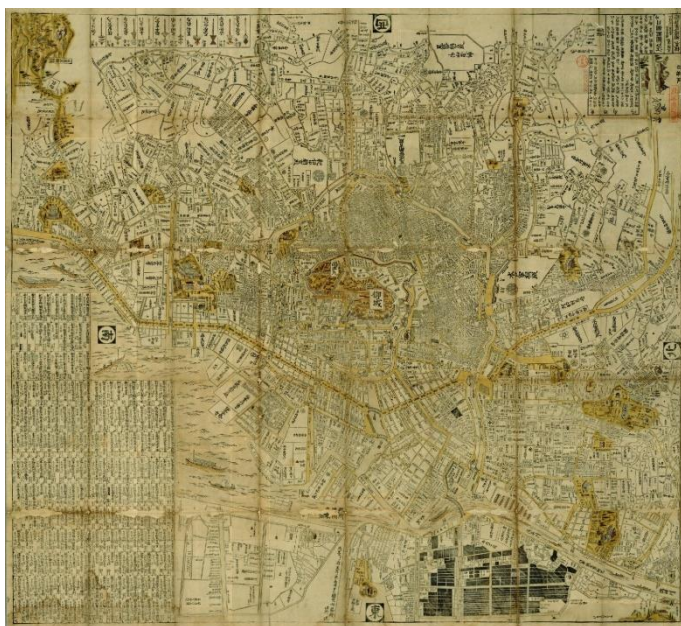
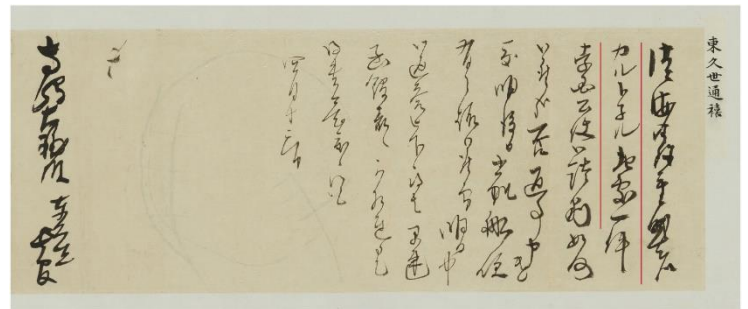
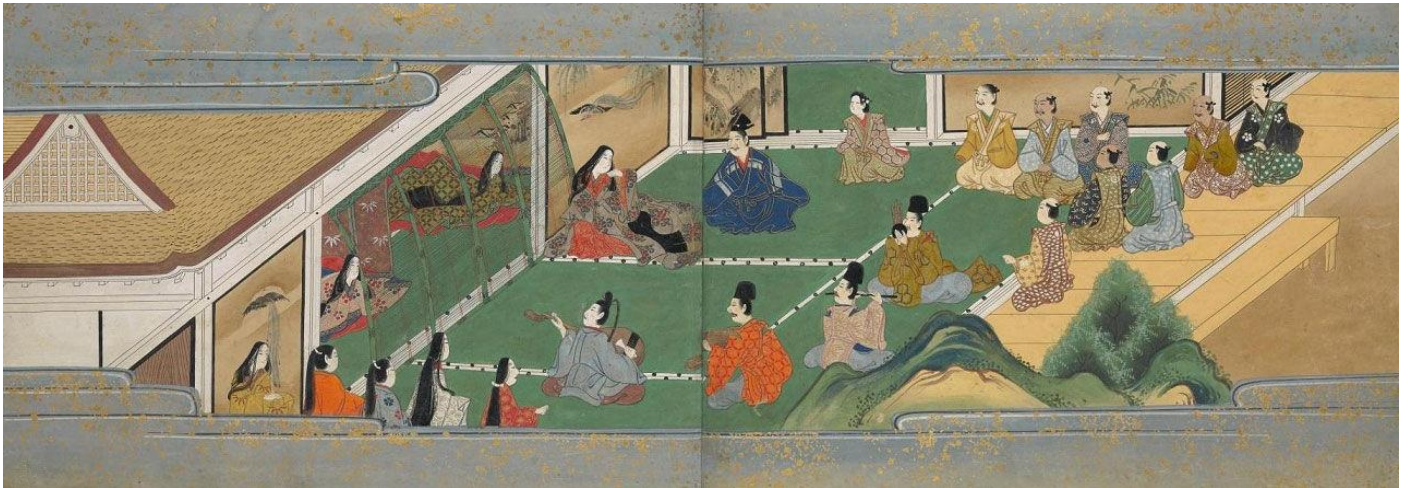


# National Diet Library Newsletter

No. 261, February 2025



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Selections from NDL collections

## Materials in the Modern Japanese Political History Materials Room: *Meijicho meishisho* (Scroll of Diplomatic Correspondence of the Early Meiji Era)

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)*.

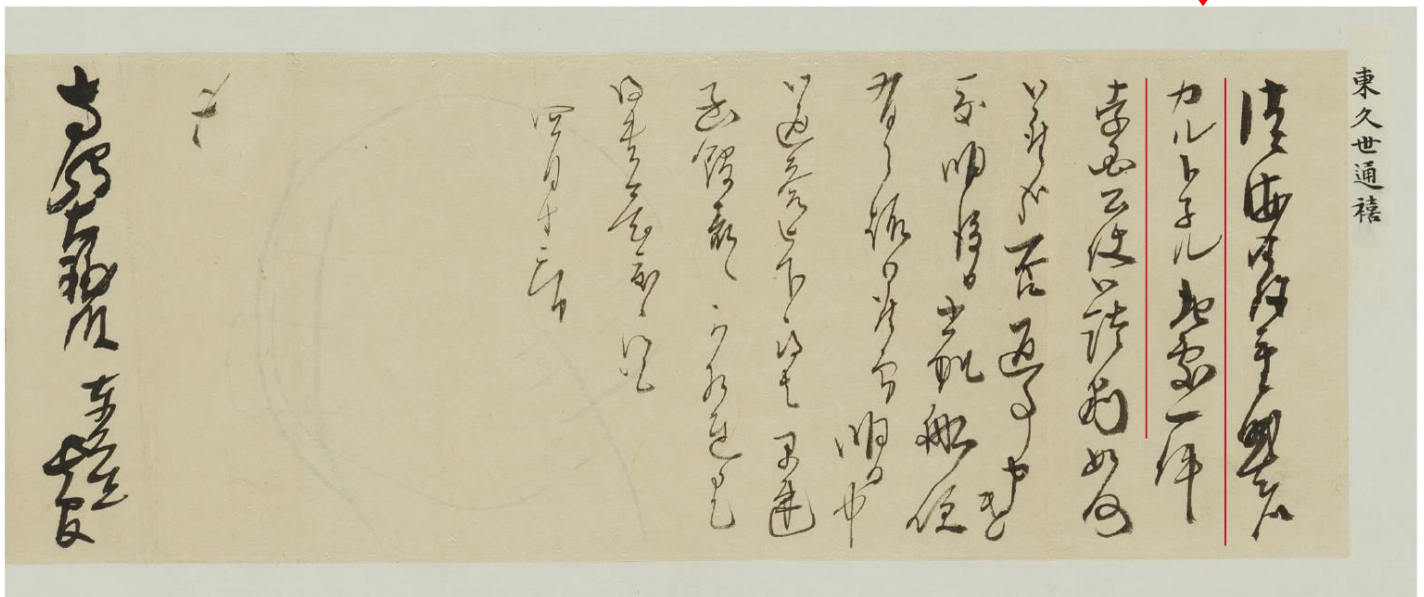


Image 1: Letter from HIGASHIKUZE Michitomi to TERASHIMA Munenori, dated April 13, [Meiji era].  
NDL Call No. Constitutional Government Documents Collection 370-9.

### 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.

### *Meijicho meishisho* (Scroll of Diplomatic Correspondence of the Early Meiji Era)

(1 volume, 21 items, available since January 2022)

This material includes letters written by people active from the last days of the Edo shogunate to the Meiji era, such as KATSU Kaishu and KOMATSU Tatewaki. Matters arising from dealings with foreign countries and foreigners were described.

Image 1 shows one of these letters, believed to date from around 1870, in which HIGASHIKUZE Michitomi, Director-General of the Hokkaido Development Commission, asked TERASHIMA Munenori, senior vice minister of the Foreign Ministry, about negotiations with the chargé d'affaires of the North German Confederation<sup>1</sup> regarding the land leased by Reinhold Gaertner, a Prussian trader active in Hakodate, Hokkaido (indicated by ↓ in the image).

In 1869, in cooperation with his brother, a diplomat stationed in Hakodate, Gaertner concluded an agreement with the Ezo Island government established by former military of the Edo shogunate (in what is now Hokkaido), including ENOMOTO Takeaki, to lease a large tract of land outside the settlement for the purpose of cultivation, virtually on a semi-permanent basis. After the Battle of Hakodate, the newly established Hokkaido Development

<sup>1</sup> A federation centered around Prussia established in 1867; transitioned to the German Empire in 1871.

Commission reported the situation to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Meiji government, which considered this agreement a serious issue in regards to its relations with other countries, moved to negotiate its cancellation in order to recover the land. Negotiations between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the chargé d'affaires of the North German Confederation, as well as between the Hokkaido Development Commission and Gaertner, resulted in a settlement in November 1870, when a large amount of compensation was paid to Gaertner.

Higashikuze's letter can be seen as an attempt to consider diplomatic sources in the process of dealing with the Hakodate case from the standpoint of the Director-General of the Hokkaido Development Commission.



HIGASHIKUZE Michitomi

### HIGASHIKUZE Michitomi (1833-1912)

Born in 1833 in Kyoto. He was one of seven noblemen, including SANJO Sanetomi, who were expelled from Kyoto as court nobles who believed in the doctrine of *sonno jōi* (revere the Emperor and expel the barbarians). After the Meiji Restoration, he held posts as Foreign Affairs Administrator, Director-General of the Hokkaido Development Commission, *jijū-cho* (grand chamberlain), Vice Chairman of the Chamber of Elders, and Vice President of the House of Peers. He was a count. Died in 1912.

The portrait is from Portraits of Modern Japanese Historical Figures.

(<https://www.ndl.go.jp/portrait/e/datas/175/>)

(Translated by OGAWA Kanako)

### Related articles from the NDL Newsletter:

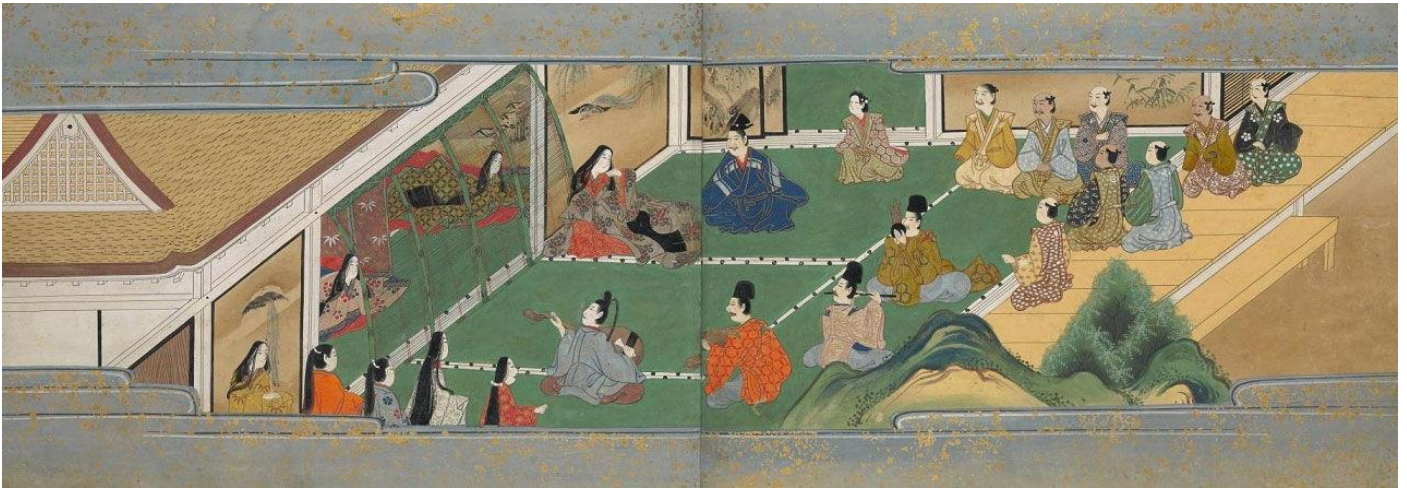
- [Materials available in the Modern Japanese Political History Materials Room \(1\)](#) (No. 200, June 2015)
- [Materials available in the Modern Japanese Political History Materials Room \(2\)](#) (No. 201, August 2015)

- [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 UTSUNOMIYA Taro Papers](#) (No. 258, August 2024)
- [Materials in the Modern Japanese Political History Materials Room: The MOROHASHI Noboru Papers](#) (No. 259, October 2024)
- [Materials in the Modern Japanese Political History Materials Room: The HONDA Kumataro Papers](#) (No. 260, December 2024)

### Related content from the National Diet Library Website

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

Selections from NDL collections

**"Bunsho"**

"Bunsho." Manuscript dating from the early Edo period, 24.0 × 34.7 cm, three volumes  
 \*Available via the [NDL Digital Collections](#).

*Bunsho* is a Nara picture book (*Nara-ehon*) that was produced during the 17th century in the early part of the Edo period and is based on a short story called *Bunsho-zoshi*, which was likely written during the Muromachi period (1392–1573). *Nara-ehon* are lavishly illustrated manuscripts that were produced between the late Muromachi and the early Edo periods. A great many *Nara-ehon* were produced for sale at the artist's studios.

*Bunsho-zoshi* tells the story of a man named Bunsho, who rises from poverty, becomes wealthy, and marries his daughters to noblemen, after which everyone is blessed with long lives. It is a joyous success story with a happy ending, and as such was tremendously popular with Edo-period readers. In fact, *Nara-ehon* based on *Bunsho-zoshi* were so popular with women that they were often used as the first book to be read at New Year's or included as part of a bride's dowery. In response to this popularity, publishers produced numerous *Nara-ehon* of *Bunsho-zoshi*, which is one reason that so many are extant today. *Bunsho* is one of the largest *Nara-ehon* to have been produced in landscape orientation, and features a number of pages on which the text is written on a luxurious paper decorated with figures of flowers and plants painted in

gold. Its beautiful construction and content that includes 23 illustrations—two of which are two-page spreads—suggest that it was produced to commemorate an auspicious event.

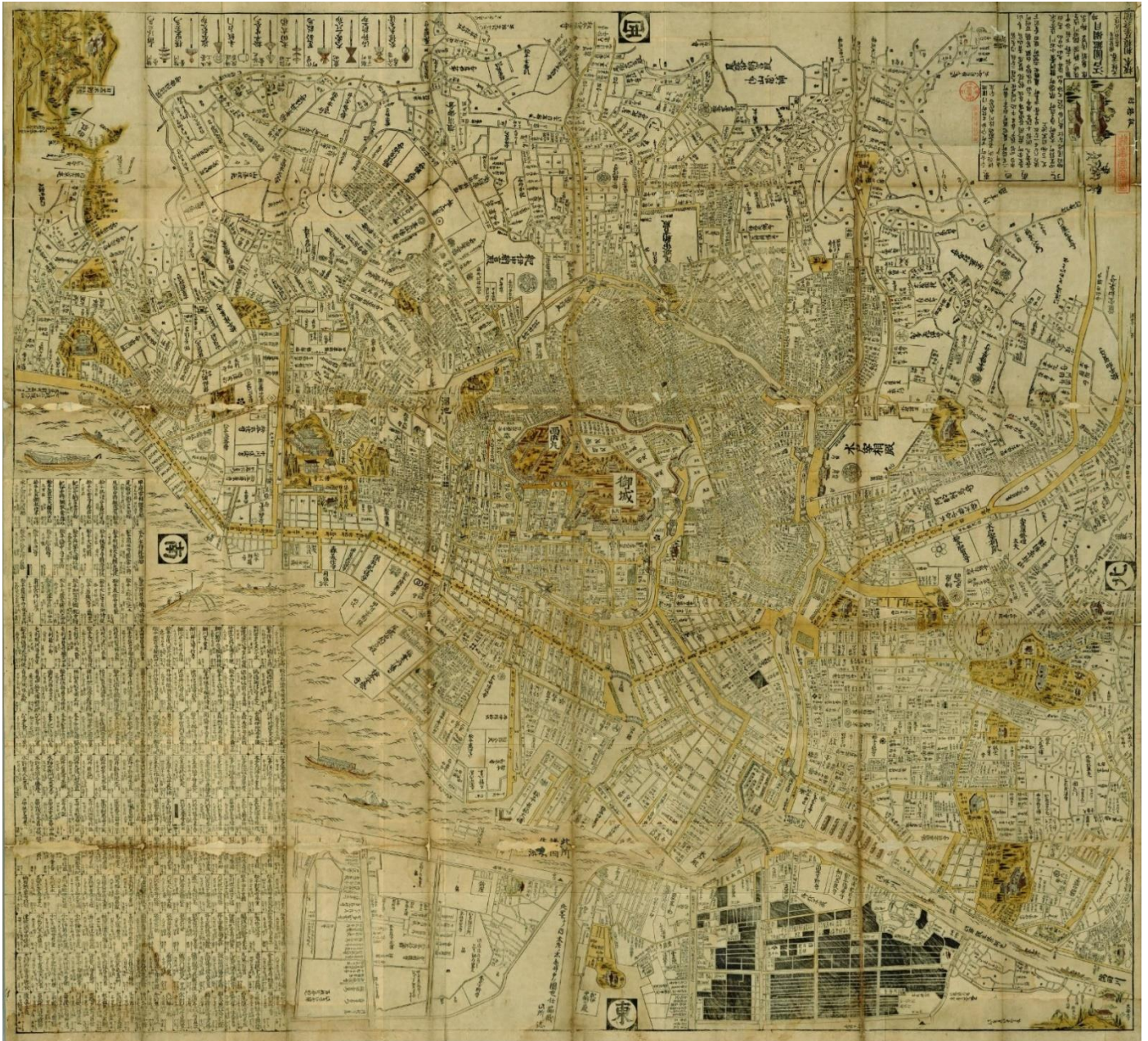
The illustration shown here is a two-page spread from the last of *Bunsho's* three volumes, which tells the story of Chujo and Rengehime. The story goes that Chujo, the son of the Imperial regent, had heard that Bunsho's daughter, Rengehime, was a beauty of great renown. Chujo visits Bunsho's home disguised as a merchant and wins an opportunity to play the *biwa* (Japanese lute) in front of the family. In the illustration, Bunsho sits at the top right center, dressed in blue, while opposite him at the bottom left center, Chujo sits holding a *biwa*. Chujo is looking to his left, where Bunsho's daughters sit behind a bamboo blind. A gust of wind blows the blind out of position, and in the blink of an eye, Rengehime and Chujo catch sight of each other. The artist has depicted this moment, showing the bamboo blind blown forward and away to reveal Rengehime sitting behind it.

(Translated by NOZAWA Asuka)

Selections from NDL collections

## Map Collections in the National Diet Library (4)

### *Edo zukan komoku*



Created by ISHIKAWA Tomonobu (Ryusen), published by Sagamiya Tahe (Edo) in Genroku 2 (1689).  
NDL Call No. 貴 9-34. \*Available via the [NDL Digital Collections](#).

*Edo zukan komoku Ken* and *Edo zukan komoku Kon* comprise a set. The author, ISHIKAWA Tomonobu (Ryusen), also produced maps such as *Honcho zukan komoku*. In the introduction of *Ken*, the author says that it is meaningless to stick to the scale as large maps made during the Kanbun period did (such as those by Ochikochi Doin). On the map of *Kon*, he widened the roads and focused on the pictorial expression of temples and shrines. *Ken* contains lists of temples,

shrines, professionals, entertainers and merchants, in addition to small maps of Edo.

## Events

## The 40th Mutual Visit Program between the National Diet Library and the National Library of China

The 40th mutual visit program of the National Diet Library (NDL) and [the National Library of China \(NLC\)](#) was held in Japan from November 19 to 26, 2024.

Headed by Mr. WEI Chong, Deputy Director of the NLC, the Chinese delegation also included:  
 Ms. YIN Mengxia, Editor-in-chief of NLC Publishing House  
 Ms. SaRenGaoWa, Deputy Director, NLC Ancient Books Library  
 Ms. HAN Xinyue, Deputy Director, Digital Resource & Service Department  
 Ms. WANG Xiao from the International Cooperation Division

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

Keynote Speeches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keynote Speech of the NLC Mr. WEI Chong, Deputy Director of the NLC</li> <li>• Current Status and Issues of the NDL 2023-2024 Mr. YAMAJI Yasushi, Deputy Director General of the NDL</li> </ul>
Session 1	<p>Theme: Facilitating Access to Materials for Those with Print Disabilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exploration and Practice of Reading Services for Those with Print Disabilities at the NLC Ms. HAN Xinyue, Deputy Director, Digital Resource &amp; Service Department, NLC</li> <li>• Services for Those with Print Disabilities at the NDL: The Mina Search Website (materials search for persons with disabilities) Mr. WATANABE Tadashi, Library Counsellor, Administrative Department, and Director of Library Support Division, Kansai-kan of the NDL</li> </ul>
Session 2	<p>Theme: Utilization and Long-Term Preservation of Digital Materials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinated Fusion of Tradition and Modernity: Effective Development of Resource Building and Knowledge Services Ms. SaRenGaoWa, Deputy Director, NLC Ancient Books Library</li> <li>• Expansion of Library Services through Digitization of Materials and Full Text Generation via OCR Mr. KIMEZAWA Tsukasa, Deputy Director General, Digital Information Department, NDL</li> </ul>

Program



NLC 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 China](#)

**Related articles from the NDL Newsletter:**

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

News from NDL

## The NDL has launched a new service that allows users to acquire photocopies as PDF files through the remote photoduplication service

On February 20, 2025, the National Diet Library has started offering the "Remote photoduplication service (PDF file download)", where we provide photocopies as PDF files, in addition to the conventional "Remote photoduplication service (courier or postal mail)", where we provide printed photocopies by courier or postal mail.

### Outline of the service

This is a service where users can make requests for photoduplication without coming to the library and acquire PDF files of photocopies of materials held by the NDL. Making requests and downloading PDF files will be done on [NDL Search](#).

According to the provisions of the Japanese Copyright Law, in principle, only a part of a work can be photocopied.

### Materials covered by the service

In principle, any materials held by the NDL are available through this service. However, publications of musical scores, maps, photo books, art books, magazines published within one year, etc. are not included in the scope of the service, in accordance with the provisions of the Japanese Copyright Law and other regulations.

### Who can use the service

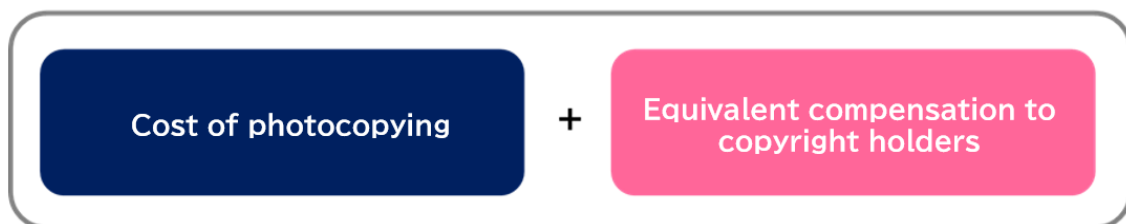
Only individual users with an official NDL user registration can use this service. Users with simple user registration and institutions such as libraries cannot make requests. For details on user registration, please refer to "[User Registration: official registration](#)".

Users must agree to the terms of use before applying for this service.

### Photocopy Fee

In order to use this service, compensation to the copyright holder is required. In addition to the cost of photocopying, a fee equivalent to compensation will be charged.

#### Photocopy fee



Details of this service are posted on the "[Remote photoduplication service](#)".



Selected list of articles from NDL periodicals

## The NDL Monthly Bulletin No. 765, January 2025/ No.766, February 2025

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. 765, January 2025 \(PDF: 4.97 MB\)](#)

- New Year Greetings for 2025
- <Book of the month — from NDL collections>  
*Chronological scientific tables volume 1*: The very first book of a hundred years of history
- A book that could not have been written without the National Diet Library Digital Collections
- Let's use the full-text search of the National Diet Library Digital Collections!
- The world of WATSUJI Tetsuro's manuscripts: Searching for the origin of "Watsuji Ethics"
- The NDL in figures: From the Annual Report of the NDL, FY2023
- <Tidbits of information on NDL>  
Original greeting card from the National Diet Library
- <Books not commercially available>  
*Oishii ukiyoeten: Hokusai hiroshige kuniyoshitachi ga egaita edo no ajiwai*
- <NDL Topics>

### [No. 766, February 2025 \(PDF: 4.31 MB\)](#)

- <Book of the month — from NDL collections>  
*Tentai ryoko*: Space travel in the Taisho era
- Featured Dialogue: SUETAKE Yoshiya and MAEDA Ryosuke  
The past and the future of searching for materials on modern Japanese political history
- The ABCs of long-term preservation of electronic materials:  
Can you still listen to those CDs?
- Results of the questionnaire on the National Diet Library Monthly Bulletin
- <Tidbits of information on NDL>  
Web accessibility for everyone
- <Books not commercially available>  
*Inkyunabura no jidai: Keio gijuku no seiyo shoki insatubon korekushon to sono hirogari: Dai30kai keio gijuku toshokan kichosho tenjikai*
- <NDL Topics>