

At the top of research on Italian criminal law and French juvenile law



For several years, Prof. Yoshinaka has been teaching an intensive course of over 30 hours on Japanese criminal law at the China University of Political Science and Law (CUPL). He is the first Japanese to receive from CUPL the title of a National Institute of Legal Aid Special Invited Research Fellow. As Japan's prime criminal law researcher, he is actively engaged in education and research with universities and students all over the world.



Prof. Yoshinaka says he initially wanted to pursue literature given his attraction to novels and other literary works. He became interested in the extreme situations involving life and death and the relationship between punishment and the law as depicted in the novels and entered the world of legal research.



Professor,
 Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences
 School of Law

YOSHINAKA Nobuhito

Research interests

Criminal law, criminal procedure law, criminal policy, juvenile law, international criminal law, victimology

The students of the School of Law mainly study Japanese law. For people who live and work in Japan, it is important to have knowledge of Japanese law. Many students are in the School of Law also for a future legal career, as a judge, public prosecutor, or attorney. When you meet first-rate jurists from different parts of the world, you usually discover that they are not only specialists in the law of their home country but also quite knowledgeable about other countries' laws and often speak several languages quite fluently.

In the past, education and research at the School of Law were mostly one-sided, involving the introduction of legal systems of other countries to a Japanese audience. This practice was largely influenced by the way foreign languages were taught in Japanese schools beginning from the Meiji era, centering on reading foreign-language texts and translating them into Japanese. For this reason, even legal researchers have sometimes referred to their work as "yoko/tate (horizontal/vertical) papers" in a self-deprecating way. That is to say, merely translating papers by foreign researchers in horizontally written Western languages into vertically written Japanese would be

considered an academic achievement. Unfortunately, not enough has been done in the opposite direction: presenting Japanese law in foreign languages to the rest of the world for rigorous international analysis and discussion. There are, of course, legitimate reasons for this state of affairs. In the natural sciences, the subject matter is identical anywhere in the world (there is no difference in mathematics or physics between Japan and the United States, for example), with English well-established as the common language of academic communications. In the legal field, on the other hand, the law differs from one country to another, and the laws of a given country are always written in the language or languages of that country. Unlike other disciplines that are globally operable from the beginning, legal students usually undergo education and research first to understand their own country's law and legal theory in their own languages before taking part in global legal debates in other languages. That is to say, for a Japanese person to be a first-rate legal researcher in the world, it is necessary to pursue education and research in Japanese as well as other languages. Fortunately, as an undergraduate student, I met a professor, an internationally recognized researcher, who became my mentor and taught me the importance of learning foreign

languages and researching foreign laws. As a graduate student, I went to France and Germany to study the history of the incorporation of European law into Japanese law from the Meiji era, while conducting research in my specialization, the interpretation of criminal and juvenile law. Upon arriving at Hiroshima University, I conducted research on how to teach Japanese law in English in particular, at the University of Auckland in New Zealand, which was adopted as an advanced overseas educational program of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. I have since given countless lectures and seminars at universities all over the world.

Japanese legal researchers cannot excel in the world unless they are also first-rate researchers in Japanese academia. I take pride in being a communicator of advanced knowledge about the whole spectrum of Japanese criminal law to the rest of the world while being among the top researchers on Italian criminal law and French juvenile law in Japan. I think my specialization is unique in the country in that most Japanese legal scholars are oriented toward German or American law. Drawing on this originality, I intend to continue research that is worth presenting to the whole world at Hiroshima University.

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