

Preservation and Use of Video Records of Congressional Proceedings in the National Diet of Japan

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Abstract: The Public Records and Archives Management Act (Act No. 66 of July 1, 2009) was enforced on April 1, 2011 in Japan. The outstanding issue of the act is how to preserve congressional records. The National Diet of Japan shall, in consultation with the Prime Minister, take necessary measures for the appropriate preservation of Historical Public Records and Archives in accordance with Article 14. That is, record management in the Diet is the exclusion from application of the act.

Both the House of Representatives and the House of Councillors in the Diet amended and laid down their document management regulations under the provisions of the act. The term “Document” as used in there regulations shall mean a document that, having been prepared or obtained by an employee of the Houses in the course of his or her duties is held by the Houses concerned for organizational use by its employees. A picture and an electromagnetic record are included in that Document.

My study was conducted with electromagnetic records as the subject, especially video records of congressional consideration. The minutes of the Diet are up to the web site of the National Diet Library. However the comment which is spoken by the Member is removed from the minutes frequently. On the other hand, videos is recorded the comment of the Member as facts. However videos are removed from the web site about a year later. Therefore it is difficult for people to access the record retrospectively.

With that in mind, I surveyed and compared the current situation of preservation of video records of the majority of countries in the world.

Introduction

The Public Records and Archives Management Act (Act No. 66 of July 1, 2009) was enforced on April 1, 2011 in Japan. The outstanding issue of the act is how to preserve congressional records. The National Diet of Japan shall, in consultation with the Prime Minister, take necessary measures for the appropriate preservation of Historical Public Records and Archives in accordance with Article 14. That is, record management in the Diet is the exclusion from application of the act.

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In Japan, the minutes of the Diet are up to the web site of the National Diet Library. However remarks of Members are removed from the minutes frequently in Japanese case. The minutes don't reflect the facts. Today in which the information level has been highly developed, I think only by the minutes of paper

media, there is a limit to the "right to know" of the people. However few studies have focused on a limitation of the paper media and a significance of electromagnetic record in Japan.

Problem Statement

This paper discusses a desirable way of the preservation and use of the minutes of the video in Japan. The minutes are not necessarily to have recorded all of the speech and behavior of Members. On the other hand, in comparison with paper media, video is able to record more information. Therefore, here I describe thought a limitation of paper media and significance and potential based on the Japanese case.

The purposes of this study were as follows.

- Clarify the Japanese current conditions or the circumstances about preservation and use of video of the proceedings.
- Comparisons the reality of management of video of the proceedings as a non-paper materials in each country.

Method

My Methods are as follows. First, I obtained the information about the contents of the minutes of parliament. Specifically, I accessed to the information of concerning video material management via web site of parliament. In addition, I interviewed to the person in charge of parliament using e-mail. Next, I compared between Japan and another country. The coverage of the survey is 5 countries (USA, UK, Germany, France and Japan).

Results

First I will describe the minutes. In USA, France and Japan, when some Member made an irrelevant remark like to wound to the House's dignity or insult another Member, the chairman can exercise the powers of elimination (Table 1.).

	USA	France	Japan
Handling	An irrelevant remark isn't described in shorthand report.	The chairman can rescind the floor. In that case, he/she can order not to describe in the minutes.	Speech which the chairman orders to rescind is deleted from the minutes. However, it is described on the original material of the minutes.
Legal grounds	precedent	The standing orders of the National Assembly, Article 54.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The Diet Law, Article 116. •The Rules of the House of Representatives, Article 206. •The Rules of the House of Councillors, Article 161.

Table 1. Handling and legal grounds of an indiscreet comment

In almost all countries except Japan, an unofficial comment (jeering, booing, catcalling, heckling, hooting, interruption, etc.) is described in the minutes alike an official comment as much as possible (Table 2.).

	UK	Germany	France	Japan
Handling	It is often that an unofficial remark is treated alike an	It is included not only comment which the chairman permit to	An unofficial remark is described in the minutes as much as possible. It is	An unofficial remark isn't described in shorthand report as

	official comment.	speak but also an unofficial comment.	described likewise official comment.	much as possible.
Thinking	Even for just unofficial remark, a speaker responds.	It is a part of contents or context of proceedings, because it has something to do with the procedural, and help to describe the situation of the deliberation.	A cry which answered an official comment on the floor is included in the proceedings.	“Proceedings” means not all comments but only an official comment (The concepts of “proceedings” is smaller than Europe)

Table 2. Handling and thinking of an unofficial comment

Then I describe the videos. In many countries, video of the proceedings are broadcast live and archived at own web site.

In the case of the United States House of Representatives, regarding videos of floor proceedings, we can get videos off the website for the Office of the Clerk¹ since 2009. The more recent, back to 2012, committee hearings are available through the Library of Congress via Ustream². In the case of Senate, the Senate floor proceedings are streamed live while a meeting is in progress and archived at a website of Senate³. The originals tapes and preservation copies are transferred to the National Archives. The floor proceedings are transferred about every 2 years, at the end of the Congress. Public access copies are managed in the Library of Congress. The post in charge of management is the Motion Picture, Broadcasting, and Recorded Sound Division of the Office of the Associate Librarian for Library Services⁴. It has a role to provide videotape copies of House and Senate floor proceedings for a fee to members of the U.S. Congress as well as to the public⁵.



Figure 1-1. USA

In the case of the UK, All proceedings of the UK Parliament are recorded in some form. All proceedings of the House of Commons and the House of Lords are recorded in full broadcast Quality as are some Select Committee meetings. All other meetings are recorded in web format. All proceedings of the

¹ “Houselive,” Office of the Clerk, United States House of Representatives, accessed November 16, 2014, <http://houselive.gov/>.

² “House Committee Live Streams,” Library of Congress, accessed November 16, 2014, <http://thomas.loc.gov/video/house-committee>.

³ “Floor Webcast,” United States Senate, accessed November 16, 2014, <http://www.senate.gov/floor/index.htm>.

⁴ “Organization Chart,” Library of Congress, last modified September 30, 2013, <http://www.loc.gov/portals/static/about/documents/lcorgchart.pdf>.

⁵ “Congressional Floor Proceedings,” Library of Congress, last modified August 3, 2007, <http://www.loc.gov/avconservation/collections/congress.html>.

parliament are available on website of UK parliament⁶. All recordings since 1st July 2009 are available on website of UK parliament. All recordings done in full broadcast quality are permanently archived on Tape and all recorded items since recording commenced in April 1978 are available in the Parliamentary Archives. Any person can purchase any item from the Parliamentary Archives.



Figure 1-2. UK

In the case of Germany, in the German Parliament (Deutscher Bundestag) a committee has the possibility to hold public or non-public hearings and meetings. Non public meetings or non-public parts of a meeting are generally neither broadcasted on television nor recorded on video. The public sessions of the committees can only be recorded if 2/3 of the members of the committed want to be recorded. The German Bundestag has fundamentals to assure that every plenary session or public committee is broadcasted with same standards. This includes also certain standards of pan, zoom and caption. In 1998/99 the parliamentary television of the German Bundestag⁷ start the video on demand platform library called Mediathek⁸. It is available to search and watch all plenary sessions since October 26, 1998. Since August 26, 2009 all videos can additional download in DVD-quality. The parliamentary archives (Parlamentsarchiv) hold the original records. Further they make copy for preservations or digitizing the material. The archive contains records of the proceedings of all plenary sessions, some of the public sessions of the committees and special events. Until the beginning of the 12. Election period (1990/91) there are predominantly audio records. Since 1987 there are single video records of the proceedings of all plenary session.



Figure 1-3. Germany

⁶ "Parliament TV," UK Parliament, accessed November 18, 2014, www.parliamentlive.tv.

⁷ "Parliamentary Television of the German Bundestag," German Bundestag, accessed November 18, 2014, http://www.bundestag.de/htdocs_e/press/tv.

⁸ "Mediathek," Deutscher Bundestag, accessed November 18, 2014, <http://www.bundestag.de/tv>.

In the case of Japan, it is removed after one from the end of the session because not a little Japanese Members are unwilling to keep opening in the web site.



Figure 1-4. Japan

I compared the situation of each country for access to the video by general users. It was found that not only Congress but also Archives has a large role in the United States and Germany (Table 3).

	USA	Germany	Japan
Organization	The Library of Congress	The German Bundestag, The Media Library	The House of Representatives and the House of Councillors
How to access	Contact the Motion Picture and Television Reference Desk at Tel, Fax, or mail.	Search, watch and download through the web site of the German Bundestag.	Search and watch videos through the web site of the each House.
Open period	No restrictions.	No restrictions.	1 session and a year (It is provided in units of a session and removed one year after from the end of the session).
Preservation	The National Archives has the originals tapes and the preservation copies	The Parliamentary Archives holds the original records.	Japan doesn't have parliamentary archives. The video-records is preserved in each House (After it is removed from the web site, it isn't open to the general public).

Table 3. Access to video-on-demand for the general user

Conclusion

The minutes have played an important part in the functions of a right to know and surveillance to parliament. However the minutes can't describe an indiscreet and unofficial comment in detail. It is the limitations of minutes in a society in which the information level has been highly developed just like today.

Many countries as it is, paper medium is a formal record, on the other hand video is not considered an official record. In spite of this, video of the proceedings are not only streamed live but also archived at own web site and provided for the general user in many countries.

In Japan, these video records are removed from web site after about several years. Most Member of Parliament in Japan has objected to the public video for a long time. Because videos have been published indefinitely, the difference between speech content in the proceedings is outstanding. Therefore not a little Japanese Members are unwilling to keep opening in the web site for a long time. Moreover general users

cannot access the video. Therefore I conclude that parliamentary democracy has not been established in Japan.

Nevertheless further studies are needed in order to find out relationship of access to the video and parliamentary democracy. For the future I will add countries surveyed to understand the conditions or the circumstances of preservation and use. Moreover I should research relationships between political systems and existence of parliamentary archives. Therefore, I will consider the meaning or potential about video of the proceedings as an archival material and the role of parliamentary archives.

Resources

Library of congress, “Congressional Floor Proceedings” Accessed August 12, 2014.

<http://www.loc.gov/avconservation/collections/congress.html>.

House of Parliament, “Welcome to Parliament's Video and Audio” Accessed August 12, 2014.

<http://www.parliamentlive.tv/Main/Home.aspx>.

German Bundestag, “Mediathek” Accessed August 12, 2014..<http://www.bundestag.de/mediathek>.