

English Translation of Japanese Labor Laws

In this issue, readers may notice that the English translation of the names of Japanese labor laws, such as the Labor Standards Act and the Equal Employment Opportunity Act, are somewhat different from previous ones.

Thus far, Japanese laws have been translated into English by related ministries and various private bodies without consistent rules. To ameliorate the situation, the Japanese government convened a council of experts a couple of years ago, and in March 2006 the council formulated a “dictionary” (basic rules) for unifying the English translations of Japanese laws.

The Japan Institute for Labor Policy and Training (JILPT), in cooperation with the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, has translated major labor laws of Japan into English and offered them to the public via booklets and web pages. However, in view of the new uniformity efforts, JILPT is currently revising its English translations so that they conform to the “dictionary” given by the council.

In this “dictionary,” for example, the Japanese word “*ho*,” which literally means “law,” is now translated as “Act” when used in the name of a statute, such as the “Labor Standards Act” instead of the “Labor Standards Law.” There are many other points in the current translation of JILPT which require modification, and a little more time is needed to complete the work of new translation.

In the mean time, as a first step in this effort, we decided to change the word “Law” to “Act” when referring to a statute from this volume of Japan Labor Review. New translations of Japanese labor laws will be published in web pages and others upon completion, and we will make an announcement thereof.

Editorial Board