

National Diet Library Newsletter

No. 127, October 2002

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Greetings from the new Librarian

by Takao Kurosawa
Librarian of the National Diet Library

This is a translation of the article of the same title in the NDL Monthly Bulletin No. 498

I was appointed Librarian of the National Diet Library (NDL) on July 19, 2002, and I send you my greetings.

The year 2002 is a special year for us. With support and cooperation from both Houses of the Diet and various other circles, we were able to fully open the International Library of Children's Literature in May and the Kansai-kan of the National Diet Library in October.

The facilities have already been prepared and our holdings have been increasing. The problem to be solved now is how to provide them to the public. Working together with libraries inside and outside Japan, we need to provide library services that show people today and in the future that the NDL is the repository of our national heritage and common property.



Advances in information and communications technology have enabled immediate access to digital information of the world via the Internet. The NDL has appropriated a large budget for various developments to provide appropriate services to meet the demand in this era and has been installing library systems making use of the latest technology such as the Electronic Library Infrastructure System.

I realized that today's well-developed NDL is a product of not only efforts of our predecessors and current staff but also the generous support of both Houses of the Diet, for the NDL is a library for the Diet as well as Japan's only national library.

Recently I found a good saying by the eminent librarian S. R. Ranganathan who paid tribute to the sesquicentennial of the Library of Congress of the United States (LC) in 1950.

The institution serving as the national library of the United States is perhaps more fortunate than its predecessors in other countries. It has the Congress as its godfather...

(<http://www.loc.gov/loc/legacy/loc.html>)

The NDL cannot be compared to the LC in the number of staff, scale of facilities and long history even though it is modeled on the LC. But looking back over the fifty or more years of NDL's history and considering our current status, I am impressed by this saying very much.

We will devote ourselves to fulfilling our responsibility as the national library and the library for the Diet, and we will welcome kind advice and support not only from the Diet, but also from our colleague librarians and other various fields.

<Career summary>

Mr. Kurosawa joined the Secretariat of the House of Councillors in 1959, and served as Chief Researcher for the Committee on Social Welfare and Labour, Director General of the House Police Department, Director General of the Committees Department, Deputy Secretary General and finally as Secretary General from 1996 to 1998.

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Kansai-kan of the National Diet Library opened on October 7

The Kansai-kan of the National Diet Library, a new facility of the NDL, opened on October 7, 2002, in [Kansai Science City in Kyoto Prefecture](#).

Opening ceremony

On October 5, 2002, the opening ceremony was held. The invited guests included the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the President of the House of Councillors, other Diet members, people from national and local administrative agencies, the



designer of the building and many from library circles. From abroad, Ms. Carolyn Brown (Assistant Librarian for Library Services, Library of Congress), Ms. Jill Finney (Director of Strategic Marketing and Communications, The British Library), Mrs. Caroline Wiegandt (Deputy Managing Director, Bibliothèque nationale de France), Mr. Zhang Yanbo (Deputy Director, National Library of China) and Mr. Shin Hyun-Taek (Director General, National Library of Korea) attended. After a ribbon cutting ceremony, the Speaker of House of Representatives and others delivered addresses. A preview of the library and a reception followed.

Outline of the Kansai-kan of the National Diet Library

Purpose

The Kansai-kan aims to provide document supply services utilizing information technology, specialized information services on Asia, library cooperation programs, a huge storage capacity for library materials and the development of digital library services. For details, please see [our website](#).

Building

The Kansai-kan is located in Kansai Science City. Mr. Fumio Toki, the winner of the international design competition, designed the building. The construction was entrusted to the Kinki Regional Development Bureau, Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport.

Outline of the facility

| | |
|---|--|
| Site | 8-1-3 Seikadai, Seika-cho, Soraku-gun, Kyoto 619-0287, Japan |
| Size | Four floors above ground, four floors below ground |
| Facilities above ground | Visitors' entrance Seminar Rooms Cafeterias Office |
| Facilities below ground | General Collections Room Asian Resources Room Auditorium Stacks |
| Facility plan in the first stage | Total floor area: approx. 59,500 square meters Storage capacity: approx. 6 million volumes |
| Final facility plan | Ground area: approx. 82,500 square meters Total floor area: approx. 165,000 square meters Storage capacity: approx. 20 million volumes |
| Total expense for building | 42.5 billion yen |

You can enjoy a tour of the Kansai-kan on the web by clicking on "[Opening of the Kansai-kan](#)" in the NDL website.





Revision of the National Diet Library web site — October 2002, aiming at a “useful web site”

This is an abridged translation of the article of the same title in the NDL Monthly Bulletin No. 498

The National Diet Library (NDL) has been enhancing information services via the Internet. The portal to such services is the NDL web site. Wherever, whenever, and whoever you are, the Library is able to provide you with relevant and prompt service through the site. On October 1, 2002, the NDL web site was re-designed to be more user-friendly. (See: [Top page of the National Diet Library web site](#))

The English version is prepared to correspond with the Japanese version as much as possible.

Purpose of revision

The average daily number of accesses to the NDL web site has recorded about 40,000.

The starting point of the revision was to reconsider the role of the NDL web site. We examined how the NDL web site was being used, from the number of hits to each content and defined some categories such as retrieving catalog, viewing and reading digitized materials, searching by theme. Then the contents were grouped according to the purpose of use.

It is also important for the user to get relevant information as easily as possible. For example, each page is designed simply, so that those who use text-to-speech software feel no stress.

Under the concept of “from a decorative web site to a useful web site”, the site map is created (See: [Site map](#) after October 1).

Characteristics

Let us introduce the main characteristics following [the new site map](#).

Enhancing the service via the Internet: search and use materials

The “useful web site” provides access to use of the collection.

A special feature of the old web site was the “Electronic library” menu as a portal to access primary information (material itself) and secondary information (information concerning materials such as bibliographic information). As a scope of our service as a digital library has expanded, however, we decided that it would be more useful to navigate directly to each service.

[Online Catalogs](#) is put on the top menu as a gate of access. Catalogs made by the NDL are gathered in the menu so that you can search the vast amount of materials and information the NDL has collected and accumulated for various kinds of use. Especially, [the](#)

[National Diet Library Online Public Access Catalog \(NDL-OPAC\)](#) enables you to search most of the NDL holdings such as books and periodicals and to request copying service. *

The English version of the NDL-OPAC is under construction at this time; however, the English version of the old online catalog called Web-OPAC will continue to be available for some time. You can view primary information (material itself) in [the Collection of the Digital Library](#). Added to [the Rare Books Image Database \(Japanese only\)](#), [the Digital Library from the Meiji Eras](#) newly launched and you can view digitized books published in the Meiji era. Information on the Internet collected by *the Web Archiving Project (WARP)* could be said to be a new NDL collection. This content will be open to the public in November 2002.

Information on the Diet & Parliaments

As its name shows, the NDL is the library of the Japanese Diet. In [the Diet & Parliaments](#), you can use [the Full-text Database System for the Minutes of the Diet \(Japanese only\)](#). [The Statutes and Parliamentary Documents Room's](#) page provides information about legal materials and parliamentary documents as well as related links. This page is due to be released by November 2002.

Service points and User guides

The NDL provides services at the Tokyo Main Library, the Kansai-kan of the National Diet Library and the International Library of Children's Literature. [International Services](#) is also available, introducing the outline of [the reference service](#), [interlibrary loan](#) and [copying service](#) for users abroad.

<Tokyo Main Library>

Buildings of the Tokyo Main Library are undergoing renovations until FY2004. Information about unavailable materials and the opening of new materials rooms will be announced on this web site as occasion demands.

<Kansai-kan of the National Diet Library>

In commemoration of the opening of the Kansai-kan in October 2002, its history and feature are introduced on [the Opening of the Kansai-kan](#) page.

An Internet tour, [Tours of the Kansai-kan](#), introduces characteristics of the building designed by Mr. Fumio Toki and highlights with various images.

Events after the opening will also be featured on this page.

<International Library of Children's Literature (Japanese only) >

The ILCL home page was renewed in May 2002, when the library was fully opened, and provides information concerning children's reading.

Enjoy the Library

[The NDL Gallery](#) provides an entrance to the Digital Exhibition featuring digitized materials and explanatory notes.

We plan to devise attractive pages so that you will find it fun to visit, discovering unexpected materials.

Information about NDL activities

Outlook of NDL is a page giving an outline of the NDL and explaining its main activities in detail. The menu on this page comprises *the NDL Profile*, an outline introduction, *Services for the National Diet* and *Services for the Executive & Judicial Agencies*.

Digital *publications* issued by the NDL are also available.

Web sites are living and bring us active and fresh information through continuous updating. Thus, the NDL web site is a mirror reflecting the current state of the NDL. We would like to enhance this web site with you and continue to improve it to meet changing needs.

The design of *the top page* has a "bookmark" image as a useful tool. The motto, "Truth will make us free", which is the basic principle of the NDL stated in the preface of *The National Diet Library Law*, is inscribed on the top page.

Digital Information Planning Office
Planning and Cooperation Division
Administrative Department



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“Books on Japan” on the web will soon be released!

**Reference Service Planning Division
Reference and Special Collections Department**

“Books on Japan (BOJ)” will be released on the web site of the NDL in January 2003.
(http://www.ndl.go.jp/en/publication/books_on_japan/index.html)

The “BOJ” provides bibliographic information of books on Japan in Western languages processed by the NDL in and after 2002. It is updated on a quarterly basis, issued in January, April, July, and October. The data appearing during a year will be accumulated and combined the next year.

As we informed you in the NDL Newsletter [No.123](#), the “BOJ” has discontinued publication in book form, with the final issue, January – December 2001. The first issue of the “BOJ” on the web, released in January 2003, will provide the bibliographic information of books on Japan in Western languages processed by the NDL during the period January – December 2002 after the termination of publication in book form. In April 2003, the data of January/March 2003 will be provided, and after then, updated on a quarterly basis.

The “BOJ” includes bibliographic information of books on Japan in Western languages published in and out of Japan and acquired through deposit, purchase, donation and exchange. There is no limit on the countries or regions where the books were published, but materials in other than Western languages, such as Chinese or Korean, are not included, nor are materials published for children.

The data in the “BOJ” are extracted automatically from the database of books in Western languages processed by the NDL, by about 700 classification codes relating to Japan, conforming to the “National Diet Library Classification, Revised Edition (1987)”.

Abstracted data are classified into one of the following categories:
Politics/Law/Administration, Economics/Industries, Social affairs/Labor, Education, History/Geography, Philosophy/Religion, Arts/Language/Literature, Science and technology, Learning in general/Journalism/Libraries/Bibliographies Special collections, Old and rare books, and Special materials.

We hope the “BOJ” on the web will be useful for all the people who have interest in Japan, including overseas researchers and Japanese studies institutions.





Selections from NDL Collection

Ise Monogatari



| | |
|---------------------|----------------------------------|
| Title: | Ise Monogatari |
| Date: | 1610 |
| Place: | Kyoto |
| Description: | 2 volumes, 1 book, 27.2cm×19.0cm |
| NDL call no. | WA7-2 |

This book is a *Sagabon* of *Kokatsuji-ban*, published in the early Edo period. "*Kokatsuji-ban*" is the generic name for movable-type prints published during the fifty years of the Bunroku, Keicho, Gen' na and Kan' ei periods (1592–1644), distinguished from the movable-type prints of the later periods. *Sagabon* are the fancy books elaborately designed by Hon' ami Koetsu (1558–1637), published in cooperation with Suminokura Soan, a wealthy merchant of Saga (now the northwest part of Kyoto prefecture). The first edition of *Kokatsuji-ban* of "Ise Monogatari" was published in 1608, and then additional editions with different arrangement of types followed. The book introduced here was published in 1610, based on the 1608 edition. Illustrations and imprint are not movable-type prints but woodblock prints. The book is decorated with white pigment made from oystershell, which is mixed with casein glue and brushed on the paper.

Ise Monogatari is an "uta-monogatari (poem tale)" whose original form dates back to around 900 A.D. and it developed to the preliminary form during the 10th century. As an "uta-monogatari", Ise Monogatari is a collection of relatively short stories each built around one or more poems. Most of the stories begin with the phrase "Mukashi otoko aikeri (Once upon a time, there was a man)." This man, the protagonist of the story, was thought to be modeled on Ariwara Narihira, an aristocrat and notable poet of the Heian period (794–1192).

Together with over 30 poems of Narihira and many other poems including those handed down from the older generation, anecdotes of Narihira and traditional materials were woven into short stories. The stories were arranged into a kind of literary biography, beginning with the story of a man who, just after his Coming-of-Age ceremony, sent a romantic poem to a beautiful woman; a series of love stories follows and it ends with a farewell poem.

About the Image (Click on the image to see it in a larger size.)

The right half of the image above is an illustration of a scene in Chapter 6, where a man stole a

highborn lady he loved and carried her off over a stream called the Akutagawa. Seeing a dewdrop on a blade of grass, she asked him what it was.

Later in Chapter 6, the lady suddenly vanished when a "demon" ate her up on a stormy night ("demon" here is really the lady's brothers who took her back, the author wrote) . The grief-stricken man recited;

Shiratama ka
Nani zo to hito no
Toishi toki
Tsuyu to kotaete
Kienamashi mono o.

When my beloved asked,
"Is it a clear gem
Or what might it be?"
I wish I had replied,
"A dewdrop!" and perished.

The left half is not the text of Chapter 6, but Chapter 7.

(We referred to Helen Craig McCullough's "Tales of Ise; Lyrical Episodes from Tenth-Century Japan", published in Tokyo, 1968.)



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

National Diet Library Monthly Bulletin

(Kokuritsu Kokkai Toshokan Geppo)

No. 499, October 2002

- Commemorative Symposium of the International Library of Children's Literature: From folktale to story

[related article](#)

- [New bibliographic services: Japanese National Bibliography, OPAC and bibliographic control by Kimiko Harada](#)
- The NDL in statistics – FY2001 (II)

[related article](#)

- Notes on foreign parliamentary and governmental documents: looking into the G7 countries at the NDL. Part 13 (final): Canada (2)

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- [Greetings from the new Librarian](#) by Takao Kurosawa
- Tracks and future of the Conference of Directors of National Libraries in Asia and Oceania (CDNLAO):

- With the summary of the 10th Conference by Masaaki Chiyo

[related article](#)

- Participating in the World Library Summit by Kazuo Ezawa

[related article](#)

- [Revision of the National Diet Library web site-- October 2002, aiming at a "useful web site"](#)
- <Announcement>
 - E-mail reference service starting
 - [Kansai-kan opens](#)
 - Symposium commemorating the opening of the Kansai-kan
- <Invitation> 6th Preservation and Conservation Training Program

- The NDL in statistics -FY2001 (I)
- Notes on foreign parliamentary and governmental documents: looking into the G7 countries at the NDL. Part 12 : Canada (1)

