Hello and welcome to Seattle! I’m Rob Britt, Coordinator for East Asian Library Services at the UW Law School’s Gallagher Law Library.
Finding legal information about Japan in English is much easier than it used to be. There are many free online resources in English nowadays, although some categories are covered much better than others. Court decisions are readily available in Japanese, but scarce in English. Many Japanese statutes are available online and in print in English, and most are available in Japanese. Journals, edited volumes and monographs are available in both English and Japanese on a wide variety of legal topics. In general, perhaps 95% of all material available on Japanese law is only available in Japanese. For statutes, this percentage is much better: say about 50% are available in English translation. For court decisions, the number may be closer to 98% available in Japanese only.

In this presentation, I will introduce ways to find information in English about Japanese law. First, we’ll look at the available online research guides. Then, I’ll discuss how to find court decisions, laws, legal articles, and books. Finally, we’ll look at translation, and what tools and services are available.
The Gallagher Law Library website provides a handy Japanese legal research guide, with information, links and advice about a wide spectrum of Japanese legal topics. The homepage you see here guides users to information on finding cases, statutes, and articles, with specific sections for finding materials in English and Japanese.
Also on the Gallagher Law Library website, the “Japanese Legal Databases” section of the “East Asian Legal Databases” page is a convenient one-stop shopping place to find links to the most-used online Japanese legal resources.
Dr. Makoto Ibusuki’s “Japanese Law via the Internet” guide on Globalex (revised by Takako Okada) is another good place to start. It provides handy introductory information and pointers to useful websites.
The WorldLII: Japan site is prepared by the World Legal Information Institute (out of Australia). WorldLII bills itself as providing “Free, independent and non-profit access to worldwide law.” The Japan page is a very comprehensive and useful resource, providing links to a wide variety of sources in English.
It’s a challenge finding Japanese court decisions in English! As a civil law jurisdiction, decisions in Japan do not have precedential value. Even so, previous court decisions are considered very important, and along with scholarly opinion judges refer to earlier decisions as they formulate their opinions. Scholars also routinely refer to court decisions. Japan’s court system is national, and courts in the country are all part of a hierarchical administrative system. In addition to its role as top-level appellate court in Japan and arbiter of constitutional controversies, the Supreme Court also serves as the administrative agency for the court system.

By the way, this slide shows an example of three aspects of a Japanese phrase: 1) Original Japanese text, 2) Transliteration (Romanization) of the text, and finally an English translation of the phrase.
Court Decisions are the most difficult type of Japanese legal resource to find in English. The Japanese Supreme Court translates or summarizes a few of its cases on their website. The percentage of Supreme Court cases translated into English is quite small, so the chances of finding any given case in English are very low. Supreme Court cases are the only ones that are ever systematically translated or summarized in English. The chances of finding translations or summaries of cases from any lower courts are pretty remote. There are a couple of exceptions, which will be noted later.
A University of Washington adjunct professor, John (Jody) Chaffee, does summaries of a variety of Japanese decisions on Hanrei.net. As I write this (June 11, 2013), the site is down for maintenance. However, I contacted Mr. Chaffee, and he says he’s working on some major updates, and that by the time of AALL in July 2013, a new improved Hanrei.net should be up and available for searching. The site has many summaries of cases on a wide variety of topics, and includes an (improved) search interface. Mr. Chaffee is an attorney and part-time faculty member of the University of Washington School of Law.
Several websites provide English translations or summaries of Intellectual Property decisions. Japan’s Intellectual Property High Court provides this site, with summaries of cases and full translations of Grand Panel cases.
The “Softic Japanese Court Cases and Analysis” page has translations of IP cases related to protection of software rights.
Yuasa and Hara IP News is a free online PDF newsletter that includes news about IP-related cases.

As you can see, there are several Intellectual property websites with some English translations of Japanese cases, but only one or two with summaries and complete translations of general cases. In short, as I mentioned before, it’s very difficult to find an English translation of any given case, with a few exceptions for specialized topics or selected Supreme Court decisions.
This Kyushu University-based project provides English translations for many Japanese laws and court decisions in the fields of Corporate Law, Goods and Services Transaction Law, Financing Law, Intellectual Property Law, Insolvency law, Arbitration law, Civil litigation law, and Public International law. According to the website’s home page, “The Transparency of Japanese Law Project aims to provide legal information on international transactions in Japan to the overseas community by organizing and translating into English, information which includes: overviews of Japanese law, specific Japanese legislation, doctrines, and case law.”

However, there seem to be no English-translated decisions after about 2009. The site is apparently not being updated. Nevertheless, it has a convenient search interface, and includes many English translated statutes and decisions that may prove useful to researchers.
Statutes and regulations are much more readily available in English than cases.
“Japanese Law Translation” is a Japan Ministry of Justice website that has bilingual Japanese/English statutes and regulations, in addition to “Dictionary Search” for Japanese-English legal vocabulary. The site has a wide variety of statutes available, with options for monolingual or bilingual searching, display and download. Users can search with a variety of search keys, including English or Japanese keyword and law number and date. (Japanese statutes and regulations are all assigned a unique number and date. The numbering begins with “1” in January of each year. With a law number and date, a searcher can find any law relatively easily in various sources.
You may recognize this. It’s what we used to call a “book” or “print”! “EHS Law Bulletin Series” is a loose-bound eight volume collection of pamphlets that translates Japanese laws into English. EHS is updated once a year. Individual EHS pamphlets may be purchased separately (see the URL noted, where you can also view the table of contents). At our library, we retain all “superseded” EHS pamphlets, as current versions of translations replace older versions. This is useful for historical legal research.
The eight EHS Law Bulletin Series binders (see the previous slide) are filled with pamphlets like the one shown here for the Civil Code of Japan. Pamphlets are updated occasionally, especially when laws have major amendments, as the civil code did in 2012. Note that the title of the law and major article headings are also shown in the original Japanese. This can be handy as a way to allow reference back to the original Japanese text.
Back in 2006, the National Diet Library (NDL) in Japan produced a wonderful index for print English translations of Japanese laws and regulations. NDL generously allowed me to load the data into an MS Access database that I call the “Japanese Laws in English Database.” This is a great resource for laws you can’t find in English anywhere else, because it includes records for over 8,000 translations that appeared in a wide variety of books, pamphlets, the EHS Law Bulletin Series, and even in the English language Japanese government gazette (“Kanpō”) that was published during the years of the U.S. Occupation (1946-1952). Unfortunately this database is only available on my computer! However, I’m more than happy to share it. Please contact me (Rob Britt) at Gallagher Law Library if you’d like to request a search.
Another way to access the English Kanpō (Government Gazette), plus a huge amount of Japanese language historical legal materials is with the new English interface, “NDL Digitized Contents.” Also, the related “Digital Library from the Meiji Era” page has links to other useful resources, such as doctoral dissertations and constitutional materials.
Many English language articles on the Japanese legal system are available in “non-traditional” sources, some in Japan, and some internationally.
IFLP (Index to Foreign Legal Periodicals) is a good place to look for English language articles on Japanese law. IFLP indexes many journals published in English in Japan, and also English journals from around the world that occasionally publish articles related to Japanese law. IFLP is available on a subscription basis at many libraries.
Quite a few English-language law periodicals are published at Japanese universities, usually by the “law faculty”. In addition, occasionally some law journals in Japanese publish occasional articles in English or other European languages. These are indexed as noted on other slides.

English only titles include:
• University of Tokyo Journal of law and Politics
• Osaka University Law Review
• Keio Law Review
• Kansai University Review of Law and Politics
CiNii (Scholarly and Academic Information Navigator, pronounced like "sigh-knee") is a database service which can be searched with academic information of articles, Books & Journals. A production of Japan’s National Institute of Informatics, CiNii includes a huge amount of law-related articles, most in Japanese but a few in English. Some of the articles are in full text, other provide citations to print journals, sometimes available in North American libraries. When not available locally, inter-library loan from Japan is much more user-friendly than in the past. CiNii is available for free online, but there are charges for full-text access to many of the journals indexed.
Of course, legal articles can also be found in edited volumes (books). These days, many of these articles are indexed, and can be searched online in OCLC WorldCat, Japan’s National Diet Library and CiNii Books (remember CiNii Articles?), where it is possible to do keyword searching for text included within edited volumes.
You can search for monographs in English or Japanese in the same sources noted in the last slide, and also in the Gallagher Law Library/University of Washington online catalog.
These two classic works on Japanese law by Prof. Haley are great places to get background on the Japanese legal system.
A wide variety of Japanese legal topics have been covered in English monographs over the past several years. For example, *Law in Japan: a turning point* is a collection of essays by leading scholars, based on a conference held in Seattle, edited by Prof. Dan Foote of Tokyo University. “Japanese business law in western languages,” a bibliography by Prof. Baum and others, and is a very useful and up-to-date resource. Finally, “The Japanese Legal System” by Milhaupt, Ramseyer and West is a great introduction by three of the leading Japanese law scholars, published just last year.
“The rule of law in Japan” by Prof. Carl Goodman (a visiting scholar at UW Law School) and “The quest for Japan’s new constitution” by Christian G. Winkler are current works that provide introductions to constitutional and rule of law issues.
Finally, two current works on the legal system related to business in Japan are “Corporations and partnerships in Japan” by Kawamoto and “Business law in Japan,” a festschrift in honor of Prof. Harald Baum.
Inter-Library Loan from Japanese Libraries

**The GIF Project:** Getting Books and Articles from Japanese Libraries


**NCC** is the North American Coordinating Council on Japanese Library Resources

“Smart ways to request Interlibrary Loan and Document Delivery services from your library using GIF, the Global ILL Framework and other services”

If you find a reference to a Japanese book or article that is not available from North American libraries (not very common, and most often applying to Japanese language works), you have an option: Request it from a Japanese library using GIF, the Global ILL Framework. GIF is a project of the NCC (the North American Coordinating Council on Japanese Library Resources). The NCC website describes it this way: “The GIF Project is a reciprocal agreement between North American and Japanese academic libraries and research institutes to provide North American researchers with access to materials not available through normal ILL channels and Japanese researchers to materials not held in Japan.”
Today, online translation tools such as Google translate can help those with some degree of Japanese language skill, or even no Japanese language at all. The translations are admittedly very rough, but they can provide the gist of strings of text that can be useful when considered carefully and judiciously.
Online dictionaries such as Moji 1.0.3 (a Firefox Extension) are also very useful. When you install Moji in Firefox, it adds a lookup menu for Japanese characters and words. The English definitions appear in a sidebar, as shown on this slide. It’s an invaluable tool!
Finally, the Gallagher Law Library Japanese Legal Research guide includes a helpful list of translation services.
There is a lot of material available on Japanese law, and it is possible to answer questions in the area with smart use of your own investigative and language skills combined with a wide variety of content and tools online.

I hope you have a chance to visit the Gallagher Law Library. I’m always happy to give tours, especially of our East Asian law collection. I hope to see you there! If you can’t make it in person, I’m also happy to respond to phone and email inquiries.

Thanks for your attention!