



SONODA & KOBAYASHI
INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY LAW



December 2018



To our friends and clients: All of us at Sonoda & Kobayashi wish you peace and happiness this holiday season and throughout the New Year!

News about Sonoda & Kobayashi

Webinar - 'Patents: employee inventions - overview of legal systems and recent trends'

17 December 2018

In collaboration with the EU-Japan Technology Transfer Helpdesk and Murgitroyd's Munich Office, Sonoda & Kobayashi is excited to announce our next joint webinar, titled 'Patents: employee inventions - overview of legal systems and recent trends.' Speakers Dr.sc. Richard Börner and Dr. Akira Fujii will shed light on what companies with R&D in Europe and Japan need to know in regard to the differing legal systems on employee remuneration. We are grateful to our partners for collaborating with us once again, and invite you to listen in.

The Webinar is scheduled for **Monday, 17th December 2018** at 10:00 AM CET (18:00 JST).

Please follow the link below to register before Sunday, 16th December 2018. We look forward to your presence online!

[Click here to read more about the webinar and register to attend.](#)

Welcoming our new patent attorneys and engineers!

Sonoda & Kobayashi is pleased to announce that we welcomed three new attorneys and two new engineers into our firm this year, expanding our Electronics, Machinery & Software and our Chemistry, Biotechnology and Pharmaceuticals departments! Please allow us to introduce our new colleagues:

Makoto Tamura

After graduating from university, Mr. Tamura worked at an automobile component maker, where he developed a new type of car air-conditioning system. He then entered the intellectual property field in 2001 and handled patent applications in various technical fields, from specification drafting to acquiring patent rights, for both domestic and international clients. He joined Sonoda & Kobayashi in 2018, and is in charge of patent applications in mechanical and electrical fields.

[See Mr. Tamura's full bio.](#)

Takashi Tokito

Mr. Tokito studied organic chemistry at graduate school before moving on to work in local government. He then worked at the Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices Agency (PMDA), where he was involved with work such as the approval process for new drugs. He joined our office in July 2018.

[See Mr. Tokito's full bio.](#)

Sarvjit Patil

Mr. Patil attended Carnegie Mellon University, where he studied Computer Science and Economics before attending Vanderbilt University Law School in the United States. Before joining Sonoda & Kobayashi in 2018, Mr. Patil worked as a patent attorney in the United States, where he also gained trial experience as a prosecutor.

[See Mr. Patil's full bio.](#)

Krystal Renard, Ph.D.

After receiving her Ph.D. from the Catholic University of Louvain (Belgium) for her research concerning the mechanical properties of TWIP (twinning-induced plasticity) steels, Dr. Renard pursued research on the thermoelectric properties of FeVAL alloys as a JSPS Fellow at the Nagoya Institute of Technology. After work at a patent law firm in Tokyo, Dr. Renard joined our office in April 2018.

[See Dr. Renard's full bio.](#)

Wataru Nishii, Ph.D.

Dr. Nishii majored in agricultural chemistry at the University of Tokyo, and in biophysics and biochemistry at the Graduate School of Science, University of Tokyo. After working as Assistant Professor at the Tokyo University of Pharmacy and Life Sciences, and as Research Scientist at

RIKEN, he became Visiting Senior Scientist at RIKEN. He has extensive experience in life science research with a focus on protein science and drug discovery science. He joined our firm in April 2018.

[See Dr. Nishii's full bio.](#)



We recently refurbished our offices in Shinjuku - here's a glimpse of our new conference room!

Latest IP News in Japan

JPO dispute resolution revisions unveil tension between big business and SMEs

26 November 2018, IPPro Patents

The JPO held a meeting on November 21st, 2018 to hear opinions about potential revisions of Japan's intellectual property dispute resolution system. Amongst those who gave presentations to the JPO were: a partner at TMI Associates; Keidnaren, representing big business; and The Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (JCCI), representing the voice of SMEs. The proposed revisions could lessen the disadvantage of SMEs in litigation, and has thus become a divisive issue for smaller versus larger companies. Both the US and German inspection systems were referenced as potential models to follow and the government will continue to discuss and research the advantages and disadvantages of both.

[Read the full article here.](#)

Fourth ID5 Annual Meeting Held

21 November 2018, Japan Patent Office (JPO)

The ID5 held its fourth Annual Meeting on November 5th and 6th, 2018 in Seoul, Republic of Korea. The ID5 is a forum of five of the world's major Industrial Design offices, consisting of the JPO, the EUIPO, the USPTO, the CNIPA and the KIPO, with the JPO delegation being headed by Director-General Sawai on this occasion. One of the outcomes of the Annual Meeting was the "ID5 Joint Statement", which declared a joint aim to consolidate the protection of new technological designs against the backdrop of the fourth industrial revolution. The ID5 also made further agreements to adopt new cooperation projects for greater international coordination of the design protection system. The 2019 Annual Meeting will be held in Japan, with the JPO serving as the secretariat. The JPO has stated its intention to continue developing an environment where designs are appropriately protected and utilised worldwide.

[Read the full article here.](#)

Japan-India PPH to start in 2019

30 October 2018, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI)

A METI press release confirms the start of the Japan-India Patent Prosecution Highway (PPH) following a Summit between the two countries' leaders on October 29th, 2018. The program will commence on a pilot basis in certain fields of inventions, under which Japanese companies can request expedited examinations in India based on claims deemed patentable in Japan. This agreement comes as a part of the JPO's continued efforts to ease the acquisition of overseas patents for Japanese companies by supporting expanded PPH network as well as to increase standardisation in IP offices worldwide.

[Read the full article here.](#)

Japan to make trademark registration of era names impossible

6 November 2018, The Japan Times

The Japanese government intends to revise its trademark application screening criteria to prevent the registration of any era names, thereby expanding the existing rule, which rejects only the current era name, Heisei. If the revision is confirmed, it will come into effect around February next year, however exceptions would be made for existing well-known names and trademarks such as Meiji Holding Co.

[Read the full article here.](#)

Japan's Upper House approves free trade pact with EU by majority vote

8 December 2018, The Japan Times

The Japanese Diet has approved an economic partnership agreement with the EU. The deal, predicted to come into effect on February 1st, 2018, will create a free trade bloc, under which tariffs will be removed for over 90% of trade items and will decline on a range of other products. A Foreign Ministry executive asserted that the agreement will also introduce "comprehensive and advanced rules" to protect intellectual property.

[Read the full article here.](#)

World Intellectual Property Indicators: Filings for Patents, Trademarks, Industrial Designs Reach New Records on Strength in China

3 December 2018, World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)

A WIPO press release stated that worldwide demand for IP tools reached record heights in 2017, citing China as the force behind the 5.8% yearly increase. WIPO Director General Francis Gurry is quoted stating that "demand for IP protection is rising faster than the rate of global economic growth, illustrating that IP-backed innovation is an increasingly critical component of competition and commercial activity." The top five patent application offices accounted for 84.5% of the world total, a group in which Japan features. However, Japan's total number of patent applications only saw a 0.03% increase, in contrast with its counterparts in China and the US, whose growth was 14.2% and 4.5% respectively.

[Read the full article here.](#)

Osaka wins bid to host 2025 World Expo

24 November 2018, The Japan Times

Osaka beat rivals Yekaterinburg in Russia and Baku in Azerbaijan in winning the rights to host the 2025 World Expo, officially titled the Osaka-Kansai Japan Expo. The event will return to Osaka 55 years after the 1970 Osaka Expo, which is considered to be one of the most successful Expos held, having attracted 64 million visitors. The 2025 theme will be 'Designing Future Society for Our Lives' and is expected to showcase advanced technologies such as AI and biotechnology, while also aiming to contribute to the 2030 United Nations sustainable development goals, particularly in ageing societies such as Japan. Construction costs on the

man-made island of Yumeshima, where the Expo is planned to take place, have been estimated at 125 billion JPY.

[Read the full article here.](#)

Japan and China pledge to move from 'competition to collaborator'

26 October 2018, Nikkei Asian Review

Prime minister Shinzo Abe and Chinese Premier Li Keqiang agreed on a range of economic and security initiatives during the first visit to China for bilateral meetings by a Japanese leader in seven years. Many areas were covered during the talks, including an agreement to set up a discussion framework for intellectual property. The Nikkei Asian Review notes that Tokyo hopes such an agreement will aid companies in securing protection from Beijing for their IP rights. This agreement comes in the wake of IP protection playing a focal role in the ongoing US-China trade dispute.

[Read the full article here.](#)

Japan's industrial production surges in October

30 November 2018, Financial Times

The FT reports that Japan's industrial production rose 4.2% year on year in October, signaling a strong start to the fourth quarter after a 2.5% contraction in September. Analysts have however blamed poor growth in the third quarter on natural disasters, including September's earthquake in Hokkaido.

[Read the full article here.](#)

About

SONODA & KOBAYASHI is a law firm offering dependable legal services for intellectual property. Our multinational team of about 90 experts in technology, law, languages and international communication has served companies worldwide and gained a reputation for thoroughness and reliability.

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