

## STATEMENTS OF INVENTION

1. An image encoding method characterized by comprising:

5 a first step of selecting a motion reference block from an already-encoded pixel block to which an inter prediction is applied, the motion reference blocks including a first motion reference block that is spatially adjacent to an encoding target block in an upward direction and a second motion reference block  
10 that is spatially adjacent to the encoding target block in a left direction;

a second step of selecting one or more available blocks from the motion reference block, the available blocks each including a candidate of motion information  
15 applied to the encoding target block and different motion information;

a third step of selecting a selection block from the available blocks;

20 a fourth step of generating a predicted image of the encoding target block using motion information of the selection block;

a fifth step of encoding a prediction error between the predicted image and an original image; and

25 a sixth step of encoding selection information specifying the selection block by referring to a code table decided according to a number of the available blocks.

2. The image encoding method according to claim 1, characterized by further comprising a seventh step of encoding prediction switching information indicating whether the predicted image is generated by motion compensation prediction in which the motion information of the available block is used, wherein the seventh step comprising determining whether the prediction switching information is encoded, according to a size of the encoding target block.

3. An image decoding method characterized by comprising:

a first step of selecting a motion reference block from an already-decoded pixel block to which an inter prediction is applied, the motion reference block including a first motion reference block that is spatially adjacent to an decoding target block in an upward direction and a second motion reference block that is spatially adjacent to the decoding target block in a left direction;

a second step of selecting one or more available blocks from the motion reference block, the available blocks each including a candidate of motion information applied to the decoding target block and different motion information;

a third step of selecting a selection block from the available blocks;

a fourth step of generating a predicted image of

the decoding target block using motion information of the selection block;

a fifth step of decoding a prediction error between the predicted image and an original image; and

5 a sixth step of decoding selection information specifying the selection block by referring to a code table decided according to a number of the available blocks.

10 4. The image decoding method according to claim 3, characterized by further comprising a seventh step of decoding prediction switching information indicating whether the predicted image is generated by motion compensation prediction in which the motion information of the available block is used, wherein  
15 the seventh comprising determining whether the prediction switching information is encoded, according to a size of the decoding target block.