

## Marking the 10th Anniversary of the Kansai-kan

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<<Kansai-kan of the National Diet Library>>

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## 1. Introduction

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Opened in October 2002, the [Kansai-kan](#) of the National Diet Library (NDL) marked its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2012. Including the 20 years before its opening, 30 years have already passed since its project was launched.

On its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the NDL is now undertaking a thorough review for the Kansai-kan to take the next step. This article outlines the background to the establishment of the Kansai-kan, its current situation and future perspectives.



<<The Kansai-kan logo to commemorate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its opening>>

## 2. History of the Kansai-kan project

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The planning of the Kansai-kan started in June 1982 with the establishment of the Research Committee for the Kansai Project of the NDL. The NDL started discussing the functions to be reallocated the new facility, in accordance with the report submitted by the committee in 1987<sup>1</sup>. The outcome of the discussions took the form of the First Basic Plan for the Establishment of the Kansai-kan (provisional name) of the NDL (August 1988)<sup>2</sup> and the following Second Basic Plan for the Construction of the Kansai-kan (provisional name) of the NDL (August 1991)<sup>3</sup>. After the Recommendations for construction of the Kansai-kan were submitted by the NDL Building Commission to the Diet in December 1994, the full-fledged project was launched. These recommendations suggested constructing a library of 82,500 m<sup>2</sup> in total site area and 165,000 m<sup>2</sup> of total floor space<sup>4</sup>, in Kansai Science City, Seika, Nishi-kizu area.

In August 1996, the first prize for the Design Competition was awarded among 493 entries from Japan and beyond. Construction started in October 1998; the Kansai-kan of the NDL eventually opened in October 2002.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.ndl.go.jp/en/service/kansai/about/history\\_198704.html](http://www.ndl.go.jp/en/service/kansai/about/history_198704.html)

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.ndl.go.jp/en/service/kansai/about/history\\_198808.html](http://www.ndl.go.jp/en/service/kansai/about/history_198808.html)

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.ndl.go.jp/en/service/kansai/about/history\\_199108.html](http://www.ndl.go.jp/en/service/kansai/about/history_199108.html)  
Referred to as the Second Basic Plan, later in this article.

<sup>4</sup> These figures are final goals. The first stage goal of total floor space is 60,000 m<sup>2</sup>.



<<Opening ceremony of the Kansai-kan on October 5, 2002>>

In the last 10 years, the Kansai-kan has carried out many new projects and services. The chronological table below shows the main events after its opening.

<<Table: Chronology of events related to the Kansai-kan in 10 years since its opening >>

2002		
October	The NDL-OPAC, the NDL Asian Language Materials OPAC and the Digital Library from the Meiji Era launched	
	The Kansai-kan opened	
November	Two Successive Commemorative Symposiums for the Opening of the Kansai-kan "The New Century of Libraries"	
December		
2003		
March	<i>The Bulletin of the Asian Resources Room</i> launched	
August	<i>The NDL Research Report</i> launched	
October	The e-mail based magazine "Library Cooperation News" launched	
2005		
December	Collaborative Reference Database open to the public	
2006		
July	Web Archiving Project (WARP) went into full-scale operation	
2007		
October	NDL Digital Archive Portal "PORTA" released	
2009		
June	Large-scale digitization with a supplementary budget for FY2009 (continued to the end of FY2010) The Copyright Law revised and came into effect in January, 2010. This allowed the NDL to digitize its holdings for the purpose of preservation.	
2010		
April	Acquisition of the Internet resources provided by national organizations and others launched	
August	The China-Japan-Korea Digital Library Initiative Agreement signed	
2011		
May	Distribution of the Historical Recordings Collection started	
July	Number of digitized contents tops a million	
October	The Digital Information Department in the Tokyo Main Library established	
2012		
January	Library system renewed NDL Search launched	

April	NDL Asian Language Materials OPAC integrated with the NDL-OPAC
May	Official Gazette open to the public on the Internet Japanese Doctoral Dissertations started to be available on the Internet Number of digitized contents tops two million
June	The Copyright Law revised and came into effect in January 2013. This allowed the NDL to distribute its digitized contents to the public libraries.
July	Historical Recordings Collection provided to public libraries on a regular basis

### 3. Functions of the Kansai-kan: 10 years after opening

In the Second Basic Plan, the Kansai-kan was designed to promote the national library's role in a new era, working in tandem with the Tokyo Main Library. The functions of the Kansai-kan were intended as follows:

- (1) Transmitting document information
- (2) Providing services globally
- (3) Promoting new library cooperation

Now let's look at the current situation of the Kansai-kan in terms of how much these three functions have been achieved.

#### 3.1 Transmitting document information

The Kansai-kan functions as the reception office for requests of remote photocopy and interlibrary loan service. This allows users to make a request via the Internet ([NDL-OPAC](#)) any time, anywhere, no matter where a collection item is located among the NDL three facilities: Tokyo Main Library, Kansai-kan, and International Library of Children's Literature.

The Kansai-kan has also been focusing on providing digitized contents. The rough number of digitized items available through Internet services such as the [Digital Library from the Meiji Era](#), was raised from 30,000 at its opening up to current 410,000. Moreover, the [Web Archiving Project \(WARP\)](#) started in full swing in July 2006 after its experimental stage. With the amendment of the National Diet Library Law and Copyright Law of July 2009, the NDL began to harvest and preserve websites of national and public organizations without their express permission in April 2010. As a result, a total of some 44,000 captures from about 7,000 websites are now released; the cumulative volume of data reached 140TB. The [Digital Library from the Meiji Era](#) was accessed about 33.3 million times annually (counted image-based), and the [WARP](#) about 720 thousand times (counted website-based).<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Basic statistics of the FY2011.

## National Diet Library Newsletter

To support transmitting document information, the Kansai-kan houses periodicals in western languages, spare copies of Japanese books, reports on science and technology, and materials related to Asia. To cope with the shortage of storage space in the Tokyo Main Library, on the other hand, a total of 105 million volumes were moved from Tokyo to the Kansai-kan in the FY2009 and 2011. Equalizing the stack occupancy of East and West facilities, this enabled the NDL as a whole to secure storage of library materials. As of the end of the FY2011, the Kansai-kan holds roughly 120 thousand titles of periodicals and 3 million volumes of books.



<<Reading room>>

### 3.2 Providing services globally

As mentioned earlier, the Kansai-kan receives remote photocopy requests. This photocopy service, which can be ordered via the [NDL-OPAC](#), has made it much easier for overseas users to get information on Japan.

The Kansai-kan also helps to deliver information on Japan by transmitting primary sources online via the [Digital Library from the Meiji Era](#), [WARP](#) and other services.

In the Asian Resources Room of the Kansai-kan<sup>6</sup>, a wealth of Asian language materials is located: roughly 350 thousand volumes of books, 7,800 titles of periodicals and yearbooks, and 700 titles of newspapers. Materials related to Asia in Japanese and Western languages, and Chinese and Korean e-journals, are also available. As the cataloging of Asian language materials has been carried forward, bibliographic information in almost all languages is now available on the NDL-OPAC. Instructive tools on researching Asia, such as [AsiaLinks](#) (Asia-related web links), are provided online. Furthermore,

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<sup>6</sup> NDL Newsletter No. 174 (August 2010) carries a [related article](#).

training programs on Asian resources which target librarians, and meetings with organizations specializing in Asian Resources, are organized to promote collaboration in this area across Japan.

In regard to the digital library project, the NDL joined the [International Internet Preservation Consortium](#) (IIPC) and is internationally contributing in web archiving.



<<Asian Resources Room>>

### 3.3 Promoting new library cooperation

The Kansai-kan promotes library cooperation by handling the Interlibrary Loan services as well as by operating networking systems such as NDL-OPAC, National Union Catalog Network known as “Yunika Netto” (integrated to NDL search in January 2012), the Collaborative Reference Database, etc. Moreover, this year, the Kansai-kan started to provide primary source contents to public libraries. At the moment, the contents for the service are limited to the Historical Recordings Collection, but will be broadened to digitized books.

In the area of research on libraries and library and information science, the Kansai-kan annually produces a visible result. For example, in FY2011, we published *The Great East Japan Earthquake and Libraries* as an NDL Research Report. The Kansai-kan provides group training programs, e-Learning programs and training programs on reference service by NDL staff dispatched to libraries in Japan. The Kansai-kan also carries out various training programs for librarians and information experts outside of Japan.

## 4 Future perspectives

At the end of this article, I would like to cite the following three points for the future perspectives of the Kansai-kan.



## 4.1 Raising the institutional profile

The Kansai-kan was originally intended not only as a new wing of the NDL, the sole national library of Japan, but also as a central hub in the Kansai Science City in response to requests from the local area. Taking its history into account, we want more and more people in the Kansai region to visit our facility. However, the Kansai-kan remains worryingly *terra incognita* compared with the Tokyo Main Library, despite its significant operations. One reason might be the difficulty of access from the major cities and fewer opportunities for active public relations. We should continue to transmit information about the library through various channels, in addition to the continuous activities such as “Open Day at the Kansai-kan of the NDL” which children also can participate in, exhibitions of the Kansai-kan materials and library guidance by staff dispatched from the library.

To commemorate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its opening, the Kansai-kan held an exhibition “100 years of libraries in the Kansai Region and 10 years of the Kansai-kan,” two lecture meetings and an international symposium, which contributed to increasing the public image of the Kansai-kan.



<<Open Day at the Kansai-kan of the NDL >>

## 4.2 Expanding and improving the facilities

One of the purposes of building the Kansai-kan was to ensure a large-scale storage facility. After 10 years since the completion of the first construction, more than 80% of its storage, with a capacity of six million volumes, is already filled. The storage space of the three facilities will be really bursting at the end of FY2017. Expansion of the storage by the second construction of the Kansai-kan is an urgent issue of the NDL as a whole.



<<Underground stack of the Kansai-kan>>

### 4.3 Reallocating functions between the Tokyo Main Library and the Kansai-kan

Establishment of the Digital Information Department in the Tokyo Main Library in October 2011, encouraged us to reconsider the division of responsibility for the digital library projects of the NDL between Tokyo and Kansai. The related role sharing in other areas should also be viewed.

The Great East Japan Earthquake in March 2011, inflicted damage to a part of the stacks in the Tokyo Main Library. At that time, the Kansai-kan supported the Tokyo Main Library in catering to users' needs (mainly reader services). The backup function in the event of a disaster will continue to be of vital importance.

The NDL three facilities work together even more closely to enhance its services, capitalizing on each feature with appropriate role-sharing.

The Kansai-kan started off as a library facility built upon an untended area of wild land. The pioneer spirit cultivated from the experience takes root in the soil of the Kansai-kan which does not hesitate to tackle a new challenge. The mettle of our staff to unflinchingly grapple with emerging issues is a great asset to the Kansai-kan.