

# A Japanese-English Glossary of Terminology Related to the Central Government During the Nara Period (Abridged)

The following is an abridged version of “A Japanese-English Glossary of Terminology Related to the Central Government During the Nara Period” originally published in the first issue of Cultural Heritage and Global Audiences in March, 2021.

## Preface to the Glossary

This is a selected Japanese-English reference glossary about the agencies of the central government during the Nara period, a topic central to the research activities of our Institute.

We had several goals in compiling this list:

- 1) The main goal was to produce standardized English translations of the agencies to be used in future publications of our Institute.
- 2) Another aim of the new glossary was to introduce consistency in the wording and the grammar of the translations, especially when one looked at them as part of a complete eco-system of translated terminology related to the Nara Capital.
- 3) We wanted the new translations to be as concise as possible so they could be easily used even on busy layouts, like maps.

For this purpose, we have reviewed several past translations, ranging from the 2000s all the way back to the 1930s. We adopted as much from past translations as possible and only coined new phrases when all options proved to be inadequate.

## References:

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- Miller, Richard J. *Japan's First Bureaucracy: A Study of Eighth-Century Government*. Ithaca: China-Japan Program, Cornell University, 1979.
- Miner, Earl Roy, Hiroko Odagiri, and Robert E. Morrell. *The Princeton Companion to Classical Japanese Literature*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985.
- Piggott, Joan R. and Yoshida Sanae, ed. *Teishinkōki: What Did a Heian Regent Do? The Year 939 in the Journal of Regent Fujiwara*

After we had finished our initial draft, we presented it for review and discussion at an internal meeting at our Institution during the summer of 2020. This glossary presented here follows all the suggestions that we had received. However, it also includes translations that we made later and thus have not put through the same rigid review process. All responsibility for the translations is therefore ours.

Whether we should use the words emperor, empire, and imperial or not was something that we, the authors, continued to discuss after the review. Initially, we opted to avoid using imperial because the Yamato State in the eighth century was neither the size nor the structure of what one would imagine hearing the English word empire to mean. However, eventually, we had decided to adopt “imperial” and other grandiose wording in the translation on the grounds that the Yamato State followed the naming conventions of the Tang Empire.

We have also compared our draft glossary with English translations for Chinese and Korean administrative agencies from the same period. Ultimately, we have decided not to align the translations, as they do not exactly match in the respective languages either. Still, we made sure to make the translations sound similar in tone and wording whenever it was feasible.

We hope that translators and scholars will adopt the list in its entirety, but we are also open to discussions and look forward to suggestions on improving the glossary.

(Peter Yanase and Shaun I. Mackey)

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- Sansom, George Bailey. “Early Japanese Law and Administration.” *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan*, 2nd ser., 9 (December 1932): 67–109.
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## The Glossary

文神祇官	Department for Kami of Heaven and Earth	漆部司	Office of Lacquer Production
太政官	Council of State	縫部司	Office of Tailoring
左弁官（局）	Controlling Body of the Left	織部司	Office of Weaving
中務省	Ministry of Royal Affairs	宮内省	Ministry of the Royal Household
中宮職	Consorts' Household Service	大膳職	Palace Table Service
図書寮	Bureau of Manuscripts and Books	木工寮	Bureau of Carpentry
左大舍人寮	Bureau of Attendants, Left Division	大炊寮	Bureau of Palace Kitchen
右大舍人寮	Bureau of Attendants, Right Division	主殿寮	Bureau of Palace Maintenance
内藏寮	Bureau of Royal Storehouses	典藥寮	Bureau of Medicine
縫殿寮	Bureau of Royal Garments	正親司	Office of the Royal Family Registry
陰陽寮	Bureau of Yin and Yang	内膳司	Office of the Royal Table
画工司	Office of Painting	造酒司	Office of Saké
内藥司	Office of Royal Medicine	鍛冶司	Office of Metalworkers
内礼司	Office of Etiquette for the Royal Residence	官奴司	Office of Government Slaves
式部省	Ministry of Personnel	園池司	Office of Gardens and Ponds
大学寮	Bureau of the Imperial University	土工司	Office of Clayworkers
散位寮	Bureau of Honorary Courtiers	采女司	Office of Ladies-in-waiting
治部省	Ministry of Rites and Ceremonies	主水司	Office of Water
雅樂寮	Bureau of Court Music	主油司	Office of Oils
玄蕃寮	Bureau of Buddhist Monastics and Barbarians	内掃部司	Office of Housekeepers for the Royal Residence
諸陵司	Office of Royal Tombs	宮陶司	Office of Kitchenware
喪儀司	Office of Funeral Rites	内染司	Office of Royal Dyers
民部省	Ministry of Civil Affairs	彈正台	Board of Censors
主計寮	Bureau of Statistics	衛門府	Headquarters of the Palace Gate Guards
主税寮	Bureau of Taxation	隼人司	Hayato Office
右弁官（局）	Controlling Body of the Right	左衛士府	Headquarters of the Palace Guards, Left Division
兵部省	Ministry of Military Affairs	右衛士府	Headquarters of the Palace Guards, Right Division
兵馬司	Office of Military Horses	左兵衛府	Headquarters of the Military Guards, Left Division
造兵司	Office of Armorers	右兵衛府	Headquarters of the Military Guards, Right Division
鼓吹司	Office of Fife and Drums	左馬寮	Bureau of the Imperial Stables, Left Division
主船司	Office of Ships	右馬寮	Bureau of the Imperial Stables, Right Division
主鷹司	Office of Falconry	左兵庫	Armory, Left Section
刑部省	Ministry of Justice	右兵庫	Armory, Right Section
贓贖司	Office of Fines	内兵庫	Royal Armory
囚獄司	Office of Prisons		
大藏省	Ministry of Treasury		
典鑄司	Office of Metal Casting		
掃部司	Office of Palace Housekeepers		