

## **University Archives in Japan: An Experience of the Hiroshima University Archives**

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### **Introduction**

University archives in Japan have been established following their history compilation project. Many university archives are the collection archives and research and educational institutions for the university history.

In this report, I will first classify university archives in Japan and reveal the characteristics. After doing that, I would like to clarify the future of university archives in Japan, citing the Hiroshima University Archives as an example.

### **1. University Archives of Japan**

University archives have cooperated by establishing the Japanese Association of College and University Archives (107 member organizations). It was prepared from 1986; “the Liaison Council for University History in the Kanto Region” centered on the eastern Japan since 1988 and “the Meeting for University History Staff in the Western Japan” centered on the western Japan since 1990 merged to form the Association at the Hiroshima University in April 1996 (started with 62 member universities). It allows sharing of information through the study group and tries to improve activities at each university. However, at present only 11 national universities (12.7%) out of 86 have archives, including archives-related facilities. Of them, only six universities received designation by the Prime Minister under the Public Records and Archives Management Act (Act No. 66 of 2009) upon its enforcement, including the Hiroshima University Archives.

Today, Japanese university archives are classified into four types based on the characteristics derived from their establishment: 1) archives, 2) history compiler, 3) memorial library of founders, and 4) alumni association-oriented.

The first type is established in cooperation with the records management services of the university, and many national university archives come under this type. They mainly appraise, select and make accessible the documents upon expiration of the retention periods. The second type is the university archives established in the course of the history compilation projects to commemorate, for example, the universities’ 50th anniversary. Basically, archives of this type are based on historical materials that have been collected in

the course of the history compilation projects. The third type, which focuses on founders and university origins is commonly found among private universities in Japan. The basic feature lies in that they are accompanied by exhibition facilities which function as an educational institution of tradition and the academic culture of the universities. The fourth type is based on university alumni associations. Its characteristic is to collect and publicize information primarily on students and student life, whereas the former three types have been established in accordance with the functions of universities, such as the management and administration of universities, education and research.

Based on these four types of the university archives in Japan, next, I would introduce the organization and activities of the Hiroshima University Archives as a role model.

## **2. Basic Policy of the Hiroshima University Archives**

The Hiroshima University Archives (HUA) was established in April 2004. It has been extended on three occasions, with a current total floor space of 835 square meters and 4317.3 linear meters of shelving. There are three full-time staff members. It is a small organization consisting of 4 members, including myself while holding another post concurrently. Incidentally, Hiroshima University National University Corporation is a university with 15,520 students and 3,307 staff members.

HUA upholds the following six basic policies. The first is to support the efficiency of the university business by acting as a management organ for corporate documents. The second is to develop the uniqueness of the university. The third is to form a basic foundation for education and research. We provide lectures and collect historical materials to form a university-wide research infrastructure. The fourth is symbolized in the phrase “from pre-university to post-graduation.” We build relations with the students and alumni as major university members, make efforts to foster their identity as Hiroshima University members, and support university activities to be handed down through generations. Fifth is cooperation with local communities. Specifically, we provide oral history projects and open lectures. Along with enhancing the uniqueness through this cooperation with local communities, we believe these locally-based activities eventually lead to global ones. The sixth is to continue to disseminate information to the community as a local university. Information on each university business has been disseminated via books, report booklets, the Internet, and other various media. Though most of them are written in Japanese only, since its establishment we have published 6 books, 5 report booklets, 4 catalogs, 3 oral history books, and annual research bulletins.

Our business comes under the following two areas: activities as a university think tank centering on archiving official documents and those as an educational and research

institution centering on preserving the materials related to the university history.

### **3. Organization and Activities of the Hiroshima University Archives**

Next, I will introduce activities from the standpoint of the organization of HUA. It has the offices of public records and of university history materials as well as other offices such as a reading room. The public records office functions as an institutional archives to arrange and make public non-current records and corporate documents of the university. On the other hand, the Office of University History Materials, which inherited the history compilation project to mark the 50th anniversary of the University, functions as a collecting archives of private documents.

#### **3.1. Office of Public Records**

At the office of public records, we have been considering how to bequeath high-quality records, emphasizing the management of current records when they have reached the non-current stage of their life cycle.

At HUA, from the stage of current records, we have co-managed public records in tandem with the financial and general affairs offices. We have established trustful relations with the general affairs office when arranging an intermediate repository of the head office together.

General affairs office developed a records management system with our support. In it, records are classified in accordance with their importance at the time of creation, which makes appraisal and selection easier. This system became fully operational three years ago, since which the records management of each department has improved across the years, and thus transfer and destruction of records came to be conducted in a laborsaving manner.

The life cycle of a document is established, and basically all documents must undergo checks by HUA. For this reason, HUA director has the authority to destroy records. Additionally, in January 2011, a branch of the Office of Public Records was established inside the university head office building, to intensively manage specified historical records and archives of the head office as well as on-campus publications, which has enhanced convenience for the staff and efficiency in the administrative operations.

In addition, since its establishment, HUA has offered lectures and training programs on records management for new and middle-ranking university staff. In light of these achievements, in December 2011, HUA provided a training program for records managers working at national university corporations and national colleges of technology in the Chugoku and Shikoku districts with the support of the Japan Association of National Universities.

In order to enhance the reliability of public documents in records management, HUA deals only with non-current corporate documents which fall under specified historical records and archives under the Public Records and Archives Management Act. Documents will be classified into either “public documents” or “private documents” when prepared, but they will be classified into either “public documents” or “personal/group documents” when housed. Therefore, personal documents under the jurisdiction of the Office of University History Materials are considered as scholarly materials. This is because given the current staff size, facilities and budget scale, it is difficult to arrange and make public wide-ranging personal documents such as letters within one year from the expiration of their retention period as described in the guidelines for the Public Records and Archives Management Act. Furthermore, it is necessary to limit their use because of the contract with the donators as to accessibility.

### **3.2. Office of University History Materials**

Office of University History Materials is a collecting archives, and was set up to inherit the history compilation project to mark the 50th anniversary of the University. Basically, archives of the office are classified into the following 4 categories: 1) documents previously in the possession of various schools under the old education system (Hiroshima Higher Normal School and Hiroshima University of Arts and Science) which were later integrated to the Hiroshima University under the new education system, 2) personal documents of Hiroshima University officials (especially, we have full relevant documents of former presidents. Old documents and materials of the faculty and alumni), 3) documents relating to the alumni association (old archives of the Alumni Association of the Hiroshima High School under the old education system) and the teachers’ union, and 4) copies of the collection of other archives acquired for the history compilation project.

Noteworthy among these collections are three special libraries. They will reveal the characteristics of Hiroshima University.

Tatsuo Morito Memorial Library has a collection of 36,957 items of lifelong materials related to the first President Tatsuo Morito (1888-1974), which are on show to the public. Morito was expelled from the University of Tokyo in a pre-war crackdown on freedom of thought. After the Second World War, however, the political system was overturned, allowing Morito to become a member of the House of Representatives, and engage in the enactment of the Constitution of Japan and the Basic Act on Education. In addition, he was appointed Minister of Education and was also instrumental in formulating a democratic education system. After that, he resigned the member of the House of Representatives, and became the first president of the Hiroshima University. He had laid the foundations for the

development of the University. In this library, records of his entire life can clarify the school motto, “a single, unified university, free and pursuing peace.”

Library for Peace and Academics has a collection of personal documents on the post-war peace movement in Hiroshima. Many of the predecessors of the University were severely damaged by the atomic bomb on August 6, 1945. This caused many of the University’s faculty and alumni to play central roles in the movement. Toshihiro Kanai (1914-1974), included as an example, worked as chief editorial writer for the Chugoku Shimbun and was a leader in the field of atomic bomb news. HUA has collected the personal documents of journalists, focusing on Kanai. Besides this, approximately 60,000 personal documents relating to the movements for the relief of atomic bomb victims and for the compilation of white papers on atomic bomb consequences, as well as the ban-the-bomb movement, have been collected and are supposed to be made public.

Toshiyuki Kajiyama Library has collected and organized about 10,000 relevant materials of a novelist Toshiyuki Kajiyama (1930-1975) who graduated from the Hiroshima Higher Normal School, one of the University’s predecessors. Kajiyama was a popular writer during the years of soaring economic growth and also worked as a reporter. In this library, his production processes for novels and articles are explained, and the collection shows not only literary aspects but also historical materials such as key testimonies.

### **3.3. Educational and Social Contribution**

HUA is conducting various projects around the Office of Public Records and the Office of University History Materials.

One of such projects was to develop the alumni association so as to include the University students whereby formulating a cross-generational organization. HUA engaged with this project from its institutional design, and brought exhibition for it.

We also deliver the lecture of university history as a cultural education subject for all departments. Last fiscal year, although it was an optional subject, 976 students signed up for the course. In addition, we also offer an open lecture “Modern History of My Family,” in which students write the history of their own families. These all go along with “cultivation of personality,” a philosophy of Tatsuo Morito for university education, and at the same time, make university education open to the general public.

Following the Great East Japan Earthquake of March 11, 2011, as the first example of cooperation between universities and local communities, a mutual cooperation agreement between HUA and the Hiroshima Prefectural Archives was concluded in September 2011 to ensure safety of archival materials in case of disaster. The agreement is expected to

minimize damage in case of disaster.

## **Conclusion**

As shown above, the Hiroshima University Archives has all the elements of the four types of the university archives: 1) archives, 2) history compiler, 3) memorial library of founders, and 4) alumni association-oriented. In addition, it is a multiple archives fulfilling the nature of institutional archives as well as collecting archives. Given the arrangement and disclosure of corporate documents in the Office of Public Records on the one hand, and the collection, arrangement and disclosure of personal documents in the Office of University History Materials on the other, each business links these two cycles and whereby enhance efficiency in university business as a whole.

University archives are on the way to shift to multiple archives such as the Hiroshima University Archives in order to emphasize the uniqueness of the universities. However, contrary to our expectation that the enforcement of the Public Records and Archives Management Act would help promote the installation of the university archives, even national universities have been hindered from establishing archives. This is because the demanding nature of the Act in terms of records management makes university archives business too costly.

Finally, at the Hiroshima University Archives, we would keep pursuing a well-balanced archives with uniqueness.