

Articles by NDL staff

Doctoral dissertations at the National Diet Library

Public Services Division, Kansai-kan of the National Diet Library

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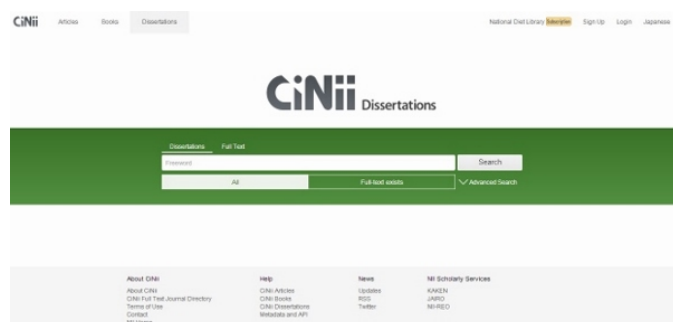
1. Introduction

Doctoral dissertations are submitted by doctoral candidates to universities or other academic institutions for screening by a faculty committee as a demonstration of proficiency in their chosen subject matter or discipline. This article describes how the National Diet Library (NDL) acquires, archives, and provides access to doctoral dissertations for which a degree was conferred by an academic institution in Japan.

Major points regarding how the NDL acquires, archives, and provides access to doctoral dissertations for which a degree was conferred by an academic institution in Japan

1. Doctoral dissertations for which a degree was conferred on or after April 1, 2013, by academic institution in Japan are generally available on the Internet.

They are generally available from the online archives of scholarly papers maintained by the institution that granted the degree. [CiNii Dissertations](#) is an archival system managed by the National Institute of Informatics (NII) and is very useful for finding dissertations. The NDL also acquires and archives digital versions of doctoral dissertations.



Top page of the CiNii Dissertations website

2. Most of the 140,000 doctoral dissertations digitized by the NDL are available at our more than 600 partner libraries in Japan, and 15,000 of these are also available on the Internet.

140,000 doctoral dissertations archived in print by the NDL between 1991 and 2000 have already been digitized and are available for viewing on the

premises of the NDL as well as at NDL-partner libraries enrolled in the Digitized Contents Transmission Service for Libraries in Japan.

3. Doctoral dissertations archived in print at the Kansai-kan are available for reading at either the Kansai-kan or the Tokyo Main Library (per an inter-site request) as well as via photoduplication service for remote patrons.

The NDL is the only library that stores doctoral dissertations for which a degree was conferred by an academic institution in Japan prior to March 2013, and makes them available in either printed or digital form. The collection is not only a valuable source of academic information but also represents an important cultural heritage which traces the development of some 600,000 professionals who earned doctorate degrees.

2. Acquisition of doctoral dissertations by the NDL

The Kansai-kan of the NDL preserves doctoral dissertations for which a degree was conferred by an academic institution in Japan during or after September 1923, just after the Great Kanto Earthquake, which caused widespread damage throughout the Kanto region, including Tokyo, Kanagawa, Chiba and Shizuoka.

Acquisition of doctoral dissertations began in 1935, when the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture transferred its collection of doctoral dissertations to the Imperial Library, a predecessor of the NDL. Before that, the Ministry had collected and stored doctoral dissertations, but many precious documents were lost in the fires that broke out after the Great Kanto Earthquake. The Ministry discussed countermeasures to for this concern with the Imperial Library, and it was eventually decided that the Imperial Library would take the role of acquiring and preserving doctoral dissertations.¹

As of December 2015, the NDL stores printed doctoral dissertations from nearly 589,000 people. Doctoral dissertations are stored in individual envelopes in the closed stacks of the Kansai-kan. The collection includes the doctoral dissertation of the famous manga artist Osamu Tezuka, who earned a medical degree in 1961, and the doctoral dissertation of the theoretical physicist Hideki Yukawa, who in 1949 became the first Japanese to

¹ For details, please see the article in Japanese "Kokunai hakase ronbun no goshokai (lit. Introduction to Japanese doctoral dissertations)," pp.34-35, the NDL Monthly Bulletin No. 574 (January 2009)

receive a Nobel Prize in Physics.



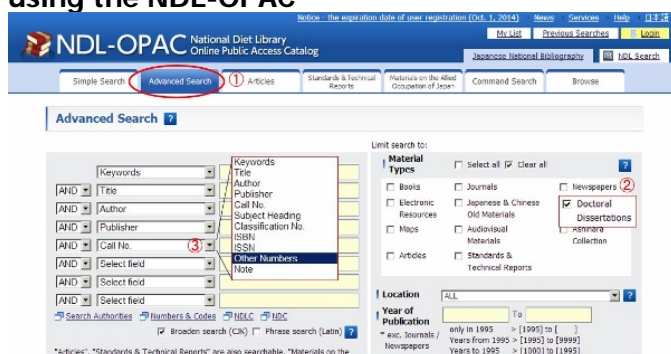
Doctoral dissertations in the closed stacks of the Kansai-kan of the NDL

3. Using doctoral dissertations archived at the NDL

(1) Printed doctoral dissertations

The [NDL-OPAC](#) can be used to search for any printed doctoral dissertation preserved at the NDL by title, author, institution that conferred the degree, or dissertation number. Registered users may request items found on the NDL-OPAC for reading at either the Kansai-kan or the Tokyo Main Library (per an inter-site request) as well as via photoduplication service for remote patrons. Copy requests must conform to the provisions of Japan's Copyright Act, which generally means that no more than 50% of the original work can be copied.

Tips for searching for doctoral dissertations using the NDL-OPAC



Advanced Search screen

1. Select the Advanced Search screen and check the box "Doctoral Dissertations."
2. To search by name of academic institution, select "Note" from the pull down list (3) and input the name of the academic institution in Japanese or using Romanized spelling.
3. To search by dissertation number, select "Other Numbers" from the same list and input a dissertation number, for example 甲第〇〇号.



Bibliographic Information screen

4. If the item has been digitized, a link to the National Diet Library Digital Collection (4) is displayed. Please click the link to see the digitized version.

(2) Doctoral dissertations digitized by the NDL

The 140,000 doctoral dissertations acquired by the NDL from FY1991 to FY2000 have been completely digitized. Full-text versions are available for viewing and copying on the premises of the NDL or at NDL partner libraries enrolled in the Digitized Contents Transmission Service for Libraries in Japan,² and bibliographic information such as title, author, date of publication, and table of contents are available on the Internet.

Also, the abstracts and body of 15,000 of these are accessible on the Internet provided the author's permission has been obtained.³

Doctoral dissertations digitized by the NDL are searchable on the "Doctoral dissertation" screen of the NDL Digital Collection.

² In January 2014, the NDL began a service to transmit digitized versions of out-of-print materials and other difficult-to-obtain items to libraries in Japan. For details please see the article "[Digitized Contents Transmission Service for Libraries in Japan \(Paper presented at IFLA/WLIC 2015, Session 102 - Technology facilitating access to information: libraries for development - Information Technology Section, Public Libraries Section, Asia and Oceania Section joint with Library and Research Services for Parliaments Section\)](#)" in the 202nd issue of the NDL Newsletter. Please note that some doctoral dissertations, for example, those commercially published later, are not available in partner libraries.

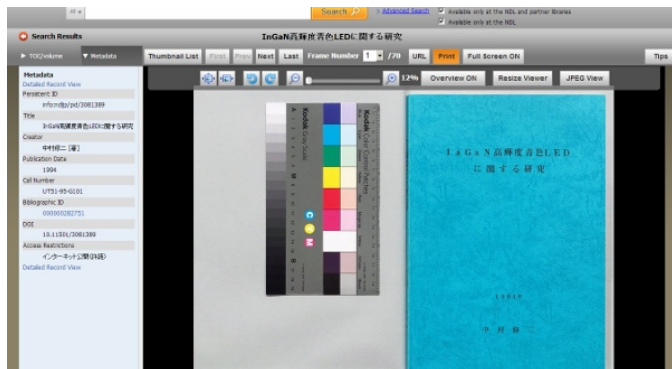
³ The NDL sought permission for making their doctoral dissertations available on the Internet, in cooperation with university libraries. The permission covers abstract and body, but it does not include sub-thesis and reference papers which can be submitted for reference when screening, together with doctoral dissertations. So, sub-thesis and reference papers are not available online.

NDL Digital Collections

Doctoral Dissertations screen

Tips for searching

After selecting “Doctoral Dissertation” (1) on the advanced search screen, you can search by title, name of author, name of academic institution (2), dissertation number (3), etc. You can also specify the scope of availability, by selecting check boxes (4) for “Available Online,” “Available only at the NDL and partner libraries” or “Available only at the NDL.”



Example of doctoral dissertation available online

Title: InGaN 高輝度青色 LED に関する研究 (lit. Study on InGaN high-luminance blue LED);
 Author: Shuji Nakamura; Academic institution: Tokushima University; Dissertation Number: 乙第 1371 号; Academic degree: Doctor of Engineering

This is the doctoral dissertation of Shuji Nakamura who received the Nobel Prize in Physics in 2014, together with Isamu Akasaki and Hiroshi Amano. He submitted it to Tokushima University and received a doctorate of engineering on November 11, 1994. The item is available online only with the author's permission.

(3) Doctoral dissertations published in digital formats

On March 11, 2013, the Degree Regulations (Ordinance of the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture No. 9 of 1953) were revised. The dissertations pertaining to the doctor's degrees conferred by universities or the National Institution for Academic Degrees and University Evaluation on or after April 1, 2013, are now required to be published via the Internet, supported by the institution they belong to.

This means that the publication format of doctoral dissertations changed from printed to digital format. Accordingly, in collaboration with academic institutions⁴ the NDL collects doctoral dissertations published in either digital or printed format.

The NDL automatically collects dissertations published via the institutional repositories of the degree-conferring university or institution, supported by the NII.⁵ Doctoral dissertations acquired by the NDL in digital format are available via the NDL Digital Collection on the premises of the NDL.

4. Conclusion

The NDL preserves doctoral dissertations in either printed or digital format, depending on publication requirements at the time of acceptance or for other reasons. Usage options differ, depending upon the format. Please see the table summary on the next page.

Doctoral dissertations include not only research achievement but also a wealth of reviews of previous studies, and references. The NDL hopes that doctoral dissertations, which can be accessed much more easily through the NDL-OPAC or the NDL Digital Collection, will be widely used to conduct survey research for years to come.

Reference (in Japanese):

- [“Doctoral dissertation for which a degree was conferred by an academic institution in Japan”](#) in the RESEARCH-NAVI
- [Digitization of library materials](#)
- “Kokunai hakase ronbun no goshokai (lit. Introduction to Japanese doctoral dissertations)”, pp.34-35, the NDL Monthly Bulletin No. 574 (January 2009)

⁴ Some doctoral dissertations for which a degree was conferred by an academic institution after April 2013, have been published only in printed format or not available on the Internet for unavoidable reasons. Those dissertations have been acquired in printed formats.

⁵ Concerning doctoral dissertations which have been released in a way outside its automatic collection, the NDL collects them through the submittal system. The NDL makes items available on the Internet after obtaining authors' permission. For details, see [“Collection of doctoral dissertations for which a degree was conferred by an academic institution in Japan”](#) (in Japanese) in the NDL website.

Table: Format of doctoral dissertations for which a degree was conferred by an academic institution in Japan and usage options at the NDL

Fiscal year of the conferral of degrees	Search system	Format	Usage option
September 1923– FY2012 (Except for the items below)	NDL-OPAC	Print	Reading at the Kansai-kan and at the Tokyo Main Library (per inter-site request) or photoduplication service for remote patrons
FY1991–FY2000 *Year of acceptance by the NDL	NDL-OPAC NDL Digital Collections	Digital (Digitized by the NDL) *In general, the original printed version of a doctoral dissertation which has already been digitized is not available for services. Please use the digitized version.	Available in the NDL Digital Collections Most of the 140,000 doctoral dissertations digitized by the NDL are available at our partner libraries and 15,000 of these are also available on the Internet after obtaining the author's permission
FY2013–	NDL Digital Collections	Digital (collected in digital format based on the received Degree Regulations) *Some are still collected in print form, although it is an exceptional case.	Available in the NDL Digital Collections Some are available on the Internet, after obtaining authors' permission Some are available on the premises of the NDL