

Materials available in the Modern Japanese Political History Materials Room (4)

Modern Japanese Political Documents Division
Reader Services and Collections Department

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● Introduction

The National Diet Library (NDL) holds Kensei-shiryō -- personal papers of former politicians, high-ranking officials, and military officers from the closing days of the Tokugawa shōgunate to the modern period. This article introduces materials newly available in recent years in the Modern Japanese Political History Materials Room in the Tokyo Main Library.

● Kaneko Kentaro Papers (Part 2)

(Member of the House of Peers, Minister of Agriculture and Commerce, Minister of Justice, Privy Councillor/ 171 items / donated / available since May 2015)

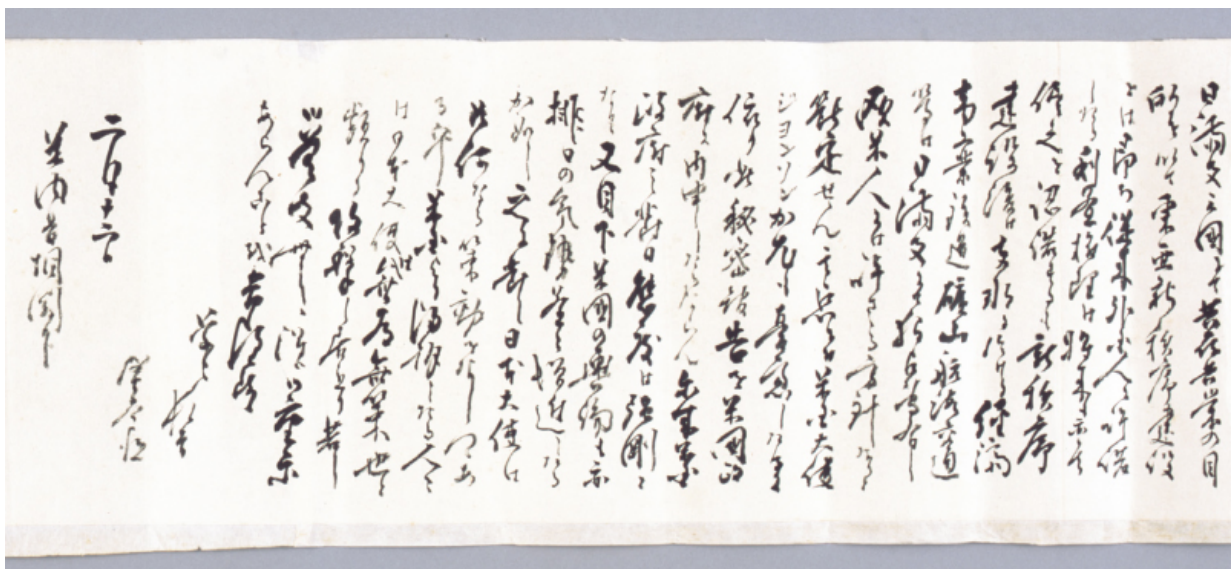
The name of Kaneko Kentaro (1853-1942) appears in textbooks of Japanese history as a drafter of the Constitution of the Empire of Japan, and is well-known person who played a significant role in the conclusion of the Treaty of Portsmouth that ended the Russo-Japanese War in 1905, since he had a good friendship with then-President of the United States Theodore Roosevelt. He was an important person, but unfortunately, when the great fire that spread after the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923 burned his house in Tokyo, many of his personal papers vanished in smoke; still, "Kaneko Kentaro Papers (Part 1)," materials related to the Russo-Japanese War, are held in the Modern Japanese Political History Materials Room in the NDL, and his diaries and some other documents are held in the Center for Information Networking at Nihon University.¹

The newly added collection includes letters kept by Kaneko himself after the Earthquake of 1923. Recognized as a "stubborn" person, he was already a 70-year-old politician retired from the front line of politics at that time. However, in the Showa era when the U.S.-Japan relationship gradually became worse, he came to play a vital role in opposition because of his pro-U.S. attitude. Therefore, many interesting letters relating to U.S.-Japan diplomatic matters in the pre-war Showa era were found in this collection.

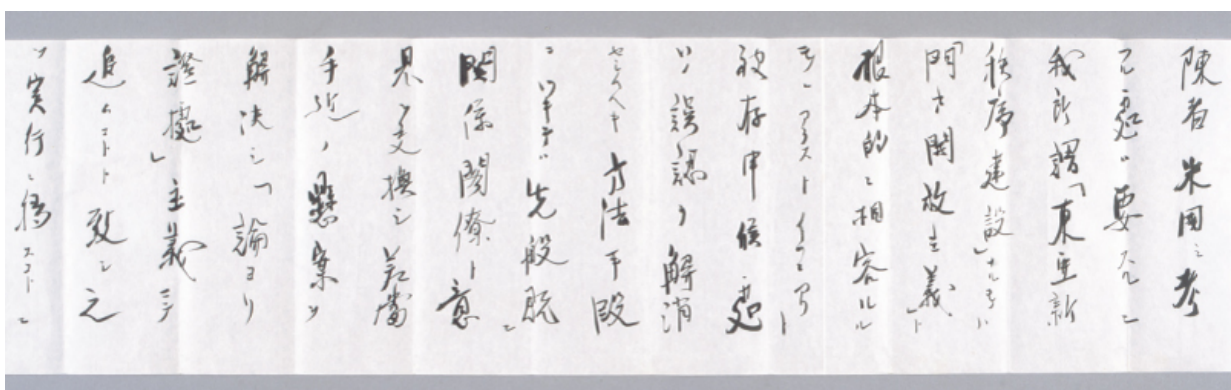
Photo 1 shows a letter to the then-Prime Minister Yonai Mitsumasa (1880-1948) of February 12, 1940. In the previous month, Yonai became PM with an intense backup by the

pro-U.K. and pro-U.S. political communities. In this letter, Kaneko wrote to PM Yonai as follows: Johnson (Nelson T., 1887-1954), U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of China, reported to the home government that Japan's slogan "*Toa Shinchitsujo* [lit. New Order in East Asia]" is implying that Japan would never hand over its rights and interests in China to the United States and European countries. Since the report triggered the stiffening of the anti-Japan opinions in the country, the Japanese government should react somehow. Photo 2 shows the reply letter dated February 19, in which PM Yonai wrote as follows: Certainly, the U.S. government thinks that Japan's new order and their own open-door policy are inconsistent. Consequently, to remove those misunderstandings, my cabinet is planning to tackle such problems from the easiest part with a tactic of "The proof of the pudding is in the eating." But just after this letter, Germany tried a positive strategy and succeeded, so the Japanese atmosphere rushed to conclude the Japanese-German-Italian Tripartite Pact. Thus, the Yonai Cabinet was overthrown before "eating the pudding."

Additionally, letters relating to the Privy Council and the Imperial Household are also found in this collection, especially some relating to the compilation of "*Meiji tenno ki* [lit. A Biography of the Emperor Meiji]."



<<Photo 1: Letter from Kaneko Kentaro to Yonai Mitsumasa, dated February 12, 1940
NDL Call No. Kaneko Kentaro Papers (Part 2) 27-2>>



<<Photo 2: Letter from Yonai Mitsumasa to Kaneko Kentaro, dated February 19, 1940
NDL Call No. Kaneko Kentaro Papers (Part 2) 88-1
(This letter was the reply to the letter of photo 1)>>

● Uchida Yasuya and Masa Papers

(diplomat, Foreign Minister, Member of the House of Peers, Privy Councillor, President of the South Manchurian Railroad Company / 107 items / donated / available since October 2014)

Uchida Yasuya (1865-1936) joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1887, and was Foreign Minister three times from October 1911 to December 1912 in the Second Saionji Cabinet; from September 1918 to September 1923 nonstop in the Hara Cabinet, the Takahashi Cabinet, and the Kato Tomosaburo Cabinet; from July 1932 to September 1933 in the Saito Cabinet; then he became a Diet Member. He is known for experiences of many diplomatic negotiations including the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 that concluded the WWI, and Washington Conference in 1922. The Ryuhoku Historical Archives in Hikawa-cho, Kumamoto Prefecture, holds letters, documents, and other types of items related to him. The NDL has completed a microfilming project on letters and documents stored there, and they have been available in 22 reels of microfilms at the Modern Japanese Historical Materials Room since March 2013.

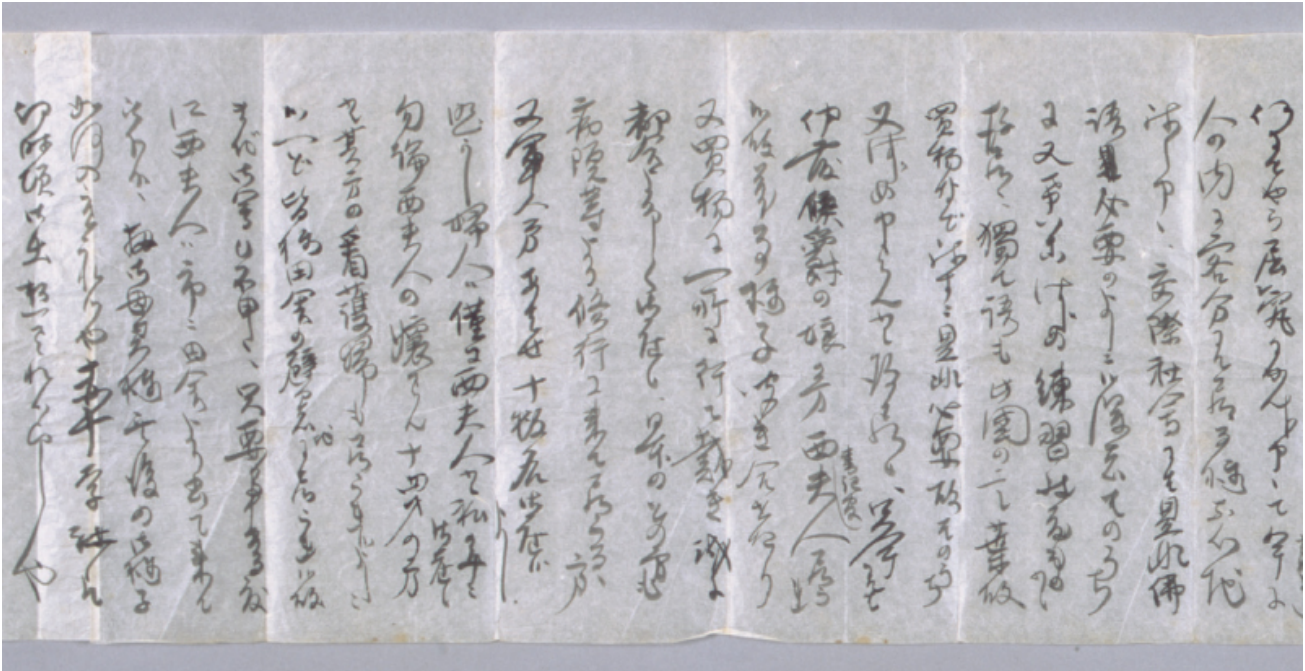
These recently-acquired papers donated by his family are original and complement the above-mentioned microfilms. Documents related to his background and the funeral service, newspaper clippings featuring him, and other types of materials are included. Many items are related to his wife Masa (1871-1946), for example, outgoing letters to her parents (Dokura Shozaburo and Toshiko) when Yasuya was stationed abroad.

Masa was born in Nara Prefecture as the forestry magnate Dokura Shozaburo's second daughter. She graduated from Doshisha Women's School and Bryn Mawr College, then came back to Japan in 1897. Then in 1899, she was married to Yasuya. As she was a fluent speaker of foreign languages, she is said to have been helpful to the diplomat Yasuya on sociable occasions when he was stationed in China, Austria, United States, and Russia, where she always stayed with him. A photo of the bewitching Masa in an elegant formal dress is also found in this collection (see Photo 3).

In a letter to her parents in 1907, when Yasuya was Ambassador to Austria and also an envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary to Switzerland, Masa wrote "French is essential in society, so I would like to resume lessons shortly." and "German is a local language here and required when I go shopping, so I would like to learn it, too." These are good evidence of her eagerness to learn (see Photo 4).



<<Photo 3: Photo of Masa in a formal dress
NDL Call No. Uchida Yasuya and Masa Papers 84>>



<<Photo 4: Letter from Uchida Masa to Dokura Shozaburo and Toshiko, dated on July 5, 1907

NDL Call No. Uchida Yasuya and Masa Papers 23>>

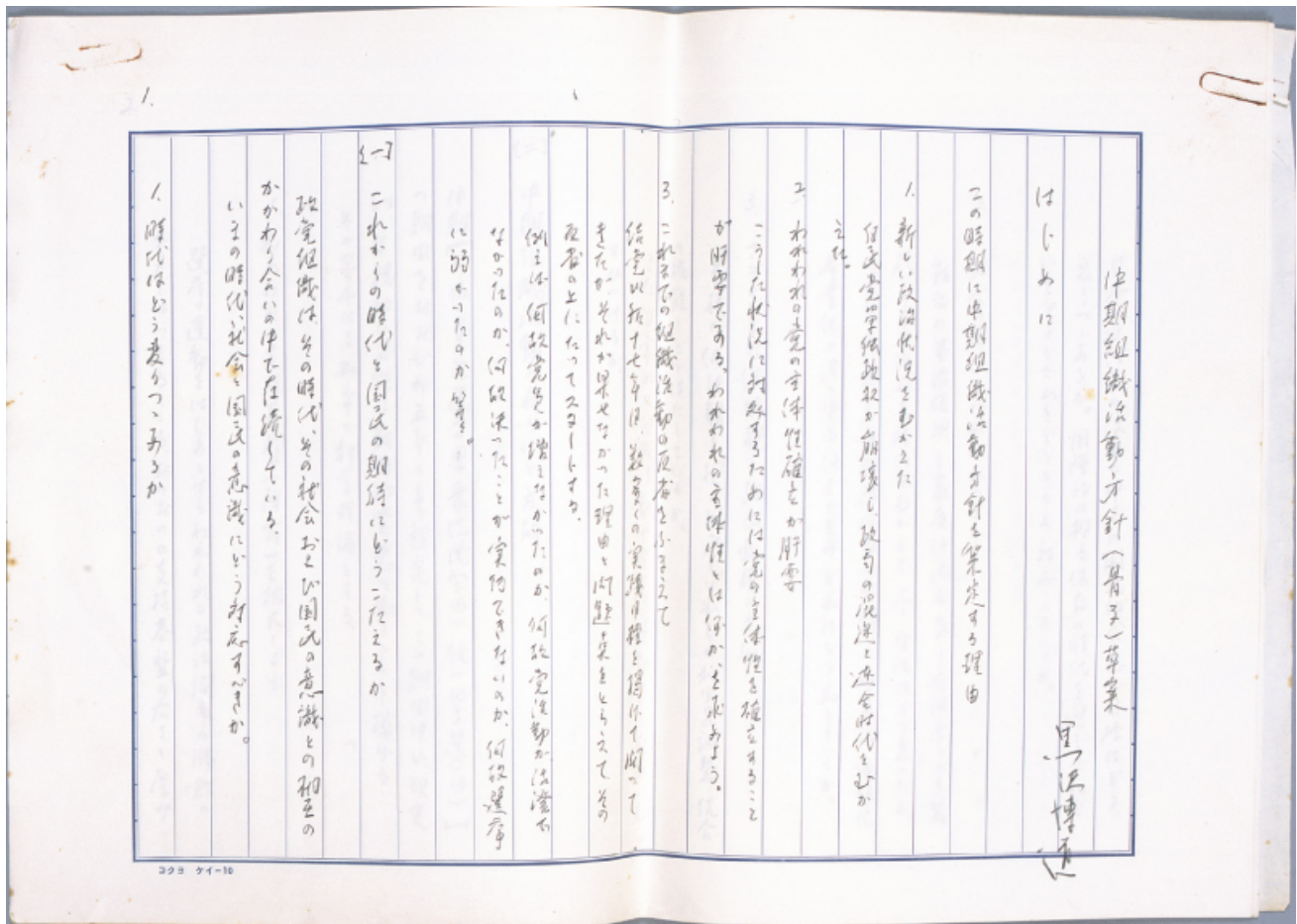
● Kurosawa Hiromichi Papers

(a secretariat staff member of the Democratic Socialist Party (DSP) / 6,100 items / donated by himself/ available since March 2015)

Kurosawa Hiromichi (b. 1935) entered the secretariat bureau of the Headquarter of the Democratic Socialist Party (DSP) just after its foundation, and served as major positions including director general of a bureau for organizing, and director general of a bureau for training and propaganda.

In the so-called "1955 system" which consisted of only two pillars, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and the Japan Socialist Party (JSP), the DSP was established in January 1960 by the new party factions that left the JSP in the previous year from Nishio Suehiro's group and Kawakami Jotaro's group, both of which were regarded as part of the right wing within the JSP and were opposed to the mainstream of the party. The DSP was active for 35 years until it was merged into the New Frontier Party in December 1994.

This newly donated collection includes many election-related materials such as leaflets issued by the election campaigning committee of the DSP, newspapers, special feature articles, and handbills. Photo 5 shows Kurosawa's own handwritten "Draft of Mid-term Organizational Action Program (gist)" in which he showed how the party should act to accommodate itself to the present day, assuming that the LDP would lose a simple majority in the 34th general election in December 1976 (in fact, it regained the majority after it ticketed more candidates), and joining a coalition government began to look practicable. The DSP party affairs brochures and a wide variety of other materials are also found in this collection. Publications by the All-Japan General Alliance of Laborers (Domei) and other DSP supporters or friendly organizations are included, as well as newspaper clippings related to political parties in Japan.



<<Photo 5: "Draft of Mid-term Action Program (the gist)" by Kurosawa Hiromichi.
NDL Call No. Kurosawa Hiromichi Papers 1814, At the beginning of 1977>>

● Watanabe Chiaki Papers

(Governor of Kagoshima Prefecture, Member of the House of Peers, Minister of the Imperial Household / 403 items added (972 items in total) / donated by his family/ available since October 2014)

Watanabe Chiaki (1843-1921) was born in Nagano Prefecture, and became a high-ranking official of Home Affairs and the Imperial Household, later entered the Diet. He served as Minister of the Imperial Household from April 1910 to April 1914.

The original batch of those papers has been available in the Modern Japanese Political Materials Room since it was deposited to the National Diet Library (NDL) in 1987, and later donated by his family in 2015. At the same time, they donated 403 items as an additional batch, which is now newly available.

This additional batch includes incoming letters from high-ranking officials, and invitations from other high-ranking people, both of which he received during his time in the Ministry of Imperial Household. As to the letter part, there are plenty of letters that he received after he resigned as Minister of the Imperial Household, which were sent by Hijikata Hisamoto (1833-1918) who had also experienced the same ministerial position. Hijikata wrote to Watanabe about "proving Watanabe's innocence" on his resignation. Additionally, letters from Oyama Iwao (1842-1916) and Tokugawa Iesato (1863-1940) related to the state

funeral for the Meiji Emperor, and letters from the famous botanist Makino Tomitaro (1862-1957), are also found in this part.

There are many more items such as invitations to various social events like dinner parties and celebrations. Those received during his time working for the Ministry of the Imperial Household form main part of this category of 243 items. They are preserved in good condition, in some cases held with notes on dress codes or other expected honored guests (e.g. members of the Imperial family). On the front of the envelopes, there are some notes indicating whether Watanabe attended or not, by someone assumed his butler or personal secretary.

Photo 6 shows an invitation to the party to celebrate the wedding of Prince Asakanomiya Yasuhiko and Princess Nobuko held at the Kasumigaseki Detached Palace (now around the front garden of the National Diet Building). Only the invitees' names are written with a brush on printed letter paper, and a memo pad attached to it gives the dress code. Three cards are all for the events on May 7, 1910, and are invitations to a dinner party and a ball on the day, and a garden party on the following day, respectively from left to right. The memos on each envelope prove that Watanabe attended all three events. Another invitation related to a wedding party of the Imperial family is that of Prince Takedanomiya Tsunehisa, and it includes three cards for a dinner party, a ball, and a garden party, just the same as those for Prince Asakanomiya's.

Additionally, the Modern Japanese Political Materials Room stores and provides the following collections of the Watanabe family: Watanabe Kunitake (1846-1919), Chiaki's younger brother and three-times Financial Minister during the Meiji era; Watanabe Chifuyu (1876-1940), Chiaki's third son who was later adopted by Kunitake, then in the early Showa era became Minister of Justice; Watanabe Takeshi (1906-2010), Chiaki's grandson, later appointed as president of the Asian Development Bank.



<<Photo 6: Invitations to Watanabe Chiaki dated on April 30, 1910
 NDL Call No. Watanabe Chiaki Papers 1148-1150
 These were sent by Ichino Kisaku (a steward attached to Prince Asakanomiya's family)
 for the wedding party of the prince and Princess Nobuko, for a dinner party, a ball,
 and a garden party from top left to bottom right.>>

Related articles from the National Diet Library Newsletter:

- Materials available in the Modern Japanese Political History Materials Room (1) (No.200, June 2015)
- Materials available in the Modern Japanese Political History Materials Room (4) (No.201, August 2015)
- Materials available in the Modern Japanese Political History Materials Room (3) (No.202, October 2015)

¹ Takase Nobuhiko. 2004. "Kaneko Kentaro," Kingendai nihon jinbutsu shiryō jōhō jiten. Yoshikawa Kobunkan.