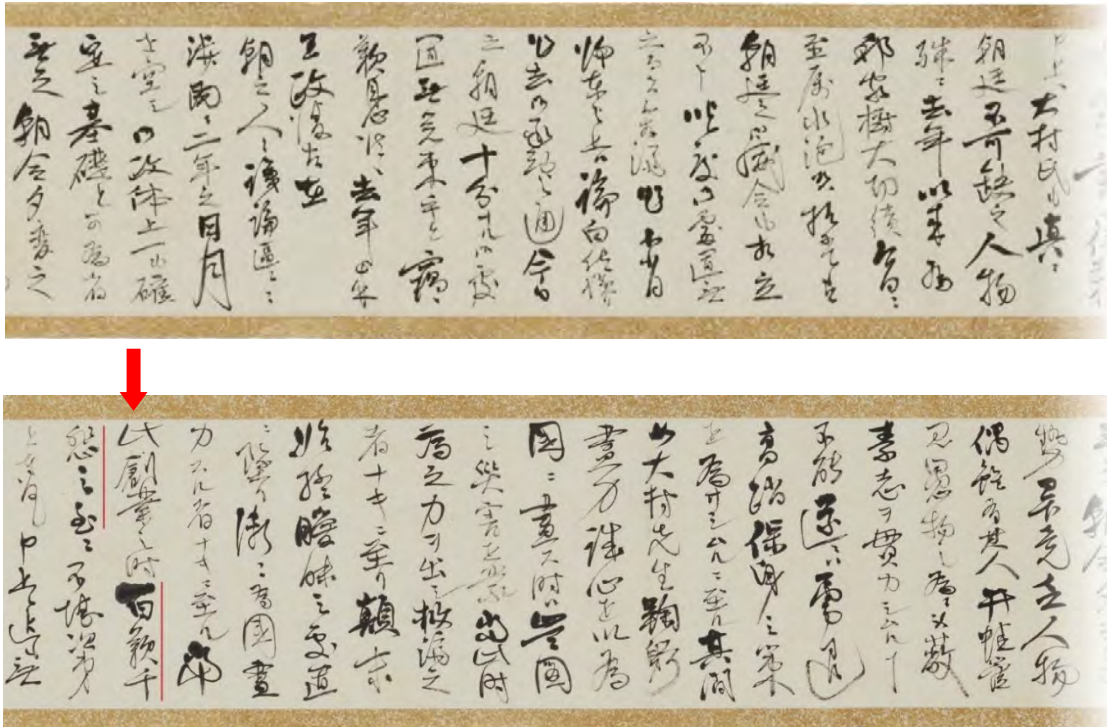


Selections from NDL collections

Materials in the Modern Japanese Political History Materials Room: *Shunpoko iboku* [Scroll Book of Letters from ITO Hirobumi to MAKIMURA Masanao]

Modern Japanese Political Documents Division, Reader Services and Collections Department

This article is a partial translation of the article in Japanese in *NDL Monthly Bulletin No. 739 (November 2022)*.

Letter from ITO Hirobumi to MAKIMURA Masanao, dated September 29, [1869].
NDL Call No. Constitutional Government Documents Collection 371-1.

He expressed his sorrow about the attack on OMURA Masujiro, stating “百歎千怨の至” (↓), which means it caused much grief and resentment.

Introduction

The National Diet Library holds approximately 420,000 documents on modern Japanese political history, including the personal papers of politicians, high-ranking officials, and military officers, dating from the end of the Tokugawa Shogunate to the present day. This article is one of a series introducing materials available at [the Modern Japanese Political History Materials Room](#) in the Tokyo Main Library.

These materials on modern Japanese political history primarily comprise documents that were donated by the families of prominent figures, and are made available to the public after they have been organized and catalogued by the NDL. We hope that this article will provide readers with a glimpse into the appeal of this invaluable collection, which supports scholarly research in political history and related fields.

*Shunpoko*¹ *iboku* [Scroll Book of Letters from ITO Hirobumi to MAKIMURA Masanao] (Constitutional Government Documents Collection 371)

(1 volume (3 letters), available since January 2022)

On September 4, 1869, OMURA Masujiro, a *Hyobu taifu* (senior vice minister of the Army-Navy Ministry) who was considered open to foreign ideas, was attacked by an anti-foreign faction while staying in Kyoto as part of a visit to the Kyoto-Osaka area on his way home. Fortunately, he survived the attack and was able to receive medical treatment at the Choshu domain residence in Kawaramachi, Kyoto. During that period, ITO Hirobumi wrote the above letter to MAKIMURA Masanao. At the time, MAKIMURA was the vice governor of Kyoto Prefecture, and was tasked with

¹ Shunpo or Shunpoko is a pen name of ITO Hirobumi.

locating the attackers. There had already been rumors circulating about a potential attack on OMURA, which caused his close friend, KIDO Takayoshi, to become concerned. In light of this, KIDO advised MAKIMURA to take measures to ensure OMURA's safety.

ITO Hirobumi was also greatly shocked by this incident. He had strongly advocated for *hanseki hokan* (the return of the lands and people to the Emperor), which was achieved in June 1869. Due to this, he was viewed as an adversary by the samurai class, and had recently resigned as governor of Hyogo Prefecture in the Keihan region, where many anti-foreign factions were concentrated, to become an *Okura shoyu* (junior vice minister of the Finance Ministry) in Tokyo. ITO expressed concern regarding the challenges faced by the new government in controlling the disgruntled samurai. Additionally, he noted that the lack of coordination and frequent changes in government were impeding progress towards the greater good of the nation. This letter sheds light on the difficult political situation before and after the Meiji Restoration, and highlights ITO's unwavering determination to overcome these challenges.



MAKIMURA Masanao

MAKIMURA Masanao (1834-1896)

Born in 1834 in Yamaguchi. During the final years of the Edo period, he was extensively involved in national affairs under KIDO Takayoshi. In September 1868, he was hired as a probationary assistant to *giseikan* (legislators for the new government), and was promptly assigned to serve in Kyoto Prefecture. Thereafter, he served as the head of Kyoto Prefecture until 1881, when he became a member of the Chamber of Elders. After

the transfer of the capital to Tokyo, Kyoto's industry was in decline, but during the MAKIMURA era, Kyoto focused on industry and education, and sought to transform itself into a modern city while maintaining its traditions. He was also the founder of the *Miyako Odori* (dance performance by geisha in Kyoto). He was also the chief justice of the Administrative Court, a member of the House of Peers, and a *danshaku* (baron).

The portrait is from *Kansai kyoiku*, Kansai kyoikusha. vol. 1, October 1898, NDL Call No. 雑 59-29.

(Translated by OGAWA Kanako)

Related articles from the NDL 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 \(2\)](#) (No. 201, August 2015)
- [Materials available in the Modern Japanese Political History Materials Room \(3\)](#) (No. 202, October 2015)
- [Materials available in the Modern Japanese Political History Materials Room \(4\)](#) (No. 203, December 2015)
- [Materials available in the Modern Japanese Political History Materials Room \(5\)](#) (No. 220, October 2018)
- [Materials available in the Modern Japanese Political History Materials Room \(6\)](#) (No. 221, December 2018)
- [Materials newly available in the Modern Japanese Political History Materials Room \(7\)](#) (No. 225, August 2019)
- [Materials newly available in the Modern Japanese Political History Materials Room \(8\)](#) (No. 226, October 2019)
- [Materials newly available in the Modern Japanese Political History Materials Room \(9\)](#) (No. 233, November 2020)
- [Materials newly available in the Modern Japanese Political History Materials Room \(10\)](#) (No. 235, January 2021)
- [Materials newly available in the Modern Japanese Political History Materials Room \(11\)](#) (No. 241, October 2021)
- [Materials newly available in the Modern Japanese Political History Materials Room \(12\)](#) (No. 242, December 2021)
- [Materials available in the Modern Japanese Political History Materials Room: The YAMAGATA Aritomo Papers](#) (No. 251, June 2023)
- [Materials available in the Modern Japanese Political History Materials Room: The MOTONO Ichiro and Seiichi Papers](#) (No. 252, August 2023)
- [Materials in the Modern Japanese Political History Materials Room: The UZAWA Fusaaki Papers](#) (No. 254, December 2023)

- [Materials in the Modern Japanese Political History Materials Room: The America–Japan Society Papers](#) (No. 255, February 2024)
- [Materials in the Modern Japanese Political History Materials Room: The KAWAKAMI Jotaro Papers](#) (No. 256, April 2024)

Related content from the National Diet Library Website

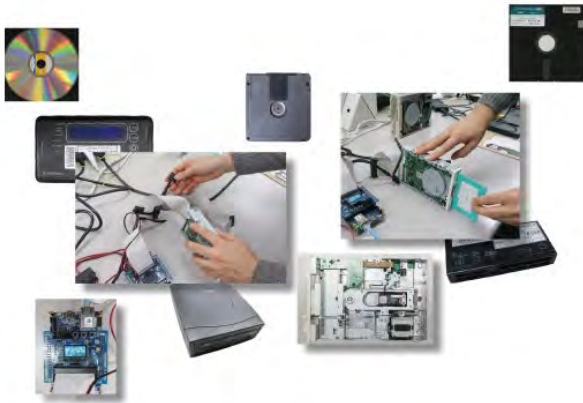
- [Research Navi](#): Summary of Modern Japanese political history materials (in Japanese)

Articles by NDL staff

The ABCs of long-term preservation of electronic materials — Are those disks still readable?

KINOSHITA Takafumi, Research and Development for Next-Generation Systems Office, Digital Information Planning Division, Digital Information Department

This article is a translation of an article in Japanese from [NDL Monthly Bulletin No. 730 \(February 2022\)](#).



To ensure perpetual access to its collections, the National Diet Library (NDL) undertakes various efforts such as repair and restoration, stack environment maintenance, and disaster preparedness.

The NDL's collections are not limited to paper materials. In addition to physical materials including CDs, DVDs, and USB memory sticks, it also holds significant amounts of digital data that has no physical format and is harvested through the internet or other methods. To ensure perpetual access to these digital materials, some efforts for proper maintenance are required, and their treatment is different from paper materials.

This article first shows what types of digital materials the NDL holds, and then explains the problems and solutions for the long-term preservation of digital materials.

What is digital data?

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01010000 00011000 01001001 11011101
10100010 01000001 10000110 01000100
01010001 00110100 01000100 11000001
10001010 01010110 10010001 11001001
01010101 00100110 01000000 01000110
01010001 01001011 00111100 01001101
10001010 00010110 10010101 10001001
01010000 00011000 01001001 11011101
10100010 01000100 10100110 01000100
01011001 00110100 01000100 01000001
01010000 00011000 01001001 11011101
10100010 01000001 10000110 01000100
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Digital data describes information using a series of 0s and 1s. In contrast to analog data which is continuous, digital data is easily duplicated and transmitted exactly the same as the original information. Therefore, once data is generated in a digital format, the quality of information contained in it will never go down.

However, physical damage to media naturally causes data loss. Additionally, as digital data is invisible and not readable by humans as is, usage relies upon playback systems including devices and software.

Various types of digital materials from the NDL's collection

Floppy disk (FD)

Storage capacity: several hundred kilobytes (KB) to several megabytes (MB)

Contains: government reports, software, magazine supplements, e-books, etc.



Floppy disks were widely used from the 1970s to the 1990s in Japan, although they are scarcely used nowadays.

Additionally, they are not suitable for long-term preservation since they sometimes become unreadable due to mold and other causes.

MO (magneto-optical disk)

Storage capacity: 128 MB to 640 MB
Contains: government reports, etc.



MO discs are writable multiple times and were used from the 1990s to the 2000s in Japan.

The NDL holds about a hundred items on 3.5-inch MO disks.

There is a risk of re-writing data, and reading devices, including MO drives, are difficult to come by, so MO discs are not recommended to keep data on.

USB memory

Storage capacity: several MB to several hundred gigabytes (GB)
Contains: proceedings, database software, etc.



The emergence of USB memory was in the 2000s, and it is still widely used in Japan.

Since USB memory sticks are easily erasable, there are risks of deleting and overwriting in error. It could be suggested that this media type is mainly aimed at making data portable, not at long-term holding.

Some USB memory sticks are the size of business cards and have foldable terminals.

MiniDisc (MD)

Storage capacity: about 140MB
Contains: audio materials, etc.

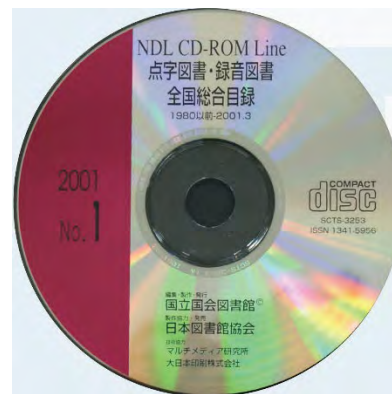


MiniDiscs were widely used from the 1990s to the 2000s in Japan, mainly for recording audio data, but they are rarely used nowadays, and players have been discontinued for production.

Additionally, the uniqueness of its format to hold audio files makes this type of media unsuitable for long-term preservation.

Optical discs (CD, DVD, BD)

Storage capacity: about 700MB to 100GB
Contains: various contents including audio-visual materials, etc.



Compact discs (CDs) began to spread in the 1980s, and digital versatile discs (DVDs) since around the 1990s to the 2000s, and both are still used today in Japan. Compared to other types of media, there are lower risks of data damage. They are suitable for a long-term preservation to a certain extent in appropriate conditions. However, it is known that the rate of deterioration varies according to the disc standards, such as "-R" (recordable) and "-RW" (rewritable), with the -RW standard in particular suffering from relatively rapid deterioration. Therefore, proper measures that match each standard are required.

The NDL also holds...

Astonishingly, the National Tax Agency created a game software titled *Wakusei Aton Gaiden* <NDL Call No. YH21-1364>, which can be played on the Nintendo Family Computer Disk System.

Regretfully, the NDL cannot run the software since it doesn't have a Family Computer game console.

According to the website of the agency, it was created for parents and their children to enjoy during the "Think About Tax Week" in 1990, and it was a quiz game.



In the 1990s, electronic materials called "digital books" or "electronic books" were sold in formats including FD or CD, and the NDL holdings include them. Specially designed portable reading devices were also sold.



In the NDL stacks, electronic materials are sorted by format and usually contained in boat-shaped paper boxes called funabako.

In addition to those electronic publications in physical formats, the NDL stores intangible materials including digitized materials, e-books, e-magazines, and websites. These are secured in digital storage (servers for the National Diet Library Digital Collection) and other apparatuses.

Problems and solutions for the long-term preservation of electronic materials

Problems

Severe effects of physical damage on recording media



- Data cannot be read with even a tiny corruption.
- Partial data deficiencies can make the entire content unreadable.

Relatively short life span compared to paper materials



- The life of the media is said to be for decades at the longest.
- Maintaining compatible playback devices means everything, and devices also have operating lives.

Easy falsification or overwriting of records



- Some types of media can be easily rewritten without any trace. Therefore, it is hard to check if data is truly maintained in its original condition.

Essential maintenance of system requirements including software



- Not only data but also playback software must be kept.
- The upkeep of the OS and the hardware on which the OS runs is required as well.

Solutions

Making a backup



- As digital data can be fully duplicated, creating backup copies can protect against unforeseen eventualities.

Media replacement



- Migration means moving digital data into more secure recording media for long-term preservation.

Maintaining system requirements



- Some problems can be solved up to a point by keeping a legacy system physically or using technologies such as emulation that imitate a legacy system virtually.
- Migration is another solution by converting unmaintained software data into compatible formats. Note that the word "migration" sometimes only means media replacement, and sometimes includes conversion of file formats.
- However, neither emulation nor migration can always work as a perfect alternative for the original.

The concept of the preservation of digital materials has a short history and contrasts sharply with paper materials worldwide, as it is far behind. In the first place, digital data is relatively new, so people rarely consider the significance of the problems shown above. But considering our situation, there is no doubt that the

importance of digital data will dramatically grow in the future. Consequently, preservation will surely become a larger problem.

Handing down the current cultural heritage to people decades or hundreds of years later, the NDL will continue to conduct technical research on preservation measures into the future.

Migration work of 5-inch FDs

Here is an instance of the concrete migration work currently processed by the Research and Development for Next-Generation Systems Office.

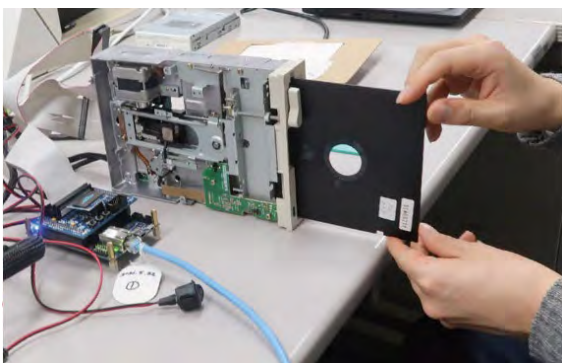


FDs are relatively easy-to-erase media and are in danger, so we must duplicate the data in other media.

When we pulled FD materials for research purposes, we found something that was black and flimsy like paper! That's why they are called "floppy."



When we think of a FD, we may imagine a 3.5-inch FD, but these are a little bit different. This type is usually called "5-inch FD," but actually measures 5.25 inches. In the 1980s to the 1990s, they were widely used as recording media. The storage capacity is about 1.2 MB, quite a bit less than the media used nowadays. (In comparison, even a CD has 700MB and a DVD has 4.7GB.)



Since the production of 5-inch FD drives has been discontinued, we had to procure a secondhand one, but unfortunately, our present-day PCs don't have any compatible inputs.

Will it be normally readable with our modern PCs even after somehow managing to connect the device?



In the case of our project, our PCs load data from 5-inch FDs through a specially designed device that makes 5-inch FD drives compatible with them.



We did it! Finally, we got raw signal data that had not yet been returned to the original 0 and 1 state. Now we have successfully made it through the phase of loading data from the FDs.

However, we have only taken a dump of data in an unreadable format. Even though we have managed to preserve the raw FD data as a whole, it does not mean a thing unless it is usable.

Which methods should we implement next, converting the file format into something compatible with present-day PCs, or emulation that imitate a legacy system virtually? We will keep making efforts.

(Translated by KATO Yuhei)

News from NDL

Weather maps from the Library of the Japan Meteorological Agency are available at the National Diet Library Digital Collections

Branch Libraries and Cooperation Division, Administrative Department

The National Diet Library (NDL) collects and preserves hard-to-find materials not held by the NDL in digitized data format, from branch libraries in government ministries, agencies, and the Supreme Court, as well as from public libraries, etc., and makes them available for use in the NDL Digital Collections.¹

The digital data of approximately 3,600 weather maps was provided to the NDL by the Library of the Japan Meteorological Agency and was made available to the public via the NDL Digital Collections in August 2023.

This means approximately 140 years of weather maps published by the Japan Meteorological Agency (and its predecessor organization) from March 1883 to September 2022 can now be viewed by anyone via the internet without any formalities.²

Announcement from the Library of the Japan Meteorological Agency

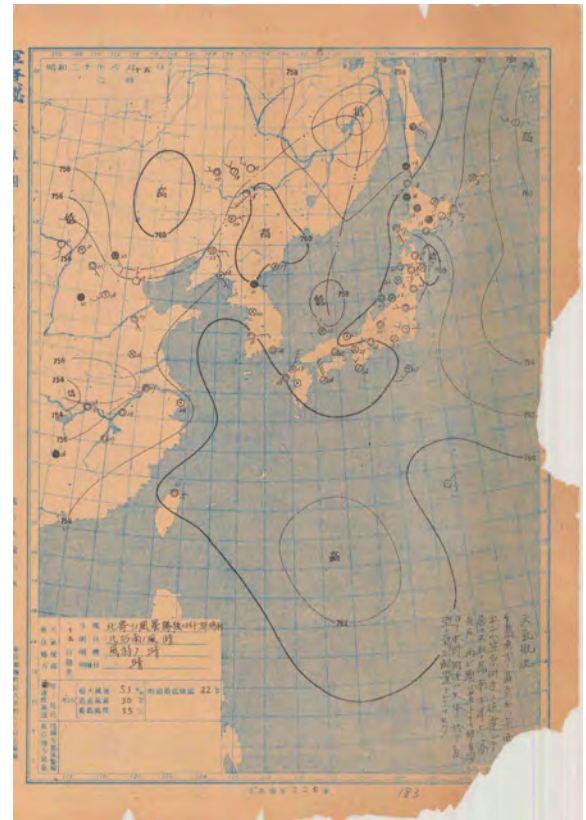
A weather map is a graphical representation of atmospheric conditions and weather conditions based on observation data. It can be described as a map of the sky. Nowadays, disaster prevention and weather forecasting are conducted using a variety of data from meteorological satellites, oceans, radar, and other sources, but weather maps are still one of the most important data sources.

It may be interesting to find and view weather maps of birthdays, anniversaries, and historical events for yourself and your family from the digital collection. In the summer of 2023, there were reports of extreme heat across the country, but if you compare August 100 years ago to August in recent years, you may find some differences.

The weather maps in the digital collection can be used for a variety of purposes, from summer homework and school reports to academic research and study.

Example of a weather map

The following figures are a weather map and a part of regional observation tables for August 15 and 16, 1945.³ Comparing the regional observation tables for both days, on August 16, the locations with data are almost exclusively Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku, and Kyushu.



観測所	緯度	経度	気圧	気温	湿度	風向	風速	雲量	降水	日照	その他
札幌	43°N	142°E	1010.0	18.0	75	北	10	0	0.0	10	晴
仙台	38°N	140°E	1010.0	20.0	75	北	10	0	0.0	10	晴
東京	35°N	139°E	1010.0	25.0	75	北	10	0	0.0	10	晴
京都	35°N	136°E	1010.0	25.0	75	北	10	0	0.0	10	晴
福岡	33°N	130°E	1010.0	25.0	75	北	10	0	0.0	10	晴

Weather map and regional observation table of August 15, 1945

*The last access date for internet information in this paper is May 2, 2024.

¹ <https://dl.ndl.go.jp/en/>

² All volumes are available at the NDL Digital Collections: <https://dl.ndl.go.jp/pid/12896309>.

It is also available from the following page: Collections from Other Institutions> The Library of the Japan Meteorological Agency: <https://dl.ndl.go.jp/en/collections/A00186?pageNum=0>

³ *Weather map, August 1945*. Central Meteorological Observatory, 1945-08. Data provided by the Library of the Japan Meteorological Agency. Reprinted in part from the [NDL Digital Collections](#).

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Regional observation table of August 16, 1945

Selected list of articles from NDL periodicals

The NDL Monthly Bulletin No. 757, May 2024/ No.758, June 2024

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. 757, May 2024 \(PDF: 4.63 MB\)](#)

- <Book of the month — from NDL collections>
Do not break promises to your children: *Kodomo no shitsukekata hiketsu 100kajo*
- "Hints and examples" for research
- Research Navi
- Collaborative Reference Database
- <Tidbits of information on NDL>
Making a report on International Policy Seminars
- <Books not commercially available>
Mito geijutsukan paipu orugan katsudo kirokushu: 1990 - 2021: Tsukuru, kanaderu, hirogaru
- <NDL Topics>

[No.758, June 2024 \(PDF: 3.91 MB\)](#)

- Greetings from new NDL Director General KURATA Keiko
- <Book of the month — from NDL collections>
Juju: A collection of foreign toys in print
- The official version of Mina Search has launched
- Providing Japanese National Bibliography: Provision services of the bibliographic data of the NDL
- <Books not commercially available>
Daimyo no kondate: Bunka ninen mibu gokondatecho
- <Tidbits of information on NDL>
If you win the lottery: The budget allocation of the NDL
- <NDL Topics>