

TV and radio scripts at the National Diet Library:  
focusing on acquiring and preserving TV and radio scripts

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<<Stacks for TV and radio scripts>>

● 1. Introduction

On April 17, 2014, the National Diet Library (NDL) started to provide for reading and copying service more than 27,000 volumes of TV and radio scripts donated by the Consortium for the Promotion of Broadcast Script Archives in Japan. This article focuses on

the development of collection and preservation of TV and radio scripts, and how to make them available.

## 2. Collecting TV and radio scripts by the Television and Radio Writers' Association of Japan

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Vast amounts of TV and radio programs have been produced and aired since radio broadcasting service started in Japan in 1925 and TV in 1953 as media indispensable for people's everyday life. Many programs generated trends and social phenomena. For example, it was said that when the radio drama *Kimi no na wa* (lit. What is your name?)<sup>1</sup> was on air from 8:30 to 9:00 in the evening on Thursdays in 1952, women were glued to the radio instead of taking a bath in a sentō (Japanese communal bathhouse).

However, produced on a day-to-day basis, audio-visual recordings of few programs have survived until now. Above all, unfortunately, we have little chance to meet video recordings of TV programs produced before the 1980s when a magnetic tape was overwritten and reused many times due to its high price. There had been also growing concern about scatter and deterioration of scripts still in the hands of scriptwriters and producers after 40 to 50 years at the oldest.

It was the late Shin'ichi ICHIKAWA,<sup>2</sup> Director of the [Television and Radio Writers' Association of Japan](#), who lamented the situation. Responding to his appeal, the association launched a special committee on broadcast script archives in October 2005. Making efforts to collect broadcast scripts with financial assistance from the Agency for Cultural Affairs and a facility provided by Adachi City<sup>3</sup> in Tokyo, the committee organized exhibitions and symposiums about broadcast scripts, and carried out a joint research with the [Interfaculty Initiative in Information Studies, University of Tokyo](#).

## 3. Agreement between the NDL and the Agency for Cultural Affairs (FY2011)

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In this context, on May 18, 2011, the NDL and the Agency for Cultural Affairs reached an agreement to ensure the reliable handing-on of valuable materials produced in Japan to the next generation, which stipulates that TV and radio scripts should be included in those materials, and the NDL started to participate in activities like research study on their preservation. In July of the same year, the consortium for the promotion of broadcast script archives in Japan was founded with the participation of the Television and Radio Writers' Association of Japan, the [Writers Guild of Japan](#), the Japan Broadcasting Corporation (NHK), the [Japan Commercial Broadcasters Association](#), the [Broadcast Creators Association of Japan](#), the [Broadcast Programming Center of Japan](#), the Interfaculty Initiative in Information Studies at the University of Tokyo, etc., and the NDL also joined in it.

After discussion in FY2011, it was agreed that in view of the stake of preservation of audio-visual recordings in broadcast stations, priority should be allowed according to three periods (the first period (before 1980), the second period (1981-2000) and the third period (after 2001)), and the donation of materials produced in the first period should go to the top of the queue, because they are most in danger of deterioration.<sup>4</sup>

#### 4. Towards preservation and opening of public access to TV and radio scripts (FY2012)

The consortium continued after FY2012 under the changed name of the exploratory committee on broadcast scripts archives with the participation of staff members from museums, etc. in addition to representatives from broadcast-related organizations, dealt with grasping the number and whereabouts of the existing scripts, and further discussed how to preserve them. Moreover, on the premise that the materials would be laid open to the public in the future, it gave some thought to the copyright, explained to the donors of scripts, and reported to broadcast stations which owned the copyright.

But, the special committee of the Television and Radio Writers' Association of Japan was dissolved at the end of FY2011. Fifty thousand broadcast scripts acquired by the committee were taken over to the newly-founded Consortium for the Promotion of Broadcast Script Archives (general incorporated association) in June 2012. As the biggest issue, how to make the collection available for use in the future remained to be solved, because the archives could not secure a facility for the long-term preservation.

#### 5. Acquisition of TV and radio scripts by the NDL (FY2013)

The NDL had excluded unpublished TV and radio scripts from the scope of acquisition, saying that the NDL collects "publications" to be widely distributed, and those scripts were written in order to produce TV and radio programs and used among only limited people involved.

To accept broadcast scripts, the NDL had to consider how to ensure the public use of the items. Besides, the NDL was also faced with the difficult situation of tight capacity in the closed stacks estimated to be full within a few years. With those points in mind, the NDL finally decided to take over 27,219 volumes of scripts produced in the first period (before 1980) that were in danger of deterioration and whose audio-visual recordings rarely survive. The others were shared among several institutions: the [Kawasaki City Museum](#) responsible for the scripts produced after the second period, the [NHK Museum of Broadcasting](#) for a part of handwritten scripts, the [Tsubouchi Memorial Theatre Museum](#) of Waseda University for dramatic scripts, and the [National Film Center](#) of the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, for film-related scripts.



<<TV and radio scripts available in the NDL>>



I would like to express deep gratitude to all of the people who contributed to donating the scripts and making them available to the public.

## Column: How can we use TV and radio scripts in the NDL?

### Step 1: Searching

There are two options to check the availability of the script you wish to read in the NDL.

One is to search for the [Script Database](#) provided by the Consortium for the Promotion of Broadcast Script Archives. The database offers integrated search for more than 41,800 scripts stored in six institutions<sup>5</sup> including the NDL. You can search by title, authors, cast members, holding institutions, and it is possible to refine the result by period and genre. You can find not only scripts produced before 1980 held by the NDL but also a wide range of scripts produced after 1981 including TV, radio, drama, film and animation held by other institutions. Please note that as of October 2014, materials stored in institutions other than the NDL are not yet open to the public and they are not available.



<<Top page of the Script Database>>

The other option is to look for the item on the following two lists of TV and radio scripts stored in the NDL available on the RESEARCH NAVI: the title list in order of the kana syllabary in the PDF format and the list of the control number in CSV file.

### Step 2: Making a reading request

TV and radio scripts are available in the Audio-Visual Materials Room on the first floor of the Annex building, Tokyo Main Library of the NDL. Bibliographic information of the

materials is not available in the NDL-OPAC, so please look for the title and the control number of items you wish to read in the way above, fill out a request form available in the Audio-Visual Materials Room, and submit it at the counter. You can request up to three materials in one request. Like other audio-visual materials, permission is required to use scripts. Permission is limited to research and study purposes only. Please fill out an application form describing the purpose and subject of your research and submit it at the counter along with your reading request.

From the terminals on the premises of the NDL, through the [Web Archiving Project](#) (WARP), you can enjoy the digital scripts written by Shin'ichi Ichikawa which were open to the public for limited periods on the website "[Ichikawa Shin'ichi no sekai](#) (lit. the World of the script writer Shin'ichi Ichikawa)" produced by the Consortium for the Promotion of Broadcast Script Archives.



<<A top page of Ichikawa Shin'ichi no sekai>>

Related article:

- [TV and radio scripts donated by a consortium for the promotion of broadcast script archives in Japan now available in the National Diet Library](#) (No. 193, April 2014)

- <sup>1</sup> A love romance after the World War II broadcast on the radio from 1952. It soon enjoyed a great deal of popularity. It is considered to be a masterpiece of the Japanese scriptwriter Kazuo KIKUTA.
- <sup>2</sup> He was a scriptwriter known for the TV programs produced by Tsuburaya Production's Ultraman Ace (the fifth in the Ultra Series). He worked very hard on archiving TV and radio scripts.
- <sup>3</sup> It is one of the 23 special wards of Tokyo and is located in the north east of the prefecture, and surrounded by rivers. The famous Japanese film director Takeshi KITANO is from Adachi City.

- <sup>4</sup> "Nihon kyakuhon akaibuzu chosa kenkyu hokokusho 7 (Heisei 23 nendo (Saishuban))" (lit. Final report on research study of TV and radio scripts archives in FY2011) published by Nihon hoso sakka kyokai nihon kyakuhon akaibuzu tokubetsu iinkai (lit. Consortium for the promotion of broadcast script archives in Japan of the Television and Radio Writers' Association of Japan) in March 2012 [NDL call no.: UL587-J20]
- <sup>5</sup> The NDL and the following five institutions: Kawasaki City Museum (TV and radio scripts produced after 1980), the National Film Center of National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo (film-related scripts), Tsubouchi Memorial Theatre Museum of Waseda University (dramatic scripts), NHK Museum of Broadcasting (handwritten materials) and [Association of Japanese Animations](#) (Cartoon film-related scripts)