

National Diet Library Newsletter

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National Diet Library Reorganized

On April 1, 2002, the National Diet Library underwent a big reorganization to improve all its library services.

As a result of the reorganization, details of this web site such as "User Guide", "Outlook of NDL" have been changed. Please check again for information on the Library.

For the new Organization Chart of the National Diet Library, please see [here](#).

To increase its usefulness, this web site will be revised again in October 2002.

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Telephone & Fax Information Service Started

In April 2002, the National Diet Library began its Telephone & Fax Information Service (Japanese/English).

To obtain information, please call the numbers below and follow the instructions.

	Telephone Information Service	Fax Information Service
Number	+81-3-3506-3300	+81-3-3506-3301
Information available	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Days closed• Access to the Library• Photoduplication guide• Temporarily unavailable materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• User guide• Days closed• Temporarily unavailable materials

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Overview of the facilities of the Kansai-kan of the National Diet Library

by Keiya Utsumi

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This is an abridged translation of the article of the same title in the NDL Monthly Bulletin No. 493

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1. History of the Kansai-kan plan

Planning for the Kansai-kan plan was under discussion from 1982. In December 1994,

the plan came into being as a result of the recommendation of the National Diet Library Building Commission submitted to the Diet.

In this recommendation, the objectives of the Kansai-kan are defined as:

- To resolve storage capacity limitations
- To meet the needs of a highly sophisticated information society

The site for the Kansai-kan was designated in Kansai Science City, Kyoto prefecture. As a result of this recommendation, the "Kansai-kan of the National Diet Library (Provisional Name) Design Competition" was budgeted in FY1995.

2. Construction

"The Kansai-kan of the National Diet Library (Provisional Name) Design Competition" was held from 1995 to 1996. The guidelines for applicants were distributed all over the world via embassies and consulates of Japan and were carried in major Western architecture magazines. This competition drew a large international response. A total of 493 entries were submitted including 219 from 42 overseas countries. The first prize was awarded to Mr. Fumio Toki, a Japanese architect, after five screenings.

Comments on his work by the screening committee included: his sophisticated design present shows a refreshing creativity. For example, the approach through the skylight roof



garden creates a ceremonial air; the roof with slits and the glass facade connected to it look clear and bright; greenery on the roof and in the courtyard are in harmony with the surrounding forests. This understated freshness set against strong and assertive designs from others attracted many votes from the judges.

It is not easy to bring the architect's plan to reality, as he wants it: over half the building is underground and the exterior walls at street level are all glass.... We had to remove 300,000 cubic meters of surplus soil. The period of construction was quite limited because it was obvious that the storage capacity of the Tokyo Main Library, one of the main reasons for constructing the Kansai-kan, would reach its limit at the beginning of 2002.



Groundbreaking ceremony (11/30/1998)

Construction started at the end of October 1998. The surplus soil was successfully removed in cooperation with the Defense Agency. The joint venture (Takenaka Cooperation, Sumitomo Construction, and Penta-Ocean Construction), which was awarded the contract for the construction, adopted the "wake-up method" for the first time in Japan in order to ensure safety and

shorten the periods. The "wake-up method" is originally used in hanging bridge beams. Takenaka Cooperation applied this method to the glass wall of the facade of the Kansai-kan: the steel frame of the wall was put together on the ground and winched up to the building frame.

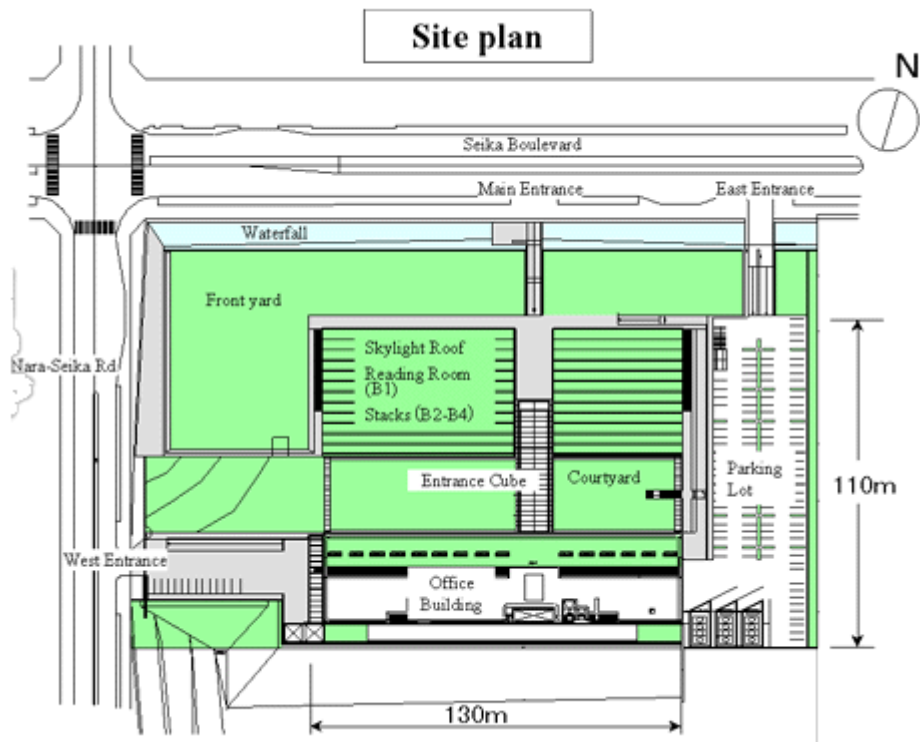
Wake-up method

On March 20, 2002, The National Diet Library received the Kansai-kan building from the Kinki Regional Development Bureau of the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport, which was in charge of the construction. The building's beautiful, clear form can be seen, now.



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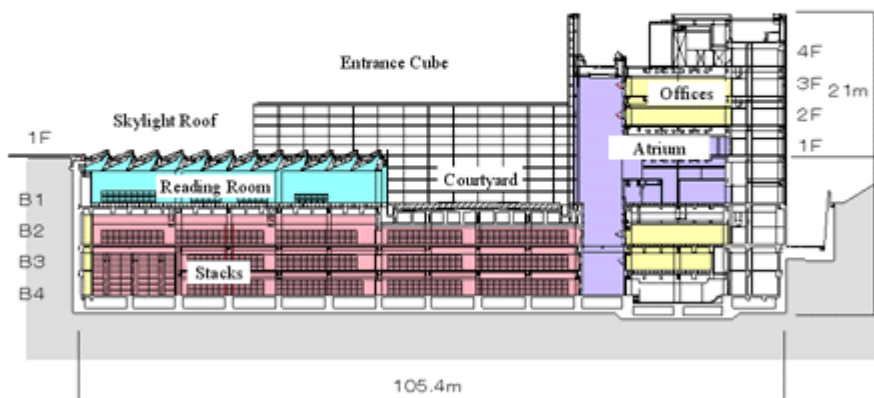
3. Major facilities of the Kansai-kan



From entrance to the gate

The overwhelming green of the grass in the front yard facing Seika Boulevard and on the skylight roof welcomes visitors to the Kansai-kan. As if to water the grass, a waterfall flows down a 230m long wall of Chinese granite. In the middle of the waterfall is the entrance, which leads to the transparent entrance cube. There is a wooded area on both sides of the entrance cube. Down the stairs, the entrance gate appears. When you make a User Card at the User Card Issuing Machines and insert it, the gate opens and the General Library Section and the Asian Resources Room come in sight. "Approach through skylight roof garden creates a ceremonial air" is the aim achieved here.

Sectional Plan

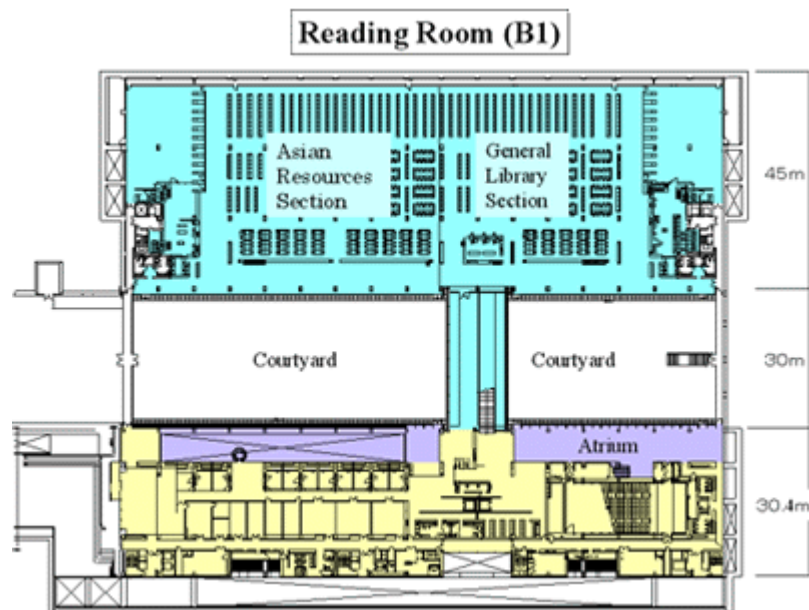


General Library Section and Asian Resources Room

Through the glass door, there is a spacious 5,000-square-meter grand reading room. There are 350 seats and almost all of them with computer terminals. Users can request materials in stacks via a terminal. High and low shelves are set between the seats that allow space for 150,000 books.

The walls of the public zone are coated with plaster, Italian stucco. Mr. Fumio Toki adopted this traditional method with modern taste that gives this building a look of understated elegance.

Both ends of the reading room are offices and service counters of the Public Services Division and the Asian Resources Division.



Stacks and Conveyers

The total floor space of the Kansai-kan is about 60,000 square meters and half of it is stacks. The storage capacity is six million volumes.

The stacks are located underground where temperature and humidity are more stable than above ground. The fixed shelving stacks are located in the second and third basements and compact shelving stacks are in the fourth basement. Materials of high-frequency use are placed on the fixed shelving stacks; bound materials and other items are placed in the compact shelving stacks. All entrances to the stack space are controlled by IC cards.

The most significant facility of the Kansai-kan is its automatic stacks. Metal arms automatically pick up containers of the requested materials when they perceive the orders. The containers are taken to the conveyance stations and then carried to the desired point by horizontal and vertical conveyers. There are conveyance stations not only at the service counters but also in all offices.

In the Kansai-kan, requests are sent to the staff of the stack space via the computer terminals of the reading room and offices, though in the Tokyo Main Library, call slips are sent through pneumatic tubes.

As a fire prevention measure in the stacks, a nitrogen gas fire extinguisher system is

installed. The nitrogen gas has no ill effects on the human body and is safer than conventional CO₂ gas and halon gas.

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Other facilities and Offices

Seminar rooms are located on the first floor; study rooms and an auditorium are in the first basement. The auditorium has movable seats that make it possible to use the space in many ways such as for lectures, exhibitions and conferences.

The cafeteria is located in the fourth floor, and is open not only to library users but also to the general public.

Offices are located in the first basement to provide user services, in the second basement next to the distribution center where materials are brought in, and in the second and third floors. The areas for users and staff are separated. The offices have minimal walls in order to be prepared for future re-arrangement of offices to allow for the expansion of the stack space.

4. Kansai-kan and Kansai Science City

The Kansai Science City, whose construction began in 1987, aims at stimulation of economic activity in the Kansai area and balanced development of the nation's land. The City was planned to be a hub of private research institutions through cooperation among academic, business and governmental circles, though the Tsukuba Science City is the hub of national research institutions.

The Kansai-kan is expected to function as a major information service facility in the Kansai Science City. Many high technological institutions, such as the International Institute for Advanced Studies, are located in the neighborhood, and many researchers from abroad are researching there. The Kansai-kan might be an academic forum of these researchers, just same as the ancient Library of Alexandria was.

5. Conclusion

From its establishment the NDL has been facing the necessity of re-arranging stack space to meet the increasing library holdings every 20 years. The Kansai-kan makes it possible to secure stack space in the long term. But even though the infrastructure of the Kansai Science City is well built, it is not easy to develop library functions of the Kansai-kan that are integrated with the Tokyo Main Library, which is 500 km away from the Kansai-kan.

But the times are changing and a highly sophisticated information society is becoming a reality. To ride on the strength of this current, the Kansai-kan of the National Diet Library will open on October 7.

As a result of the amendment of the National Diet Library Law in April 2002, the Kansai-kan has started its operation, except for public services. The organization consists of Director General,

Collections Department (in three divisions), Projects Department (in two divisions), and Administrative Division.

The six months before the opening to the public will be used for preparations including the transportation of 3.2 million books and other items, data communications experiments via leased line between the Tokyo Main Library and the Kansai-kan, and training in the operation and management of the new facilities.

A report on the organization, holdings and service of the Kansai-kan will appear in the August issue of the National Diet Library Monthly Bulletin.

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Selections from NDL Collection
**Oka-fu, A Sketch Book of
Sakura (cherry blossoms)**

Title:	Oka-fu
Author:	Sakamoto Konen (1800-1853)
Date:	Edo Era
NDL call no.:	Hon-Betsu 6-6
Description:	Album, Outside size (binding): 29.8 × 35.2cm. Inside size (picture): 19.2 × 25.4cm). Hand painting on silk. Ownership stamp: <i>Nanki Bunko</i> (owned by Kishu Tokugawa family)

Sakura, cherry blossom, is the most famous flower of Japan. Its beauty has long been inspiring artists in Japan. The design of Sakura can be seen in many places. For example, the 100 yen coin has the Sakura design on its reverse.

The Oka-fu, drawn in the middle of the 19th century, introduces 29 varieties of Sakura with delicate brushwork. For all images, please see [here](#) (Japanese only).

You can still enjoy some of the varieties such as Gyoiko (Yellow dress: double flowered. The petals look greenish yellow), Komatsunagi (Horse resting: single flowered. According to legend, Shinran, a famous priest of the 12th century, stopped his horse at a cherry tree and that is how the variety got this name), and Taizai-fukun (God of life: double flowered. According to legend, a noble regretted the falling of blossom and prayed for the blossom's long life to Taizan-fukun or Taishan fujun, Chinese god of life) in the botanical gardens. But Somei-yoshino, the most popular variety today, does not appear in this book.

[Gyoiko Sakura](#)

[Komatsunagi Sakura](#)

[Taizan-fukun](#)

The author, Sakamoto Konen (1800-1853), studied medicine and herbalism under his father Sakamoto Jun'an, physician in ordinary to the sovereign lord of the Kishu Domain (now Wakayama prefecture). He also worked in the Kishu Domain as physician.



Ownership stamp: *Nanki Bunko*

This book wears the ownership stamp of the Kishu Tokugawa family and is presumed to be dedicated to the Lord of Kishu by the author.

The bookbinding is rich and the pictures are painted on silk. The book contains only

pictures and names of Sakura.

Sakamoto Konen was interested in collecting fungi and classified, evaluated and sketched them. Other works of his, *Kin-fu* (sketch book of fungi, [NDL call no.:Ki-Betsu11-18](#), [NDL call no.: Ki-Betsu 11-19](#)) and *Yuri-fu* (sketch book of lilies) are also available on this web site.

Moegi-take :
Kin-fu (Ki-Betsu 11-18) , volume 1

Oni-yuri:
Yuri-fu



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Selected list of articles from NDL periodicals (Text in Japanese)

National Diet Library Monthly Bulletin

(Kokuritsu Kokkai Toshokan Geppo)

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- [Overview of the facilities of the Kansai-kan of the National Diet Library by Keiya Utsumi](#)
- [International Conference on the Enhancement of Information Availability for Scholarly Resources in Japanese Studies by Yuri Chiyo](#)
 - 6th meeting of the Legal Deposit System Council
 - [NDL budget for fiscal 2002](#)
- Use rate of acid-free paper in government publications was over 80%!: Result of the 16th pH test on newly-acquired materials by *Anti-acid paper unit, Preservation Planning Office*
- Establishment of the Electronic Resources Room 2 and provision of online journals
- Notes on foreign parliamentary and governmental documents: looking into the G7 countries at the NDL. Part 7: France (1)

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- NDL's services for the Diet and Diet members: current status and new developments by *Research and Legislative Reference Bureau and Detached Library in the Diet*
 - Services offered by the Research and Legislative Reference Bureau by *Meitetsu Haruyama*
 - In preparation for the opening of the Parliamentary Documents and Official Publications Room by *Statutes and Parliamentary Documents Division of the Research and Legislative Reference Bureau and Official Publications Division of the Special Materials Department*
 - Provision of the Full-text Database System for the Minutes of the Diet to the public and the Diet members by *Electronic Information Services Division of the Research and Legislative Reference Bureau*
 - Services offered at the Detached Library in the Diet by *Motonobu Yoshinaga*
 - Legislative research services of parliaments in major countries by *Kazuo Matsuhashi*
- Lending out of NDL materials to the exhibition held by the National Library of Australia

- Visiting the Treasures from the World's Great Libraries exhibition
- Attending at the 7th International Conference on Interlending and Document Supply *by Yumi Mitobe*
 - Report of the 9th forum for libraries participating in the National Union Catalog Network
 - Third meeting with service organizations for the blind
 - 31st meeting of the Council on the Index to the History of Japanese Laws
- Discontinuance of Japanese subject heading assignment for the National Diet Library Catalog of Foreign Books Database
- Reorganization of the special material rooms in the Tokyo Main Library in FY2002
 - Partial suspension of reader service
 - Change of the contact address for remote services
 - Japanese National Bibliography available on the NDL web site

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- Remote services of national libraries in the 21st century: Report of the 21st mutual visit program with the National Library of China *by NDL delegation to China*

[related article](#)

 - Sketch of the mutual visit program
 - Academic Annual Meeting 2001 of China Society for Library Science *by Shigako Okamura*
 - Outline of the National Library of China
 - Reminiscence and nostalgia *by Jin Fengji*
- Report of the International Conference on Dublin Core and Metadata Applications 2001 *by Machiko Nakai*
 - Lecture: European libraries and Internet resources
- Participating in the Asian Congress of Children's Librarians 2001 in Singapore *by Naoko Sato*
 - Electronic Library National Liaison Conference FY2001
- Notes on foreign parliamentary and governmental documents: looking into the G7 countries at the NDL. Part 6: Germany (2)



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