

The First Year of the First Archival Science Course in Japan

Yayoi Tsutsui

Reference URLs

☆A Brief History of Archives in Japan

* Foundation of Famous Repositories

756 Shosoin Repository

<http://www.kunaicho.go.jp/eindex.html>

<http://www.kunaicho.go.jp/e-event/shosoin02.html>

Shosoin Documents Database

<http://somoda.media.osaka-cu.ac.jp/>

1801 Historiographical Institution (The University of Tokyo)

<http://www.hi.u-tokyo.ac.jp/index.html>

http://www.hi.u-tokyo.ac.jp/english/about_hi/history-e.html

1948 National Diet Library (1872/90)

<http://www.ndl.go.jp/en/index.html>

1951 Ministry of Education Historical Archives (→NIJL)

http://www.nijl.ac.jp/index_e.html

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Institute_of_Japanese_Literature

1959 Yamaguchi Prefectural Archives

<http://ymonjo.ysn21.jp/> (Japanese)

1971 National Archives of Japan

<http://www.archives.go.jp/english/abouts/outline.html>

http://www.archives.go.jp/english/basic_laws/public_archives.html

http://www.archives.go.jp/english/basic_laws/national_archives.html

http://www.archives.go.jp/english/basic_laws/national_archives.html

http://www.archives.go.jp/english/news/090403_01e.html

<http://www.archives.go.jp/english/abouts/outline.html>

<http://www.kualalumpur2008.ica.org/en/sessions/cutting-edge-archival-community-japan>

* LAWS

1987 Public Archives Law

http://www.archives.go.jp/english/basic_laws/public_archives.html

1999 National Archives Law

http://www.archives.go.jp/english/basic_laws/national_archives.html

2009 Public Records Management Law

http://www.archives.go.jp/english/news/090403_01e.html

☆Gakushuin

<http://www.gakushuin.ac.jp/univ/english/index.html>

<http://www.gakushuin.ac.jp/univ/english/his/index.html>

<http://www.gakushuin.ac.jp/univ/english/ua/>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gakush%C5%ABin>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gakush%C5%ABin_University

(Gakushuin University site in English is out of date. It has no information about new courses including the Archival Science Course.)

Gakushuin University

School of Humanities

Course of Archival Science

<http://www.gakushuin.ac.jp/univ/g-hum/arch/index.html> (Japanese)

<http://www.gakushuin.ac.jp/univ/g-hum/arch/kyodo-FEATURE.html>

(Kyodo News Article)

☆Events

Opening and Entrance Ceremony

<http://www.gakushuin.ac.jp/univ/g-hum/arch/01senkoukaisestusiki.html>

Annual Meeting of the Japan Society for Archival Science

<http://www.jsas.info/> (Japanese)

Observation tour for the Broadcasting Library

<http://www.bpcj.or.jp/> (Japanese)

Observation tour for Saitama Pref Archives

http://www.saimonjo.jp/01_top/Index.html (Japanese)

Annual Meeting of the Records Management Society of Japan

<http://wwwsoc.nii.ac.jp/rmsj/> (Japanese)

Symposium of the Japanese Historical Council

<http://wwwsoc.nii.ac.jp/jhc/> (Japanese)

Visit to Tokyo Restoration and Conservation Center

<http://www.trcc.jp/>

Lectures by Dr. David B. Gracy II

<http://www.gakushuin.ac.jp/univ/g-hum/arch/05news.html#top>

→Sep4 09

講演会：14：30 ～ 17：30

デイビット・グレイシー教授(テキサス大学)

アーキビストって早起き？

ーアメリカにおけるアーカイブズ活動ー (通訳付き)

→グレイシー教授の講演録(英語)はこちら(PDF)

→グレイシー教授の講演録(日本語訳)はこちら(PDF)

Visit by a missionary from the National Archives and Records of Oman

http://www.gakushuin.info/2008/10/post_83.html

Study tour for Okinawa

<http://www.archives.pref.okinawa.jp/publication/2008/10/post-123.html>

☆Discussion

--The Asahi Shimbun, March 31(IHT/Asahi: April 1,2009)

Overshadowed by the deepening economic crisis and the scandal over political fund-raising that is rocking Nagatacho, the nation's political power center, one important issue is at risk of falling into limbo: the need to establish clear rules for managing the records of the government.

The government has submitted a bill to the Diet that represents a first step toward properly preserving and publishing official documents, which are public assets, under unified rules for the entire government. Currently, the management of government records is left to each ministry and agency.

The current system tends to frustrate researchers delving into how a specific policy was developed and executed. Diet members, researchers and the voting public trying to find relevant policy documents often end up unable to lay their hands on them, or worse, learn that they have already been discarded.

The National Archives of Japan preserves official documents and, in principle, makes them available to the public. But this institution doesn't offer much help for research because only a fraction of the total records are transferred to the archives. This is the grim reality of the government's record-keeping.

The government hopes the bill for reforming the system will be enacted in the current session. It would require all ministries and agencies to document appropriately their decision-making and other activities for record management under unified rules.

The bill stipulates that all documents and materials judged to have historical value should be transferred to the National Archives after a certain period. It also mandates ministries and agencies to submit annual reports on their record management efforts to the prime minister, who is empowered to urge improvements to fix problems.

The proposed rules are far from perfect. The bill's definition of documents that should be preserved does not cover personal memos of government employees, for instance.

The bill also leaves to an ordinance to be issued after its enactment vital details concerning specifically what kind of records should be preserved and how they should be published. The Cabinet Office would be responsible for enforcing the rules but its capability to monitor compliance is insufficient.

The main opposition Minshuto (Democratic Party of Japan) remains critical of the proposed legislation, saying it has too many holes. But there are no major differences between Minshuto and the government in the approach toward proper preservation and publication of the nation's official records.

Minshuto may prefer to enact a law for the management of official documents under its own initiative if it wrests power from the ruling coalition in the next Lower House election. No matter if the opposition party takes power, the way official documents are treated should not be left unchanged any longer.

Minshuto should consider holding talks with the ruling camp for revisions to the bill so that the proposal can be enacted during the current Diet session. This would serve as a first step toward establishing satisfactory rules for record management.

There is certainly legitimate concern that the ruling camp may use this legislative initiative as an excuse for postponing a dissolution of the Lower House for a snap election. Still, Minshuto should make serious efforts to ensure the bill is enacted in this session.

Although this is not the kind of legislation that attracts much attention, the reform, if designed and implemented properly, will inject much transparency into the nation's bureaucratic work conducted in Kasumigaseki, Tokyo's administrative quarter. As it is aimed at ensuring that administrative decisions will be subject to public scrutiny later, the reform will force individual bureaucrats to change their mind-sets. It will also increase tension in government offices.

This reform is crucial for the health of Japan's democracy.

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