



Ryang-Ok Ku

Senior Foreign Attorney

TEL	+82-2-316-1840
FAX	+82-2-756-6226
E-MAIL	roku@shinkim.com

Ms. Ryang-Ok Ku is a senior foreign attorney at Shin & Kim, with more than a decade of direct, practical experience advising on corporate matters in Japan.

Leveraging over 10 years of legal practice in Japan, Ms. Koo focuses her practice on cross-border advisory services between Korea and Japan, with particular emphasis on assisting Korean companies with market entry and ongoing business operations in Japan. Born in Kyoto, Japan, Ms. Koo has developed a broad-based legal background, including experience at a law firm in Osaka, where she advised Korean clients on a wide array of issues such as market entry, establishment and management of Japanese subsidiaries, mergers and acquisitions, licensing, and regulatory compliance. Her expertise also extends to compliance, labor, internal controls, and corporate governance matters involving Korean headquarters and their Japanese subsidiaries or branches. Additionally, she counsels Japanese companies operating in Korea on business operations and related legal and regulatory issues.

Notably, in addition to her law firm experience in Japan, Ms. Koo served as in-house counsel at Blizzard Entertainment, a global gaming company, where she provided direct legal support for the company's operations in both Korea and Japan. Through this unique in-house perspective she developed a deep understanding of the difference in the legal systems, corporate cultures, and decision-making processes of both countries, enabling her to deliver practical solutions to legal and regulatory challenges faced by headquarters and local subsidiaries or business units. Her work has included drafting and negotiating contracts in Korean, English, and Japanese, as well as advising on Japanese law in the IT and fintech sectors. She has also provided legal support to the Japan business division on core regulatory matters, including the Payment Services Act, the Act on the Display of Prize Information, and the Antimonopoly Act.

Ms. Koo's litigation experience in Japan is equally extensive, encompassing management control disputes, shareholder derivative actions, criminal cases involving corporate executives, and labor litigation. She successfully represented a plaintiff before the Supreme Court of Japan in a landmark civil damages case related to hate crimes against Koreans residing in Japan. Drawing on this experience, she offers comprehensive counsel on all aspects of Korean companies' entry into the Japanese market, local business operations, regulatory compliance, and dispute resolution. She also collaborates with Shin & Kim's experts in multidisciplinary teams to advise Japanese companies operating in Korea on a full spectrum of Korea-related legal issues.

Ms. Koo holds a Juris Doctor (J.D.) from Osaka City University Law School. She furthered her academic credentials as a research fellow at New York University School of Law, earned a Master of Laws (LL.M.) in International Law from the University of Essex in the United Kingdom, and received a Ph.D. in International Law from Korea University Graduate School.

Professional Career

2024-Present	Shin & Kim LLC
2020-2024	Blizzard Entertainment Inc., Seoul office
2013-2020	Dandelion Law Office, Japan
2009-2013	Asunaro Law Corporation, Asunaro Law Office, Japan
2008-2009	Legal Training and Research Institute of the Supreme Court of Japan

Professional Affiliations

2025-Present	Director, Korean Society for International Law
2022-Present	Member, International Human Rights Law Association of Japan
2021-Present	Member, Korean Society for International Law
2019-2020	Vice Chair, International Branch, Committee on the Rights of the Child, Osaka Bar Association; Chair, Committee for Investigation of Serious Bullying Incidents in Osaka Prefectural High School
2019-Present	Member, Asian Law and Society Associations
2018-Present	Member, Human Rights Protection Committee, Japan Federation of Bar Associations
2009-Present	Member, International Committee, Children's Rights Committee, Criminal Defense Committee of Osaka Bar Association

Key Experience

- Represented a Korean-Japanese citizen in a civil damages action for hate speech
- Advised on import and export, international commercial transactions and contracts for small and medium-sized companies in Japan
- Advised a Korean mobile application company in connection with its launch in Japan
- Advised a Korean start-up company on its entry into Japan
- Represented a defendant in labor appeals
- Advised on game industry, including reviewing and defending against legal risks in the planning of gaming leagues and various global events

- Advised on Japanese transfer of personal information to third parties and matters in connection with the Personal Information Protection Act
- Advised on the Funds Settlement Act and Electronic Commerce Act of Japan

Education

2021-2023	Korea University, Graduate School of Law (Ph.D., International Law)
2018-2019	University of Essex, School of Law (LL.M., International Human Rights Law)
2017-2018	New York University School of law, U.S.-Asia Law Institute (Visiting Scholar)
2006-2008	Osaka City University, School of Law (J.D.)
2002-2006	Osaka City University, College of Law (LL.B.)

Qualifications

2009	Admitted to bar, Japan
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Languages

Japanese, Korean, English, Chinese

Professional Activities

Publications

- Japan's Violations of International Law in its Mass Denationalization of the Korean Minority in Japan, Korea Foundation for the Advancement of Justice, [Justice] No. 68 (Jun. 2024)
- Japan's Violation of International Human Rights Law and the Challenges Ahead by the Utoro Arson Case and Hate Crimes in Japan, Korean Bar Association [Human Rights and Justice] No. 505 (Aug. 2023)
- Korean-Japanese on Trial in Japan, Sechang Publishing House (co-authored, Aug. 2023)
- Hate Speech in Japan, Chapter 5 The Current Movement of Hate Speech, Cambridge University Press, (co-authored, Jan. 2021)

- Comparison of International Legal Practice on Hate Speech and Hate Crimes and Japan's Challenges, [Freedom and Justice] Vol. 71 No. 9, Japan Federation of Bar Associations (co-authored, Nov. 2020)
- To What Extent Can Hate Speech Be Regulated?, Lawyers Associations of Zainichi Korean, (co-authored, Mar. 2016)

Speaking Engagements

- Presentation, “Session: Sovereignty, Human Rights and Historical Memory”, Asia Law and Society Associations (2019)
- Lecture, “A Leading Case of Hate Speech and Minority Rights in Japan”, NYU, School of law, U.S.-Asia Law Institute (2018)
- Lecture, “A Case of Hate Speech: A Supreme Court Ruling in Japan and Reflecting on Minority Rights from a Comparative Perspective”, U.C. Santa Cruz (2018)
- Presentation, “Session: Internet & Privacy”, International Associations of Korean Lawyers (2015)