The First Year of the First Archival Science Course in Japan

Yayo Tsutsui
Master's student, Graduate Course in Archival Science, Gakushuin University, Tokyo, Japan. E-mail: 0813b005@gakushuin.ac.jp (by March 2010)

A Brief History of Archives in Japan

- Foundation of Famous Repositories
  - 756 Shosoin Repository
  - 1801 Historiographical Institution (now in the University of Tokyo)
  - 1948 National Diet Library (1872/90)
  - 1951 Ministry of Education Historical Archives (~NIJL)
  - 1959 Yamaguchi Prefectural Archives
  - 1971 National Archives of Japan
- History of Education
  - 1952 “Archives College” at the National Institute of Japanese Literature
  - 1959 Yamaguchi Prefectural Archives
  - 1961- Present: National Archives of Japan
- LAW'S
  - 1967 Public Archives Law
  - 1971 Public Archives Law
- 2009 Public Records Management Law

Gakushuin
Gakushuin's origins lie in the "Old Gakushuin," which was established in 1847 in Kyoto as the educational institution of the Imperial Court. It was named after the Analogue of Confucius, which stated thus: "To be taught and to learn the truth is such a precious thing." In 1877, funds for a new set of school buildings was donated by the Imperial Household. In 1884, Gakushuin became a government school. The move to the present site at Mejiro took place in 1908. The site covered a vast area of 200,000 square meters. After World War II, Gakushuin became a purely private school. In 1949, Gakushuin established a university, by launching a Faculty of Letters and Politics. This has evolved into the present day university, which has 14 departments in four separate faculties, a fully equipped graduate school comprising six separate schools and a law school. The university also offers 19 specialist courses. The renowned author Nanami Shiono is an alumna and has mentioned in her essay that she had received authentic liberal arts education.

Tuition: ¥854,200 in the first year and ¥704,200 in the second year
Number of Professors: 5, Assistant Professor: 1, Assistant: 1 instructors: 10
Students: (M1), (M2), (C2), and (C1) + a

My Schedule
Spring Term 2008

Introduction
A student of Japan’s first graduate school for archival science, I present an outline of the course. In particular, I describe the lectures, practice sessions, and events such as study tours included in the course. Many academics and archivists have long sought the establishment of the archival profession, and the launch of this course signifies the materialization of this hope. I enjoy peer activities organized in the course as well as the course offerings. I also benefited from other divisions’ or schools’ discipline. Now I am working on my master’s thesis about Athenian archival system.

Design of the Archival Science Course
The master’s course is designed for those who wish to become qualified archivists. Archiving is expected to become a recognized profession in Japan. The course is systematic and has a well-balanced combination of theoretical and practical programs. The aim of the doctoral course is to train researchers and educators in the field of archival science.

Discussion
In June 24, a law for the management of public records was enacted. A newspaper column once stated as follows: “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 new law will change the situation because it provides unified rules under which all ministries and agencies are required to adequately document their decision-making and other activities for record management. The law also prohibits the disposal of records without the permission of the prime minister, which actually means the National Archives of Japan. Therefore, the National Archives of Japan faces the necessity of preparing for an onslaught of work with a staff of only 42 members. At the moment, Gakushuin is the only academic authority on archiving and the main source of personnel. Can Gakushuin fulfill this expectation?