3 Measures for areas with limited judicial services

For areas where it is difficult to receive legal services due to a lack of lawyers or judicial scriveners, Houterasu will provide legal services at an appropriate cost through staff lawyers who work for Houterasu.

4 Victim Support

For crime victims and their families, Houterasu provides information on available victim aid systems, such as procedures for participation in criminal proceedings or recovery of damages for victims and other related persons. Information is also provided on victim support organizations and lawyers with expertise in the field of victim support. The telephone number for crime victims is 0570-079714.

6 Court-Appointed Defense Counsel Services

If, owing to financial difficulties, you are unable to pay for a lawyer in a criminal trial, the court (the state) can appoint a lawyer for you. This is the system of court-appointed defense counsel. In the past, court-appointed defense counsel could only be appointed after a defendant is indicted, but since October 2006 in some serious cases, court-appointed defense counsel can be appointed for a suspect undergoing investigation before indictment. Houterasu swiftly and reliably enlists candidates for court-appointed defense counsel, provides assistance in arranging court-appointed defense counsel right from the investigation to the trial, and provides support for implementation of the saiban-in (lay judge) system.

The legal experts comprised of lawyers and judicial scriveners perform their duties independently, and do not receive orders or instructions from Houterasu.

Japan Legal Support Center Headquarters
Ichigaya Building 6F, 4-2-6 Kudan, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 102-0073
Tel: 0503333-5333
URL: http://www.houterasu.or.jp

Houterasu has opened 50 offices across the country.

CALL CENTER
☎ 0570-078374
※ From overseas: 81-3-6745-5600
(81 is Japan's country calling code)
Call center hours are weekdays 9:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.
Saturday 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
English-speaking bilingual operators are present during these hours.

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Houterasu aims to provide information and services that will help resolve legal problems all over the country. The official name of Houterasu is “Japan Legal Support Center”. The name of Houterasu is derived from our wish to “light up society with knowledge of legal rights and provide a place where people can relax in comfort, just like reclining on a sunny terrace (terasu).”

Please feel free to call or e-mail Houterasu if you have any legal problems. Please access the web site of Houterasu (http://www.houterasu.or.jp/), and click the icon right above FAQ on the web site. When calling from a landline/cell phone please dial 0570-078374.

0570-078374
* Calls from landlines cost 8.5 yen nationwide for three minutes.
* "0570" is the number of an NTT Communications automated telephone service.
* When using a PHS/IP telephone please dial 03-6745-5600.

Japan Legal Support Center

Main Services of Houterasu

Provides free information on national and local government organizations, bar associations, judicial scriveners’ associations and related organizations which are responsible for providing information and legal services for resolution of legal disputes.

For instance, in the following cases.

What nationality will a baby who has a Japanese parent and a foreign parent have?

I’ve been working in Japan on a work visa. How do I go about extending it?

I would like to file a lawsuit, but I don’t have the money to hire a lawyer or a judicial scrivener. What are my options?

I would very much like to know where I can get legal consultation in English.

Introduction of legal systems

The Nationality Law of Japan stipulates the provisions on nationality, and you will be able to find information on your baby’s nationality in this law.

The Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act stipulates the provisions for extension of a work visa.

Introduction of a suitable organization

We can provide you with information on organizations which offer legal services in English.

When people need assistance of legal experts but have limited financial resources, this service aims at offering free legal consultations, and where necessary referring their cases to legal experts and granting loans to cover the expenses of trials or lawyers and judicial scriveners.

The aid is subject to examination of the financial resources of the applicant.

- Aid for legal consultation (provides free legal counseling)
- Aid for legal representation (loans for attorney’s fees)
- Aid for preparation of legal documents (loans for the costs of making legal documents)