

# KIMAP Internship Report / KIMAP インターンシップ報告書

No. 2024-07

## I. Basic information / 基本情報

- 1) Name / 名前: Sun Tao
- 2) Enrolled year / 入学年: 2023 October
- 3) Period of internship / インターン期間: From August 20 to September 13
- 4) Place of internship / インターン場所: Kobe City Law Office
- 5) Person who accepted your internship / インターン受入担当者: Ms. Ishibashi and Mr. Hirata
- 6) Content of work in your internship / インターン中の作業内容 Litigation Case study, M&A Case study, Legal study, attending court litigation, attending interview with client

## II. Details and impressions / 詳細と感想

Including the following points: merits, demerits, lessons, contribution to your future career, personal experience etc.

First, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Professor Kadomastu and Professor Kawashima for their invaluable support in securing this internship opportunity. Without their help, I would not have had the chance to work in a Japanese local law firm and experience the legal environment firsthand.

Frankly speaking, before starting the internship, I felt a bit anxious. I knew I would be working in an entirely Japanese-speaking environment, something I had never experienced before. I was concerned that my Japanese language skills would not be sufficient for professional communication, particularly in legal matters. However, once I arrived at Kobe City Law Office, my worries quickly eased. Everyone at the firm was incredibly friendly, and the overall atmosphere was relaxed and welcoming. This supportive environment helped me settle in much more comfortably than I had expected.

On my first day, I had an introductory meeting with Ms. Ishibashi, the firm's representative, and my mentor, Mr. Hirata. Afterward, Ms. Ishibashi introduced me to the staff and Mr. Hirata gave me a tour of the office, helping me get acquainted with the work environment and the facilities I would be using. The firm consists of around 10 lawyers and 6 secretaries, and I immediately noticed that the atmosphere among them was very collegial. This sense of camaraderie seemed to be an integral part of the firm's culture, which made it a pleasant place to work.

My mentor, Mr. Hirata, is an experienced lawyer who earned his Juris Doctor degree from Kobe University after completing his undergraduate studies at Kyoto University. Interestingly, he began his career in an information services company before passing the Japanese bar exam and transitioning into law. With over nine years of legal experience, Mr. Hirata patiently guided me throughout the internship, taking the time to explain any legal concepts or issues I was unfamiliar with. His expertise, coupled with his willingness to mentor me, greatly enriched my learning experience.

During the internship, I was exposed to a wide variety of legal cases, including traffic violations, software copyright infringement, marital disputes, inheritance conflicts, civil and criminal cases, and even M&A due diligence. I had the privilege of accompanying lawyers to court not only in Kobe but also in Osaka, where I observed litigation proceedings. One of the most memorable experiences was witnessing a full criminal court trial from start to finish. Additionally, I had the opportunity to visit the Kobe office of Japanese notary with Mr. Hirata, where I learned about the role of notaries in the Japanese legal system. I also participated in client meetings, observing how Japanese lawyers conduct client interviews.

Among the cases I encountered, the one that left the strongest impression on me was an M&A due diligence case involving real estate companies. The selling companies held numerous rental properties and had financed their operations through both traditional bank loans and a specialized financial arrangement known as "real estate specific joint business operators" (不動産特定共同事業者), which was entirely new to me. Through this case, I gained deeper insight into Japan's real estate finance laws. I learned about the various types of companies eligible for this kind of financing, the structure of investment contracts, how funds are managed and disbursed, and the risks investors face. This experience sparked my interest in the intersection of real estate and corporate finance, and I now feel more confident in my understanding of these complex legal and financial mechanisms.

Working in a Japanese law firm has several significant benefits. First and foremost, the immersion in a fully Japanese-speaking environment was invaluable for improving my language skills. Every conversation, whether with colleagues or clients, was in Japanese, which pushed me to improve my listening and speaking abilities. I also had the rare opportunity to observe Japanese lawyers in action, gaining insights into how they approach their cases, interact with clients, and navigate the legal system. The chance to visit courts and notary offices further enriched my understanding of Japanese legal practice.

However, the language barrier was also one of the greatest challenges of the internship. Legal terminology, in particular, was difficult to grasp at times, and I found myself having to work hard to keep up with conversations. Thankfully, the patience and support of the staff made it manageable. While the experience was incredibly valuable for me, I do feel that this internship would be particularly beneficial for law graduates who are either already qualified or preparing to qualify as Japanese lawyers.

In conclusion, this internship at Kobe City Law Office has been an immensely rewarding experience. Not only have my Japanese language skills improved, but I have also gained practical knowledge of how law is practiced in Japan. The diverse cases I encountered, the court visits, and the mentorship from experienced lawyers have all contributed to my professional growth. I am confident that the skills and knowledge I have acquired will be of great value as I move forward in my future career.

(Photo)



2024-09-15  
(Date / 記載日)