

Trends of the past year

1. Introduction

The National Diet Library (NDL), as the library and research institute of the Diet, as well as the only national library in Japan, gathers a broad range of materials through legal deposit and other means to provide various services to the Diet, the executive and judicial branches of the government, and the general public.

As the year 2008 coincides with the 60th Anniversary of establishment and opening of the NDL as well as implementation of the legal deposit system, we held several events to celebrate the occasion.

An open discussion “Publishing culture and the Legal Deposit System” was held in commemoration the Day of the Legal Deposit System (May 25) on May 24, 2008.

An exhibition of rare books titled “Rare books of the National Diet Library – The 60th anniversary –” was held at the Tokyo Main Library from October 16 to 29, and at the Kansai-kan from November 13 to 26 displaying a total of 77 items.

The 16th meeting of the Conference of Directors of National Libraries in Asia and Oceania (CDNLAO) was hosted on October 20 and the CDNLAO Open Seminar was held on October 21.

A symposium commemorating the 60th anniversary titled “Through knowledge we prosper – New role of the National Diet Library –” was held on November 19.

We developed and published a mid-term future plan to implement “Vision for the NDL’s 60th anniversary” (the Nagao Vision) formulated in the previous year, in the form of “Future Initiatives - to build a new knowledge base to generate creativity -.”

We have been running Activity Evaluation to assess progress and achievement in the Priority Objective for each FY to achieve the NDL Vision. In FY2008, we evaluated and published the results of Priority Objectives set in the previous FY. We also reviewed the evaluation system for the next FY.

The contract between the Toyo Bunko (Oriental Library) and the NDL was terminated at the end of FY2008, thereby abolishing the branch library status which the former had had since 1948.

The following developments were made during FY2008 in the services for the Diet, and in the library services for the executive and judicial branches and the general public; in the acquisition and cataloging, provision of bibliographic information and preservation of materials as the basis of the said services; and in the cooperation with other libraries and the digital library project.

2. Services

(1) Services for the Diet



Briefing a Diet Member's secretary
(image)

The provision of services to the Diet is the primary duty of the NDL, and has been carried out under the across-the-library framework, led by the Research and Legislative Reference Bureau.

In FY2005, we developed as the future goals of the Diet services the Guidelines for Services for the National Diet, aiming to improve and reinforce two functions, namely to serve as the brains for the legislative body and also as an information center for Diet members.

As FY2008 is the midpoint for the “Second Basic Plan for Diet Service” which sets out measures to improve services in the five years from FY2006, we carried out comprehensive inspection of the plan and summarized challenges and solutions.

In response to requests from Diet members, the Research and Legislative Reference Bureau answered about 46,000 queries across the political, economic and social spectrum. The total number of research requests has increased 1.6 times over the last 10 years.

We also conduct surveys in advance on issues that are expected to be debated in the Diet, and distribute the results to the Diet in publications. In FY2008, 501 such anticipatory researches were

conducted. As for interdisciplinary researches made jointly by two or more research divisions on cross-cutting issues, we conducted research on “Policy Issues of Japan in International Comparison” and “Impacts and Measures of Regulatory Reform in Economic Fields.” We chose “First year of the Rudd Government of Australia” as the theme of the former research. As a part of the international joint research, an international policy seminar was held inviting a policy specialist from Australia.

We improved electronic provision of information on legislations and parliaments by providing an external database through the “Chosa-no-Mado,” a website for the Diet, and by expanding the Database System for the Minutes of the Imperial Diet.

The Detached Library in the Diet allows users to read and borrow materials and provides a search service for the materials it holds, using the DLID-OPAC (Detached Library in the Diet Online Public Access Catalog).

(2) Services for executive and judicial branches

The number of branch libraries of the NDL within ministries, agencies and the Supreme Court stood at 26 (32 including sub-branches) the same as the previous year.

A special lecture was given at the Meeting between the Librarian of the NDL and the Directors of the Branch Libraries to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the NDL branch library system.

In FY2008, the NDL, the central library, provided services for approximately 10,400 loaned materials and 2,600 copied materials to branch libraries. About 43,000 reference enquiries were answered, 158,000 materials were lent, and 33,000 items were photocopied at branch libraries.

To promote the service by the branch libraries, a survey on users’ needs was conducted for administrative and judicial staff based on the Action Plan for Supporting Branch Libraries placed in the Executive Agencies of the Government and in the Judicial Agency. Special training was also conducted to support the digitization of the materials in branch libraries.



Service for the staff of branch libraries
(image)

(3) Services for the general public

Services intended for the general public are provided in the Tokyo Main Library, the Kansai-kan, the International Library of Children's Literature, and the Toyo Bunko (Oriental Library), branch of the NDL. These services consist of both remote and in-house services.



Research instruction sessions for visitors (image)

The remote services of the Tokyo Main Library, the Kansai-kan and the International Library of Children's Literature in FY2008 included approximately 16,000 cases of lending out to libraries, 337,000 requests for photocopying, 7,500 reference enquiries in writing, and 39,000 reference enquiries by telephone.

Regarding in-house services, the NDL drafted the existing operation rules into compliance rules of in-house service and detail rules for copy service and announced to users with the purpose of preservation of the materials, security for inside the library, maintenance of good environment for usage and provision of fair and smooth copy service.

The review of in-house services in each facility in FY2008 is as follows:

At the Tokyo Main Library, the number of days open was 278, and the number of visitors was about 457,000 (an average of 1,644 people per day).

At the Kansai-kan, the number of days open was 278, and the number of visitors was about 59,000 (an average of 212 people per day).

At the International Library of Children's Literature, the number of days open was 286, and the number of visitors was about 136,000 (an average of 475 people per day).

At the Toyo Bunko (Oriental Library), branch of the NDL, the number of days open was 224 and the number of visitors was about 1,900 (an average of 8 people per day).

3. Acquisition, cataloging and preservation of materials

(1) Acquisition of materials

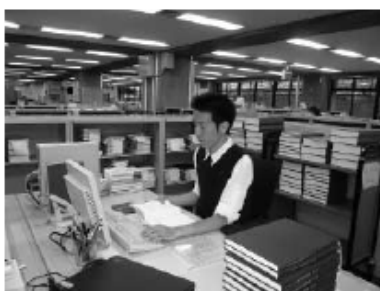
Increasing the collection is a fundamental task for all the services of the NDL, and thus efforts have been continuously made in this fiscal year to acquire library materials through legal deposit, purchase, international exchange and donation.



Materials newly accepted during FY2008 include about 247,000 books, 635,000 serials, and 262,000 other items, totaling approximately 1,144,000 items. The approximate number of items in stock at the end of this fiscal year is 9,290,000 books, 13,091,000 serials, and 13,267,000 other items, totaling about 35,648,000 items.

As the NDL designated every May 25 as the Day of the Legal Deposit System, last fiscal year, an open lecture was held on May 24, 2008, and publicity pamphlets and posters commemorating the 60th anniversary of the legal deposit system were sent to publishers and others in the hope of improving the deposit rate.

(2) Cataloging of materials and provision of bibliographic information



Cataloging of materials

Cataloging of materials and the provision of bibliographic information are being carried out, based on the Policy for Creation and Provision of Bibliographic Data in the National Diet Library (2008) formulated last fiscal year.

In April 2009, the Acquisitions Department and the Bibliography Department were reorganized into one Acquisitions and Bibliography Department and a commercial MARC was introduced to improve the operation system.

To improve access to information resources, in addition to the creation of bibliographic data for newly acquired materials, the three-year retrospective cataloging project has been implemented since FY2006, making it possible to search data via the NDL-OPAC.

In November 2008, a Conference on Bibliographic Control was held with researchers and library officials to promote bibliographic control.

The total number of items of bibliographic data in the NDL-OPAC at the end of FY2008 was about 19,090,000.

(3) Preservation and cooperation

To accumulate publications as cultural property and pass them on to future generations, the NDL is working on maintenance of a proper preservation environment, restoration of damaged materials, and media conversion.

In order to use the stack space of the whole library and effectively utilize the existing stacks for as long as possible, a first



Checking sticky trap for insect

stage plan of transferring materials from the Tokyo Main Library to the Kansai-kan to be implemented in FY2009 was drawn up based on the stack plan of the Tokyo Main Library and the Kansai-kan formulated in FY2006.

As measures for preserving library collections, a team to review the stack environment of the main building in the Tokyo Main Library was formed in June 2008 to manage pests including mold, and countermeasures were considered and conducted.

On media conversion, the National Diet Library Basic Plan for Media Conversion, FY2009-2011, was formulated in March 2009 to stipulate that digitization is set as the measure of media conversion in principle and the promotion of digital library service is set to be the purpose of media conversion in addition to preservation of the materials.

4. Library cooperation

Since the NDL is the sole national library of Japan, it is our key duty to work in coordination and cooperation with various libraries and library-related groups at home and abroad.

To advance domestic cooperation activities, conferences and meetings with public libraries and university libraries and training sessions for the staff of local assembly libraries were held. The NDL supported the 94th All Japan Library Conference (in Hyogo) and co-hosted the 2008 Annual Meeting of the Japan Special Libraries Association (in Kyoto) with the Japan Special Libraries Association.



Training program on reference service

For training exchange activities, group training and remote training programs via the Internet were provided. In this fiscal year, we started a new training program on reference service by dispatching NDL staff, which targeted libraries and other institutions chosen from open applications. For research and study activities, the number of libraries participating in the National Union Catalog Network Project and the Collaborative Reference Database Project, which are being carried out in coordination with libraries across Japan, respectively reached 1,091 (with 64 libraries providing data) and 479, as of March 2009.

In the field of international coordination, in October 2008, the China-Korea-Japan meeting on “Trilateral Cooperation in a Digital Archiving Project between NLC, NLK and NDL” was held at the Tokyo Main Library and the Kansai-kan, in place of the bilateral mutual visit programs with the National Library of China (NLC) and the National Library of Korea (NLK). In addition, representatives of the NDL were dispatched to South Korea for the mutual visit program with the National Assembly Library of Korea to improve our services for the Diet. Seven staff members of the NDL, including the Librarian of the NDL, were dispatched to participate in the World Library and Information Congress-74th IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions) General Conference and Council held in Quebec City (Canada) between August 10 and 14, 2008.

5. Digital Library Projects

The NDL is actively promoting the Digital Library Project as a library service via the information communication network.

During FY2008, continuing from the previous year, based on the National Diet Library Digital Library Medium Term Plan for 2004, we continued digitization and provision of books and other materials and collection of online information resources, and developed a system (NDL Digital Archiving System) to build the foundation of the next-generation digital library.



China-Korea-Japan meeting

For the Digital Library from the Meiji Era, data for 6,000 books published during the Taisho Era were added.

In the Web Archiving Project (WARP), about 4,300 titles of electronic journals and websites were collected.

For the Digital Archive Portal (PORTA), it became possible to automatically join PORTA from external systems.

The NDL website is the entry point of our library services on the Internet, and the total number of accesses in FY2008 reached some 31.98 million (an average of 87,600 accesses per day).

To participate in the World Digital Library which the Library of Congress and UNESCO promote jointly, we concluded a statement of mutual agreement with the Library of Congress in

December 2009, that we would offer the images of our collection.

6. International Library of Children's Literature



Spring event for children

Based mainly on the Basic Expansion Plan for the International Library of Children's Literature formulated in 2006, an outline expansion and repair plan for the ILCL was finalized in December 2007. Based on this outline, we conducted necessary examination and operations for the facility design in this fiscal year.

The library has approximately 290,000 books and about 87,000 items of serials, as of the end of FY2008.

In this fiscal year, four exhibitions including "Door to the Czech Republic: The world of children's books" and "World of illustrations for children: Picture magazines and their artists" were held. A Lecture Series on Children's Literature "Japanese folk tales" was also held to develop the abilities of librarians in charge of services for children.

In addition, four types of events for children were held on Children's Day and during the summer vacation.

The operation of the Book Sets Lending Service to School Libraries, as part of the promotion of children's reading activities, was 259 cases in this fiscal year.

7. Management and operation of the organization



Renewed National Diet Library
Monthly Bulletin

The number of permanent staff in FY2008, including the Librarian of the NDL and Deputy Librarian, was 908, a decrease of 15 from FY2007.

The budget of this fiscal year totaled 21,782,620,000 yen.

In a reorganization, the Acquisitions Department and the Bibliography Department were integrated into the Acquisitions and Bibliography Department in April 2008, and the NDL branch library status of the Toyo Bunko (Oriental Library) was terminated at the end of FY2008.

Considering that a new personnel evaluation system will be introduced in the ministries and governmental offices from FY2009, we conducted a trial personnel evaluation similar to this

system.

For the maintenance and improvement of facilities, the second stage of maintenance and repair work was started in the Annex of the Tokyo Main Library. A second building site for the Kansai-kan was acquired, and a geographical survey was carried out.



Symposium commemorating the 60th anniversary of the NDL

Regarding matters related to information systems, an entire management body and five partial management bodies were organized to promote the Optimization Plan for the National Diet Library System (IT Master Plan) formulated in the end of FY2007. They are considering a development policy and operational/system requirement with the integrated library package system to replace the present Digital Library Infrastructure System. In addition, in preparation for the next network system, NDL-NET4 (tentative name), its specifications were examined.

To publicize the projects and achievement of NDL's service actively, the content and form of the National Diet Library Monthly Bulletin were renewed.