

14. The Law Concerning Regulations Relating to Human Cloning Techniques, Handling of a Specified Embryo and Animal Experiment in Japan

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1. The Law Concerning Regulations Relating to Human Cloning Techniques and Other Similar Techniques (Dez,2000) and the Guidelines for Handling of a Specified Embryo (Dez,2001)

This unique Law was introduced as a strong reflection of Japanese scientists who were against the sheep made by the cloning techniques. In Japan we were accustomed to a human cloning as an idea in famous comics or old stories but it was for most people just a story.

The purpose of the law is to harmonise the development of modern science and technology with the society and human dignity. This law is prohibiting the transfer of embryos made by the techniques of human cloning, hybrid or chimera or other similar techniques. The creation of a cloned being or some existence which is not definitely defined as a human or an animal is strong threat to human dignity and public order.

A human embryo should not transferred into uterus of an animal. A creation of embryo by a fertilisation between human and animal gametes is prohibited. Also the creation of an embryo by aggregation of a human embryo and an animal embryo or animal cells.

The Government must ensure the proper handling of so-called Specified Embryos. For this purpose the government made the guidelines concerning the handling of Specified Embryos. According to the Guidelines for Handling of a Specified Embryo, which come into existence on December 2001, only an animal-human chimeric embryo shall be allowed to be produced among nine categories of Specified Embryos, and the purpose of its production shall be limited to the research concerning production of human cells-derived organs transplantable to a human being. A producer shall not use any human fertilised embryos or human unfertilised eggs in order to produce an animal-human chimeric embryo.

We have also the Guidelines for Derivation and Utilisation of Human Embryonic Stem Cells issued by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology in September 2001, but the Guidelines do not work effectively in practice and weakened.

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2. Regulating of an animal experiment and protection of animal welfare

For Japanese people an animal means a family friend and for those it is a dog or a cat. But, in the world of science there are many animals which are exploited their lives and dignity everyday. The Government made the Law for the Human Treatment and Management of Animals which is amended recently in 2005.

Animal experiments are very important and effective producers in medical and biological research. Government shall establish the policy for appropriate animal experimentation through a scientific and ethical consensus of society. We have now the basic Guidelines for Proper Conduct Experiment and Related Activities in Academic Research Institutions issued by the Ministry of Health and Welfare 2001. Also for the safety of experiment in the field of Xenotransplantation, the Guidelines of Infection in Xenotransplantation is issued by the Ministry of Health and Welfare in 2001.