

Articles by NDL staff

Recent updates of digital exhibitions: The Meiji and Taisho Eras in Photographs / The Japanese Calendar

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1. Introduction

As of August 2016, the National Diet Library (NDL) provides 24 digital exhibitions featuring its precious materials with easy-to-understand explanations on the [Online Gallery](#) of its website. This article introduces recent updates of two digital exhibitions: "The Meiji and Taisho Eras in Photographs" and "The Japanese Calendar."

Online Gallery

The NDL Gallery features digital exhibitions of the NDL's unique collections with easy-to-understand explanations.

Online Gallery of the National Diet Library



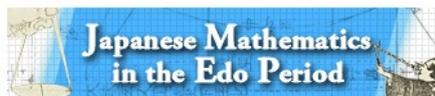
This exhibition introduces the 150-year history of exchanges between Japan and France. The exhibits covering politics, industry, literature, art, lifestyles and subcultures were all selected from the NDL collection. (available since December 2014)



Cette exposition présente l'histoire de 150 ans d'échanges entre le Japon et la France. Les matériels exposés couvrant la politique, l'industrie, la littérature, les beaux arts, les modes de vie et des sous-cultures ont tous été sélectionnés dans la collection NDL. (disponible depuis Décembre 2014)



This exhibition introduces Nishiki-e (color woodblock prints) of landmark places in Edo from our collections. There are four search menus such as "Find on a map," and "Search by Artist," so you can search for landscape nishiki-e from various viewpoints. (available since March 2014)



Wasan is the native Japanese mathematics of the Edo period. This digital exhibition shows Wasan materials with their bibliography. It also gives an outline of Wasan history and columns about it. (available since December 2011)

Image 1: A part of the list of Online Gallery of the NDL

2. The Meiji and Taisho Eras in Photographs

The NDL has been providing selected old photos of notable buildings, sightseeing spots and other features which still exist and are familiar today, in the "The Meiji and Taisho Eras in Photographs - Tokyo Edition" since August 2007, and "The Meiji and Taisho Eras in Photographs - Kansai Edition" since March 2008.

In April 2016, the NDL combined the Tokyo and Kansai editions and newly added photos from the Tohoku region.¹ This has increased the number of posted photos to approximately 1,300, and these photos can be cross-searched.



Image 2: The top page of the Meiji and Taisho Eras in Photographs

2.1 Tohoku from a different perspective

The exhibition now includes nearly 330 old photos of Tohoku which show grand mountains and lakes, bustling festivals, mines and factories which reflected expansion of industry at the time. You will find different scenery in the photos from those in Tokyo and in Kansai.

Also, seven columns have also been prepared for several items to provide the opportunity to learn more about the item's background and history; The Aizu War and Wakamatsu Castle; Kurikoyama Tunnel and Mishima Michitsune; The youth of Takuboku and Kenji - Morioka Middle School; Tohoku Hot Springs; Mining in Tohoku; Mt. Hakkoda; and Hachirogata Lagoon.

Column <Tohoku>

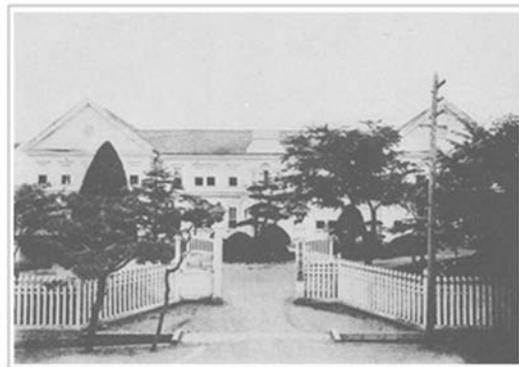
3 The youth of Takuboku and Kenji - Morioka Middle School

[Morioka Middle School](#) (present day Morioka Daiichi High School) was established as the first middle school in Iwate-ken (Iwate Prefecture) and produced a number of talented individuals. Particularly famous among these are Ishikawa Takuboku (1886-1912) and Miyazawa Kenji (1896-1933). Takuboku was 11 years Kenji's senior.

**Let me lean on the railings
Of Morioka Middle School
Just once more**

-Ichiaku no Suna by Takuboku

The school building with its balconies which Takuboku wrote about in later years, was painted a beautiful white, leading to it being called "a white palace". In 1885, the school was located in where the head office of the Bank of Iwate stands today.



Morioka Middle School "Togu Gyokei Kinen Shashincho"

| Takuboku

Takuboku enrolled in the school at the age of 13 in 1898. His classmates included a number of boys who would be active in political and business as well as literary circles including Nomura Kodo, a novelist known for the historical novel *Zenigata Heiji Torimonohikae* as well as a music critic, among the first year students; Kindaichi Kyosuke, the Japanese language linguist who looked after Takuboku throughout his life, among the 2nd year students; and [Yonai Mitsumasa](#), who served as the 37th Prime Minister, and was a naval admiral during the end of the Second World War, among the 4th year students.

Takuboku was called a child prodigy in Shibutami-mura (Shibutani Village) and enrolled as 10th out of 128 students in academic performance, but he soon came to be devoted to literature and neglected his academic performance. His time at the school was eventful, including starting the Union Club in order to study English, participating in strikes related to lack of instructors and internal issues, and in the end, being expelled from school just before graduation for cheating (1902). In addition, he also met Horiai Setsuko, who would later become his wife, during his middle school years. Setsuko attended [Private Morioka Girls' School](#).

**I escaped from the classroom window
And went alone
To lie in the ruins of that castle**

Image 3: Column

2.2 Links to the related digital exhibitions

Searches can also still be carried out from maps and keywords, and links are provided to the related digital

exhibitions.² On the website connected to a photo, you might enjoy a new discovery!

The Ladies Normal School, Tokio

Source : [Album of Tokio by the Photovisite](#)
 Year of Publication : [1893]
 Call Number : 404-3

Category
 Education

Keyword
 Ochanomizubashi, snow scene

Related Picture or Map
[Joshi Koto Shihan Gaikoku, April, 1903-March, 1904 / 1903 / 精30-897](#)

Portraits of Modern Japanese Historical Figures
[Ogino, Ginko](#) [Nakamura, Akiko](#) [Watanabe, Tatsuzo](#)

The Landmarks of Edo in Color Woodblock Prints
[Yushima](#) [Ochanomizu](#)

Address (Meiji and Taisho Era) [Hongo-ku, Yushima](#)
 Address (Present) [Bunkyo-ku, Yushima](#)
 Present (as of January, 2016) [Tokyo Medical and Dental University](#)

Ogino, Ginko 荻野吟子 (1851 - 1913)

Occupation, Status [Doctor, Pharmacist, etc.](#)
 Birthplace(modern names) [Saitama](#)
 Date of birth and death [Apr. 4, 1851 - June 23, 1913](#)

Description
 Born in Saitama. The first woman doctor in Japan. She married at the age of 16 but after failing at the divorce. After graduating from Tokyo Women's Normal School, she studied at the private medical school Ogino. She passed the medical practitioners' exam in 1885 and opened Ogino Hospital as the first registered woman doctor. She joined the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), married a priest, Yukiyoichi Shibata, in 1890, and went to Hokkaido in 1894, where she ran a medical practice. After her husband died, she came back to Tokyo and in 1905 resumed running a hospital.

Image 4: Links to the related digital exhibitions

3. The Japanese Calendar

Since ancient times, calendars have been indispensable for knowing the changes of days, months and seasons. Every era has various types of calendars used in the daily life of the people, and some were particularly enjoyed for their special features. In this context, old calendars contain highly interesting materials reflecting the

transition in life-style and culture down through the ages. The digital exhibition "The Japanese Calendar" which was renewed for the first time since its release in March 2002 has provided opportunities to learn more about the history of the Japanese calendar based on the NDL's calendar collection, with special focus on the *Daisho-reki* calendar consisting of months, some with 30 days, others with 29, which was used in the Edo period (1603 to 1867).

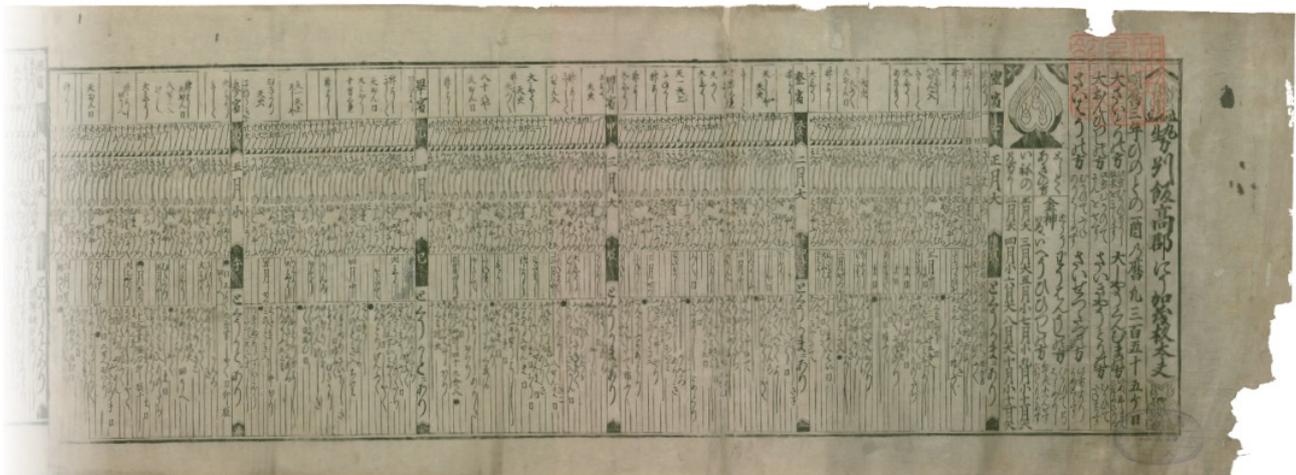


Image 5: *Nyugoyomi*, one of the traditional local calendars in Iitaka district in Ise Province (Matsukata in Mie prefecture, today)

3.1 Visual redesigns

The website was redesigned in a bright and beautiful Japanese-style, making it easy for users to navigate

themselves. Font size, color shade and the menu display will make navigation easy. We have upgraded some of the images to a higher quality (for example: images in "Unriddling the *Daisho-reki* calendar").



Image 6: Top page of the digital exhibition "The Japanese Calendar"

3.2 Improvement of its web accessibility

We have improved its accessibility in accordance with the NDL accessibility policy (Japanese) based on JIS X 8341-3:2010 "Guidelines for older persons and persons with disabilities-Information and communications equipment, software and services-Part 3: Web content." For example, you are able to enjoy it with a screen of various display

sizes, and images and graphic charts are accompanied by clear captions and titles. It is also compatible with screen readers.

Partial content of the exhibition, "Chapter 1 Calendar History" and a part of "Unriddling the *Daisho-reki* Calendar," is available in English.

Riddles and Answers

The following illustrations are examples of the *Daisho-reki* calendar. The months of the year are hidden in these pictures. Can you find them?

(1) The first riddle [[Check the answer from here](#)]



Title	[Egoyomi] 3rd year of Keio (1867), <i>Daisho-reki</i>
Creator	Unknown
Physical data	17cm×8cm
Subject (NDC)	449.81/721.8
Note	Negishi Takeka Collection
Call No.	貴 9-4
NDL Digital Collections	http://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/1286721/26?lang=en

(2) The second riddle [[Check the answer from here](#)]

Title	[Egoyomi] 7th year of Ansei (1860), <i>Daisho-reki</i>
Creator	Illustrated by Yoshitsuna
Physical data	30cm × 10cm
Subject (NDC)	449.81/721.8
Note	Negishi Takeka Collection
Call No.	貴 9-4
NDL Digital Collections	http://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/1286721/15?_lang=en

(3) The third riddle [[Check the answer from here](#)]

Title	[Daishoreki harimazejo] 2nd year of Bunkyu (1862) <i>Daisho-reki</i>
Creator	Created and illustrated by Gengyo
Physical data	13cm × 19cm
Subject (NDC)	449.81/721.8
Note	Ojima Sekiyu old calendar Collection
Call No.	本別 15-21
NDL Digital Collections	http://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/1286928/8?_lang=en

(4) The fourth riddle [[Check the answer from here](#)]

Title	[Egoyomi harikomicho] 4th year of Keio (1868) <i>Daisho-reki</i>
Creator	Illustrated by KAWANABE Kyosai
Physical data	19cm×26cm
Subject (NDC)	449.81/721.8
Note	Pasted in "Egoyomi harikomicho" and included in the Shinjo Bunko
Call No.	寄別 13-64
NDL Digital Collections	http://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/1286722/65?_lang=en

(1) The answer to the first riddle [[The first riddle](#)]

The phrase "ooatama" (lit. big head) written above a *Fukusuke* doll indicates that the long months are hidden in the illustration. You can find the Chinese character which represents the number ten on the head, eleven in the left *kamishimo*, twelve in the right *kamishimo*, two in the hems, four in the right sleeve, and eight in the left sleeve.

Fukusuke is a traditional Chinese doll which became popular in the Edo period, and was believed to bring good luck like the Seven Lucky Gods.

Long months: February, April, August, October, November, December

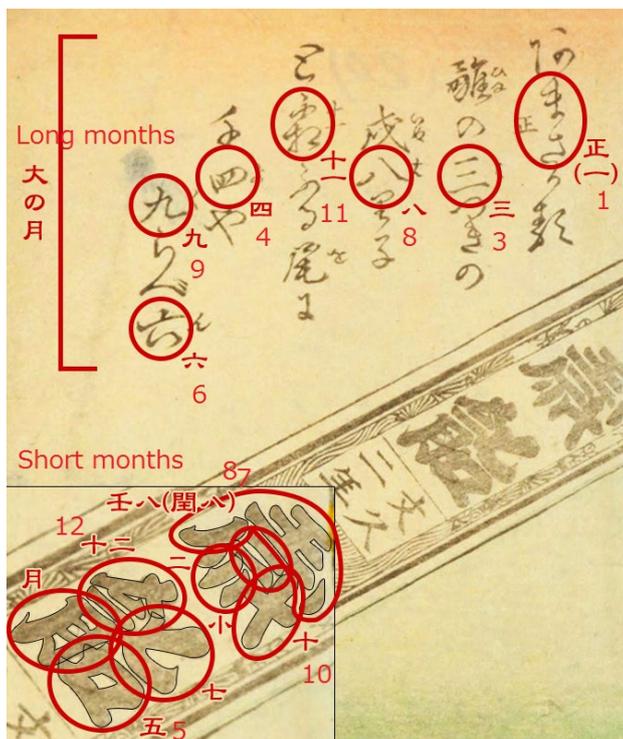
Short months: January, March, May, June, July, September

(2) The answer to the second riddle [[The second riddle](#)]

A mischievous monkey is up on a *Torii* (*Shinto* gateway). This year is the year of the monkey according to the Chinese zodiac, and it is holding a piece of paper saying "Sho no tsuki," that is "small months." From the top to the bottom, each of the papers is labeled: February, April, May, July, August, and October.

Long months: January, Intercalary March, June, September, November, December

Short months: February, April, May, July, August, October

(3) The answer to the third riddle [[The third riddle](#)]

Long months are hidden in the Japanese poem written in the upper left, on the other hand, small months are written in the characters on the package of a *Chitose-ame* (lit. thousand year candy).

This year was the year of the dog according to the Chinese zodiac. Illustrated in the right is an *inu-hariko* (lit. a dog of papier-mâché), a folk toy of the Edo period which was said to be used as a lucky charm for safe delivery and children's health.

Its creator Baiso Gengyo (1817-1880, other names such as Baisotei and Seiken) was a *kyōka* (comic tanka) poet and illustrator in the end of the Edo and the Meiji period. Long months: January, March, April, June, August, September, November

Short months: February, May, July, Intercalary August, October, December

(4) The answer to the fourth riddle [[The fourth riddle](#)]

In 1868, the Tokugawa Shogunate collapsed and put an end to the Edo period, marking the beginning of the Meiji period. In the previous year, a kind of social/political protest movement in which people went crazy over dancing and sang "*Ee ja nai ka* (lit. Why not?)" broke out, reflecting the chaotic situation of the society.

In this boisterous *Daisho-reki* titled "*Ee ja nai ka*," men show longer months, women short months. People are wearing costumes and holding belongings symbolizing each month. For example, the woman of January wears a mask of the plump-cheek *Okame* face, holding a battledore. The woman of April is with a child, because it is an intercalary month. You can also find animals symbolizing the first day of each month.

Kawanabe Kyosai (1831-1889) was a popular artist from the end of the Edo period to the middle of the Meiji period.

Long months: February, March, May, August, October, November

Short months: January, April, Intercalary April, June, July, September, December

Related articles on the National Diet Library Newsletter:

- [Digital exhibition "The Landmarks of Edo in Color Woodblock Prints" \(No.194, June 2014\)](#)
- [Online Gallery "Children's Books in the Victorian Era: from the Winnington-Ingram Collection" now available \(No.188, April 2013\)](#)
- [252 persons' portrait photographs added to the digital exhibition "Portraits of Modern Japanese Historical Figures" \(No.188, April 2013\)](#)
- [Online Gallery of the National Diet Library \(No. 165, February 2009\)](#)

¹ The Tohoku region is the northeastern portion of the largest island of Japan Honshu. It consists of six prefectures: Akita, Aomori, Fukushima, Iwate, Miyagi and Yamagata.

² In Japanese version, the links to the NDL Digital Collections are also displayed.