

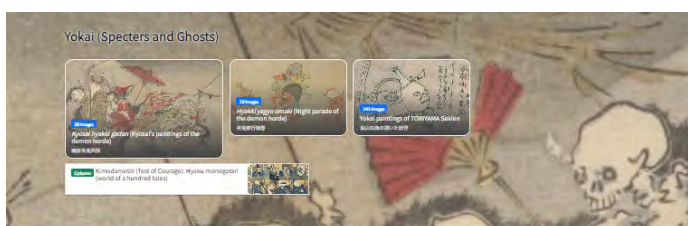
National Diet Library Newsletter

No. 253, October 2023

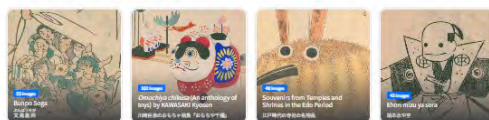


Let's work together, let's library

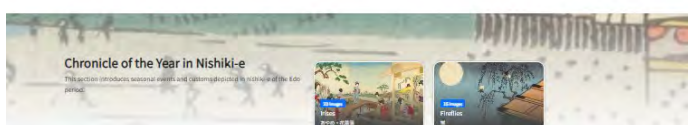
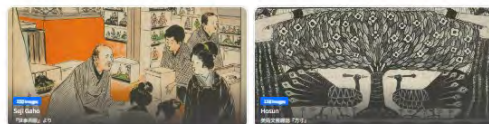
World Library and Information Congress
88th IFLA General Conference and Assembly
 21-25 August 2023, the Netherlands



Kawaii Edo, Meiji and Taisho Periods



From 100-Year-Old Magazines



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 No. 749/750, September/October 2023



Articles by NDL staff

The Early Days of the NDL at the Akasaka Palace

This article is a translation of the article in Japanese in [NDL Monthly Bulletin No.734 \(June 2022\)](#)



When the National Diet Library first opened in 1948, it was not in the same location as it is today. The present NDL facility in Nagatacho was not built until 1961. Until then, the NDL operated three facilities: the Miyakezaka Branch Office, the Ueno Branch Library, and the main library located in the former Akasaka Palace, which is now a State Guest House.

After World War II, the Japanese Government took possession of the Akasaka Palace from the Imperial Household, and at the direction of the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, the National Diet Library, the Legal Affairs Agency, and other government agencies were moved into the palace building. The NDL was located to the left as one entered the building, with the first floor used as office space and the second floor as reading rooms.

As magnificent as the building's neo-baroque architecture was, however, it had no elevators and few restrooms, which made it entirely unsuitable as a library facility. Nevertheless, the crowd of readers who could be found each day huddled under the chandeliers were testament to the eager desire of the Japanese public for reading matter in the postwar days.

Through photographs taken then and now as well as contemporary documents and later memoirs, we look back at the early days of the National Diet Library at the Akasaka Palace.

About the Akasaka Palace

—During the Edo period, this area was the site of the Edo residence of the Kishu Tokugawa family.

—During the Meiji period, there was growing enthusiasm to construct a Western-style palace to serve as a residence for the Crown Prince.

—After the start of construction in 1899, the palace was finally completed in 1909 at a cost of over 5.1 million yen.

—The building was designed by architect KATAYAMA Tokuma.

—The structure is a masonry-clad steel frame in neo-baroque style with two floors above ground and one floor below. The exterior is clad entirely in granite block, with the walls 1.8 meters across at their thickest point and more than 50 cm even at the thinnest point. The walls are said to comprise approximately 30% of the building area.

* Source of color photos: [Cabinet Office, State Guest Houses website](#)



Oosaka Mainichi shinbunsha, ed., *Toreishi goraicho kinen shashincho*, Vol. 2, Araki Riichiro, 1922. *Available at the NDL Digital Collections



A map of the Akasaka Palace and environs during the postwar era.
 Edited by Kokuritsu Kokkai Toshokan Ippan Kosabu, *Kokuritsu kokkai toshokan riyō no tebiki: Shutoshite ippan riyōsha no tameni*, Shunjukai Kokuritsu Kokkai Toshokan Nai, 1954, NDL Call No. 016.11-Ko5482k

Photographs marked with ● are taken from this book.

Hagaromo no Ma (Hall of the Robe of Heaven)

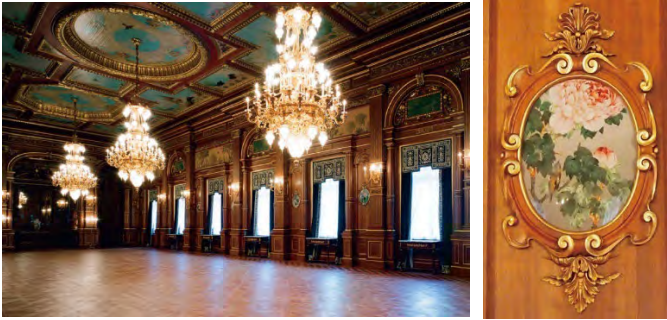
The Hagaromo no Ma was designed to be a ballroom when the building was first built, which is why it has an orchestra pit on the second floor. There are photographs of past exhibitions and receptions held there.



SUZUKI Takao, the second director general of the NDL

Kacho no Ma (Hall of Flowers and Birds)

The Kacho no Ma was originally designed to be a banquet hall. The ceiling is adorned with oil paintings and walls with cloisonné panels featuring birds and flowers. The design sketches for the cloisonné were drawn by WATANABE Seitei. This room was an open shelf reading room for the general public when the National Diet Library was housed here.



Sairan no Ma (Room of Mythical Birds)

The Sairan no Ma is located directly above the front entrance. It was originally called the Second Guest Room and was used for events such as concerts of recorded music when the National Diet Library was housed here.



“People dressed in plain summer clothes—clean-cut and innocent looking—lean forward as they peer fascinated into their books under the fluorescent lights ... I gaze furtively at them from just outside the door, my spirit so tense that my bones and muscles seem to creak ... But with so many people here putting their heart and soul into discovering their purpose in life, all my complaints disappear into thin air and I am filled with joy.”

Excerpted from *Toshokanjin no oni no so: Waga sanjuni so (9)* by KANAMORI Tokujiro.

Grand Stairway



KANAMORI Tokujiro, the first director general of the NDL, speaking to guests at a ceremony celebrating the tenth anniversary of the National Diet Library

“What is real? What is authentic? ... You and I, we are but rickshaw runners hauling a cargo of truth.”
Excerpted from greetings at a ceremony celebrating the tenth anniversary of the National Diet Library by KANAMORI Tokujiro.

Asahi no Ma (Room of Rising Sun)

The Asahi no Ma was originally called the First Guest Room and was where the Crown Prince held audiences with visitors. It was named *Asahi no Ma* (the Room of Rising Sun) because of the rising sun behind the goddess depicted on the ceiling. It was used as a reading room for periodicals when the National Diet Library was housed here, and bookshelves full of magazines and journals were arranged in a neat row amidst the beautiful wallpaper and pillars.



Velvet-flocked silk damask, from Kyoto's Nishijin textile district



Ejiputo no Ma (Room of Egypt)

The Ejiputo no Ma was adorned with Near Eastern motifs and Egyptian designs painted on the walls. Originally, this was an after-dinner smoking room but was used as a conference room when the National Diet Library was housed here. The photos show Director General KANAMORI addressing a meeting and people attending a reception.

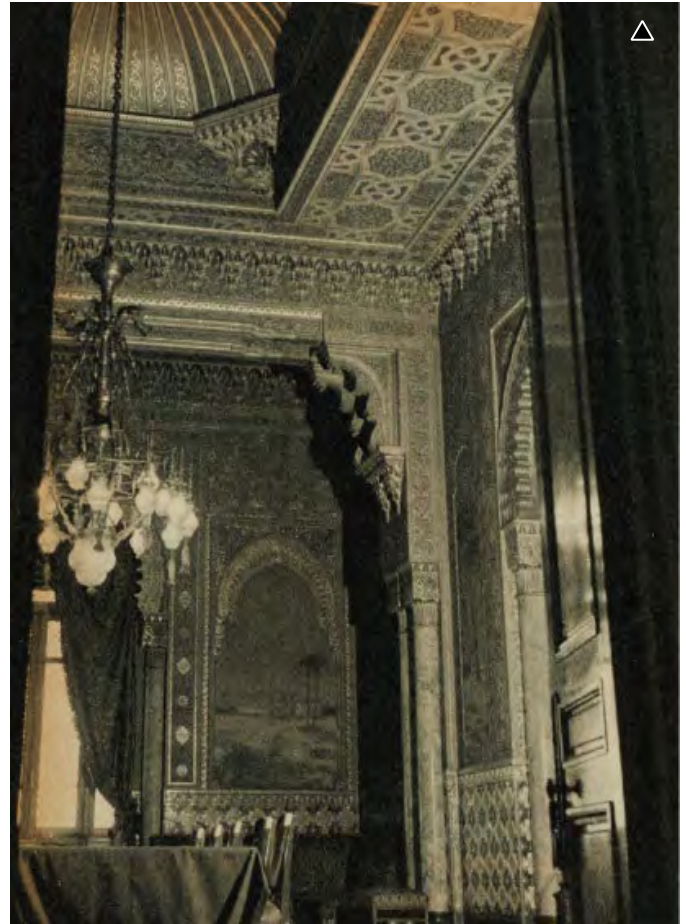


KAWACHI Iwao was one of the earliest NDL employees, who before WWII had also worked at the Akasaka Palace as an employee of the Imperial Household. He describes his surprise at seeing the changes made to the building when it housed the National Diet Library.

"Thinking back on how things were at the Akasaka Palace ... people would gather in the smoking room, the *Ejiputo no Ma*, where members of Japanese "high society" would exchange niceties amidst the fragrant cigar smoke and the aroma of coffee... Many years later, as an employee of the National Diet Library, would enter the *Ejiputo no Ma* and even though the room seemed far less vivid to my eyes than it once had been, the chandelier hanging from the ceiling, the stained glass in the windows, the wall paintings, and the marquetry of the floor all retained their former appearance. The people filling the

room today, however, are of a very different social class than in the past."

Excerpted from *Kokuritsu kokkai toshokan geppo* (120) by KAWACHI Iwao, March 1971, NDL Call No. Z21-146.

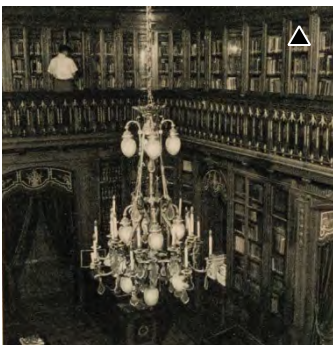


Shashin koho. 3(20). Okurashoinsatsukyoku. 1956.10. NDL Call No. Z23-37.

Photographs marked with ▲ are taken from this book.

"The National Diet Library at the Akasaka Palace was established to bear the great responsibility of words that are born from deep, deep within our souls and to serve as a symbol Japan's unending regret over the war."

Excerpted from "Umarekawatta akasaka riyu" by NAKAI Masakazu.



"Although I had told myself that I was mentally prepared, the building was an absolute labyrinth. I entered the main lobby as previously instructed over the phone but took a wrong turn down the hallway and ended up spending quite a while wandering around before finding my destination."

Excerpted from "Kyuden no horei kojo" by SATO Tatsuo in *Junkan toki no horei kaisetsu* (18), 3 April 1951, NDL Call No. Z2-50.



YURA Kimiyoshi was a scholar of English literature who described his own youthful experience in the *Kari no Ma* (the Room of Hunting), which was a reading room for newly arrived Western books.

"In the days before the start of the Cold War, this room—the *Kari no Ma*—was its own little universe, where the word democracy was like an incantation that held the promise of a beautiful future, and the privilege of being able to select any book you wanted to read was a most incredible and memorable experience ... It was a quiet and opulent place, that was filled with so many intellectually appealing objects that no single person could ever hope to read them all. I was so engrossed in reading that it was hard for me to tear myself away. The gap between my own impoverished circumstances and the richness of the world to be found in this room seemed insurmountable."

Excerpted from "Kieta mittsu no shifuku no heya" by YURA Kimiyoshi in *Mimizuku henshoki*, Chikuma Shobo, 2012, NDL Call No. US61-J179.



"I heard that in order to attract patrons, a tour of the library was included in the itinerary of sightseeing buses ... I remember there being about 240 patrons and over 400 tourists."

Excerpted from "Bobo nijuyuyonen (Twenty odd years in retrospect)" by YOKOKAWA Hyogo in *Kokuritsu kokkai toshokan geppo* (151), October 1973, NDL Call No. Z21-146.



"As I remember, it was March 1948 when I was one of those who were transferred from the Research Department of the House of Councilors to the National Diet Library, and we arrived at an almost deserted Akasaka Palace with a truck full of desks and chairs. The

furnishings were virtually untouched, and the beds, baths, desks, and chairs were in such stark contrast to the postwar devastation in which we all were living that it almost felt like we had wandered into a mansion in a fairy tale. After peeking into rooms here and there, we climbed up to the attic, where there was a wooden corridor over one meter wide with log railings on either side. Each of us occupied a room of our own choice and furnished it with a desk and chair. After a few days, however, we were all evicted and they started to allocate rooms for specific purposes—this is the director general's office, this is a conference room, and so forth."

Excerpted from "Chosakyoku ni chosaman toshite ikite (Looking back on my career as NDL researcher)" by KATSUHARA Fumio in *Kokuritsu kokkai toshokan geppo* (313), April 1987, NDL Call No. Z21-146.



"From time to time, the Director General would say to us, 'thanks to you all, the National Diet Library was born out of nothing.' And I was deeply moved."

Excerpted from "Kakushite kokuritsu kokkai toshokan wa umaredeta (The National Diet Library was thus born)" by OKADA Narau in *Kokuritsu kokkai toshokan geppo* (329), August 1988, NDL Call No. Z21-146.



Judging of entries to the architectural design competition for the Nagatacho building of the National Diet Library. (Director General KANAMORI is on the right.)

"The budget for the coming fiscal year ... there were many times when I would wait alone late into the night for my colleagues to go home. Waiting alone at night when there was not a single person in the whole Akasaka Palace (although there were two on night-duty), I keenly felt the weight of the burden I was carrying, and the idea that I might be laying down my life here came to me poignantly."

Excerpted from "Kokkai toshokan no konogoro" by NAKAI Masakazu.



Relocating to the Nagatacho building

(Translated by HATTORI Mao)

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Quotation:

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Articles by NDL staff

Protecting Our Books—Tools for preservation and restoration

(3) Pressing

Preservation Division, Acquisitions and Bibliography Department

This article is a translation of an article in Japanese from [NDL Monthly Bulletin No. 729 \(January, 2022\)](#).

The National Diet Library undertakes a wide variety of preservation activities to ensure the permanent availability of the materials in our collections, including digitization or other media conversion, disaster preparedness, maintenance of storage environment, and restoration.

The Preservation Division of the Acquisitions and Bibliography Department plays a major role in these activities, and staff members who specialize in material conservation use their expert judgment to carry out repair and restorations as required according to the characteristics and condition of the materials. We also manage the environment of the stacks and implement countermeasures against insect and mold.

This is the third in a series focusing on the tools used for conservation and restoration in the Preservation Division. Although only a few examples of our work are introduced here, we hope it will give you a glimpse into our efforts to preserve cultural assets. See [Related articles from the NDL Newsletter](#) for the past articles.

***Tegikai*—Book presses**

These are small presses that can be placed on a tabletop. They are often differentiated by the shape of the handle, such as crank type and wheel type. The applied pressure varies according to how tightly the handle is turned.



Turning the handle raises or lowers the top board.

Other uses



Pressure is applied to unbound pages in order to flatten them, thereby eliminating distortions that inevitably appear when pages are removed or the book is disassembled for re-binding or other purposes.



In the process of spine lining, which reinforces the spine of a Western-style book, the press is placed horizontally on a table.

Standing presses



While a book press can hold only a few materials at once, a large standing press can hold a large volume of large materials. This standing press, made of steel, is sturdy enough to apply high pressure.

Hydraulic presses



When stronger adhesion is required, or when creases or distortions are to be removed, a hydraulic press that can apply even more pressure is used. For example, it is used to convert reduced-size facsimile newspapers, which become quite bulky, from softcover binding to hardcover binding.

While the other presses we use are all manual, this one uses a powerful hydraulic pump to apply pressure.



The pressure is set numerically, and application stops automatically when the set pressure is reached.

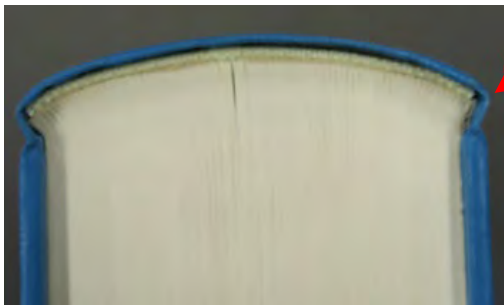
Shimeita—Press boards



Press boards are indispensable for pressing materials. Each material is placed between two boards to protect it and to ensure that the pressure is applied evenly. There are many different sizes of press board, which are selected to accommodate the size of the material.

Backing

Materials with a rounded spine have a protrusion called a ridge or a shoulder, which is applied to match the thickness with the cardboard of the cover. We use a book press to make the ridge by hand (p. 1).



In Japanese, the ridge is called an "ear."



Backing boards, with a wedged shape and metal guides.



The material is placed between the backing plates, placed in a book press, and its back is tapped with a hammer to make the ridge.



Beautifully formed ridges on a rounded spine.

A variety of weights Weights for pickling



We use a variety of weights for different aspects of restoration. There is nothing particularly special about them, usually they are weights for pickling, which are filled with concrete and available at any home improvement store. They are much heavier than they look, the largest weighs 8.5 kg. When a large material that would not fit in a press needs to be flattened, it is placed between pressing boards and held down with these weights.



Applying weights is heavy work.

Repairing large maps



Large maps are folded and stored. Before repairing damaged areas, we first straighten out the folds and wrinkles to flatten the maps as much as possible.



A large map can be straightened by lightly moistening the entire map with water, placing it between two sheets of filter paper, and flattening it with multiple pressing boards or weights, so that the pressure is distributed as evenly as possible. The map is left for at least one day and night to dry thoroughly before removing the weights and repairing the map.

Elongated weights





Folded maps are often torn at the folds. Elongated weights are useful for repairing torn folds. We also use acrylic rulers instead of a pressing board.



Starch paste is applied to a strip of *washi* paper, which is then pasted to the folds. Nonwoven fabric, filter paper, and acrylic rulers are placed over the fold, and then weighted down, so that the map will be dried flat without rippling.



The bottom side of the weight is covered with filter paper to protect the material being repaired.

Small weights



Small weights are used when repairing small-scale damage to prevent the material from rippling during drying.

Repairing handscrolls



A small amount of starch paste is applied to the damaged part of a handscroll, and *washi* paper is attached, then the handscroll is pressed and dried. A thick paperboard is placed on top of the filter paper to apply pressure evenly.

Lead shot



This is a handmade weight, which consists of 2-mm lead shot enclosed in a plastic pouch covered with a white fabric bag. This is the same kind of lead shot used in shotgun shells.

These weights are suitable for the frequent pressing of small-scale repairs on soft-paper materials such as the painted areas of picture scrolls and letters. Many museums and art galleries use this kind of weight.



These weights conform flexibly to the contour of the material.

Other uses



Minor damage to a letter is repaired using *washi* paper and starch paste, then a flexible weight full of lead shot is placed on top of the repair while the starch paste dries.



Weights are also used when exhibiting materials. Weights placed inside the book cradles prevent them from lifting off the tabletop.

This article presents just a few examples of these tools and their uses.

(Translated by OGAWA Kanako)

Related articles from the NDL Newsletter:

- [Protecting Our Books—Tools for preservation and restoration \(1\) Cutting and folding \(No. 251, June 2023\)](#)
- [Protecting Our Books—Tools for preservation and restoration \(2\) Applying paste and sticking \(No. 252, August 2023\)](#)

Articles by NDL staff

NDL participation in IFLA/WLIC 2023



Logo

[The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions \(IFLA\)](#) was founded in 1927 and is the world's largest organization in the field of library and information services. Currently there are more than 1,500 members from approximately 150 countries around the world.

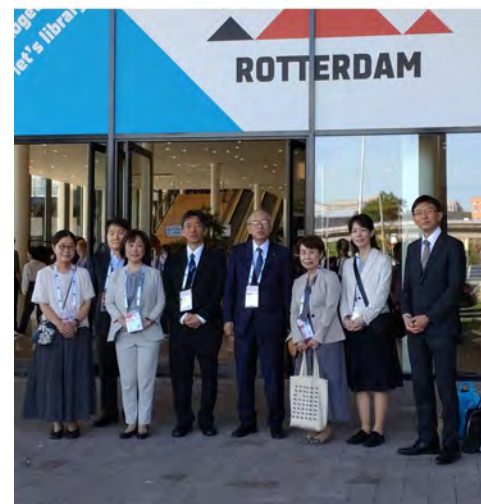
The National Diet Library (NDL) joined the IFLA as an associate member in 1966 and became a full member in 1976. NDL employees have attended the IFLA's annual conference since 1967 to take part in sessions and satellite meetings held close to the venue, as well as to participate in the annual meeting of the [Conference of Directors of National Libraries \(CDNL\)](#), which is usually held at the same time as the IFLA conference.

At present, six NDL employees serve on standing committees contributing to sections involved in activities such as management or information exchange. The NDL has also been designated as the [IFLA Core Activity on Preservation and Conservation \(IFLA/PAC\) Regional Centre for Asia](#) since 1989. In Japan, the NDL translates guidelines and reports to make the results of IFLA activities available to the public via its website and publications.

The IFLA's annual conference, the [World Library and Information Congress: IFLA General Conference and Assembly \(IFLA/WLIC\)](#) is held in a different country each year to present activities reports, network in person, and exchange views on matters of common interest. The 2023 IFLA/WLIC was held from August 21–25 in Rotterdam, the Netherlands. The theme for this year was “Let's work together, let's library.” Director General YOSHINAGA Motonobu and seven other NDL employees were in

attendance, with some also attending satellite meetings, to network with colleagues from around the world as well as deliver reports.

Ms. NAGANO Yuko (Assistant Director, Resources and Information Division, International Library of Children's Literature) gave a presentation titled “Warm voices for babies—from nursery songs to stories” at the Satellite Meeting of Libraries for Children and Young Adults Section and Literacy & Reading Section.



Group photo of participants from the NDL

This year's conference was also held as a virtual conference and ten NDL employees participated online in sessions related to their work.

Events

The 23rd Mutual Visit Program between the National Diet Library and the National Library of Korea

The 23rd mutual visit program of the National Diet Library (NDL) and the National Library of Korea (NLK) was held in Japan from July 24 to 29, 2023. Headed by Mr. LEE Soomyoung, Director General of the Knowledge and Information Operations Department, this year's delegation from the NLK consisted of the following two members as well: Dr. CHOI Yoonkyung, Deputy Director

of the Metadata & Sustainable Access Division, and Mr. LEE Yoon-Soo, Conservator of the Preservation and Research Center.

The highlight activities of the program are shown in the table below. Detailed presentations were made in each session, followed by active Q&A exchanges.

Opening Session (Keynote Speeches)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current status and challenges of the NLK Mr. LEE Soomyoung (Director General, Knowledge and Information Operations Department, NLK) • Current status and challenges of the NDL, 2022-2023 Mr. OZAWA Kota (Director, Planning Division, Administrative Department, NDL)
Session 1	<p>Theme: Introduction of next-generation bibliographic languages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transforming to next-generation bibliographic languages: National Bibliography 2030 Dr. CHOI Yoonkyung (Deputy Director, Metadata & Sustainable Access Division, NLK) • Plan for Creating and Providing the National Diet Library's Bibliographic Data 2021-2025 — from the viewpoint of the basis for Linked Data Mr. OSHIBA Tadahiko (Senior Librarian, Acquisitions and Bibliography Department, NDL)
Session 2	<p>Theme: Long-term preservation of digital materials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-term preservation of digital materials Mr. LEE Yoon-Soo (Conservator, Preservation and Research Center, NLK) • Long-term preservation of digital materials in the NDL Ms. TOKUHARA Naoko (Director, Research and Development for Next-Generation Systems Office, Digital Information Department, NDL)

Program



NLK delegation and senior officials of the NDL



Session at the Tokyo Main Library of the NDL

Reference:

- [Chronology of Mutual Visit Programs between the National Diet Library and the National Library of Korea](#)

Related articles from the NDL Newsletter:

- [Reports of past programs in the NDL Newsletter](#)

News from NDL

Integration of the NDL Online and NDL Search web services

The National Diet Library, Japan, (the NDL) plans to integrate two of its current web services: the [National Diet Library Online Search and Request Service \(NDL Online\)](#) and the [NDL Search](#). These two will be launched as a new NDL Search web service in January 2024.

The main points of renewal of the new NDL Search

1. Functions for Searching and Requesting

Patrons will be able to search for NDL library materials and digital content as well as apply for a variety of services. They will also be able to search bibliographic and holding information for books at prefectural and government-designated city libraries or to search for library materials and digital content available from public, university, and specialized libraries as well as academic research institutions in Japan, all via a single web service.



Top page (*Screenshot subject to change.)

2. Providing information in support of the desire for knowledge

Search results in the new NDL Search include information that is useful for research. Using reference information provided by the Research Navi and Collaborative Reference Database, the new NDL Search supports our patrons' desire for efficient access to a wide range of information.



Search result page (*Screenshot subject to change.)

3. A new and improved user interface

A newly redesigned interface will make all our services easier to use for both new and experienced patrons. Improved usability and accessibility will make it easier to use digital content, including the National Diet Library Digital Collection, from the new NDL Search.



Bibliographic record page (*Screenshot subject to change.)

About Providing Japanese National Bibliography, etc.

We will continue to provide our bibliographic data, including the Japanese National Bibliography (standard bibliographic data for Japanese publications and foreign publications in Japanese acquired by the National Diet Library), in a way that is easier to use. Bibliographic data in MARC format and MARC tag format for NDL collections (tangible materials) will be available for download both as individual records and in batches of multiple records.

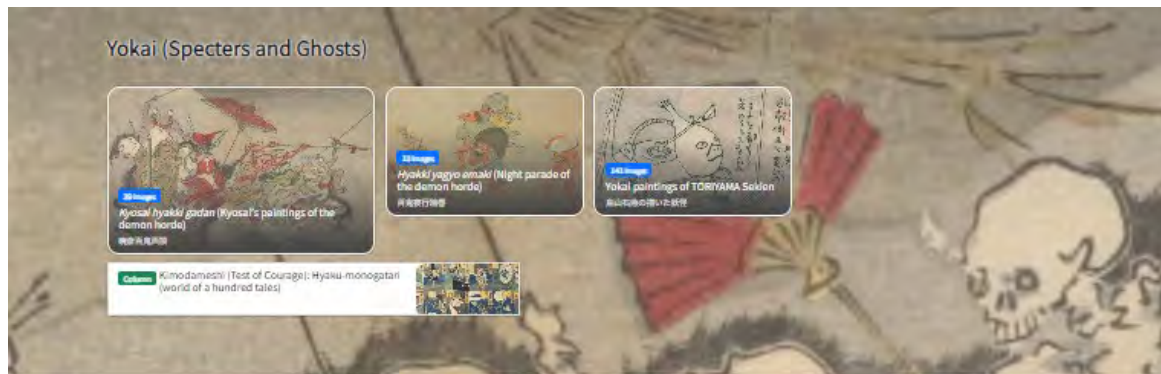
For detailed information of the renewal, please visit the following page.

<https://www.ndl.go.jp/en/use/2024renewal/index.html>

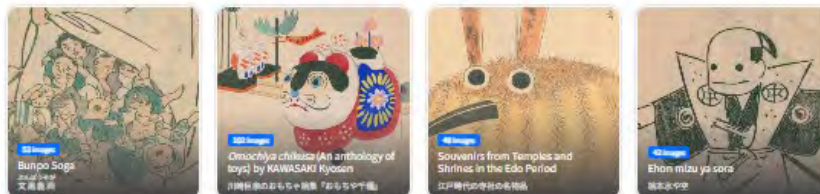
News from NDL

NDL Image Bank now available in English

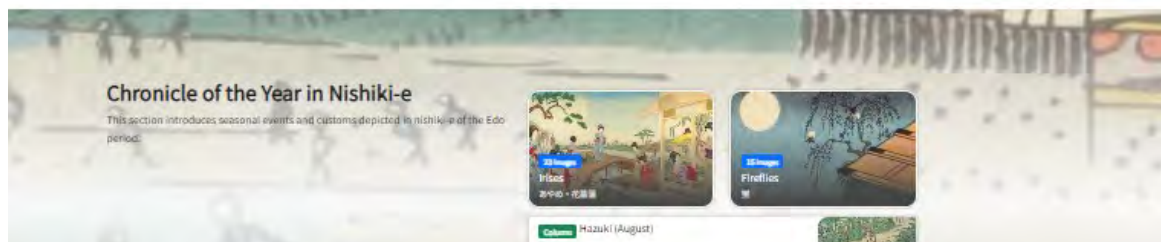
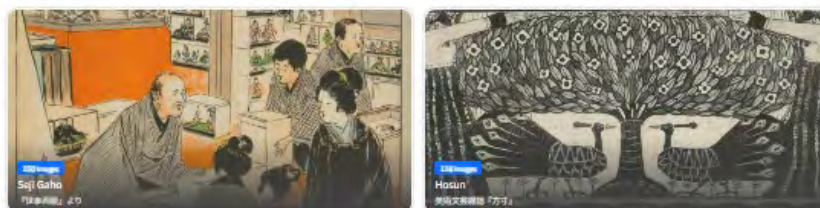
The NDL Image Bank is an online exhibition featuring selected visual elements of ukiyo-e prints, journals, and books from the National Diet Library's collection. All the images in the NDL Image Bank are taken from digitized, public-domain content held by the NDL and can also be accessed via the [NDL Digital Collections](#). The English version of the NDL Image Bank is available at <https://rnavi.ndl.go.jp/imagebank/en/>.



Kawaii Edo, Meiji and Taisho Periods



From 100-Year-Old Magazines



English version of the NDL Image Bank

Related articles from the NDL Newsletter:

- [NDL Image Bank Instagram account is newly open \(No. 250, April 2023\)](#)
- [The NDL Image Bank \(No. 247, October 2022\)](#)

Selected list of articles from NDL periodicals

The NDL Monthly Bulletin No. 749/750, September/October 2023

If you click the volume number of each issue, you can read the full-text of NDL Monthly Bulletin. The text is provided in PDF format (in Japanese).

[No. 749/750, September/October 2023 \(PDF: 4.89MB\)](#)

- <Book of the month — from NDL collections>
MAKINO Tomitaro's letter: When is kobushi not kobushi?
- What we can learn about earthquakes from HINAGIKU
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