

Digital Resource Review

The Current State of Digital Musical Materials in Japan

Introduction

In Japan, there is an abundance of materials related to the various genres of traditional music that were established in each of the historical periods, from ancient times to the present day, that have been handed down and preserved. After the Meiji Period (1868–1912), in which Western musical practice took root within Japan, materials related to Western music began to accumulate concurrently with those related to traditional music. The fact that up until the present day, both of these types of materials have been preserved and passed down together, is a significant and unique feature of Japan's musical materials heritage.

In this way, on account of their precious value alone, the emphasis on the preservation of these musical materials rather than their exhibition or utilization, has been strong. As a result, the complexities of the procedures for perusing and duplicating library materials up until the twentieth century have at times been a barrier to research.

This situation changed dramatically at the beginning of the twenty-first century, as the National Diet Library embarked upon an ambitious programme of digitalization of and granting of access to materials in its possession.¹ In this essay, I consider the digital materials related to the research of nineteenth century music found in the National Diet Library Digital Collections and other libraries and archives. The materials fall into four categories: (A) books (including printed scores), (B) audio materials (among which digitized 78rpm records are prevalent), (C) searchable databases and (D) other materials. I hope that the exhaustive use of these digital materials will open up new fields of research into Japanese music.

National Diet Library Digital Collections

At the National Diet Library, Tokyo, the largest library in Japan, databases of books that are out of copyright (including printed scores), digitized audio materials and

¹ In addition to the general state of affairs surrounding the acceleration of digitization since the beginning of the twenty-first century, this change was greatly influenced by the late Makoto Nagao (1936–2021). Nagao was a specialist in information engineering who served as the Director General of the National Diet Library from 2007 to 2012, having previously served as the president of Kyoto University.

early modern Japanese published scores (in five-line staff notation) are all openly available on the internet in the form of the National Diet Library Digital Collections.²

The digitization of Meiji-period books commenced in 2001, and from 2002, this collection was made available as the Digital Collection of the Meiji Era. Thereafter, digitization continued to advance, and in 2005 published books from the Taishō period (1912–1926) were added to the collection. This was followed by the addition, in 2010, of published books, doctoral dissertations and other materials from the early Shōwa period (1926–1945). In 2016, the Digital Collection of the Meiji Era service was discontinued, as it was consolidated into the National Diet Library Digital Collections, an arrangement that continues to the present day. Even now, the digitization of materials at the National Diet Library is being expanded, and it is expected that the amount of materials available for utilization via the internet will continue to increase into the future.

The formats by which materials are made available are divided into the three categories: freely accessible online; through the National Diet Library and its partnering libraries; and only at the National Diet Library. The categorization is determined by the particulars of the various copyrights of the items.³

(A) Books (including printed scores)

The overall number of books that have been digitized thus far is 1,013,141.⁴ Among these, 360,079 are available online, 563,286 are available through the National Diet Library and partnering libraries and 89,776 are available only at the National Diet Library. Searches for book titles and authors' names may be further refined by using, amongst other parameters, the Nippon Decimal Classification (NDC) and publication years.⁵ In the NDC system, 'music' is classified under subsection 76 (Music and Dance) of the seventh section (Arts), and it is subdivided into categories 760 (Music), 761 (Basic Music Theory and Musicology), 762 (Music History and the Music of Various Countries), 763 (Musical Instruments and Instrumental Music), 764 (Instrumental Ensembles), 765 (Religious and Sacred Music), 766 (Dramatic Music), 767 (Vocal Music), 768 (Japanese Music) and 769 (Dance and Ballet). At present, there are 12,895 digitized books in subsection 76 (Music and Dance).

Each of the digital categories includes musical scores (in both five-line staff and traditional notations) as well as books. For example, various songbooks, beginning with the first elementary school singing textbook in Japan, the Shōgaku Shōka Shū (Primary School Songbook) published by the Ongaku Torishirabe Gakari (The

² For more on the National Diet Library Digital collections, please see the site's 'About' page: <https://dl.ndl.go.jp/en/intro.html>. All websites discussed in this review were accessed in November 2021.

³ Items for which the copyright protection periods have yet to be verified may only be viewed (both within and outside of Japan) on the premises of those libraries participating in the National Diet Library's Digital Materials Transmission Service for Libraries. As of 1 October 2021, there are 1,315 participating libraries within Japan. The acceptance of foreign participation began in 2019, and the United States, Italy and Spain, each have a single participating library: https://dl.ndl.go.jp/en/soshin_librarylist.html.

⁴ For digitized books at the National Diet Library: https://dl.ndl.go.jp/?_lang=en.

⁵ The Nippon Decimal Classification (NDC) is the classification system most widely used at libraries in Japan.

Research Institute for Music) between the years of 1882 and 1884, the first Koto music scores in five-line staff notation such as the “Sōkyoku Shū” (Collection of Japanese Koto Music) published in 1888, as well as a large number of five-line staff musical scores published during the Meiji period, are included. All of these can be searched and viewed using their titles and authors’ names as keywords, and the search results can be saved and printed (see Fig. 1).

(B) Audio Materials (Historical Recordings)

The ‘Historical Recordings’ are not in the possession of the National Diet Library, but are digitized items made available through the library, consisting of 48,732 recordings of 78rpm records created within Japan between the years of 1900 and 1950.⁶ The creation of this archive was the result of the coming together of six organizations within Japan, in 2007, to establish the Historical Records Archive Promotion Conference. The purpose of this conference was to prevent the loss, due to deterioration or geographical dissipation, of historically and culturally significant early recordings and to tackle the digitization of about 50,000 such recordings.⁷ In 2011, these began to be offered as a part of the National Diet Library Digital Materials, which since 2014 have been known as the National Diet Library Digital Collections.

The items in the ‘Historical Recordings Collection’ can be searched (in both Japanese and English) by title, genre, composer, or performer (see Fig. 2), and among them, 5,477 items for which the copyrights have expired can be directly viewed and listened to online. Recordings other than these are available for viewing and listening only at the National Diet Library or at libraries that have agreed to participate in offering streaming.⁸ The recordings offered here include not only those of traditional Japanese music, but also those of Western music and a wide range of genres such as popular songs. In recent years, these have been enthusiastically used for research into issues such as musical performance. Even now, the processing of copyrights continues, and it is expected that the number of recordings available online will increase in the future.

(C) Database of the Comprehensive Catalogue of Published Scores from Early Modern Japan, Western Music Edition

Using this database (<https://mnavi.ndl.go.jp/score/>), which is available at the National Diet Library as well as in 161 libraries throughout Japan, one can search for musical scores that were published between the end of the Edo period and 1945. In addition to Western musical scores, those of traditional Japanese music

⁶ For audio materials at the National Diet Library see <https://rekiion.dl.ndl.go.jp/>.

⁷ The six organizations that formed the conference were the Japan Broadcasting Corporation (NHK), the Japanese Society for Rights of Authors, Composers and Publishers (JASRAC), the Japan Council of Performers Rights & Performing Arts (Geidankyō), the Japan Traditional Cultures Foundation, the Visual Industry Promotion Organization (VIPO) and the Recording Industry Association of Japan (RIAJ).

⁸ Streaming is offered mostly in libraries within Japan, but there are five participating libraries in the United States. Germany, France and Switzerland also each has a participating library (as of 4 October 2021); see https://dl.ndl.go.jp/ja/rekiion_librarylist.html.

All Books Periodicals Rare Books and Old Materials Doctoral Dissertations Official Gazettes Modern Japanese political history materials Materials on the Allied Occupation of Japan Prange Collection

Historical Recordings Science Film Scripts Music manuscripts Online publications

Access Restrictions Available Online Available only at the NDL and partner libraries Available only at the NDL

Material Type Books Periodicals Rare Books and Old Materials Doctoral Dissertations Official Gazettes
 Modern Japanese political history materials Materials on the Allied Occupation of Japan Prange Collection Audio-Visual materials
 Historical Recordings Maps Special Digital Collections Collections from Other Institutions Online publications
[\[Select all\]](#) [\[Clear all\]](#)

Keyword Full text

Title

Table of Contents

Creator

Publication Place

Publisher

Publication Date Range Exact Date
 A.D. Y M D - A.D. Y M D
Month and "Day" parameters can be left empty.

Subject

NDC

Enter one or more Nippon Decimal Classification Code from the list.

NDLC

Provider

Identifier

Call Number

Journal Title

Volume Number

Bibliographic Level Volume Article Aggregate volumes under the same title
[\[Select all\]](#) [\[Clear all\]](#)

Language

Results sorted by primary sort: secondary sort: Records per page:

Combine conditions by Boolean Operator

Fig. 1 NDL Digital Collections, Books, Advanced Research page

国立国会図書館 Rekiion Language: English [Top](#) [Help](#)

Historical Recordings Collection can be found by the detailed parameters.

Keyword

Title

Creator(Lyricist, Composer, Artist/Performer)

Label Name

Genre

Range Exact Date

Release Date A.D. Y M D - A.D. Y M D
Month and day parameters can be left empty.

Identifier

Results sorted by primary sort: secondary sort: Records per page:

Available Online

Combine conditions by Boolean Operator

Fig. 2 NDL Digital Collections, Audio Materials, Advanced Research page

converted into five-line staff notation are also included, but traditional Japanese musical notations are not.

This database makes available the bibliographic and location data acquired from the project 'Investigative Research for the Purpose of Digitizing "Japan's Musical Materials"', which was implemented in 2009 and from 2011 to 2014 by The Musicological Society of Japan's investigative committee for 'Musical Materials of Japan', as a part of a commission from the Japanese Agency for Cultural Affairs. As of February 2019, there were bibliographical entries for about 11,400 items, and the location entries for about 18,700 others. The ability to conveniently search the locations of printed scores (in five-line staff notation) not housed at the National Diet Library makes this database highly useful.

(D) *Other Materials (Searchable Newspaper Databases, etc.)*

Periodicals are included in the National Diet Library Digital Collections, but as this collection does not include commercially published magazines, there are still no digitized periodicals that include music-related articles from the nineteenth century.

The National Diet Library possesses a variety of newspapers that were published within Japan and its colonies from the end of the Edo Period and onwards, but these are not available digitally. However, with regards to the three major newspapers (*Asahi Shimbun*, *Mainichi Shimbun* and *Yomiuri Shimbun*), articles published during the nineteenth century can be searched from the following paid sites, which are useable free-of-charge at the National Diet Library or at other libraries who contract with the various newspaper companies. Within these, there is an abundance of important information related to the musical activities from the Meiji Period onwards.

Kikuzō IIō Visual (*Asahi Shimbun*; first issue in 1879), https://database.asahi.com/help/jpn/about_text.html

Maisaku (*Tokyo Nichi Nichi Shimbun*, later *Mainichi Shimbun*; first issue in 1872), <https://mainichi.jp/contents/edu/maisaku/>

Yomidasu Rekishikan (*Yomiuri Shimbun*; first issue in 1874), <https://database.yomiuri.co.jp/about/rekishikan/>

Music-Related Digital Materials Made Available by Libraries and Archives Other Than the National Diet Library

*Tokyo University of the Arts (University Library, University Historical Archives,
Musicological Research Information)*

The Tokyo Academy of Music, which was founded in 1887 by the Meiji Government, was preceded by the Ongaku Torishirabe Gakari (The Research Institute for Music), which was established in 1879 by the Monbushō (Ministry of Education). It was the first public music school to be established in Asia. Many of the musical materials (books, musical scores, official documents, instruments, etc.) that were accumulated and purchased from the time of its establishment were rescued from the damage inflicted by such events as the Great Kanto earthquake of 1923 and the 1945 Bombing of Tokyo, and today these are in the possession of its successor, the Tokyo University of the Arts.

(A) Tokyo University of the Arts Digital Collection

At this site (<https://jmapps.ne.jp/geidailib/index.html>), books, musical scores, documents, pictures and other materials from the time of the Ongaku Torishirabe Gakari (1879–1887) and the Tokyo Academy of Music (1887–1949) are available at this site in the form of images. These are important materials for researching the process by which professional education in music was established in early modern Japan. The details of each of these materials is searchable by keyword. For example, in the category of musical scores, five-line staff notations (both drafts and clean copies) of traditional music, beginning with *gagaku*, which were transcribed by the Hōgaku Chōsa Gakari (established in 1907) are included. It is planned that the number of images made available will increase in the future as digitization efforts progress.

(B) Tokyo University of the Arts Faculty of Music University Historical Archives

This archive (<https://archives.geidai.ac.jp/>) houses and makes publicly available, as images, a portion of the historical materials related to the Ongaku Torishirabe Gakari, the Tokyo Academy of Music and the Tokyo University of the Arts Faculty of Music.

(C) Information Related to Musicological Research at the Tokyo University of the Arts Faculty of Music

The following databases, which were created from a number of earlier research projects, are available online.

- **Database of Musical Scores from the Tokyo Academy of Music** (<http://musicology.geidai.ac.jp/wp/research/tokyoongakugakkoudb/db/>). Here, one can search over 1,369 musical scores dated from the period between the Ongaku Torishirabe Gakari and the beginnings of the Tokyo Academy of Music (1879–1895).
- **Database of Persons Enrolled at the Tokyo Academy of Music** (<http://musicology.geidai.ac.jp/wp/research/ongakugakkoudb/>). This is a database of persons enrolled at the Tokyo Academy of Music, as compiled in the 'Catalogue of the Tokyo Academy of Music' from the years 1889 to 1941 (however, due to the fact that the years 1923 and 1928 are missing from the catalogue, enrolled persons from these years are not included). It is planned that this database will be revised soon.
- **Database of Persons Enrolled in the Naval Band and Database of Persons Enrolled in the Army Band** (<http://musicology.geidai.ac.jp/wp/research/militarybanddb/>). These are databases of the persons enrolled in the Naval and Army bands between the years of 1871 and 1945. It is planned that these databases will also be revised in the near future.

International Research Center for Japanese Studies (Nichibunken)

The International Research Center for Japanese Studies is an inter-university research institution established in 1987 for the purpose of researching Japanese culture from an international perspective that is both interdisciplinary and comprehensive. Out of the many databases that are made available by this institute, I will introduce those that are related to music.

(B) Digital Archive of 78rpm records of Rōkyoku

This is an archive of about 10,000 78rpm records of *rōkyoku* (*naniwabushi*) released during the period from the third decade of the Meiji era through the third decade of the Shōwa era (1897–1965).⁹ This archive was made publicly available from June 2020.

The content centres around 9,998 78rpm records and record-surface images donated to Nichibunken in 2014 by the 78rpm record collector Tsukasa Morikawa (1923–2014) and it includes materials in the possession of Nichibunken that are related to *rōkyoku*, such as posters. Only those record audio files whose copyright protection periods have expired are made publicly available online, and those whose copyright protection periods have not expired are made available exclusively at Nichibunken. As of June 2021, the portion of items available online amounts to 2,117 titles for audio files, 5,533 titles for record-surface images and 56 for related materials. The work of digitizing audio files is ongoing, and it is planned that items will be made available in the order by which their digitization is completed. As an archive of a single genre of audio files made available online, and at this scale, there is nothing comparable. Using the '78rpm record search' function, one can search by performer, piece title, label and record number.

*Kyoto City University of the Arts Research Institute for Japanese Traditional Music
(Den'on)*

The Research Institute for Japanese Traditional Music was established in 2000 at Kyoto City University of the Arts. Among the research results made publicly available are audio materials related to Kamigata Zashiki Uta.¹⁰

(B) Research on Kamigata Zashiki Uta

This archive is the result of research related to Kamigata Zashiki Uta carried out in the years 2000 and 2001 by the late Izawa Toshiharu (<https://rcjtm.kcua.ac.jp/pub/2017web/archives/resarc/kamigatazashikiuta/index.html>). Here, 123 items, including lyrics and commentary, as well as recordings, are made publicly available online.

Kunitachi College of Music Library

The Kunitachi College of Music is one of the private music universities in Japan. Its library is the largest-scale music library in Japan, possessing about 400,000 items, 300,000 of which are music-related materials.

(C) Searchable Database of Children's Songs and Elementary School Songs

The Searchable Database of Children's Songs and Elementary School Songs (www.lib.kunitachi.ac.jp/collection/shoka/shoka.aspx) was created as an auxiliary search tool for searching Children's Songs and Elementary School Songs that cannot be directly searched by composition titles through OPAC. Here, children's

⁹ <https://db.nichibun.ac.jp/pc1/ja/category/rokyoku.html>. *Rōkyoku* is a narrative tradition established in the modern period that includes shamisen accompaniment. It gained mass popularity between the 1880s and the 1960s.

¹⁰ Kamigata Zashiki Uta is a genre of small-form shamisen music that was performed by kamigata (Kansai) geisha in red-light district tatami-room parties.

songs and elementary school songs with Japanese-language lyrics, as well as related materials that were published from the Taishō period until the early Shōwa period (1912–1945) in the possession of the Kunitachi College of Music Library, have been organized by lyricist and composer, lyrics and incipit (melody). The compositions included in this compilation, consisting of 1200 musical scores, singing textbooks and magazines, have been made searchable, and they have been made publicly available online since 2006.

Tōyama Kazuyuki Memorial Archives of Modern Japanese Music at Meiji Gakuin University Library

The Tōyama Kazuyuki Memorial Archives of Modern Japanese Music is a privately funded specialist archive focusing on early modern and modern music in Japan, and it has in its possession a large number of autographed musical manuscripts of Japanese composers.¹¹ In 2010, Meiji Gakuin University received a donation of materials from the archive's predecessor, the Foundation for Modern Japanese Music, and in 2011 the archive opened as an institution affiliated with Meiji Gakuin University Library, an arrangement that continues to the present.

(C) 'Materials Search'

Using the 'materials search' (http://amjmopac.meijigakuin.ac.jp/search_advanced.aspx) one can search for composition-related materials (autographed musical manuscripts, published scores, recordings, etc.) of composers beginning with Kōsaku Yamada (1886–1965), Kunihiko Hashimoto (1904–1949), Yasushi Akutagawa (1925–1989) and Tōru Takemitsu (1930–1996). Images have yet to be made available to the public online.

Japan Center for Asian Historical Records

(A) Japan Center for Historical Records (JACAR, also known as Ajireki)

The Japan Center for Historical Records (www.jacar.go.jp/) is a digital materials centre established in 2001 that makes Asian historical materials (important official documents and other records pertaining to modern-era Japan and neighbouring Asian and other countries) in the custody of Japanese institutions, publicly available online.¹² The offerings of the Center mostly consist of historical materials in the custody of the National Archives of Japan, the Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, and the National Institute for Defense Studies of the Japanese Ministry of Defense.¹³ The center's operation is handled by the National Archives of Japan.¹⁴ Although this is not an archive that specializes in music, I introduce it here because, for example, many original materials

¹¹ This facility is the descendant of the Japan Modern Music Foundation's Japan Modern Music Library, which was opened in 1987. The latter had its origins in the Tōyama Foundation for Music Archives which was founded in 1966 (and was renamed Tōyama Foundation for Music Library in 1969).

¹² Here, modern-era Japan refers to the period from the 1860s to around 1945.

¹³ For the history and development of the Center for Asian Historical Records, see www.jacar.go.jp/about/outline.html.

¹⁴ For a summary of the materials offered, see www.jacar.go.jp/about/materials.html.

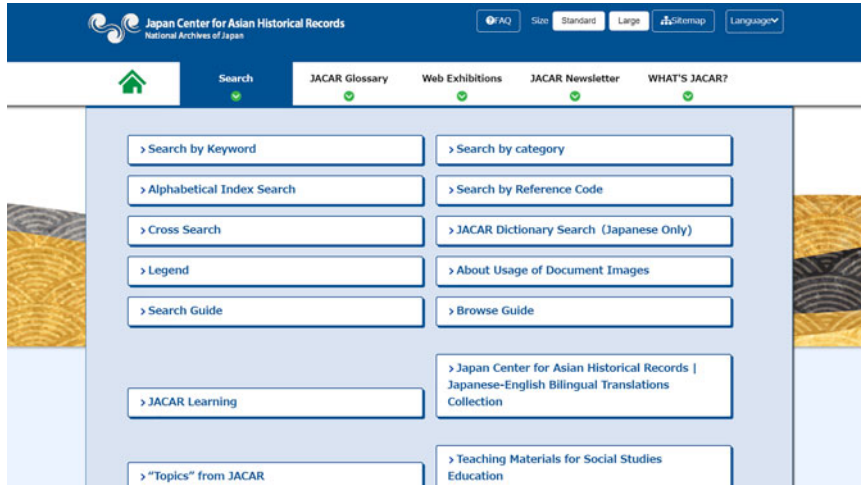


Fig. 3 JACAR, Advanced Research page

connected with the early modern Japanese army and naval bands are included in the official documents of the pre-1945 Japanese army.

Previously, original source materials in their paper form were made publicly available at the various holding libraries, but because it has become possible to search online using such parameters as keywords, reference codes and dates, it is now possible to find unexpected music-related materials from within the enormous number of public documents, the investigation of which was not possible in the days of the paper-only medium (see Fig. 3). Among the public documents, in rare cases, there are items which have musical scores attached to them as appendices. Even now, the materials made available to the public are increasing as the work of digitization progresses. Furthermore, the database was updated in April 2021, and it has become much easier to use.

National Institute of Japanese Literature

The National Institute of Japanese Literature is a national research institution established in 1972 centered on research into Japanese literature and related fields. The databases introduced below are also useful for music research.

(C) Database of Pre-Modern Japanese Works

This database (<https://kotenseki.nijl.ac.jp/>) was created by the National Institute of Japanese Literature as a part of its Project to Build an International Collaborative Research Network for Pre-Modern Japanese Texts (also known as Rekishiteki Tenseki NW Jigyō).¹⁵ It is a portal site in which one can search inside and outside of Japan for the locations, bibliographic information and high-resolution images

¹⁵ In addition to 20 participating Japanese universities, the Rekishiteki Tenseki NW Jigyō also coordinates with foreign universities and research institutions. For a detailed explanation of the database and a summary of its projects, please see the following link: www.nijl.ac.jp/pages/cijproject/en/plans.html.

Fig. 4 Database of Pre-modern Japanese Works, Advanced Research page

(for some items) of classical Japanese books created before modern times (including a few books created after the Meiji era).¹⁶ A distinct feature of this database is that, in addition to book titles, authors and other keywords, it is also possible to search tags attached to images as well as book texts (see Fig. 4). Although not specialized in music, this database includes many music books and scores related to traditional Japanese music, and it is a useful tool for investigating such materials.

This has been an introduction to the main music-related digital materials currently available in Japan. It is hoped that this will be the first step in the birth of new research projects appropriate to the twenty-first century.

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¹⁶ Although I say 'a few books', as of June 2021 the number of images made publicly available exceeds 150,000, and this number is expected to increase as the digitization of images progresses.