

Diplomatic Archives

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan



Address: 〒106-0041 1-5-3, Azabudai, Minato-ku,
Tokyo, Japan
TEL 03 (3585) 4511 FAX 03 (3585) 4514
<http://www.mofa.go.jp/about/hq/record/>



HISTORY

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 period of the 1980s. The Archives has also made these documents available for the public use. 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.

*Late Prime Minister of Japan

SERVICES

1 Reading Room

Reading Room is available for the public to peruse the records. Reproduction of the documents is possible using our copying services. Visitors may also take photos of the records with their cameras in the Reading Room.

Opening hours

10:00am to 5:30pm (Last Entry at 5:00pm), Monday to Friday
Closed Saturdays, Sundays, National Holidays, Year-end and New Year Holidays (December 28 - January 4), and Special Holidays designated by the Diplomatic Archives.

2 Exhibition Room

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

Opening Hours

10:00am to 5:30pm (Last Entry at 5:00pm), Monday to Saturday
Closed Sundays, National Holidays, Year-end and New Year Holidays (December 28 - January 4), and Special Holidays designated by the Diplomatic Archives.



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1 Providing Public Access to Historical Documents

The Diplomatic Archives makes its documents available for the use of the public under the relevant rules of the Ministry. In addition, the Archives addresses 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 displays historical materials that are especially important in terms of Japan's diplomatic history.

In the Permanent Exhibition Room, representative treaties and other diplomatic documents from the end of the Edo period to the 21st century are displayed. In the Special Exhibition Room, materials related to former Prime Minister YOSHIDA Shigeru, the history of passports, and the process of concluding treaties are displayed. In addition, Special Exhibitions with particular themes are held on a regular basis*.

The Exhibition Room reopened on April 8th on the 5th floor of the Azabudai Hills Mori JP Tower. The Exhibition Room has explanatory panels and videos to help visitors understand the exhibits.

*During the Special Exhibition, the contents of the exhibition may change.

3 Publication of Documents on Japanese Foreign Policy (Nihon-gaiko-bunsho)

The Diplomatic Archives has published a series of Documents on Japanese Foreign Policy, arranged chronologically and by subject, compiling historical records held by the Ministry. First published in 1936, the series contains 227 volumes that cover the Meiji, Taisho, and pre-war Showa period. The compilation of the post-war Showa period is presently underway. A compilation of diplomatic documents such as Foreign Relations of the United States and Documents on British Policy Overseas (Postwar period) is regarded as national projects by various countries.

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

JACAR provides the general public with 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 is also continuing to support JACAR by supplying digital images of post-war diplomatic documents.



Reading Room



Exhibition Room

5th floor of the Azabudai Hills Mori JP Tower



Japanese Foreign Policy

PRINCIPAL HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS



Records of The Ministry of Foreign Affairs

1 Records of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Foreign Ministry records make up the largest portion of the Diplomatic Archives' documents. They consist of telegrams and official letters with overseas missions of pre-war period since the establishment of the Foreign Ministry as well as historical post-war documents until the end of 1980s. The collection contains about 102,000 files (Pre-war: 40,000 and Post-war: 62,000 as of March 2024) which is the core of our entire holdings of approximately 115,000 items.

2 Diplomatic Materials of the Tokugawa Shogunate (Tsushin-zenran and Zoku-tsushinzenran)

Tsushin-zenran and Zoku-tsushin-zenran are collections of diplomatic documents that are vital in understanding foreign policy of the Tokugawa shogunate during the last days of its reign in Japan. The 320-volume Tsushin-zenran chronicles diplomatic documentation from 1859 to 1860. The succeeding Zoku-tsushin-zenran is a compilation of documents from 1861 to 1868, edited and classified by the Foreign Ministry into categories such as friendship and commerce. At present, 1,784 volumes remain in existence. The two sets of documents were designated as Important Cultural Property by the Government.

3 Treaties

The Diplomatic Archives preserves some 900 treaties and conventions that were signed from the mid 19th century to 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 1858 treaty of Amity and Commerce with the U.S., the 1871 Treaty of Tientsin with China, the 1875 treaty for the exchange of Sakhalin for the Kurile islands with Russia, the 1895 Treaty of Peace with China and the 1905 Treaty of Peace with Russia as well as multilateral treaties such as the 1919 Versailles Peace Treaty.

4 Letters and Messages from Various Heads of States

In addition to treaties, the Archives has in its collection some 1,100 letters and messages from various heads of states dated between the mid-19th century and the end of World War II. They include the 1861 letter from U.S. President Abraham Lincoln to the 14th Tokugawa Shogun Iemochi announcing the return of U.S. diplomatic representative in Japan Townsend Harris and the 1863 personal message from Napoleon of France to the Tokugawa Shogun on the appointment of a new diplomatic representative in 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.



1858 Japan –US
Treaty of Amity and
Commerce