

Having a long interest in Buddhism and Shinto I was excited to have applied and received the Horner Fellowship for 2012. I had also researched some of the large scale digital repositories in Japan and wanted to learn more. My two-week trip to Japan included many visits to digital repositories in Tokyo and Kyoto. The colleagues I met with at the National Diet Library and Archives, Tokyo University, Japan's National Archives, Keio University, Ritsumeikan University, Kyoto Prefectural Library and Archives (Kyoto) and the Chiyoda Public Library were all gracious and generous with their time. Not only was I given exhaustive tours of each of the repositories and libraries I visited but was able to give several presentations of the Arizona Memory Project. It was great to meet with so many professionals who are all doing similar work, to share project histories and learn about what others are doing. It was a packed two-week schedule – lots of trains and subways, lots of meetings, tours and presentations.

The Japanese take great pride in their culture and customs. Although very modern, Tokyo and Kyoto still revere their sacred sites and traditions, much of which is being preserved and made accessible via digital collections. There is great respect for national treasures. The crowded cities are clean and safe.



I saw lots of developing infrastructure and investment in libraries and archives. Much, if not all, of the software used in digital presentations was homegrown. Some of the older university libraries are being re-built or replaced by modern structures. In the meantime, libraries are very popular; the archives I visited were heavily used and relied on for authoritative documentation. Security procedures and measures for controlling access are much more prevalent in Japan than what we are used to in the U.S. Removing shoes, photography bans, sign-ins and controlled access to digital collections are the norm.

Professionals were dedicated, knowledgeable and committed to their work. Most of the folks I met had traveled internationally, spoke at least a small amount of English and were all interested other countries' approaches to preservation and access.

If anything, my trip was too short. There was far too much to see in just two short weeks when all but two days were booked with tours and presentations. Meeting and exchanging ideas with others was a valuable professional experience.