

ANNOUNCEMENT: A Reorganization of NIJL's Databases (from April 1, 2023)

Currently, the National Institute of Japanese Literature (NIJL) provides over 30 different publically-available online-access databases, most notably the "Union Catalogue of Early Japanese Books," the "Database of Pre-modern Japanese Works," and the "Database of Academic Papers in Japanese Literature." Most of these databases came about as the products of various individual research initiatives and projects carried out under the auspices of NIJL over the years.

With the inauguration, however, of the "fourth mid-term objectives and mid-term plan" period in FY2022, our institute has engaged in a general reevaluation and reconsideration of our database initiatives, taking due account of both future research plans and the institute's current financial situation. As a result, we have decided to undertake a general reorganization of those databases presently offered, as well as a series of database mergers.

These reorganizations and mergers are intended above all to promote a higher-degree utilization of the accumulated wealth of data that all these databases collectively represent. This initiative proceeds under the aegis of the "Creation of a Data-driven, Solutions-focused Paradigm for Research in the Humanities" project currently being pursued by NIJL — with the full marshalling of the institute's resources — for concrete budgeting in the years ahead, as formulated within the Ministry of Education's "2020 Roadmap," after being chosen for the "2020 Master Plan" adopted by the Science Council of Japan.

The aim of this "Creation of a Data-driven, Solutions-focused Paradigm for Research in the Humanities" project is the promotion and development of cross-disciplinary research. The realization of such a goal requires us to engage in a variety of novel efforts, such as the standardization of metadata, the display of licensing to promote safe data usage, flexible coordination of our own databases with those of other institutions, and the successful incorporation of new research results.

For all these reasons, starting from April 1, 2023, NIJL's databases will transition to a new service approach, one squarely centered around the new core databases of (1) the "Union Catalogue Database of Japanese Texts" and (2) the "Database of Academic Papers in Japanese Literature and Archival Studies," as introduced below.

NIJL Core Database Services

●The New "Union Catalogue Database of Japanese Texts"

As of March 1, 2023, (1) the current "Union Catalogue of Early Japanese Books" — including the "Catalogue of Early Japanese Books at NIJL" — and (2) the current "Database of Pre-modern Japanese Works" will both be merged into the newly-inaugurated "Union Catalogue Database of Japanese Texts," which accordingly will begin its own operations that same day. In the future, we also plan to add to this new database the wealth of modern-era documentary information currently incorporated into the "Bibliographic and Image Database of Japanese Modern Times," the result of many years of surveying and collecting literary documents from post-Meiji Japan.

●The New “Database of Academic Papers in Japanese Literature and Archival Studies”

This new database will merge together (1) the “[Database of Academic Papers in Japanese Literature](#)” and (2) the “[Database of Academic Papers in Archival Studies](#),” creating a single hub through which NIJL will provide to the public a collective, organized database of all academic papers catalogued by the institute. Just as before, however, it will continue to be possible to restrict searches to either of the two fields.

Publically Archived for Research Use

The wealth of research data and databases produced over the years as the results of NIJL’s research activities—in cases where these results will not be integrated into any of our “Core Database Services” — will be publically archived for research use on the [NIJL Repository](#). This data may be accessed freely, and can be employed in accordance with the terms of license there indicated—whether to survey the research results of the past or to use these as material for new studies in the future.

Please note, however, that in some cases, where the data produced by various research projects over the years will either not admit of unrestricted publication—or cannot be offered publically under any set of clear usage conditions—such data will be made available only in an abbreviated format, one that provides the database records without the associated images or text.

Maintained in Service

The following services will continue to be provided as they have been in the past.

●[NIJL OPAC](#)

●[Archival Holdings on Japanese History Database](#)

This database will consolidate catalogues and descriptions of NIJL’s collections in historical (archival) documents, centered around the former holdings of the Ministry of Education’s Department of Historical Documents. There are also plans to incorporate into this database other archives studies databases going forward, such as the Database of the Location of Historical Materials and the NIJL Database of Detailed Shrine Records.

●[Directory of Overseas Collection of Old and Rare Japanese Books, Other Print Materials and Manuscripts](#)

Databases to be Discontinued

The following services will be discontinued as of March 31, 2023. Thereafter, the images and bibliographical data contained in these databases will no longer, as a rule, be available for viewing. As an exception, metadata for each database—its name, version history, etc.—will be archived on the NIJL Repository. Please note that this archived data will be limited to such metadata alone: other associated data relating to images, bibliographical information, and so on, will be neither published nor stored in the Repository in any form.

●[Digital Image Database of Japanese Classics in Collaboration with Collection-owning Institutions](#)

Discontinued because the bibliographical data contained therein has been incorporated into the “Union Catalogue of Early Japanese Books” and the “Database of Pre-modern Japanese Works”—both of which will be merged into the “Union Catalogue Database of Japanese Texts” as of March 1, 2023.

● Early Modern Period Vocabulary Card Database

Discontinued because of chronic user difficulties resulting from the architecture of the system, which requires the simultaneous processing of massive stores of card image data and outdated system programming.

● Hanashibon taikei Database

Discontinued, after consultation with the publisher of the Hanashibon taikei series (Tōkyōdō Shuppan), due to copyright-related difficulties that make the series' public archiving on the NIJL Repository infeasible.

● Nihonkotenbungaku taikei Database

Discontinued, after consultation with the publisher of the Nihonkotenbungaku taikei series (Iwanami Shoten), due to difficulties in making the series publically available on the NIJL Repository.

● Archival Location Information and Search

Discontinued due to issues related to the handling of private information—alongside difficult questions of copyright—that make any merger of this database with other databases impractical.

● New Naraehon Database

Discontinued due to the general end of browser support since 2020 for the Adobe Flash Player functionality that plays a critical role in this database's structure: with the end of such support, long-term maintenance of the database has become infeasible.