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## Greetings from the new Librarian Origins and Development of the National Diet Library: Inauguration

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I was appointed the 15th Librarian of the National Diet Library on April 1, 2012. As I assume the leadership of the NDL, I feel truly honored by the opportunities, humbled by the responsibilities and thrilled at the possibilities.

The National Diet Library was established based on the National Diet Library Law in February 1948, as an institution to serve the newly installed Diet assembly and the nation in the dynamic age of post-war reconstruction. The preamble of the NDL Law, which states that it was “hereby established as a result of the firm conviction that truth makes us free and with the object of contributing to international peace and the democratization of Japan as promised in our Constitution” denotes the underlying ethos of the NDL. The Law also stipulates the still relevant institutional mission that it assists the Diet members as the parliamentary library, and the whole nation as the national library.

# National Diet Library Newsletter

Since its establishment, the NDL has phased in upgrades of various library services. Its 64 years history can be roughly categorized in the four epochs: *Fledgling* (from the establishment to the opening of the Main Building of the Tokyo Main Library in 1968); *Upgrowth* (till the opening of the Annex Building of the Tokyo Main Library in 1986), *Transformation* (up to the opening of the Kansai-kan and the International Library of Children's Literature in 2004) and we are now in the middle of the 4th.

As the ever-increasing collection causes a capacity crisis in a 20-year cycle, the NDL responds with major expansions of its facilities and breakthroughs in its functions. For this we have to thank the understanding and guidance of our overseers, the Steering Committees of both Houses of the Diet, as well as the expectation and support of the general public.

Now, in its 4th epoch, I consider that the NDL is in *Maturation* to build upon the service plans of the past, and at the same time, in our *2nd Fledgling*, state to tackle the challenges and advantages of the digital information. We urgently need to establish a scheme to collect, store and effectively serve digital information in the turbulent environment of information distribution. I will follow the footsteps of my eminent predecessor, Dr. Makoto Nagao, to build the understanding of various stakeholders in the field.

I joined the NDL at the beginning of the 2nd epoch as a novice librarian, and had worked for 36 years by the end of the 3rd. Now, back to the NDL seven years after my retirement, I am impressed by the dynamic transformation it has undergone. Making a virtue of my long absence, I intend to tackle the various issues the NDL faces, not as a long-term insider, but as more of an outsider with a viewpoint of the users.

Throughout nearly half a century of my life, I have cherished the adage of Thomas Carlyle:

*Do the duty which lies nearest to you, the second duty will then become clearer.*

I will work closely with my colleagues to share the vision for the future and spearhead the Library in that direction. First, the goal that is nearest; from there, to move further afield.

I ask for your guidance and support.