

# Activities of the Japan Society for Archival Science (JSAS)

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## 1. The Japan Society for Archival Science (JSAS)

My name is Kazunori Ishihara, and I am from the Japan Society for Archival Science (JSAS). I have been serving as JSAS President since April last year. To begin with, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the National Archives of Japan and to the EASTICA Secretariat for giving me this opportunity to present a report. It is a great honor to be speaking in front of everyone in attendance at this Seminar.

This is my third time to participate in the EASTICA Seminar, having previously attended seminars in Seoul in 2008 and in Beijing last December. I was deeply impressed by the warm hospitality shown by everyone in South Korea and China, the hosts of each Seminar, and I am truly delighted that I can meet you all again on this occasion.

Today, I will be reporting on the activities of the Japan Society for Archival Science, as our organization is known in English, or “JSAS” for short. JSAS was established in April 2004. Compared to the Korean Society of Archival Studies and the Chinese Archives Society, our Society is still very young with a short history nearing 11 years.

At present, JSAS has a membership of about 470, comprised of about 450 full members and 19 supporting members. Full members are individuals, and supporting members are organizations such as businesses and universities. The annual membership fees are 5,000 yen for full members (3,000 yen for students), and 10,000 yen or more for supporting members. Full membership allows members to subscribe to and contribute articles to the biannual *Journal of the Japan Society for Archival Science*, and to make presentations at JSAS-sponsored research forums. Supporting members provide assistance for the Society’s operations.

If my talk here today piques anyone’s interest in JSAS, please contact us. Everyone is welcome to join, no matter who or when.

Enough of my pitch for JSAS. Let us get into today’s main topic of discussion.

## 2. Purpose of JSAS

In conjunction with its establishment in 2004, JSAS promulgated its Constitution. It describes the purpose of our society as follows:

“The purpose of the Society is to conduct studies and research about archives, thereby helping to advance archival science and develop archival systems in Japan.” (Article 2 of the JSAS Constitution)

And then, Article 3 of the Constitution specifies that the Society would carry out the following operations in order to achieve this purpose:

(1) To convene research forums and general meetings; (2) To publish a journal and archival literature; (3) To manage its website; (4) To engage in exchange with relevant organizations and institutions in Japan and overseas; and (5) To conduct other operations deemed necessary

These five operations clarify the domain of our Society's activities, and today, it is about these activities that I will make my report.

### **3. Research Forums**

JSAS is an academic society, and so more than anything else, its most important operation is research activities. Research forums are held three times a year, in spring, fall and winter. Among these, the largest in size is the conference that is held in conjunction with the annual general meeting in spring, and it is comprised of two types of meetings: an annual research meeting and open-topic seminars. With the annual research meeting, JSAS proposes a theme and selects people to present their papers. Following is a list of the past themes:

- (1) 2004: "Pioneering Archival Science" (Inaugural Symposium)
- (2) 2005: "Essential Archives, Desired Archives"
- (3) 2006: "Pioneering the Archival Profession in Japan"
- (4) 2007: "The Status and Power of Archives in Japanese History"
- (5) 2008: "Towards the Establishment of a Professional Qualification System for Archivists"
- (6) 2009: "Archives Japan 50: Shining the Light on Archival Science"
- (7) 2010: "Issues for Archival Science Posed by the Public Records and Archives Management Act (PRAMA): Records Schedules"
- (8) 2011: "The Expansion of 'Digital Archive' and Archives"
- (9) 2012: "One Year after the Tohoku Earthquake: Past Activities and Future Challenges"
- (10) 2013: "For Construction of the Radiation Database Archives"
- (11) 2014: "Recapture Our 'Archival Science': Criticize, Verify, Review"
- (12) 2015: "Archives for Learning"

The first annual research meeting was held to commemorate our establishment, and it was a symposium with six speakers on the panel. The second meeting took up two major subjects; preservation of archives on the pro-democracy movements in South Korea, and preservation of archives following the Great Hanshin and Awaji Earthquake. To summarize the rest of the meetings: (3) education and training of archivists; (4) an historical review of the evolution of archives in Japan; (5) a credential system for qualified archivists; (6) challenges facing the archives in Japan during the past 50 years and future prospects; (7) records schedules in Japan and South Korea; (8) the relationship between archives and digital archives; (9) rescuing archives in the wake of the Great

East Japan Earthquake; (10) archiving radioactivity and radiation data following the Fukushima nuclear accident; (11) retrospection and prospects on the tenth anniversary of JSAS; and (12) pursuit of the next step for our 11th year. The theme for this year, “Archives for Learning,” was so well-received that we are thinking about keeping it for next year and beyond in the form “Archives for Such-and-Such.”

Another important component of the conference is the open-topic seminar. It is an opportunity for the full members to present the results of their research. Every year, we receive more than ten applications, and after a review process, members get to take the platform to present their research. Their topics are really varied. More than 100 members having made presentations in the past, it would be impossible to introduce them all here. Nevertheless, their papers are later submitted to our Society’s journal, the *Journal of the Japan Society for Archival Science*, and after a peer-review, a number of them get published. The open-topic seminar provides an arena for the members to present their creative and unrestricted research ideas on the topic of free choice. As such, I believe it is an important pillar to our Society’s research activities. If you are interested in finding out more about the seminar, please check out the latest edition of the *Journal of the Japan Society for Archival Science*, No. 22, which lists the names of the presenters and the titles of their research.

As with the annual research meeting at the spring conference, JSAS also selects a theme and presenters at the fall and winter research forums. Compared with the themes at the spring conference, the themes at these research forums more often than not relate to the more practical side of archives. For example, the theme for the research forum held in November 2012 was “Archives and Medicine.” Topics of the papers included the records pertaining to Hansen’s disease, as well as case histories of patients at a psychiatric hospital. The forum was attended by both archive practitioners and archive users, and was highly acclaimed, receiving favorable comments from the participants that the meeting was very stimulating. Although time does not allow me to provide an overview of all of the fall and winter research forums, again, the names of the presenters and the titles of their research are listed in the Society’s journal, so please be sure to check out No. 22 of the *Journal of the Japan Society for Archival Science*. As for the forum venues, at present, they are split between east and west Japan, with the forum in fall being held in Eastern Japan and the forum in winter being held in Western Japan.

#### **4. Journal and Website**

I’ve mentioned this subject a number of times already, but the Society’s journal, the *Journal of the Japan Society for Archival Science*, has been published twice a year since the Society was founded in 2004. The current issue is No. 22.

The journals basically consist of papers, research notes, essays on research trends and book reviews, and sometimes also included are transcripts of the lectures delivered after the annual general meetings in spring. Papers, research notes and essays on research trends are submitted by full members, and it seems that, in recent years, there has been so many submissions that the editorial committee has constantly struggled to keep pace with their review. A few years ago when I was a member of that committee, I wrote in the afterword that I looked forward to receiving so many submissions that we would not be able to keep up with reviewing them. Now, that situation has become reality, and while the editorial committee members seem ready to scream, as a party concerned, I could not be happier.

I regard the journal as a primary source for readers to learn, not only about the themes of the research forums, but also about the trends for the Society's research and about its members' areas of research interest. While commenting on the content of the journal would be the best way of introducing the Society's activities, now is not the time to present the published content, nor do I have the personal capacity to do so, and so I would ask that, if you are interested, please refer to the Society's website below. This site lists the table of contents for each journal plus abstracts, both in Japanese and English. (<http://www.jsas.info/modules/publications01/>)

As with the JSAS journal, the Society has also been managing its website from the very beginning, although it is now very different from what it was ten years ago. Major changes are still hoped for, not just in terms of style, but also in the contents. For instance, at this year's general meeting, some members voiced a desire to make the journal open access. I remember there had been the same debate during the lead-up to the Society's establishment, but at the time, the dominant opinion had been that it was still premature. A decade has passed since then, and advances in digitization have been made in various aspects, and so, somewhat belatedly, I believe we must also consider the modernization of the Japan Society for Archival Science, and making our journal open access.

## **5. Exchange with Relevant Organizations and Institutions**

Ever since its founding, JSAS has continued to engage in exchange and cooperation with relevant organizations and institutions in Japan and overseas. These efforts in exchange and cooperation have led to opportunities for inviting overseas archivists. At the inaugural conference in 2004, we invited Prof. Eric Ketelaar who was a professor at the University of Amsterdam in the Netherlands at the time, and in the following year of 2005, we invited Mr. Djoko Utomo who was then the head of the National Archives of the Republic of Indonesia. Thus, we gained opportunities to learn about archival circumstances in different areas. Seizing other opportunities too, we have also had the chance to hear valuable reports from Prof. Kim Ik Han, Dr. Lee Kyung Yong, Dr. Yim Jin Hee and Prof. Kim Ha Won of Korea, as well as from Dr. Vu Thi Minh Huong of Vietnam. We have been able to publish reports of almost all of these talks in the JSAS journal.

In 2007, JSAS joined the International Council on Archives, and at the same time, became a member of EASTICA. However, due to financial constraints, JSAS has not yet sent any of its members to attend either the Annual Conference or to the ICA Congress held once every four years. Members have attended these meetings, but they have all been self-funded. We are looking into sending members of JSAS to next year's Congress in South Korea, and I truly hope our budget will stretch that far to make this a reality.

Turning attention to our exchange with relevant organizations and institutions on the domestic front, in recent years, we have participated in the "Working Group for Archiving Radiation and Radioactivity Measurement Data in Relation to the Tokyo Electric Power Company's Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant Accident." The Great East Japan Earthquake of March 11, 2011 presented Japan's archivists with a variety of sudden challenges. As mentioned earlier, the JSAS conference of April 2012 was titled "One Year after the Tohoku Earthquake: Past Activities and Future Challenges," and was comprised of four reports. Each of the reports shed light on urgent issues, but above all, Emeritus Prof. Akira Masaïke's report on "Archiving of Data on Radioactive Contamination Resulting from the Nuclear Reactor Accident" demanded urgency, advocating the preservation of measurement data on the radioactive materials released as a consequence of the accident. Then, in September 2012, JSAS made the decision to join a collaborative working group,

established in cooperation with the Physical Society of Japan (JPS) and the National Diet Library, and work toward preserving radiation measurement archives.

In 2013, this activity was repositioned into the “Subcommittee to Review Investigations of Environmental Contamination Caused by Nuclear Accidents,” an official working group within the Science Council of Japan’s Committee on Comprehensive Synthetic Engineering. Then, on November 1, a joint statement was released together with JPS, titled “Preserving Radiation Measurement Data Pertaining to the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant Accident, and Archiving It for Future Generations.” At the same time, the “Radiation and Radioactivity Measurement Data Archives” website (<http://www.radarc311.jp/>) was launched by the working group, and has begun collecting measurement data. Discussions are currently underway on topics such as releasing the data to the public. For further information on the development of this project, please see the numbers 17 (November 2012) and 19 (November 2013) of the *Journal of the Japan Society for Archival Science*.

## 6. Registered Archivists

Lastly, I would like to introduce the initiative on which JSAS is currently most focused. That is a program called the “Registered Archivists of the Japan Society for Archival Science,” which was launched in 2012. In this program, JSAS sets the eligibility criteria for archivists, and then certifies individuals who fulfill these criteria and registers them as archivists.

The philosophy underlying this program is expressed in the preamble to the *Rules Concerning the Registered Archivists of the Japan Society for Archival Science*. That is, the idea that “an archivist is a person who possesses systematic knowledge and skills based on archival science, who performs specialized tasks such as the management of records and archives at an archival institution or other community, and who, through these functions, serves the broader society.”

The specific goals embodying this philosophy are also indicated in the preamble to the *Rules Concerning Registered Archivists of the Japan Society for Archival Science*. That is:

- (1) Affirm the existence of archivists, and let it known to young people with aspirations for this field and to its associated personnel in active service.
- (2) Specify the basic archival knowledge and skills that would meet international standards and archivists’ code of ethics.
- (3) Identify the human resources capable of performing specialized functions, and make them visible to the employing institutions and organizations.
- (4) Further promote research in archival science.
- (5) Establish a common knowledge basis for the purpose of developing education and training systems through collaboration of the specialized institutions and institutions of higher education and advanced studies.

The number of registered archivists stood at 60 as of March this year. For the current fiscal year, applications are being accepted between October 1 and 31. With respect to accreditation standards, please refer to the slides which shows the summary of the main points.

Given how things stand in Japan currently, I do not expect that the goals mentioned earlier will be achieved straightaway; but I am confident that we could share these goals with those of you here today—as most of you are involved in archive management and record keeping.

We are still faced with not a few challenges in building a training and credential system for qualified archivists in Japan, and I would like to appeal to the various relevant organizations and institutions that we should work together to realize this system. I would also be enormously grateful if our visitors from overseas were to take an interest in how the situation of Japanese archives develops.

That concludes my report. Thank you for your attention.