

Articles by NDL staff

Books not found in the NDL: Periodicals deposited with the Home Ministry

Masaki KOBAYASHI, Humanities, Maps, Rare Books and Old Materials Division
Reader Services and Collections Department

This article is based on the article in Japanese in *NDL Monthly Bulletin No. 673 (May 2017)*.

1. Introduction

Late in 2015, I found myself rushing over the Tokyo Koshu Kaikan (Member Building of the Tokyo Association of Dealers in Old Books) in Tokyo's Kanda-ogawa-cho, after hearing from a friend who was also a book collector about something there that was rarely seen, either in used book stores or libraries: periodicals stamped with a Home Ministry imprint.

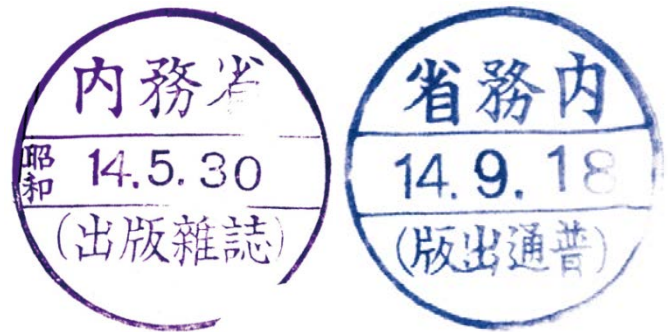
Such books have actually been a hot topic among people interested in the history of publishing in Japan. In fact, the discovery about ten years ago at the [Chiyoda Public Library \(CPL\)](#) of a large number of so-called *naimusho itaku bon*—books that had been submitted to the Home Ministry for review by government censors—is still fresh in my memory. In fact, what stands out in my mind is that the CPL organized a group of scholars who publish their findings annually,¹ which seems to me to be very similar to the new concept of "embedded librarianship"² that is now gaining acceptance with researchers in the United States.

What appears to be less well known is that these *itakubon* primarily comprise monographs, almanacs, and other books but not serial publications such as magazines or newspapers. Magazines and newspapers certainly were deposited with the Home Ministry, but after 1897 were no longer transferred (issued) to the Imperial Library, which is why periodicals stamped with a Home Ministry imprint are so rare today.

Once, at a secondhand books market, I found some issues with receipt imprints³ that I recognized as being similar in design to some I had seen in the closed stacks at the National Diet Library, and bought myself a few issues to see what they were like.

This article presents an overview of the censorship process at the Home Ministry during the early Showa period, using issues from my collection to illustrate how the process was performed. I will also speculate on the

origins of the most recently discovered examples of censorship by the Home Ministry.



Examples of Home Ministry imprints

2. The censorship process at the Home Ministry during the early Showa period

During the Edo period, books could only be published after obtaining authorization from the Tokugawa Shogunate. Even after the creation of a modern nation state with the Meiji Restoration in 1869, the new government declared a ban on the buying and selling unauthorized publications.

Later, as an extension of this original principle, two regulations were promulgated to regulate the publishing industry: the *shuppan jorei* (Publication Ordinance) and the *shimbunshi jorei* (Press Ordinance). Although originally the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, before long the enforcement of these ordinances was delegated to the Home Ministry, which soon began to require publishers to submit for approval a copy of any publication they intended to sell. Any publication that was found upon review to be detrimental to maintaining law and order or public morals was subject to an order prohibiting sale and distribution.

The Constitution of the Empire of Japan, informally known as the Meiji Constitution, was publically proclaimed in 1889 and officially enacted the following

¹ Kawai Ikuko "Kita kara minami kara Chiyoda Toshokan zou 'Naimusho itakubon' no korekushon seibi: katsuyo no uragawa" *Toshokan Zasshi* 108(9)=1090 2014.9 p/648-649 NDL call no. Z21-130

² Kamada Hitoshi "CA1751 Doko rebuyu: 'Embedded librarian': Toshokan sabisu moderu no beikoku ni okeru doko" *Current Awareness* No.309 2011.9.20 <http://current.ndl.go.jp/ca1751>

³ Publications issued by the Home Ministry to the Imperial Library are generally unmarked, duplicate copies, so there are no receipt imprints. However, there are some cases in which markup copies were issued. Of particular interest is a group of banned books called "Toku 500 bandai," which are all markup copies, stamped with receipt imprints.

year. Although the Meiji Constitution superficially protected freedom of the press, the aforementioned two regulations were revised and re-promulgated as the Publication Law and the Press Law. Although these laws made provisions for publication without prior approval, they also allowed post-publication censorship, which the government called "liberalism." Moreover, prohibition orders could be issued on the date of publication, which effectively limited actual freedom of the press.

The Home Ministry continued to censor publications until 1945 when, in the wake for Japan's defeat at the end of WWII, it was abolished by the General Headquarters of the Allied Forces (GHQ). Censorship of the press, however, remained the prerogative of the GHQ until 1949. Nevertheless, since GHQ censorship was carried out prepublication, it was different in character from that by the Home Ministry.

Censorship by the Home Ministry during the early Showa period was based on the type of publication, as follows :⁴

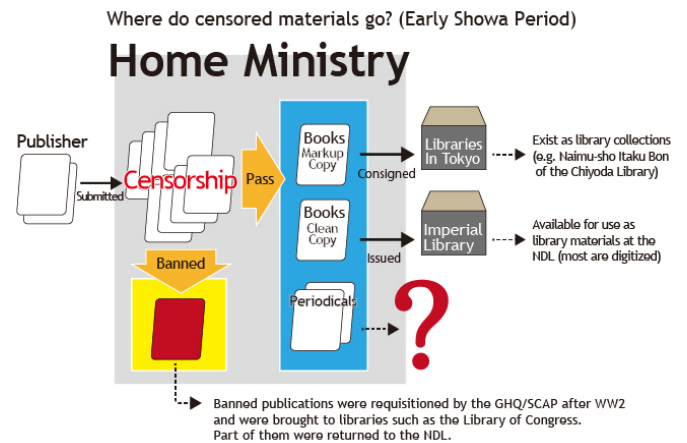
- The Publication Law of April 1893 affected books and other publications, including flyers, brochures, and parts of some magazines.
- The Press Law of May 1909 affected newspapers and magazines not covered by the Publication Law.

In practice, during the prepublication censorship of the early Meiji period, publishers submitted several copies to the Home Ministry, and the published text reflected the results of prepublication censorship. After the Publication Law came into effect, publishers were required to submit two copies of their publications to the Home Ministry three days⁵ prior to the date of publication or on the date of publication for newspapers.

⁴ Kobayashi Masaki "Senzenki zenshuppanbutsu no keitaibetsu bunruihyo (shian): nani ga nokoranakattaka wo shiru tame no junbi" *Bunken keisho* (19) pp. 2-6 (2011.10) <https://kanazawa-bumpo-kaku.jimdo.com/%E6%96%87%E7%8C%AE%E7%B6%99%E6%89%BF-1/>

⁵ It is unlikely that the Home Ministry changed the stamp date. Normally, the published date was amended. Kobayashi Masaki "Teikokutoshokan bon ni okeru nohonbun no miwakekata" *Bunken keisho* (26) pp. 3-8 (2015.4)

⁶ Yoshiko Yoshimura (ed.) *Censored Japanese Serials of the pre-1946 period*. Library of Congress (1994) NDL call no. UP67-E12



A simplified chart showing where publications went after undergoing censorship by the Home Ministry in the early Showa period.

Of the two copies that were submitted to the Home Ministry, one was designated the "markup copy," into which the censor's revisions were written. If a book was banned, the submitted copies were stored in the stacks of the Home Ministry book depository. If a book passed the censorship process, the markup copy was consigned to public libraries in Tokyo. The *naimusho itaku bon* of the Chiyoda Public Library are, in fact, markup copies of published books. The study of these markup copies provides researchers with insight into the Home Ministry's actual process for carrying out censorship.

On the other hand, the remaining copy was left unmarked and designated a "clean copy," and as such was considered a duplicate to be issued to the Imperial Library. These clean copies of published books were entrusted to the National Diet Library and have been designated in the NDL catalog as "books issued to the Imperial Library by the Home Ministry." The majority of the books in the NDL's collection that were published before WWII are clean copies such as these.

Almost all the materials that were consigned to public libraries in Tokyo or issued to the Imperial Library were books. The whereabouts of significant numbers of markups and clean copies of periodicals remains unknown, although the US Library of Congress⁶ holds a considerable volume of banned issues. Now, some 70 years later, a portion of these periodicals have begun to appear in the secondhand book market.

3. Books not found in the NDL: from my personal collection

3.1 *Sora no tabi*—stamped with a round imprint

納本／有／新



Sora no tabi Volume 3, No. 1, published on December 30, 1942

This slim booklet of ten pages is the in-flight magazine of the Imperial Japanese Airways during WWII.⁷ It contains three articles, one of which is entitled *sora no arekore* (This and That of the Sky), which is a manga by YOKOYAMA Ryuichi and another of which is an article by an academic scholar, who wrote about his experience flying on Lufthansa when he was in Germany. Included in *sora no arekore* is a section that tells the story of how the author painted nose art on a captured US DB-7 Boston, stating: "This medium bomber with tricycle landing gear was captured by the Japanese Army and is now newly reborn under the flag of the Rising Sun, with a new mascot on its fuselage."

The cover features a photo of a Mitsubishi MC-20 passenger aircraft, and has been stamped with a round imprint that reads: 納本 (deposited material) / 有 (security fee deposited⁸) / 新 (per the Press Law). This imprint was stamped by the publisher per the *Home Ministry's Precautions for Deposited Materials*,⁹ which includes instructions for stamping newspapers or periodicals per the Press Law. To the right of the publisher's imprint is one that reads 内務省 (Home Ministry), but which seems to have been stamped in a hurry and is hardly legible.

⁷ It says in p. 220 of *Zasshi nenkan showa 16 nen ban* that it was not for sale. Libraries which hold this material could not be found either.

⁸ Newspaper companies which deposited a security fee of 2000 yen were permitted to carry articles which dealt with current topics. This means that, unless they deposited the security fee, newspapers were not allowed to write about current topics.

⁹ *Shuppan nenkan showa 5 nen ban*, p. 645. In the instructions, it is prescribed that the stamp 有 (security has been paid) should come below 新 (periodical ordained by the Newspaper Law). It was probably mistaken by the publisher when the stamp was created.

3.2 *Nihon no fuzoku* – red and blue round imprints



Nihon no fuzoku Volume 3, No. 9, October issue, published October 22, 1940

* Digitized images of the issues held by the NDL are available in the [NDL Digital Collections](#).



Nihon no fuzoku Volume 3, No. 11, December issue, published on December 1, 1940

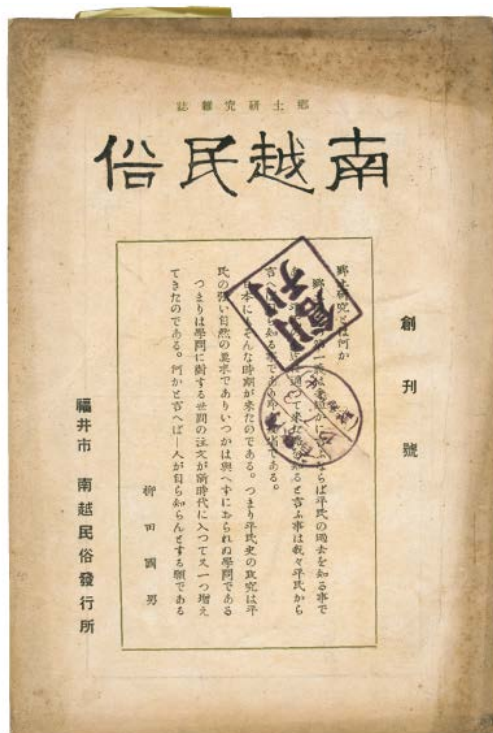
On the cover of the October issue, a red imprint reads 内務省 (Home Ministry) / 15. 10. 23 (October 23, 1940) / (新聞紙) (per the Press Law), while on the December issue, a blue imprint reads 内務省 (Home Ministry) / 15. 12. -2 (December 2, 1940) / (出版雑誌) (per the Publication Law). Presumably, red ink was used for periodicals that were subject to the Press Law, and blue



for those subject to the Publication Law. There are two possible reasons for the use of different stamps: either the publisher changed the law to which the publication is subject¹⁰ or someone at the Home Ministry made a mistake. The round imprint that says Deposited Material (納本/新/有 or 無) is missing, perhaps because it was stamped on the envelope or the copy was directly deposited. The date of the imprint is one day later than the publication date printed on the cover, but this might simply be a mistake made by the publisher.¹¹

The NDL's holdings of this periodical end with the April 1940 issue (Vol. 3, No. 4),¹² so these two issues are missing from its collection. A reprint of all the issues of this magazine has been published, however, and the articles can be read at the NDL.¹³

3.3 The first issue of *Nan'etsu minzoku* – a square imprint for inauguration



Nan'etsu minzoku first issue, published July 1, 1937

The cover of this periodical features a short composition by YANAGITA Kunito, entitled "What are Local Studies?" along with a square, black imprint¹⁴ that reads 創刊 (inauguration) and a round, black imprint that reads 内務省 (Home Ministry) / 12. 7. 3 (July 3, 1937) / (出版雜

誌) (per the Publication Law). The square imprint is upside-down, in a rather offhand manner, and was probably stamped by the Home Ministry, since it is the same color as the round imprint. A photo of another periodical with the same imprint can be found in the *Shuppan keisatsuho*, an internal periodical from the Home Ministry. This imprint probably is used to indicate a mark to handle the first issue more carefully than the ordinary issues. However, traces of censorship cannot be found from the content of this material.

A replica of the original version exists,¹⁵ and other issues can be found at the Fukui Prefectural Library, but the original print of the first issue is nowhere to be found. An editorial note by the publisher EDO Kikujō states that about 125 copies were printed.

3.4 *Gekkan mingei* – traces of censorship



Gekkan mingei, Volume 1 (3) June issue (Published on June 1, 1939)

¹⁰ In p. 268 of *Zasshi nenkan showa 16 nen ban*, there is no mention of which law the publication was published under.

¹¹ It is unlikely that the Home Ministry made a mistake. Normally, the published date was amended. Kobayashi Masaki "Teikokutoshokan bon ni okeru nohonbun no miwakekata" *Bunken keisho* (26) pp. 3-8 (2015.4)

¹² NDL call no. 雑 23-152

¹³ Tamura Eitaro ed. *Nihon no fuzoku*. Kashiwa shobo (1981.5) NDL call no. GB82-49

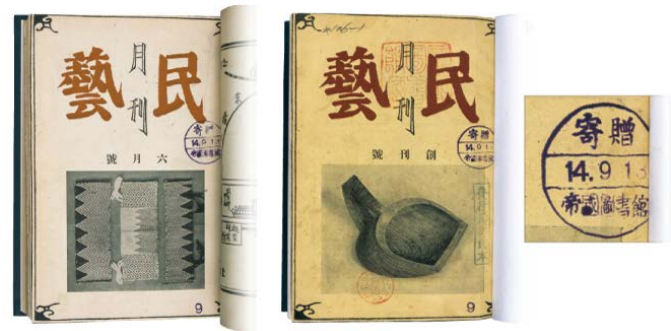
¹⁴ A little bit of blue is mixed in the black colored ink. The stamp for the normal issues probably was reused.

¹⁵ *Nan'etsu minzoku*, facsimile edition. Yasuda shoten (1975) NDL call no. Z8-1214



A close-up of the imprints

I would like to discuss this particular issue, even though the NDL also has a copy,¹⁶ because traces of the Home Ministry's censorship process can be found in it. From the receipt imprint, which reads from left to right 内務省 (Home Ministry) / 昭和 14. 5. 30 (May 30, 1939) / (出版雜誌) (per the Publication Law), we can see that various stamp designs were used for this purpose. Another imprint in blue reads 事務官 (administrative official), and one in red reads 瓜生 (Uryu)¹⁷, which might refer to URYU Nobuyoshi (1905-1982), the secretary of the Home Ministry at that time. Along with Uryu's notes, it is interesting that the deposit date written on the right edge of the cover has a correction. The colophon is corrected in the same manner, and the part that says "Printed and deposited on May 25, 1939" has been changed to "May 28, 1939" and stamped by the publisher, ASANO Choryo. However, the actual deposit date, as shown in the blue imprint, was May 30. Only the print and deposit date had to be revised in order for a material to be approved by the Home Ministry.



Since the Home Ministry essentially suspended the issuing of deposited periodicals to the Imperial Library after June 1897, such materials were acquired either by subscribing or through donations from the publishers. NDL call no. 雑 49-30

3.5 Edo dokuhon – deleted and revised edition



Edo dokuhon, Volume 2 (8) August issue (Published on July 10, 1939)



Edo dokuhon, Volume 2 (11) November issue (Published on October 10, 1939)

¹⁶ *Mingei*. Nihon Mingei Kyokai, (1939-[1946]) NDL call no. 雑 49-30 The NDL call no. of volume 3 (9) is VG1-440.

¹⁷ Since no other notes can be found, we cannot further consider whether this material was checked by Uryu or not.

The receipt imprint on the August issue reads 内務省 (Home Ministry) / 昭和 14. 7. 11 (July 11, 1939) / (出版雑誌) (per the Publication Law). Strictly speaking, this issue should have been received on July 7, three days prior to publication (or July 6, per the Home Ministry's stipulation¹⁸ of four days prior to publication), but since the content of this magazine featured amusing articles about Edo period culture, it was unlikely to have been problematic, even if several days late. There are no traces of correction.

Looking at the November issue, we see a slightly smaller imprint that reads from right to left. Presumably, the style changed when the old stamp was replaced with a new one that summer. Another significant aspect of this November issue is that it is a revised edition with partially deleted content. On the cover, we see a receipt imprint dated October 23, nearly two weeks after the publication date, and another blue imprint that reads 削除済 (deleted). Apparently some deletions were required when the censorship process was completed around October 10,¹⁹ after which a revised edition was printed and submitted to the Home Ministry on October 23.

A notation made in red pencil states: 10, 14, P, 15/削 (delete) and in red ink which reads 来 [?] 17P. In fact, the pages that were actually deleted were 15 and 16, which were likely penalized as detrimental to maintaining law and order, so the red-pencil notation probably means that page 15 was specified for deletion on October 14. The deleted section is part of an article on Edo goi (Edo vocabulary) by MITAMURA Engyo, and more red-pencil notations in the same handwriting are found on page 17.

4. Where did these periodicals come from?

These periodicals, which seem to be related to ethnology, apparently came into the secondhand book market around the same time. Perhaps they were owned by the same person. As already mentioned, newspapers and periodicals were generally not issued by the Home Ministry to the Imperial Library,²⁰ and where these issues went after passing through the censorship process remains a mystery. Since these periodicals appear to have been in the possession of an individual, perhaps they were disposed of by the Ministry, and staff members picked up ones that matched their own interests.

Although there are still significant gaps in our knowledge of how the legal deposit system was practiced before WWII, the notations and other traces left on these materials provide clues that are driving research in this field.

(Translated by Yuko Kumakura and Shihoko Yokota)

Related contents on the NDL website:

- Otsuka Nanae "'Hakkintosho kango mokuroku' (lit. List of banned books in the collection of the National Diet Library)" Reference Service and Bibliography No. 77 (2016.3)
<https://rnavi.ndl.go.jp/bibliography/entry/bn70-79.php>
- Otsuka Nanae "Research of books and materials banned or restricted after acceptance: examples from the Imperial Library under the publication statutes in the pre-war period" Reference Service and Bibliography No. 73 (2010.11)
http://dl.ndl.go.jp/view/download/digidepo_3051631_po_73-04.pdf?contentNo=1
- "Books not found in the NDL: in search of periodicals from pre-war to the Occupation (2)" National Diet Library Monthly Bulletin No. 663 (July 2016)
https://dl.ndl.go.jp/view/download/digidepo_999911_6_po_geppo1607.pdf?contentNo=1#page=14
- "Books not found in the NDL: in search of periodicals from pre-war to the Occupation" National Diet Library Monthly Bulletin No. 640/641 (July/August 2014)
https://dl.ndl.go.jp/view/download/digidepo_870443_5_po_geppo14078.pdf?contentNo=1#page=19
- "Books not found in the NDL: publications from pre-war to the occupation period" National Diet Library Monthly Bulletin No. 612 (March 2012)
https://dl.ndl.go.jp/view/download/digidepo_348704_9_po_geppo1203.pdf?contentNo=1#page=22

¹⁸ Kobayashi Masaki "Teikokutoshokan bon ni okeru nohonbun no miwakekata" *Bunken keisho* (26) pp. 3-8 (2015.4)

¹⁹ The November issue was banned for being detrimental to public morals.

Kobayashi Masaki ed. *Zasshi shinbun hakko busu jiten: Showa senzenki: Fu. Hakkinbon busu soran*, Kanazawa bunpokaku, p. 36 (2011.12).

²⁰ There are some exceptions. For example, the 323rd issue (published on January 25, 1942) of *Heigaku kenkyukai kiji*, (NDL call no. 雑 32-56) has two stamps. One reads: 内務省 (Home Ministry) / 17.2.2 (February 2, 1942) / (出版雑誌) (per the Publication Law) and another reads: 納本 (legal deposit) / 1.2.18 (the first digit of the publication year seems to have disappeared) / 帝国図書館 (Imperial Library). The next 324th issue has only one stamp: 寄贈 (donation) / 18.10.22 (published October 22, 1943) / 帝国図書館 (Imperial Library).