Documentation Center on Contemporary Japan
(Reischauer Institute, Sponsor):
Grey Literature

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With the advent of rapid technological change in recent years, the forms of information dissemination have diversified. While the amount of information grows, the number of unknown publications difficult to identify or locate also grows. These non-conventional publications with limited distribution "not readily available through normal book-selling channels" are called "grey literature" (official recognition of the term "grey literature" first appeared in the late 1970s in Europe among librarians in Britain, hence the British spelling of "grey" with an "e"). As "grey" is a color that lies between black and white, it is used as a metaphor to refer to literature that is neither confidential (black) nor really open to the public (white) because of its narrow circulation. Thus, grey symbolizes an in-between area that describes the status and accessibility of the information being published. Typical examples of grey literature include government publications, both central and local, research reports produced by think tank and private sectors, technical reports, proceedings, and conference papers. Because of some uncertainty about the role of grey literature in academia and a lack of adequate tools for its identification, grey literature has been rather neglected for some time among librarians. However, the rather negative attitude toward grey literature is being replaced by more positive attitudes as Japanese studies has matured. In recent years, academic and scholarly value has been increasingly placed on grey literature as an original and primary source for information. Thus I would like to take an opportunity to introduce notable databases for grey literature.

e-Gov
http://www.e-gov.go.jp/

The majority of government documents used to be predominantly characterized as difficult to obtain, therefore, grey literature was occasionally perceived as equivalent to government publications. In recent years, however, the access to government materials has drastically changed. With the enforcement of the Information Disclosure Law beginning in April 2001, as part of its administrative reform, the Japanese government established a new electronic information dissemination system called e-government to guarantee a citizen's right to access official documents on the Internet. Both the amount of information available on the Internet and the quality of the information retrieval systems have dramatically improved.

The e-Gov, a portal site for Japanese Government information, allows one to search information by two searchable systems: one is for the web information created by each government agency and the other is a clearing system for seamless search of all government information publications. This one-stop searchable site, which can be also searched by English as well, offers various search engines for Shingikai minutes, white papers, press releases, policy documents, statistical information, and an index of laws searchable by name, keyword or number (some full text). In addition, it also links to various sites such as Ministry Homepages and local governments and allows one to explore the abundance of information produced all levels of government agencies. Through the linked web pages of a local government, one can obtain various data, for example on households. Nowadays one can read white papers at one's own desktop terminal and the most current statistical data and public opinion polls and surveys can be obtained instantly. Thus, the Internet is becoming one of the most powerful means to disseminate government information.

Although this one-stop portal site is updated daily, one should be aware that not all ministries are included in this system and data updates vary depending on the ministries. Also, one might be advised that the system is not fully developed enough to provide a comprehensive level of document management and bibliographic control. Sometimes desired information is spread over multiple sites. In addition, although most ministries offer homepages in English, information in the English version is usually limited and with infrequent updates. For instance, the English version of white papers usually provides only abstracts.

Proceedings of Meetings of the National Diet at National Diet Library
http://kokkai.ndl.go.jp/

A long awaited searchable system for proceedings of the National Diet is now available at the National Diet Library. The database provides data on meetings for both regular sessions and committee meetings since the first National Diet meeting held in May 1947. The system is daily updated and data input for each proceeding is completed within two to three weeks after the meeting takes place. As of this writing, a full-text search for laws is not available; however, partial contents of questions and answers, and basic information about proceedings (i.e., date, attendees, agenda) can be viewed through image data. Unfortunately, supplementary information such as laws, questionnaires and respondents are excluded from searching due to a lack of full-text storage. Truncation search function is useful; however, due to a lack of thesaurus control, which is commonly found in many Japanese databases, one may need some special techniques when executing a keyword search. For instance, when the proceedings use a term "anzen hosho (security pact)" with four Chinese letters, one may have no results by searching with an abbreviated term of "ampo" with two Chinese letters. By the same token, when the proceedings in the database use the two-letter abbreviation of "ampo," no results will be found by the four-letter term under "anzen hosho." Therefore, adequate use of Boolean search by using OR may be necessary.

Subsystem for Searching Archives at National Archives of Japan
http://www2.archives.go.jp/

Preservation of historical documents

for verification and future research is fundamental for an understanding and fair interpretation of history, not to mention for scrutiny of the accountability of the government agencies. Established in 1971, the National Archive (NA) has played an important role by ensuring the preservation and service of non-current government records of cultural and historical value, which have been transferred from various central government agencies. With the consolidation of historical documents produced in the pre-war period, which were formerly de-centrally maintained by individual ministries, all non-current government records are accessible through the NA's OPAC system, which has user-friendly Boolean and truncation searches. Currently many of the archives are in process of microfilming. The historical documents produced in the pre-Meiji period, which used to be housed at Naikaku Bunko, are now transferred to the National Archives and accessible through its Naikaku Bunko subsystem. The Naikaku Bunko was closed when the governmental reorganization took place last year and the National Archives of the government has been transformed into an independent administrative institute. There is a concern that some records may have been destroyed or even lost in a massive government reorganization in January 2001. As the disclosure of information and archiving record are parallel phenomena, ensuring both is particularly important to preserve historical truth and democracy.

The Japan Documentation Center (JDC) at the Library of Congress
http://lcweb.loc.gov/rr/asian/jdc.html

Information disseminated in Japan is occasionally claimed to be invisible from outside of the country. This could be partially due to the language barrier. Yet, particular "grey routes" taken in the production and diffusion of grey literature in Japan have perhaps stemmed from "a complex interplay between law, government and bureaucracy" which is called "the hallmark of the Japanese political system." Funded by the Japan Foundation, the Japan Documentation Center (JDC) was established in 1994 at the Asia Division of the Library of Congress (LC). This is an example of

"gaiatsu" (demanding pressure from the outside) to loosen the thick wall of the Japanese bureaucracy that was reluctant to disclose information. The JDC has collected a wide variety of grey literature from Japan, which varies from public policy, recycling of nuclear energy, national defense, to the mortality rate by suicide. Unfortunately, however, due to a lack of financial support from the US government, the JDC was forced to close its operation in March 2000. The grey literature, which accumulated to more than 5,000 items published from 1992 to 1999, is still accessible free of charge through a stand-alone database at the Asian Division, which is separated from the LC's OPAC system.

GIOSS-Net at Government Data Research Center of Japan
http://www.gioss.or.jp/

Each governmental agency is a producer of source information on Japanese government policy making and administration and functions as a sort of think tank. The GIOSS-Net at the Government Data Research Center of Japan offers comprehensive coverage on the Japanese government allowing one a seamless search for publications produced by both central and local government agencies as well as private institutions and corporations. As the database is a web version of the Monthly Abstract of Government Materials, its abstracting feature for each title makes this database particularly useful when searching voluminous government materials that occasionally have similar titles. As of April 2001, the database covers approximately 40,000 government documents published after 1992, produced by all government agencies and by commissioned various non profit organizations, including think tanks, and universities. The cost of 160,000 yen ($1,350) for the first year including registration fee may be rather expensive for most libraries. However, one may find it worthwhile when appreciating their value-added features including current awareness services, document delivery, and reference services with prompt and quality delivery offered. Such expenditure could be justifiable if one uses the database frequently enough.

JOIS (JST Online Information System at Japan Science and Technology Corporation
http://pr.jst.go.jp/db/jois-db.html

The Japan Science and Technology Cooperation (JST) has been one of the active supporting organizations for the International Conference on Grey Literature since its first conference, which was held in 1993 in Amsterdam. As a fee based document delivery service for scientific and technological information, the JOIS was first released in 1976. The database consists of two online systems: one is JOIS, which mainly deals with scientific and technological information in Japan, and the other is STN, which basically contains information produced overseas. Furthermore, not only Japanese information is covered, but also serials published by more than 60 major countries and technical reports and proceedings published by the US government. Most of the documents obtained from overseas are accompanied by abstracts in the Japanese language to facilitate effective scanning of the vast number of documents produced in the scientific and technological fields. Translation service with additional charges can be provided for those who have difficulties in reading the documents written in the original languages. The JOIS is functioning as the information hub promoting around the world the advancement of scientific technology that Japan can proudly offer. Also, the access to JOIS is available through a gateway connection with NACSIS-IR as the JST is committed to promoting sound cooperation between academia and industry as well as regional development.

NTIS (National Technical Information Service)
http://www.ntis.gov/

While Japan can enjoy access to the abundance of free information on science and technology produced in the Western world, a reciprocal information flow from Japan to the Western world has not been easily available. This information gap was one of the major conflicts between the US and Japan in the 1980s. As a result of legislation enforcing the acquisition of the Japanese scientific grey literature which passed in 1986, the Japanese

Technical Literature Program (JTLP) in the US Department of Commerce was established to monitor the Japanese high-tech information that had been contributing to the country's significant economic growth. Grey literature on Japanese science and technology collected at the JTLP is now accessible at The National Technical Information Service (NTIS), which is an information service center residing in the US Department of Commerce, and is available as a document delivery service on a fee basis. As a counterpart of the JST in Japan, the primary collection acquired at the NTIS mainly centers around grey literature produced at various levels in US government agencies, including government reports, proceedings, technical reports made at non-profit and commercial organizations, and industrial technical reports. In addition, with the recent inclusion of publications made at the United Nations, World Bank, IMF, and OECD, as well as non-profit organizations, the information available through NTIS service has dramatically expanded.

A Note on the Effects of the Internet

Today one can easily disseminate information through self-publishing on the Internet. Various types of "non-conventional literature," or new forms of grey literature are rapidly growing on the Internet, such as e-journals, personal Web pages, and image archives. These new methods of communication have stimulated new categories of grey literature, generally referred to as "electronic or e-grey literature." While the production and distribution of traditional printed grey literature is falling due to increased costs, electronic grey literature is booming because publication costs are low and dissemination is virtually free. Consequently, as these non-conventional electronic publications expand and diversify, navigating grey literature is becoming ever more challenging. Ironically, the emergence of technologies which increase access to grey literature has simultaneously promoted a vast contradictory growth of relatively unavailable grey or hard to find information, which is "not easily accessible through normal bookselling channels."

Japanese Films at the Harvard Film Archive

Bruce Jenkins
Stanley Cavell Curator
Harvard Film Archive

While the Harvard Film Archive (HFA) is best known for its extensive film exhibition program—some 300 films were screened this past year in series that spanned the entire history of the medium—it oversees, as its name suggests, a major collection of motion pictures. Now numbering nearly 8,000 titles, the HFA's collection includes in-depth holdings of 35mm theatrical prints of work by many of the cinema's foremost practitioners as well as significant examples of documentaries, experimental films, and animation. The bulk of the collection is kept in cold storage at Harvard's Depository in Southborough, and the HFA has spent the past year planning for the imminent start-up this fall of a film conservation center located in the historic Watertown Arsenal complex that will be devoted to the care and preservation of this important collection.

The archive has collected in depth the "auteur" cinema of Western Europe, including work by Ingmar Bergman, Federico Fellini, and Luis Buñuel, and has substantial holdings of such American auteurs as John Ford and Orson Welles. Though much smaller, the selection of Japanese films in the collection—comprising some forty works—conforms to the same policy. Consequently, the HFA's most significant holdings are of the work of the Japanese director who has been most widely acknowledged in the West as an auteur—Akira Kurosawa. Eleven of his feature films currently reside in the collection. A number of films by Yasujirō

Ōzu and Kenji Mizoguchi from the classic period are also important parts of the archive's permanent collection. Similarly, from the period of the Japanese New Wave, the HFA has acquired works by the most prominent auteurs, including Nagisa Oshima, Shōhei Imamura, Masahiro Shinoda, and Hiroshi Teshigahara. These films are regularly screened either in retrospectives such as "Late Kurosawa," shown back in the winter of 2000, or in special screenings.

Among the rarest Japanese works in the collection is a print of *A Page Out of Order (Kurutta Ippeji)*, a 1926 avant-garde masterpiece that had been lost for more than four decades. Made during the silent era by a very young Teinosuke Kinugasa, the director who would later make the internationally renowned *Gate of Hell* (1953), the film (sometimes translated as *A Page of Madness*) is an immensely inventive portrait of madness. Kinugasa deploys an arsenal of visual effects and innovative set designs in a manner that rivals the contemporaneous cutting-edge cinemas of France, Germany, and the Soviet Union. Less frequently revived than the HFA's more contemporary Japanese holdings, *A Page Out of Order* was last screened in the fall of 2001 in a program co-sponsored with the Reischauer Institute that featured a fascinating talk by the American-born Japanese film scholar Donald Richie and a live musical performance by the local ensemble Sabana Blanca.

Scene from Kenji Mizoguchi's
Sansho Dayu,
in the Harvard Film Archive Collection