

Diplomatic Archives

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan



Address: 1-5-3, Azabudai, Minato-ku, Tokyo
106-0041, Japan
TEL 03 (3585) 4511
<http://www.mofa.go.jp/about/hq/record/>



ABOUT US

The Diplomatic Archives opened on April 15, 1971, as part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with the purpose of preserving, managing and compiling diplomatic documents and records of historical value from the mid-19th century to the early 1990s. The Archives has also made these documents publicly available. In July 1988, an Annex was built to house an exhibition room and a repository. This Annex was donated by the Yoshida Shigeru(*) International Foundation. The Exhibitions Room was relocated to and opened in Azabudai Hills in April 2024 as indicated below.

*Late Prime Minister of Japan

SERVICES

1 Reading Room

Reading Room is open to the public.

Reproduction of the documents is possible through our copy service. Visitors may also use their cameras in the Reading Room to photograph the records.

Opening Hours:

10 a.m.-5:30 p.m. (Last entry at 5 p.m.)

Closed:

Saturdays, Sundays, national holidays, New Year's holidays (December 28 – January 4), and any other days designated by the Diplomatic Archives.

2 Exhibition Room

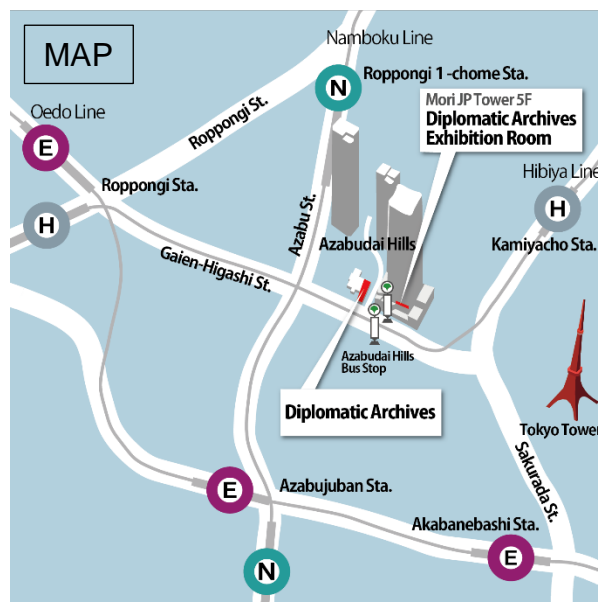
Exhibition Room is located on 5th floor of the Azabudai Hills Mori JP Tower. It is open to the public.

Opening Hours:

10 a.m.-5:30 p.m. (Last entry at 5 p.m.)

Closed:

Sundays, national holidays, New Year's holidays (December 28 - January 4), and any other days designated by the Diplomatic Archives (see the website).



Getting Here

8 minutes' walk from Roppongi-1-chome Station of Namboku Subway Line
10minutes' walk from Kamiyacho or Roppongi Station of Hibiya Subway Line
10minutes' walk from Roppongi Station of Oedo Subway Line

ACTIVITIES

1 Provide Public Access to Historical Documents

The Diplomatic Archives makes its documents available to the public in accordance with the relevant rules of the Ministry and the Public Records and Archives Management Act. In addition, the Archives responds to inquiries from the general public, including academic researchers, about diplomatic records as well as the diplomatic history of Japan.

2 Exhibition

The Diplomatic Archives Exhibition Room displays historical items that are especially important in terms of Japan's diplomatic history.

The Permanent Exhibition Room shows representative treaties and other diplomatic documents from the end of the Edo period to the 21st century. In the Special Exhibition Room, items related to late Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru as well as Japanese diplomat Sugihara Chiune, the history of passports, and the process of concluding treaties are usually displayed. In addition, Special Thematic Exhibitions are held regularly(*).

The Exhibition Room was reopened on April 8, 2024, after being moved from its former location to the 5th floor of the Azabudai Hills Mori JP Tower. It has explanatory panels and videos to help visitors understand the exhibits.

* During special exhibitions, displayed items will be partially replaced.

3 Compilation of Documents on Japanese Foreign Policy

The Diplomatic Archives compiles and publishes the *Documents on Japanese Foreign Policy* in series, a compilation of important diplomatic documents arranged chronologically or thematically (as of April 2025, a total of 230 volumes). The first volume was published in 1936. The Meiji, Taisho, and pre-war Showa series (1867-1945) have been completed, and the post-war series is in progress. The compilation of diplomatic documents is also practiced as a national project in other countries.

4 Provide Digital Images of Documents to the Japan Center for Asian Historical Records (JACAR)

JACAR provides public access to images of official documents of governmental institutions through the Internet. The Diplomatic Archives has offered digital images of pre-war diplomatic records (34,300 files) and treaties (550) to JACAR (<https://www.jacar.go.jp/>). The Diplomatic Archives also continues to support JACAR by providing digital images of post-war diplomatic documents.



Reading Room



Exhibition Room

5th floor of the Azabudai Hills Mori JP Tower



Compilation of

Documents on Japanese Foreign Policy



Records of The Ministry of
Foreign Affairs



1858 Japan – US
Treaty of Amity and
Commerce

MAIN HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS

1 Records of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The Records of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs make up the largest part of the Diplomatic Archives. They consist of diplomatic records including diplomatic cables and official letters with foreign missions of the pre-war period since the establishment of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as those of the post-war period until the early 1990s. The collection, which is the core of our entire holdings of approximately 116,000 items, contains nearly 103,000 files (pre-war: 40,000 and post-war: 63,000 as of April 2025).

2 Diplomatic Compilations on the Tokugawa Shogunate (Tsushin-zenran and Zoku-tsushin-zenran)

Tsushin-zenran and Zoku-tsushin-zenran are collections of diplomatic documents that are essential to understanding the foreign policy of the last period of the Tokugawa Shogunate. The Tsushin-zenran (320 volumes) chronicles diplomatic documentation from 1859 to 1860. The Zoku-tsushin-zenran (1,784 volumes) that followed is a compilation of documents from 1861 to 1868, edited by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and classified into categories such as friendship and trade. The two compilations have been designated as Important Cultural Properties by the Government.

3 Treaties

The Diplomatic Archives preserves some 900 treaties and conventions signed from the mid-19th century to the post-World War II period. The treaties cover establishment of diplomatic relations, trade, political and financial affairs, and many other issues. They include bilateral treaties such as the Treaty of Amity and Commerce with the United States in 1858, the Treaty of Tientsin with China in 1871, the Treaty of Sakhalin Exchange for the Kurile Islands with Russia in 1875, the Peace Treaty with China in 1895, and the Peace Treaty with Russia in 1905, as well as multilateral treaties such as the Versailles Peace Treaty of 1919.

4 Letters and Messages from Various Heads of State

The Archives has in its collection some 1,100 letters and messages from various heads of state dating from the mid-19th century to the end of World War II. They include the 1861 letter from U.S. President Abraham Lincoln to the 14th Shogun Tokugawa Iemochi announcing the return of U.S. diplomatic representative to Japan Townsend Harris, and the 1863 personal message from Napoleon III to the 14th shogun regarding the appointment of a new diplomatic representative to Japan.

5 Articles and Documents of the late Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru

The Archives also has in its possession 320 personal articles, letters, photographs, and other documents belonging to the late Yoshida Shigeru, donated by the Yoshida Shigeru International Foundation.