation of legal fees; improvement of the disciplinary system; and establishment of the labor adjudication system.

4 Japan Legal Support Center (JLSC)

The Comprehensive Legal Support Act which was enacted in 2004 designates the JLSC as the comprehensive legal support center.

As outlined above, JLSC was established in 2006 as a quasi-incorporated administrative agency. In the framework of Incorporated Administrative Agency system, Ministry of Justice, which is responsible for the operations of JLSC, sets a Medium-term goals to improve the efficiency and quality of the service. JLSC makes a plan to achieve the goals and carries out operations in line with the plan. After the Medium-term expires, the results of JLSC's operations are evaluated by external experts and the evaluation is reflected in Medium-term goals for subsequent years.

(1) Organization (As of Dec. of 2010)

- The headquarters office is in Tokyo.
- JLSC has 50 district offices corresponding to district courts.
- JLSC has 16 branch offices. Branch offices are set up beneath district offices which cover large area or population.
- JLSC has 31 local law offices. Local law offices are set up in rural area where attorneys are none or very few.
- The number of staff is 1,120. (This includes 194 staff attorneys.)

(2) Main Businesses and Statistics

A Information Services

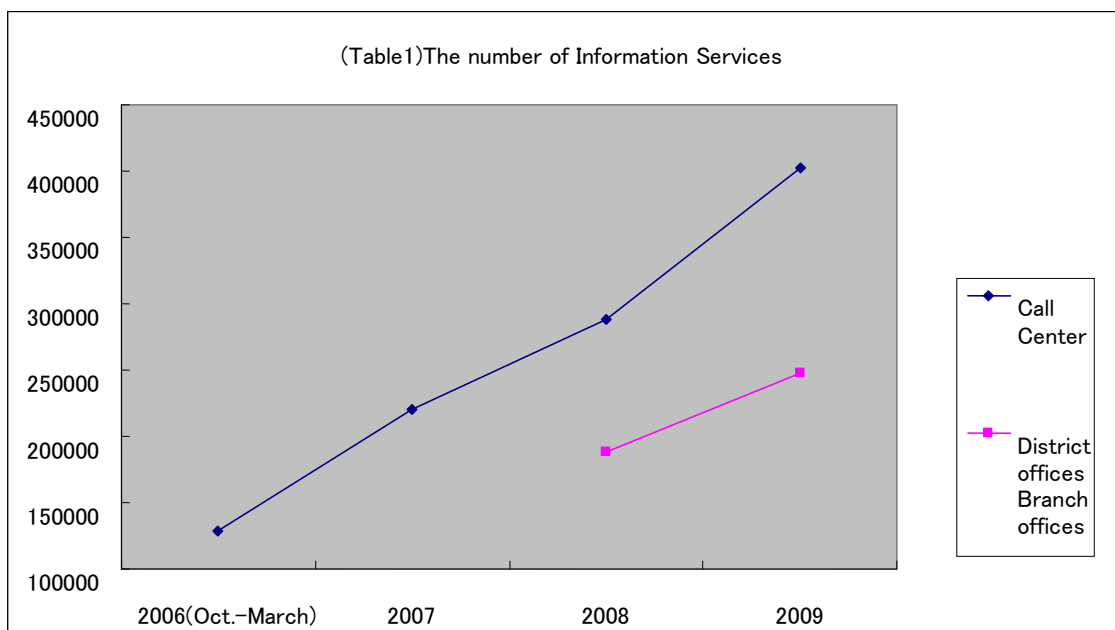
JLSC provides free information at user's request, on a legal system and counseling organizations or groups (bar associations, judicial scriveners associations, counseling counters within local governments, etc.).

JLSC has centralized main information offices (which are called "Call Center") in Tokyo and Sendai. They have skilled telephone operators to provide free information to people in trouble over both the telephone and the Internet. For example, they maintain a database of details of bar associations, judicial scrivener associations, local government agencies and other institutions

providing consultations around the country. And they refer users to the most suited institutions or transmit users to the most appropriate district or branch office. A telephone call to the centralized offices costs only 8.5 yen nationwide for three minutes.

District offices and branch offices also provide free information to users by phone or face to face.

- In 2009, Call Center offered 401,841 information services to users. (This includes 24,574 services offered by e-mail.)
- In 2009, District offices and branch offices offered 247,172 information services to users. (This includes 23,647 face-to-face information services.)
- The number of Information services is increasing rapidly since 2006 as Table1.



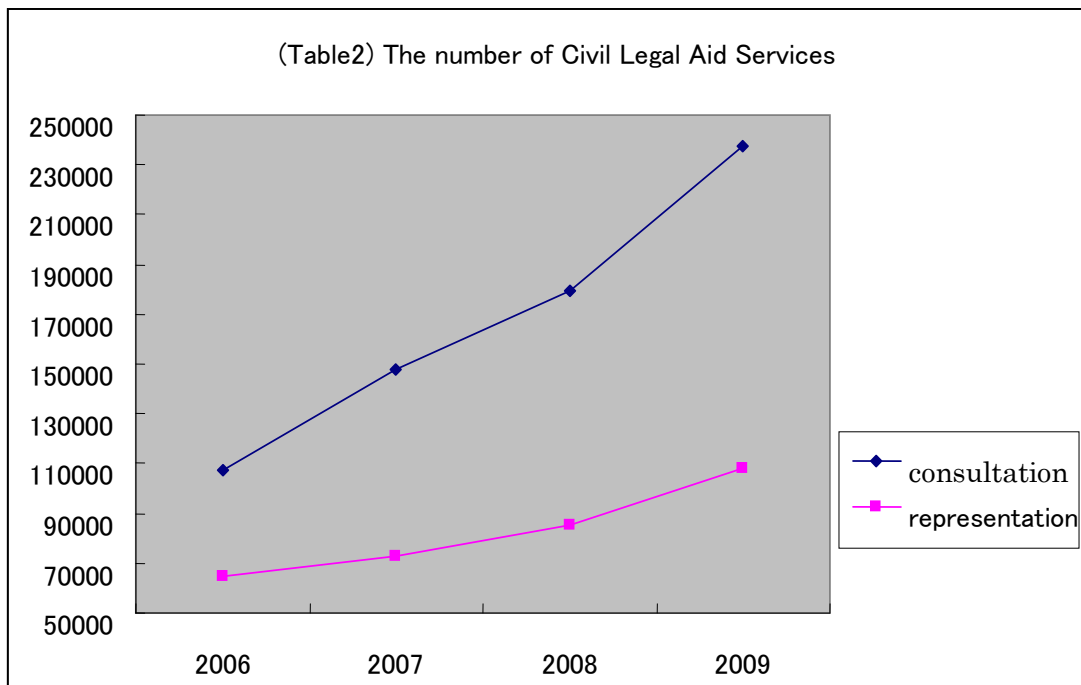
B Civil Legal Aid Services (legal consultation, legal representation and aid for making documents)

JLSC provides civil legal aid services to people who can't afford to pay attorney's fees. Japanese nationals and foreigners who reside in Japan lawfully are eligible to use of JLSC's civil legal aid services. Financial eligibility is also required (financial eligibilities for legal consultation and representation are the same). For example, in the case of a person with no family, if his/her monthly income is about 180,000 yen (approximately 2,195 US dollars) or less and his/her disposable capital is less than 1,800,000 yen (approximately 22,000 US dollars), he/she could consult a lawyer free of charge. He/She can get legal consultation at either JLSC's

offices or lawyer's offices. It is said that about 20% of the Japanese is covered under the current civil legal aid system.

If he/she needs further aid from lawyer, JLSC perform a merit test to check the nature of the case and probability of winning. Subsequently, users who pass the merit test will be funded by JLSC when they hire lawyers to represent them at court or to draft documents to be submitted to courts (In Japan, Legal Representation Aid includes negotiation as well as representation at court.). JLSC temporarily pays attorney's fee for users, and users have to repay all the money which JLSC paid for them. However, users who receive social security can be exempt from repaying if they make a request to JLSC.

- In 2009, JLSC offered 237,306 free legal consultation to users.
- In 2009, JSLC offered 107,991 legal representation aids to users. (This includes 6,769 documents preparation aids.)
- The number of civil legal aid is increasing since 2006 as Table 2. (Civil legal aid services had been provided by JLAA until September 2006.)



- In Japan, most of Civil Legal Aid Services are provided by judicare lawyers. In 2009, 327,609 out of 345,297 services (This number includes legal consultation, legal representation and aid for making documents) were provided by judicare lawyers and the rest were provided by staff attorneys³ of JLSC.

³ The details of staff attorneys are described in section 4(2) D.

C Services related to Court-Appointed Defense Counsel

Before the Comprehensive Legal Support Act was enacted, there wasn't a publicly funded court-appointed attorney system to suspects in Japan. After the enactment of the act, JLSC started to provide criminal legal services for both suspects and defendants in 2006 and the scope of criminal legal services for suspects expanded in 2008.

If people who are indicted or detained for criminal investigations are unable to hire lawyers due to financial difficulties, a court appoints defense counsel for them (Court-Appointed Defense Counsel). JLSC nominates candidates for Court-Appointed Defense Counsel at courts' request and pays defense counsel's fees. When the defendant is sentenced guilty, he/she is obliged to pay the fees. However, a court may discharge him/her from payment of the fees after taking his/her financial situations into consideration. Most of the defendants sentenced guilty are exempt from paying the fees.

JLSC also nominates candidates for official attendants for juveniles in the juvenile trial procedure and for court-appointed attorneys for victims in the criminal procedure on requests from courts.

- In 2009, total number of 61,857 lawyers were assigned to act as Court-Appointed Defense Counsel for suspects.
- In 2009, total number of 74,658 lawyers were assigned to act as Court-Appointed Defense Counsel for defendants.

D Services for Areas with insufficient Legal Services

In rural areas suffering from shortages of lawyers, it is difficult for residents to find a lawyer who deals with their cases. So, JLSC dispatches staff attorneys to such areas to meet the legal needs of residents. As of Dec. 2010, 46 staff attorneys were dispatched to 31 rural areas and they provided civil and criminal legal aid services .

E Victims Support Services

JLSC provides information about crime victim-supporting systems, including information on the participation in criminal procedures at courts and on damage claim through civil procedures. It also provides information about the systems and experienced lawyers supporting victims. In 2009, JLSC provided such information for crime victims 26,045 occasions, and introduced about 900

experienced lawyers.

(3) Activities in recent years

A Legal Needs Survey 2008

In order to implement legal aid services effectively, we need to conduct an empirical survey on legal needs of ordinary people. In 2008, JLSC asked Prof. Sugawara (Nagoya Univ.) and Prof. Yamada (Kyoto Univ.) to conduct a Legal Needs Survey concerning legal aid. Upon implementing the survey, we referred to the previous ones which had been conducted in other countries. The survey conducted in Japan consisted of a general approach that targeted the general public, homeless people and legal aid users.

Based on the findings of the survey, we could review our current services and make our services more effective and efficient. The results of the survey were as follows:

- 25.2% of the respondents have experienced some legal problems in the past 5 years, and the number of legal problems was an average of 1.8 per person. The most frequently experienced problems were related to workplace, inheritance and neighborhood.
- 25.2% of the respondents have experienced some welfare problems in the past 5 years. The most frequently experienced problems were related to pension, medical insurance and the elderly problems.
- 38.5% of the respondents have experienced either some legal or some welfare problems in the past 5 years.
- Homeless people experienced some legal or some welfare problems much frequently than Non-homeless people. 83.5% of them experienced some legal or some welfare problems in the past 5 years. And the number of problems was an average of 2.8 per person. The most frequently experienced problems were related to debt (44.2%), workplace (29.1%), family registration and/or resident registry problems (26.4%). And most frequently experienced welfare problems were social security (24.5%), medical insurance (18.5%) and pension (15.8%).
- 73.5% of the respondents who encountered some legal problem sought some kind of consultation, but only 29.7% actually received professional legal consultation.
- The remaining 26.5% didn't consult anyone. The reasons for not consulting were mostly because they didn't know what to do or felt any effort to be meaningless.

Moreover, the reasons given by younger generations were primarily “all efforts seemed meaningless” (33.3%), “don’t know what to do”, “taking action is bothersome” and “taking action seems difficult” (22.2% respectively). The older generations added “want to resolve the problem on my own”, “want to keep the problem to myself” as reasons, with increasing frequency as age went up. Furthermore, younger generations are characterized by their notably low rate of seeking professional legal consultation (7.7%).

- With regard to welfare problems, the professional consultation rate was very low (2.4%). Therefore, there is a need to establish a support for welfare problems as well as offer information and public legal education.

Based on the results, we estimated the needs for legal consultation aid and representation aid. It is estimated that 580,000 to 830,000 cases need to be found out annually. This reveals that potential needs are 2.4 to 3.5 times the number of legal consultation aid cases handled in 2009. Legal representation aid needs are 160,000 to 300,000 cases annually, which is 1.5 to 2.8 times the number recorded in 2009. Looking at the types of legal consultation, consultations regarding inheritance and divorce are relatively satisfied, but more modern issues, such as bullying, child abuse, workplace problems, and environment-related problems involving noise and shaking, showed an evident lack of fulfillment.

B Public Legal Education / Law-Related Education

As legal needs survey mentioned, a lot of people who are involved in law-related problems don’t know how to deal with the problems. As the results, many problems remain unresolved. This seriously affects their lives and the social costs are on increase. Under the situations, medium-term goals applied to 2010-2013 prescribe that JLSC should work on public legal education (hereinafter referred to as PLE) to help people deal with law-related problems effectively.

In 2011, law-related education (hereinafter referred to as LRE) was introduced to the curriculum of elementary schools. Junior high schools and high schools are going to start LRE from 2012 to 2013. In Japan, JFBA, local bar associations and judicial scriveners associations have engaged in LRE as well as Ministry of Justice. It is said that the aim of LRE is to teach the basic value of law and legal approaches to students who lead future society. Although practitioners enthusiastically have engaged in LRE since 2002, the importance of LRE doesn’t prevail among ordinary people. Now, JLSC tries to spread LRE nationwide in

cooperation with other LRE practitioners. For example, JLSC dispatched staff attorneys to schools and they taught students the value of law, judicial systems and held the trial courts. In 2010, JLSC implemented 33 PLE programs at schools. JLSC also held the meeting of PLE practitioners at 4 district offices to discuss the future of PLE and how to cooperate in this area. Practitioners gathered from: bar associations; scriveners associations; teachers; members of board of education and others.

JLSC also works on PLE for adults. We believe that it's important to acquire law-related knowledge on the basis of comprehension of the value of law. From this point of view, it's crucially important to give legal knowledge to people in order to get them to act effectively in front of law-related problems. JLSC implemented 197 PLE programs for people who had already graduated schools or students who would graduate schools in a while. Staffs of local government who work at welfare offices attended the program too. JLSC gave them knowledge regarding: how to deal with the legal problems which people often face, judicial system, the operation of JLSC and so on.

C Exemption from attorney's fee for social security recipients

In the Japanese civil legal aid, users have to repay the attorney's fee, which JLSC paid for them, in principle. Before January 2010, this principle was enforced strictly and users who receive social security had to repay the money as well as non-social security recipients did. Although exceptional exemption rule was applied to social security recipients considering their financial difficulties individually, it wasn't widely applied. Such a strict rule caused the harsh reality for them, so JLSC reviewed and amended the rule in January 2010. Under the current rule, social security recipients are suspended from repayment until the conclusion of the case and they are entitled to exemption finally after their financial difficulties were confirmed again. This amendment practically has realized free representation service for the first time in the Japanese legal aid history.

5 Recent Issues of JLSC

(1) Argument over first free legal consultation without means test

A Introduction

Professor Jon T. Johnsen released the article "Development of a universal scheme for short legal advice in Norway" at 8th Legal Service Research Centre

International Research Conference 2010 Cambridge. The article took up the topic of a proposal of a free first line service as one of the most innovative and ambitious legal aid reform in Norway. In the article he described as follows

- Early solutions of legal conflicts will reduce the costs and stress for the parties involved. A larger share of the money spent on legal aid should be allocated to advice and assistance at the pre trial stage.
- The scheme included all sorts of legal problems without any means or merit's test
- Most cases were solved within 30 minutes and two third were solved within the maximum frame of one hour without any need for further referrals.

When a case cannot be solved within the one hour limit and the lawyer advises on further steps and the need for assistance connected, the lawyer is free to suggest that she or he carries on with the case on market terms or as a legal aid case if the client qualifies.

- The influence of the Norwegian Bar Association has been strong until now, and its attitudes will be crucial to the Ministry's decisions.

The same kind of proposal was raised in Japan in April 2010 and heated debate has been continued to date.

B Overview of Bar Associations' legal consultation services and legal aid in Japan

The current Japanese Practicing Attorney Law, enacted in 1949 after the establishment of the Constitution, transferred control of attorneys from the Minister of Justice to the JFBA and local bar associations. Under the current Practicing Attorney Law, any person qualified to practice law including legal consultation have to become an attorney as well as a member of the JFBA by being listed on the JFBA's Roll of Attorneys through the bar associations which she or he belong to. Under the current scheme, local Bar Associations have established legal consultation centers so as to provide citizens with access to attorney consultation. More than 250 legal consultation centers have been established over the last 10 years, with a total of 305 in operation around Japan as of December 2007. Legal consultation fee is charged by local bar associations which differ from center to center. On average five thousand yen which is equivalent to 61 US dollars is charged by bar associations per half an hour legal consultation. These legal consultation fees have contributed to the firm financial basis of local bar associations every fiscal year and each association gradually came to be dependent on revenue generated from legal consultation centers.

The Comprehensive Legal Support Act was enacted in 2004 and JLSC was established in 2006 under the law as a quasi-incorporated administrative agency. JLSC provides a wide range of legal services and one of its main activities is to provide free legal information services without means test and free legal consultation service with means test. However, JLSC cannot provide free legal consultation service without means test under the current rule.

Since JLSC was established, bar associations and JLSC came to play each role as follows.

- First, JLSC and bar associations provide free legal information service.
- Second, bar associations provide legal consultation service charged five thousand yen per half an hour consultation on average.
- Third, JLSC provide free legal consultation services with means test, but cannot provide them without means test.
- However there is no nationwide organization to be able to provide free legal consultation without means test in Japan.

C JLSC's announcement and opposition of the Bar

In April 2010, former president of JLSC announced the plan of a free legal consultation service without means test in collaboration with bar associations as one of the most innovative and ambitious legal aid reform in Japan. The new scheme plans to include all sorts of legal problems without any means test and first consultation gets free. When a case cannot be solved within first consultation, second free legal consultation is provided with means test. Or attorney can accept the case on market terms if the user doesn't meet the means test.

After new plan was announced, local bar associations widely opposed to it. The bar argued that if JLSC introduces such a free legal consultation service without means test, all citizens would apply to not bar associations' legal consultation centers but JLSC offices, which infringes on the realm of bar associations and weaken the financial basis. Bar associations also challenged to JLSC that the bar plays the fundamental role of protecting human rights and JLSC's new scheme will be a step towards the socialization of the legal profession. Bar associations' concern is based on political, philosophical and historical background that they had been under the strong control of government before the Second World War, while JLSC aims to introduce the scheme based on practical reason that free legal consultation without means test will help socially excluded persons solve legal conflicts and reduce the costs and stress for the parties involved. It seems that

both organizations sought points of agreement but remained on different tracks. Like Norway, the influence of the Japanese Bar Association has been strong until now, and its attitudes will be crucial to the JLSC and Ministry's future decisions.

(2) Investigating the role of staff attorney-strengthening the networking

A Introduction

JLSC has hired 218 staff attorneys as of March 2011. Staff attorneys have made much of community-based holistic approach and organic use of local networking, which has improved the access to justice in both city and rural area⁴. However the introduction of staff attorney has been causing the conflict among traditional legal professions (judicare) for fear of losing their job.

B The year 2011 survey conducted by joint committee of JLSC and JFBA

JLSC and JFBA have regularly surveyed the each role of staff attorney and judicare since 2009. The year 2011 survey conducted by joint committee of JLSC and JFBA reached the conclusion that to enhance the effectiveness of staff attorney and to facilitate the collaboration between staff attorney and judicare, following prerequisites is especially essential ;

- Staff attorneys' office should have at least two or three attorneys in one law office. At present only one staff attorney is often arranged at her or his law office even in city area, which caused the busy staff attorney to be able to handle only litigation cases every day and sometimes competed with judicare for the limited amount of litigation services.

On the contrary, staff attorneys' office which has more than one or two attorneys often could outreach to the relevant public and private organizations actively through various formal and informal opportunities and brought potential unmet legal needs to local bar associations, which not only accelerated the increase of total legal services but also encouraged motivated judicare especially at younger generation.

- Strategic collaboration between staff attorney and local bar association including judicare is also essential. In successful cases, variety of events planned by staff attorneys was observed in the form of outreach style legal consultations and seminars at relevant organisations and staff attorneys consciously and persistently involved judicare through bar association committees. And staff attorneys reached out to a

⁴ Tomoki Ikenaga and Keita Abe(2010), Asian Access to Justice and Reflection on Four years of Innovation in Japan p.14-22, paper to 8th Legal Service Research Centre International Research Conference 2010 Cambridge

variety of outreach place accompanied by multiple judicare. This close working relationship model is based on a strategic design for stabilising staff attorney system and this method certainly has enhanced the mobility of staff attorney and mitigated the conflict between staff attorney and judicare.

C Plan to set up a pilot office

Joint committee of JLSC and JFBA reached the conclusion that JLSC sets up pilot office in Tokyo or other metropolitan area to survey how staff attorneys can collaborate with judicare and relevant organizations in long term and how they can bring potential unmet legal needs before the public.

(3) Activities to Support East Japan Earthquake Victims

The catastrophic earthquake hit east Japan on 11 March 2011. The deaths of 14,662 people were already confirmed and 11,019 people are still missing while 127,076 people are evacuated as of 1 March 2011. Some of JLSC's district offices and local law offices also suffered from the disaster but we confirmed the safety of all members of JLSC. Disaster areas contain many rural areas suffering from shortages of attorneys and it is hard for residents and many evacuees to access to legal aid. JLSC set up an Emergency Headquarters immediately together with Japan Federation of Bar Associations, local bar associations and other bodies.

JLSC is reviewing current rule and forwarding following activities. Some of the matters are already decided and implemented as of March 2011.

- Providing free legal information for the victims of the disaster through Call Center
- Providing free publications and legal education
- Radio broadcast for disaster areas
- Outreach visits at evacuation center usually providing free legal consultation and minor assistance
- Setting up temporary legal consultation center at evacuation sites
- Setting up JLSC office at about 11 disaster areas and hiring about 50 full-time staff
- Arranging mobile legal consultation center including renting vehicles
- Exemption from repayment in the form of legal representation aid

In Japan, users have to pay the assisted legal representation cost in principle, which JLSC paid for them, except those who receive social security. However users living in disaster areas are able to be exempted from repayment in principle.

- Increasing the rate of remuneration for legal aid work in disaster areas

6 Reference Data in English Web Site

- Japan Legal Support Center <http://www.houterasu.or.jp/en/>
- Japan Federation of Bar Associations <http://www.nichibenren.or.jp/en/>
- Japan Federation of Shiho-Shoshi Lawyer's Associations
<http://www.shiho-shoshi.or.jp/english/>
- Supreme Court of Japan <http://www.courts.go.jp/english/>
- The ministry of Justice <http://www.moj.go.jp/ENGLISH/index.html>
- Japanese Law Translation <http://www.japaneselawtranslation.go.jp/?re=01>