

The Japan Institute of International Affairs. Access: <http://www.jiia.or.jp/en/>.

The Japan Institute of International Affairs (JIIA) is a well-respected think tank and research institution with a long history of producing high-quality analysis and research on Japan's foreign policy and international relations. The organization is widely recognized as a leading authority on these topics, both within Japan and internationally. The JIIA website is a comprehensive resource for information on international affairs, with a particular focus on Japan's role in the world. The website is available in both English and Japanese, making it accessible to a wide audience. The site features a search function that allows users to search for keywords or phrases across the entire site. This can be a useful tool for users who are looking for specific information or resources.

The homepage prominently features the latest news and events from the JIIA, providing visitors with up-to-date information on the institute's activities. The website also includes a comprehensive list of past and upcoming events. This allows visitors to stay informed about conferences, seminars, and workshops. Users can sign up for the JIIA's email newsletter, which provides updates on the latest news and research from the organization.

One of the standout features of the website is its wealth of resources on Japan's foreign policy, including reports, research papers, policy briefs, working papers, and journals on a range of issues, which can be easily accessed through the "Research" tab. These resources are presented in an easy-to-read format and available for download as PDFs. The "Research" section also includes videos and podcasts featuring JIIA experts discussing current international issues in more depth. These multimedia resources offer another way for visitors to engage with JIIA research and analysis.

JIIA's "Experts" section includes scholars and researchers with a wide range of academic backgrounds and expertise. This allows readers to gain a more comprehensive understanding of each issue and consider multiple viewpoints.

Overall, the JIIA website is an excellent resource for anyone interested in international affairs, particularly those interested in Japan's role in the global community. The website is well-organized, easy to navigate, and provides a wealth of information and resources, making it a valuable resource for researchers, policymakers, and anyone seeking to learn more about international affairs.—*Jia Mi, The College of New Jersey, jmi@tcnj.edu*

Tibetan and Himalayan Library. Access: <https://www.thlib.org/>.

The Tibetan and Himalayan Library (THL) provides a portal to digital collections as well as a nonprofit publishing platform. Established in 2000, THL represents decades of Tibetan and Himalayan studies scholarship. Content is drawn from an international consortium of sources, and editorial boards oversee curation and publishing while setting the THL vision. The project's home base is at the University of Virginia (UVA).

Library resources include digital collections of various formats, encyclopedia entries, project reports, the archives of the *Journal of the International Association of Tibetan Studies*, online tools for reading Tibetan fonts, biographies, and obituaries.

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A series of tabs across the top of the homepage divide resources by format. Each tab has a landing page with a search box and links to subcollections. These are the first keyword search opportunities that a user encounters—there is no sitewide search available. Rather than an oversight, this feature appears to be missing simply due to the age of the website, which launched in 2008 and was last updated in 2013. This is a weakness of the platform, as it conforms to technological constraints and user expectations that are at least a decade old.

Searching reveals the depth of THL's collections and the quality of its metadata. However, the search interface is not intuitive. It takes three additional clicks to open a digital image, if one exists. Some results are catalog records only. If the user selects a result with a digital document, they leave the THL site and enter a separate repository platform hosted by UVA. This platform, Mandala, is newer than THL. Mandala is more user friendly than THL, and since the majority of THL's digitized collections are housed on Mandala, this is good news. However, Mandala's interface is complex. It is friendlier, but not entirely intuitive for those unfamiliar with navigating scholarly databases.

In short, THL provides excellent resources on a specialized topic. The platform is recommended for experienced researchers who will have success navigating the wealth of material and a complex user interface.—*Katharine Van Arsdale, Adventist Digital Library, vanarsdk@andrews.edu*

PLANTS Database. *Access:* <https://plants.usda.gov/>.

Founded in 1994, PLANTS (Plant List of Attributes, Names, Taxonomy, and Symbols) Database is one of the longest running federal government websites. It is a valuable—if not particularly user-friendly—resource for botanists, horticulturalists, and anyone looking for information about the plants of the United States.

Maintained by the Natural Resources Conservation Service, a part of the USDA, PLANTS Database is considered the authoritative source of standardized information on plants. Coverage includes more than 35,000 plant species, including approximately 28,000 vascular plants and 2,000 non-vascular plants, and about 4,000 lichens. Every plant has its own database entry that lists its names (both scientific and common), classification, and distribution maps showing the range of the plant within the United States, color coded by whether it's native or introduced. Some plant entries also offer brief fact sheets describing the plant and its uses in more detail. A smaller subset of records also includes plant guides, which are more extensive, multi-page documents providing detailed descriptions of plant use, cultural significance and ethnobotanical context, and horticultural management practices, with robust bibliographic references. Additionally, the database offers a downloadable list of every plant in the database and provides links to additional external resources such as the USDA Plant Hardiness Zone map and downloadable interactive plant identification software.

The fundamental use of this resource, however, is for searching specific plants. When users arrive at the homepage, they have multiple options by which to search for the plant of their choice. A basic search box located in the upper-left corner allows for searching by scientific name, common name, symbol, or family. It is unfortunate that there is no keyword search option; the interface is clearly designed for known-item or known-plant searching. There is an array of search options on the lefthand navigation panel, hinting at the ability to search by topics such as “characteristics,” “duration,” “rarity,” and more, although little description

is provided for new users. Determined users who go to “Help” can find more details about each of these specialized search options.

This is an authoritative database with a pronounced learning curve for novice users and non-specialists, but botanists needing to verify specific plant information will find it invaluable.—*Eli Gandour-Rood, University of Puget Sound, egandourrood@pugetsound.edu* ↗