

COLLECTIONS OVERVIEW

JAPANESE STUDIES

I. SCOPE

This overview deals with the Library's collection of materials relating to the study of Japan. The Japan Team of the Asian Division has custody of Japanese-language materials; other materials are in the general and special format collections.

The Japanese collection began modestly in 1875, when the Japanese government accepted a proposal by the Smithsonian Institution for an exchange of Japanese government publications to be housed in the Library of Congress. The collection grew slowly in its early years, as there were no specialists with the expertise for the purchase of Japanese books and periodicals. The first area specialist on Japan was appointed in 1930. In 1938, the Japanese Section was established as a part of the then Orientalia Division – since 1978 designated as the Asian Division. The Japanese collection grew to about 34,000 volumes by 1941.

The collection of Japanese-language materials increased dramatically after World War II, when nearly 300,000 volumes were added with the transfer of Japanese-language research resources collected during the Occupation of Japan in 1945-1952 and sent initially to the Washington Document Center (WDC). Since then, holdings have been augmented systematically by the addition of a wide range of commercially published publications acquired by purchase, by exchange - comprehensive sets of Japanese government publications – as well as by gift from numerous individuals, societies, and institutions. Approximately 15,000 items of Japanese-language books and serials are added annually.

The Japan Documentation Center (JDC) in the Asian Division collected documents and difficult-to-locate Japanese items on public policy issues concerning economic, political, social and military about contemporary Japan from 1992 until the closing in 2000.

II. SIZE

The Library's comprehensive collection of more than 1.16 million volumes of Japanese-language monographic publications represents the preeminent research resource on Japan outside that country itself. The collection also includes nearly 15,000 periodical titles, including 5,800 current titles, as well as nearly 11,500 reels of newspaper and government documents and some 21,000 sheets of microfiche.

Estimated Statistics on Cataloged Holdings
(.Japanese-language only)

Buddhism	7,700 titles
Flistory (World War II)	5.300 titles

Economics	54,000 titles
Japanese Language and Literature	43,000 titles
Fine Arts and Performing Arts	12,500 titles

III. GENERAL RESEARCH STRENGTHS

In qualitative terms, the Japanese language collection covers virtually all subjects of value to scholarship. The collection is especially rich in the humanities and social sciences as well as in the government publications and academic journals including the areas of science and technology. Overall, the composition of the collection is approximately 40 percent in the humanities, 40 percent in the social sciences, and 20 percent in general works, science and technology and bibliography.

No other library compares with the Library of Congress for its comprehensive coverage of western language publications on Japan. For other special format materials, the Library has unique old Japanese maps in the Geography & Map Division; rare pre-World War II Japanese feature films and newsreels in the Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division; and Japanese woodcut prints in the Prints and Photographs Division.

IV. AREAS OF DISTINCTION

Among the unique and rare items and notable special research collections are:

The Pre-Meiji (1868) Printed Books and Manuscripts Collection:

This special collection consists of over 5,500 titles of Pre-Meiji materials acquired by the Library including:

Genji Monogatari (Tale of Genji): *Tale of Genji* is often considered as the first great novel in the literature of the world, first partly written by Murasaki Shikibu (b. 978?) in the early 11th century. The edition published in 1654 in the Library of Congress is a complete and well-preserved set including the complete main text (54 volumes) of *Tale of Genji*, also *Meyasu* (3 volumes, commentary on key words and phrases in the text, *Keizu* (genealogy), *Yamaji no tsuyu* (a sequel to the work by a later author), and *Hikiuta* (index). Digital files are available via the Library of Congress Online Public Catalog.

Hyakumanto dharani (One Million Prayer Charms): Among the world's oldest extant samples of printing, dating from 770 A.D., are small scrolls consisting of four *dharani*, passages from a Buddhist sutra used as prayer charms.

Nara Ehon (Nara Picture Books): *Nara Ehon* is a type of colorfully illustrated book or scroll, either manuscript or hand-painted, of tales produced in Muromachi period (1333-1568) through mid-Edo period (1600-1868). *Nara Ehon* is considered to be the earliest popular picture books in Japan. Four titles of *Nara*

Ehon, Hōmyō Dōji, Soga Monogatari, Shigure and *Shizuka* are in the Japanese rare book collection.

The Crosby Stuart Noyes Collection: In 1905, Mr. Noyes (1825-1908), presented the Library his collection of late 18th- and 19th- century Japanese illustrated books, prints and drawings including *Hiroshige gajō* (Sketchbooks of Hiroshige), the original hand-drawn sketchbooks of the famous Ukiyoe artist, Hiroshige Andō (1797-1858).

The South Manchurian Railway Company Collection: Among the materials transferred soon from the WDC after WWII, were the materials once held in the Company's library in Tokyo. The Company has long been recognized for its central role in the economic development and political expansion of Japan's prewar sphere of influence in Northeast Asia.

The Washington Document Center Collection: Apart from the South Manchurian Railway Company Collection, other materials from the WDC. Most of these materials are works on pre-WWII studies of such areas as Korea, Taiwan, China, Mongolia, and the Pacific Islands.

V. ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

The Japanese collection's electronic resources include the digital collection of 5 rare books from the pre-Meiji (1868) printed books and manuscripts collection mentioned above: 1) *Genji Monogatari* (Tale of Genji); and 2) 4 titles of *Nara Ehon* (Nara Picture Books), *Homyō Dōji*, *Soga Monogatari*, *Shigure* and *Shizuka*. All of the digital images are available from the Library of Congress Online Public Catalog on the Internet.

Digital images of over 2,400 Japanese woodcut prints (Ukiyoe) in the Prints and Photographs Division are available via the Prints & Photographs Online Catalog . Digital collections of pre-1868 maps of Japan including, 207 sheets of manuscript maps of Japan, Inō Maps (1816-19) are accessible via the Library's Map Collections webpage.

The Japanese collection also provides access to a full-text database of newspapers, journals, and magazines including three of major Japanese newspapers, *Mainichi*, *Sankei*, and *Yomiuri Shinbun* in the Asian Reading Room.

VI. WEAKNESSES/EXCLUSIONS

The serial collection can be strengthened by filling in gaps of missing volumes and issues, mainly of those titles received from WDC and exchange sources. Multi-volume sets especially in local history acquired from exchange sources can be also developed further. While the collection of science and technology serials is extensive, it can be further developed with additional titles available in Japan.