



Internet Guide

National Clearinghouse for United States-Japan Studies

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Current as of June 2003

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Japanese Government

Political structure (The Economist)

<http://www.economist.com/countries/Japan/profile.cfm?folder=Profile-Political Structure>

The Economist provides a compact profile of the Japanese political structure, including basic information about the elected officials, the legal system, legislature, and elections. The page lists the main political organizations and main members of the cabinet.

Power and Politics in Modern Japan

<http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/japan/japanworkbook/govpol/intro.html>

From Columbia University's East Asian Curriculum Project *Contemporary Japan: A Teaching Workbook*. "An essay that gives a brief history of the structure of government in Japan. Emphasis is on the role of the emperor and the role of the Diet, Japan's legislative body." Discussion questions are also provided.

Statistics: Politics

http://web-japan.org/stat/category_03.html
Japan Information Network presents statistics about elections and political parties. The site covers elections from 1986-2001 and gives such information as number of electorates and the voting rate. It also breaks down the Diet by number of members in each political party.

Campaign Posters

<http://homepage.mac.com/electionposters/en/index.html>

Japanese political posters from 2000 and 2001. "Posters can tell us much about party and candidate strategies and the key political issues of the day," the author of the site writes. "And just as important, Japanese voters use posters as a key source of information when deciding which candidate to vote for. From the historical standpoint, too, it is surely worthwhile to preserve these snapshots of political culture."

Senrei

<http://www.senrei.com/>

Senrei provides "summaries of important recent constitutional, civil and commercial law cases from Japan as well as articles and essays on a variety of topics relating to law in Japan." Case summaries are organized by area and topic.

Branches of Government

Executive Branch

The Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet

<http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/index-e.html>
The Japanese Prime Minister's Web site provides news releases, translations of speeches and statements, translations of policy reports and up-to-date information about current political activities.

Government Ministries

<http://www.indiana.edu/~japan/govt.html>
The Clearinghouse lists the Japanese government Ministries, the Japanese counterpart to U.S. government Departments.

Legislative Branch

House of Councillors: The National Diet of Japan

<http://www.sangiin.go.jp/eng/index.htm>
This thorough site gives an introduction to the history, organization, and function of the House of Councillors, one of the two houses that make up the bicameral legislative body in Japan. It lists current members and information about officers of the house, Articles of Constitution, Diet Law, and Rules of the House of Councillors. Features of interest include a chart explaining the electoral system and an outline of a legislator's typical day, and a quiz to test visitors' knowledge about

the Diet. The site links to other sites related to Japan's national governmental institutions.

House of Representatives: Internet TV

<http://www.shugiintv.go.jp/en/>

While the House of Representatives site is currently not available, this site allows visitors to view House proceedings in progress, as well as view archived meetings. Requires RealPlayer or Windows Media Player. Meetings are in Japanese.

Judicial Branch

The Supreme Court of Japan

<http://www.courts.go.jp/english/ehome.htm>

The official site of the Supreme Court of Japan includes an overview of the Japanese judicial system, a virtual tour of the Supreme Court, and outlines of court procedure depending on type of case.

Constitution

The Seventeen Article Constitution (c. 620)

<http://www.wsu.edu:8000/~dee/ANCJAPAN/CONST.HTM>

World Civilizations at Washington State University presents the constitution written by Shotoku Taishi, prince regent under the Empress Suiko, shortly before his death in 622. The Constitution established rules for officials engaged in political affairs.

The Constitution of the Empire of Japan (1889)

<http://history.hanover.edu/texts/1889con.html>

The Emperor Meiji and advisors crafted this constitution after seizing power from the shogun, the military leaders who had historically wielded the power. The constitution reaffirmed the end of the shogunate and emphasized the supreme power of the emperor. It also borrowed some Western ideas and created a constitutional government.

The Constitution of Japan (1947)

<http://www.solon.org/Constitutions/Japan/English/english-Constitution.html>

The current constitution was largely drafted by the Allied Occupation forces headed by General Douglas MacArthur after the end of World War II. This constitution created the framework for the Japanese democratic government and redefined the role of the emperor from political leader and divine personage to that of ceremonial head of state, while the political leader of Japan is the democratically elected prime minister.

Lessons on the Japanese Constitution

<http://www.indiana.edu/~japan/Digests/const.html>

In this Japan Digest, Lynn Parisi offers a brief exploration of the history of Japan's 1947 Constitution. The Digest introduces recent scholarship and offers examples of how that scholarship deepens the story of Japan's postwar constitutional process. In its final section, the digest provides ways in which study of the postwar constitution can enrich social studies instruction.

Birth of the Constitution of Japan

<http://www.ndl.go.jp/constitution/e/index.html#>

The National Diet Library offers a new online exhibit: "Birth of the Constitution of Japan." According to the exhibit website, "the exhibit outlines major events and important documents involved in the framing and promulgation of Japan's constitution."

This document is also available on the Clearinghouse Web site: www.indiana.edu/~japan.

Search for more resources on this topic in the online U.S.-Japan Database at the same URL.

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