National Diet Library Newsletter

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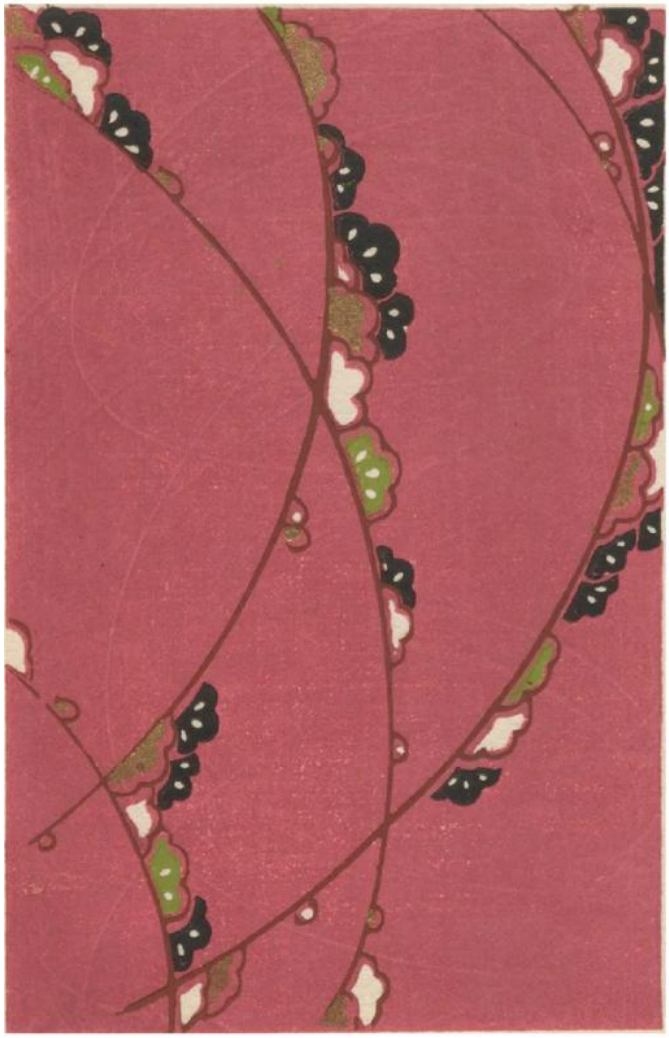

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国立国会図書館
National Diet Library, Japan

Selections from NDL collections

Materials in the Modern Japanese Political History Materials Room: The AWAYA Yuzo Papers

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. 763 (November 2024).

Image 1:
The AWAYA Yuzo papers arrived at the NDL packed into more than 30 cardboard boxes. (left)
Over the next several years, each item was inspected and catalogued, and they all have now been carefully preserved, protected in acid-free paper envelopes, and stored in stacks. (right)

Introduction

The National Diet Library holds approximately 430,000 documents on modern Japanese political history, including the personal papers of politicians, high-ranking officials, and military officers. 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.

The AWAYA Yuzo Papers

(8,765 items, available since December 2023)

The AWAYA Yuzo Papers is a vast collection of 8,765 items, as shown in Image 1. AWAYA Yuzo (1897–1995) was a member of the Japan Socialist Party who began his career in Aomori Prefecture where he grew up and later was elected to the House of Representatives a total of six times. He is also well known as a writer and uncle of the singer AWAYA Noriko (1907–1999), who was known as the Queen of the Blues.

In addition to requests and petitions from throughout Aomori and environs, this collection includes numerous documents related to government policies that govern primary industries, as prepared by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, other national agencies, and prefectural officials. Many of these documents were most likely collected by AWAYA when he was a Diet member, in order to convey the opinions of his constituents to the national government.

There are also materials related to the so-called Sanrizuka Struggle, which involved local opposition to the building of Narita Airport, and provide a direct glimpse into AWAYA's activities in the political climate of the 1970s.

Image 2: AWAYA Yuzo

AWAYA Yuzo (1897–1995)
Born in Aomori in 1897. After serving as a member of the Shinjo-mura Assembly in Aomori, he first ran for a seat in the House of Representatives as a member of the Japan Socialist Party during the 26th general election in 1953. He served a total of six terms during his 16 years in national politics and served as head of the Socialist Party's newspaper bureau as well as chairman of the Aomori Prefectural Federation of Party Branches, before retiring from politics in 1969. After retiring, he served as director of the Aomori Writer's Association in his hometown. He died in 1995 at the age of 98.

The portrait is from *22nin no seijika*. Naisei Tosho Shuppan, 1956, NDL Call Number: 312.8-M942n.

(Translated by KUBO Satoshi)

Related content from the National Diet Library Website

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

Selections from NDL collections

Umetsukushi: A modernly retro design

SEGAWA Tomoko, Business, Science and Technology Division, Reader Services and Collections Department

This article is a translation of the article in Japanese in NDL Monthly Bulletin No. 778 (February 2026).

Front cover.
FURUYA Korin, *Umetsukushi*, Yamada Unsodo, 1907, 24 illustrations, 19 × 26 cm.
Available via the NDL Digital Collections.

Umetsukushi is a collection of *zuan* featuring plum blossoms.
According to the Japanese language dictionary *Nihon kokugo daijiten*, the term *zuan* refers to "the act of creating a design of aesthetically-pleasing combinations of shapes and colors that can be used as a decoration or for some other purpose. Also, the patterns or motifs of such an illustration; or an illustration expressing a design or concept to be used in the production of arts and crafts or general manufactured goods."[1]

During the early Meiji era, the term *zuan* was used as a translation of the English word "design," but since then design has been adopted into Japanese as a loan word. During the Meiji and Taisho eras, art schools had *zuan* departments, department stores had *zuan* divisions, and design magazines held contests to solicit *zuan*. Clearly, the term *zuan* was significantly more common back then than it is today.

Umetsukushi was authored by FURUYA Korin (1875–1910), a graphic designer who was active during the late Meiji era and whose real name was FURUYA Totaro. He studied painting under SUZUKI Mannen, a painter of the Shijo school, who emphasized sketching from life. He also studied design under KAMISAKA Sekka, a designer and painter who was deeply influenced by the Rinpa school. In addition to his studies of painting and design, Furuya also pursued interests in architecture, interior design, charcoal drawing, and other subjects. He was reportedly an admirer of OGATA Korin, a leading painter of the Rinpa school, who was active during the Edo period. And this is what led to his own adoption of the pseudonym Korin.

FURUYA Korin
Kyoto zuan 2(1), April 1907, p. 21. NDL Call Number: 雑 34-7.

[1] *Nihon kokugo daijiten*, second edition, vol. 7, Shogakukan, 2001, p. 750, NDL Call Number: KF3-G103.

Kamisaka was, in fact, often referred to as the reincarnation of Ogata Korin, and served as Furuya's lifelong mentor. Furuya was an instructor at the Kyoto City Arts and Crafts School (now Kyoto City University of Arts) zuan department, and during this time, Kamisaka also taught at the same school, where they both worked to educate the coming generation. Their relationship was deep, as evidenced by the foundation of the design magazine *Shin bijutsukai*,[2] which was conceived by Furuya and edited by Kamisaka. Furuya was considered Kamisaka's most brilliant student, and Kamisaka thought of him as his successor. At an early age, Furuya had won prizes at numerous exhibitions and actively published collections of his designs. Tragically, he fell ill and died at the age of 36.

A posthumous exhibition of Furuya's works was held in 1919. *Korin ibokushu* (Collected works of Korin) was published to commemorate the exhibition, and the designs, folding screen paintings, and other works compiled in that book illustrate Furuya's natural talent for creating design.[3] He is highly regarded not only for his design work but also for his paintings of flowers, birds, and figures.

Author's note:

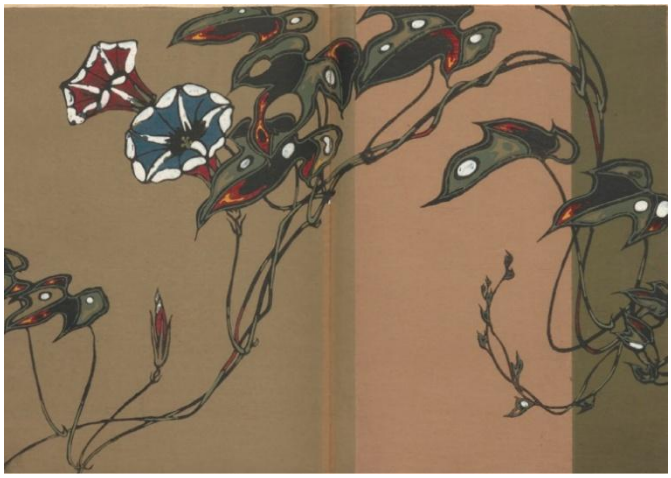
I came across this book by chance when it was featured in an exhibition I was involved with. I was deeply impressed by the numerous designs, which at first appear retro but also somehow feel fresh and sophisticated. Looking at Furuya's works, I was struck not only by his artistic sensibility but also by the diversity of style. It seems to me that Furuya never ceased to acquire new knowledge while playing a variety of roles—as a painter, a designer, and a teacher.

From Umetsukushi

(Top left) https://dl.ndl.go.jp/en/pid/854297/1/9 (Top right) https://dl.ndl.go.jp/en/pid/854297/1/16
(Bottom left) https://dl.ndl.go.jp/en/pid/854297/1/8 (Bottom right) https://dl.ndl.go.jp/en/pid/854297/1/20

[2] *Shin bijutsukai*, 1-34, May 1902–April 1906, NDL Call Number: 雑 34-5.
[3] FURUYA Korin illust., HASHINAGA Shunpa et al, eds, *Korin ibokushu*, Unsodo, 1919, NDL Call Number: 195-186.

Other works by FURUYA Korin



(Top left) FURUYA Korin, *Shasei kusabana moyo*, vol. 1, Yamada Unsodo, 1907.
Available via the NDL Digital Collections.
(Top right) *Ibid.* Available via the NDL Digital Collections.
(Center) FURUYA Korin, *Shasei kusabana moyo*, vol. 2, Yamada Unsodo, 1907.
Available via the NDL Digital Collections.
(Bottom left) INOKUMA Asamaro, FURUYA Korin illust., *Kyugi soshoku jurokushiki zufu*, vol. 2, Kyoto Bijutsu Kyokai, 1903. Available via the NDL Digital Collections.
(Bottom right) FURUYA Korin, *Korin moyo ashide moyo*, Yamada Unsodo, 1908.
Available via the NDL Digital Collections.

Let's make good use of *Umetsukushi*!

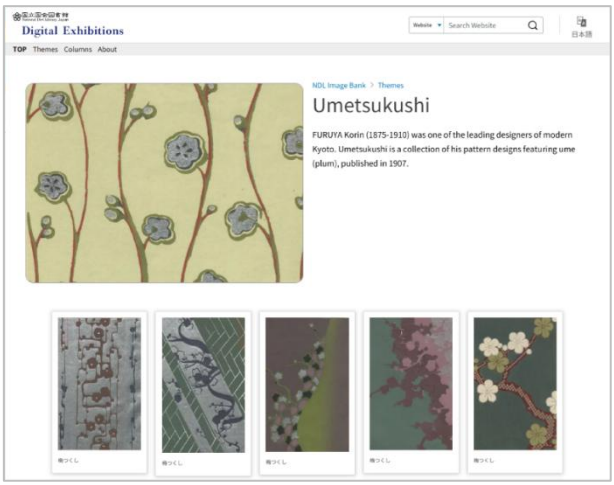
Have you ever been asked to design a poster for an event at work or in your community? Perhaps you have thought about creating a more elaborate New Year's card this year? These days, there are plenty of ways to find illustrations and free stock images, but I would like to suggest a slightly different approach.

Using the NDL Digital Collections

Examples of poster and a New Year's card made with images from *Umetsukushi*
Images used (top): https://dl.ndl.go.jp/en/pid/854297/1/20 (bottom): https://dl.ndl.go.jp/en/pid/854297/1/9

Umetsukushi is just one of the many materials for which copyright protection has expired and which is available via the National Diet Library Digital Collection (https://dl.ndl.go.jp/en/). Because these materials are in the public domain, they can be used by anyone to create posters and New Year's cards. The National Diet Library Digital Collection is a wonderful source of free materials that can be used to create fresh and new designs.

Using the NDL Image Bank



NDL Image Bank: *Umetsukushi* (https://www.ndl.go.jp/en/imagebank/theme/umetsukushi)

Of course, searching for just the right images can also be time-consuming, and for this reason we recommend the NDL Image Bank (https://www.ndl.go.jp/en/imagebank), where you will find digital images of materials from the National Diet Library's collections, organized by subject matter. This makes it easy to find images that suit your purpose, and since all images in the NDL Image Bank are in the public domain, they can be reused for any purpose, including commercial use.

*Please be sure to read the important notes before using images from the National Diet Library Digital Collections and NDL Image Bank.

- Utilizing content from the National Diet Library website / National Diet Library website
- About NDL Image Bank / NDL Image Bank

(Translated by HATTORI Mao)

Reference (in Japanese):

- FURUYA Korin, *Furuya korin soka moyo* (Kindai zuan korekushon), Unsodo, 2005. NDL Call Number: KC521-H149.
- KAMISAKA Sekka and FURUYA Korin eds., *Shin bijutsukai* (Kindai zuan korekushon), Unsodo, 2006. NDL Call Number: KC521-H279.
- NAMIKI Seishi, MATSUO Yoshiki, and OKA Tatsuya, *Zuan kara dezain e: Kindai kyoto no zuan kyoiku*, Tankosha, 2016. NDL Call Number: KC521-L239.

Articles by NDL staff

Welcome to the magazine stacks!

Book and Serials Division, Reader Services and Collections Department

This article is a translation of the article in Japanese in NDL Monthly Bulletin No. 775 (November 2025).

Book shelves have divider slots at 3-cm intervals, and dividers are generally set in every other slot.
The shelf for the next week's new acquisitions is marked by the red divider at the center of the picture.

Every Thursday morning, several of us in the Periodicals Section head to the basement stacks, where we find newly-launched magazines and other "new acquisitions," that is, titles not previously held by the National Diet Library.

New acquisitions are handed over to the Periodicals Section after the Acquisitions Department catalogues and assigns call numbers to each title. Space for each newly acquired title is reserved for the next several years by setting dividers on the shelves. For example, to reserve seven years' worth of a monthly magazine, we calculate as follows: 12 months times 7 years equals 84 issues. And since each issue is 2 cm thick, 84 issues require 168 cm of space. Then, since shelf dividers are placed at 6-cm intervals, we divide 168 by 6 and reserve space for 28 dividers. Personally, I never thought that working at a library would require so much mental arithmetic, and as someone who struggles with math, I still have a hard time with it.

These estimates can still be off due to things such as a change in publication frequency from monthly to quarterly, a change in the thickness of a single issue, suspension of publication, or reissuance. We periodically review the overall layout of the stacks, but if we run out of space before a review, we assess how full the surrounding shelves are and move materials back and forth to create space. We do our best to avoid miscalculations, but since it is difficult to predict changes, the only way to get things right is to rely on experience but occasionally go through some trial and error. It is not a straightforward task, but it's rewarding to know that we are handling magazines that are being preserved for the future.

Occasionally, we receive prewar magazines with pages that have turned brown. Such materials are quite fragile, so we do not place them directly on the shelves but instead store them in protective holders or bindings. Even old magazines are new acquisitions if they are not already held by the NDL, and it is interesting for me to encounter a variety of magazines.

New acquisitions have yellow markers inserted in them, so if you visit the NDL and find a magazine with yellow tape in it, please think about the journey that magazine took to reach your hands and return it with the yellow tape still inside.

(Translated by MOURI Tomoki)

Articles by NDL staff

The small and amusing world of the cabinet storage of maps

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

This article is a translation of the article in Japanese in NDL Monthly Bulletin No. 778 (February 2026).

A cabinet containing 1:50,000 topographical maps produced by the Geospatial Information Authority of Japan (GSI) or its predecessor organizations, located within the Map Room Stacks.

In the central part of the Main Building of the Tokyo Main Library, there is an old-fashioned, multi-tiered stacks building. While the stacks building of the Main Building mainly houses books, the map room stacks, which are maintained by our Map Room, are located in the stacks building, and here we store approximately 600,000 map materials.

The materials in the Map Room Stacks can be broadly classified into three categories: Residential maps in booklet form, folded maps (such as mountain maps and city maps) which are large maps that have been folded, and flattened maps (such as topographical maps and hydrographical charts) which are stored in an unfolded state. The first two are generally stored upright on bookshelves, just like books, but flattened maps cannot be stored that way. So, what do we do? They are stored in specially made cabinets with large drawers that can accommodate flattened maps in their unfolded state. About half of the map room stacks are occupied by these cabinets.

It is what these cabinets contain that is really fascinating. In the case of Japanese topographical maps produced by the Geospatial Information Authority of Japan (GSI) or its predecessor organizations, the same call number is assigned to topographical maps of the same scale and location, regardless of whether they are old or new, and they are stacked in the same drawer. In other words, when a drawer is opened, old and new topographical maps of a certain location are placed on top of each other, and as each map is turned, the changes in the land since the Meiji Era (1868–1912) can clearly be seen. This is the case all across Japan, making it a very romantic space filled with the history of the development of our country's land.

Cabinets that house foreign topographical maps are quite different, containing topographical maps from around the world, organized by country and scale. Each country employs diverse and creative approaches to map production, making it interesting to compare them.

Cabinets containing materials with the National Diet Library Classification (NDLC) code YG13 (Other Thematic Maps) hold a diverse collection of maps, including bird's-eye views, illustrated maps, and statistical maps, offering endless discoveries of maps you never knew existed. What delightful stacks! It is regrettable that, being closed stacks, only staff can enter.

In the Map Room, we create tools to help you find maps, such as index maps and the Maps page in Research Navi. Our ultimate goal is for users to be able to search for maps as freely as they would by flipping through physical maps in a library, but we are still only halfway there. We will continue our research and improvements with the aim of creating an environment where maps are easier to find.

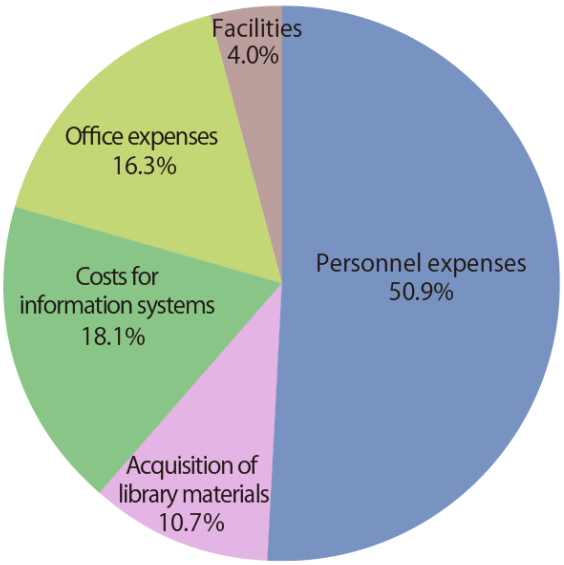
(Translated by TOMITA Joji)

Budget

NDL Budget for FY2026

This article is a translation of the article in Japanese of the same title in NDL Monthly Bulletin No. 782 (June 2026).

The budget for FY2026 (April 2026–March 2027) was approved by the National Diet on April 7, 2026, with 20,808,767,000 yen appropriated for the National Diet Library during FY2026.



Breakdown by expenditure for FY2026

The overall composition of the expenditure budget includes:

- Personnel expenses: 50.9%
- Acquisition of library materials: 10.7%
- Costs for information systems: 18.1%
- Office expenses: 16.3%
- Facilities: 4.0%

The outline of the expenditure budget for FY2026 is as follows:

National Diet Library FY2026 Budgets (1,000 yen)

(Item) National Diet Library	**19,984,808**
Personnel expenses	10,582,766
Regular office expenses	189,244
Legislative research	288,185
Acquisition of library materials	2,227,527
of which was compensation for deposit of publications	347,570
Costs for information systems	3,774,255
Tokyo Main Library operation	1,738,766
International Library of Children's Literature operation	255,767
Kansai-kan operation	928,298
(Item) Expenses for facilities	**823,959**
Maintenance of the Tokyo Main Library	347,338
Maintenance of the Kansai-kan	376,685
Maintenance of the International Library of Children's Literature	99,936
Total	**20,808,767**

(Translated by MOURI Tomoki)

News from NDL

NDL User Satisfaction Survey of FY2026

Planning Division, Administrative Department

Since FY2003 the National Diet Library (NDL) has conducted annual user surveys in order to figure out the trends of use, user satisfaction and requests.

The NDL is now conducting a user satisfaction survey of FY2026. Your ideas and opinions are important to our library and will help us provide you with the best library services possible.

URL: https://enquete.ndl.go.jp/141833/p/NL?lang=en
Survey period: From May 1 to September 30, 2026

*This is an anonymous survey. It will take about 10 minutes to complete.
*Answers are processed statistically and individual answers are not linked to the respondent. Also, the data will not be used for any purpose other than this survey.
*The results of this survey will be posted on the NDL website.

For further information about NDL user surveys, please visit the NDL website.

Selected list of articles from NDL periodicals

The NDL Monthly Bulletin No. 783/784, July/August 2026

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. 783/784, July/August 2026 (PDF: 15.7 MB)

- <Book of the month – from NDL collections>
  Hawai Saijiki edited by HAYAKAWA Oo: Nature and daily life in Hawaii depicted by Japanese immigrants
- 61st Committee on Designation of Rare Books
  Materials recently designated as rare books
- Series: Behind the National Diet Library
  Part 3: Cataloging books and other printed matter
- Lecture by YAMAMOTO Miki
  Exploring the intersection of wordless picturebooks and "search and find" picturebooks
- <Tidbits of information on NDL>
  Unifying the collection and organization of library materials in both tangible and intangible formats
- <Books not commercially available>
  Mushi mezuru nihon no hitobito = Mushi (Insects and other creatures) Lovers in Japan
- <NDL Topics>