



# Japan Field Study Trip 2024

## My first visit to Japan

**Elin Sigurjonsdottir**

Senior University Registry assistant (Student Admissions)  
WMU

I have been a part of the WMU family since 2005 but it was first in January 2022 that I joined the registry team. During that year there were still restrictions because of the COVID-19 pandemic. It was only last year the yearly Sasakawa Students Japan Field Study Trip resumed and our beloved colleague Lyndell Lundahl went on her final trip with the WMU students to Japan before retiring. When I was asked if I would want to join the Sasakawa Fellows on their visit to Japan the following year, I did not have to think twice. This time it was the class of 2024's turn to go to Japan. On May 11th the 30 Sasakawa-funded students, together with Professor Johan Hollander and myself, headed off to Copenhagen airport to catch our flight to Tokyo.

While preparing for this journey I read a lot about Japan and its culture. It is described as a country that seamlessly blends tradition with modernity. From the bustling streets of Tokyo to the tranquil temples and shrines found in countless places, it seemed to be a country that I would feel at peace in. We also had expert advice and guidance from our two Japanese students who generously put together and shared with us a document with all kinds of useful information to help us during our stay. So with our bags packed and armed with important tips and

information, we were ready to navigate Nippon like pros!

We arrived at Haneda airport, after our 12-hour flight, and were warmly greeted by Ms. Emi Shimada from the OPRI and Ms. Miyo Wada, our tour guide. Together with them, we all made sure the whole group had made it through customs and they guided us to the bus to take us to our hotel where we would stay for the first two nights in Japan. At the hotel we were welcomed by, among others, Mr. Eisuke Kudo, Senior Advisor, and Mr. Kudo's enthusiasm and kind personality made us all feel welcome and at ease. After the orientation meeting and lunch, we had a quick practice where all the students got together for a run-through of the WMU song, preparing for the welcome reception that would be the following day. It took a few tries before everyone was in sync but we felt confident it would go well at the reception. Since we had to wait a while before we would get access to our rooms and despite being tired after our long flight a group of us went with Ms. Miyo on a quick tour of the Hie Shrine, not far from the hotel. After checking in we all had free time to explore Tokyo for the afternoon and evening but I suspect many, including myself, were very tired and opted for sleep instead to recharge our batteries for the coming days.



Monday 13 May was a big and important day. It started early for some of our students, representing the GOLI (Global Ocean Literacy Initiative), who had arranged to give a presentation to Dr. Hide Sakaguchi, President of the OPRI at the Sasakawa Peace Foundation. The rest of the group joined them later in the morning for the courtesy visit where we had the honour of meeting Dr. Yohei Sasakawa, Chairman of The Nippon Foundation. After brief speeches by Dr. Sakaguchi and Dr. Sasakawa the students were introduced and in a few words thanked Dr. Sasakawa for his generous support and explained how the fellowship would benefit them and their countries in their future careers.

Next on the agenda was a courtesy visit to the Maritime Bureau of the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism where we called on Mr. Atsushi Kaiya, Director General of the Maritime Bureau. A few presentations were made and our students were given insight into the work of the Maritime Bureau. We also had the pleasure of meeting and listening to a presentation made by WMU alumni, Captain Ryoji Hayashi from the Japanese Coast Guard.



The day ended back at the hotel where we were all invited to a welcome reception. This was a wonderful opportunity for us all to implement a new phrase we had learned: Nomunication. A Combination of NOMU “drink” and Communication. At the reception, we met with many dignitaries, both from Japan and other countries. The WMU students took care of the entertainment by singing the WMU song and many, both WMU graduates and others, joined in.



The following days were perfectly planned for us and we visited many different sites representing the Japanese maritime industry. On Tuesday all flew to Hokkaido, the northernmost of Japan's main islands. We started our stay on the island by visiting the Hakodate Research Center for Fisheries and Oceans and Hakodate Dock. I must say that of all our visits during our week in Japan, the visit to Hakodate Dock was my favourite. I was in awe of the skill of the workers and the size of the vessel they were building. I have seen big vessels before, but I have never given any thought to how they were built and the time, effort and special skills it takes to get them just right.



On Wednesday we spent quite some time on the bus which gave us time to enjoy the beautiful landscape of Hokkaido as well as a fun lesson from Ms. Miyo on some basic Japanese. The main visit of the day was to Nippon Steel where we got an introduction to their history and a tour of the premises. We then continued our journey to Otaru port where we boarded a ferry that would take us on to Niigata with an overnight stay. The weather was beautiful as



we left the port and we watched Otaru disappear as we sailed away. On board the ferry we were invited on a tour of the engine room and in the evening Ms. Reiko Naito from the OPRI and Ms. Miyo hosted a traditional tea ceremony where we all were invited to try.



We arrived in Niigata on Thursday and there we visited the Hokuriku-Shin'etsu District Transport Bureau and Kashiwazaki-Kariwa Nuclear Power Plant. The following day we enjoyed the view of Niigata from the Hotel Nikko Observation room and some amazing sea life at the Niigata City Aquarium, before taking the bullet train back to Tokyo. Back in Tokyo, we went on our final official visit. Tokyo Port welcomed us with a sailing tour of the port and a presentation.



On our last day in Japan, it was time for some sightseeing. Ms. Miyo took us on a tour to the Meiji Jingu Shinto shrine. Located in a forest in the middle of Tokyo, this is a beautiful and peaceful place of worship. The next stop was in Asakusa where the annual Sanja Matsuri was in full action. Here we had time to enjoy the festival on our own and do some shopping. From there we took a boat to the Hama-rikyu Gardens for a leisurely stroll through this beautiful and serene garden in the middle of the, otherwise crowded city of Tokyo.

When we left Japan the following day we were all very grateful for the hospitality of everyone at the Sasakawa Peace Foundation and seamless planning of this amazing trip offered to us. I am sure I don't speak only for myself when I say, this was merely the opening act. I can't wait to visit again. To everyone we met and who guided us around, arigato gozaimasu and, sayonara, for now, but not forever.



## SPF Initiative for the Private Sector-led Evolution of Japan-Pacific Islands Relations



**Hideyuki Shiozawa**  
(Director, Division of Island Nations, Ocean Policy Research Institute, Sasakawa Peace Foundation)

Sasakawa Peace Foundation organized the Pacific Island Nations Weeks (PINW) from July 8-19, 2024, in Tokyo in conjunction with the 10th Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting (PALM 10).

PINW aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the actual situation on the ground in Pacific Island countries. To this end, the event included seminars, cultural introductions, and keynote speeches by Heads of State, together with about 50 Ministers and practitioners invited from the Pacific Island region. The seminars addressed a diverse range of topics, including climate change, sea level rise, disaster management, Women, Peace and Security (WPS), maritime security, management of exclusive economic zones, justice affairs, sustainable tourism, protection of traditional cultures, education, health, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), and media relations. The participants shared valuable insights and information that could only be obtained through on-the-ground experience. Additionally, keynote speeches by the leaders of Fiji, Palau, the Marshall Islands, Tuvalu, Niue, and French Polynesia showcased the appeal of their

respective countries and their prospective collaboration with Japan.

The PALM was established in 1997, based on the Pacific Island Nations Conference in Tokyo in 1988, which was organized by the Sasakawa Peace Foundation. However, in recent years, as the international community's concerns about the Pacific Island region have grown, it has become increasingly clear that the region faces a range of complex issues. In light of this, a multilayered approach involving the public and private sectors in Japan is now essential.

The PINW spearheaded the establishment of FLOWERS (Freely Linked Opportunities with Efforts and Results), a private-sector-led public-private partnership forum aimed at bridging the gap between national and regional policies and the people of Pacific Island countries.

The Sasakawa Peace Foundation aims to advance the multilayered nature of Japan-Pacific Island country relations through PALM and FLOWERS. We look forward to future collaboration with WMU members from Pacific Island countries.



# Adapting to the Era of Maritime

## A Conversation Between Dr. Michael Manuel and

This interview took place at WMU on Friday, October 27, 2023. The hour-and-a-half-long discussion proved to be extremely insightful for all of us. Due to space constraints in this newsletter, we have had to significantly condense the content. The full transcript is available on the Friends of WMU, Japan website, and we encourage you to read it in full.

<https://www.wmujapan.net/global-data/20240913181008260.pdf>

### Dr. Michael Manuel (MM):

We look forward to discussing the unprecedented pace of automation and digitalization in the maritime industry and would appreciate your thoughts on this.

### Dr. Anish Hebbar (AH):

Respectfully addressing others is important in Japanese culture, and as a lifelong learner myself, I believe that while Artificial Intelligence (AI) is advancing, especially in aviation, the complexity of the maritime industry requires a more nuanced approach to automation.

### MM:

The challenge for educators at WMU is to equip students with the ability to critically assess the impact of technology while balancing tradition, innovation, societal roles, and personal development, ultimately fostering well-rounded, adaptable leaders who can navigate and influence rapid change.

### AH:

You raise very interesting points, especially in relation to the concepts we teach at WMU about formulating international regulations, like the SMART criteria. These changes in learning, from traditional methods to digital tools, mirror how regulations at the IMO have evolved from prescriptive approaches to goal-based ones, particularly with autonomous vessels. Projects like the Nippon Foundation's digital ocean mapping project, which is crucial for enhancing maritime safety through better visualization of oceanic parameters, also illustrate how automation and digitalization are increasingly linked to maritime safety, a crucial area for our students to understand.



### MM:

Indeed. And in all of this, a siloed approach to learning is limiting. Students must be able to integrate and collaborate across domains, recognizing the significant influence of other industries, like the technology industry and its products, on the maritime industry, which requires cross-domain innovation and collaboration. While technology expands our learning scope, it can quickly overwhelm human capacity, making cross-disciplinary collaboration essential. The challenge in automation and digitalization lies in varying perceptions of risk, with some preferring to retain elements of old technology while others push for new advancements, impacting both operational and educational approaches. The two-speed technological divide in the shipping industry presents global challenges, particularly as automation impacts countries differently. WMU students must consider the social implications of technology, especially in contexts of declining or rapidly growing populations.

### AH:

You raise a crucial point about the challenge of keeping everyone working at the same pace in maritime industries, especially with globalized standards as set by the IMO. Developing countries must work at an accelerated rate to keep up, and organizations like the IMO and WMU play a key role in helping this transition. Additionally, while digitalization and automation progress in some regions, traditional vessels, such as domestic ferries, continue to coexist, highlighting the need for a parallel system where human involvement remains essential. The IMO plays a vital role in creating a level playing field, as seen through initiatives like the IMSAS audit, which identifies gaps and fosters global cooperation. The interconnected nature of maritime and digital infrastructure,

## Dr. Michael Manuel

Professor and Nippon Foundation Chair; Academic Dean, WMU



# Digitalization

## Dr. Anish Hebbar



from ocean mapping conducted by The Nippon Foundation to global communication, demonstrates how actions in maritime benefit all of humanity.

Even in highly automated systems like aviation or drones, it is noteworthy that human involvement remains essential. However, as Hollnagel points out, increased automation leads to greater complexity, which humans must manage despite receiving less training and having less experience. This is particularly challenging when humans are only occasionally required to take control, as infrequent hands-on experience makes responding to unexpected situations even more difficult.

This is exactly what happens in aviation. As systems become more complex and incorporate AI, the algorithms driving them become less transparent. When navigation was manual using charts, operators fully understood the corrections and chart conditions. However, even with the introduction of ECDIS (Electronic Chart Display and Information System), navigational accidents occurred, underscoring the challenges that new technology can introduce.

Humans have long faced and navigated the challenges posed by increasing automation. The case of Tesla is especially fascinating, as it raises significant questions and ongoing debates about the risks associated with autonomous vehicles. In the U.S., certain regions have already allowed fully automated taxis, providing valuable case studies. Interestingly, there's even a website documenting Tesla accidents, sparking discussions about the potential dangers and whether limits should be placed on autonomy. What are your thoughts on balancing technological advancement with safety concerns?

**MM:**

Global consensus is crucial in managing rapid technological changes, especially concerning climate change. While maritime regulations have traditionally focused on ships, the emphasis must now shift to broader technological infrastructures across countries. WMU plays a key role in educating on these changes and fostering a supportive network. However, as automation and digitalization increase, the resulting greater complexity and dependence on technology may create vulnerabilities and diminish human skills thus impacting safety in all socio-technical systems. Where technological interventions fail, as they have, and a high technology dependence exists, there is the potential for serious consequences. Striking a balance in using technology effectively and ensuring safety and security is essential.

**AH:**

Very right.

**MM:**

Relying too heavily on technology can erode certain human abilities, skills and brain functions, potentially leading to survival issues if the technology fails, emphasizing the need for balance. Moreover, the maritime industry and oceans are inseparable, and while automation can help address environmental crises, we must proceed cautiously as new technology often relies on the limited resources of the Earth, the extraction and exploitation of which could lead to future problems.

A few decades ago, humanity failed to anticipate the severe consequences of extreme fossil fuel use, and now, as we transition to digitalization, we risk making the same mistake by not fully addressing its future impacts. Future generations may question how we plan to handle battery disposal and the environmental effects of mineral extraction. The “cloud” we rely on is not a distant entity but a network of energy-consuming servers with environmental consequences, highlighting the need to scrutinize technology’s sustainability, especially in higher education.

At WMU and similar institutions, we must educate learners to think critically about long-term impacts rather than just immediate outcomes. Nobel laureate Elinor Ostrom’s work on governing the commons and sustainable development stresses the importance of looking beyond short-term productivity. Students should be prepared to tackle long-term challenges and uphold values such as humanity, relationships, and stewardship of the planet.

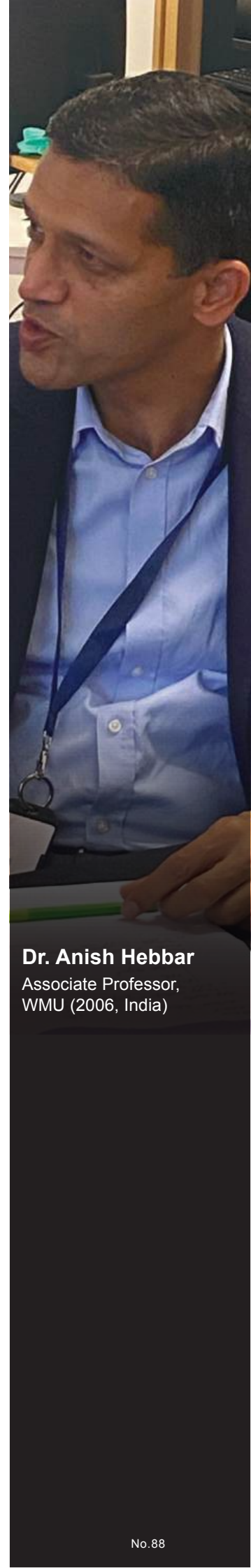
While many global issues could be addressed socially, society tends to favor technological solutions, often exacerbating divisions. WMU’s education and network aim to address both social and technological dimensions, and we must do more. Automation helps with decarbonization, but true progress will require behavioral shifts, such as reducing travel and consumerism, rather than relying solely on technology. What are your views on the maritime industry’s decarbonization efforts?

**AH:**

I would like to emphasize the importance of safety, especially in relation to digitalization and decarbonization, which are interconnected systems that impact multiple areas. Teaching students to think holistically about these tightly coupled systems is crucial, as decisions now affect many other countries, highlighting the need for a goal-based and risk-based approach.

We spend significant time defining aims, goals, functional requirements, and performance standards, but the challenge lies in determining if these standards are achievable, measurable, and verifiable. In decarbonization, introducing new fuels like ammonia or LNG raises safety concerns for sailors, as there

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**Dr. Anish Hebbar**  
Associate Professor,  
WMU (2006, India)

are no established regulations or risk assessments for their use as fuel, creating potential safety risks like those posed by new technologies such as sails impacting visibility on ships.

**MM:**

As a ship's officer on ro-ro container ships, I noticed the sails could pose windage challenges, highlighting the need for system adaptation, and I appreciate the focus on systems thinking, though the challenge lies in how to implement it practically.

As people become more competent, they tend to specialize, which, while increasing productivity, can limit broader human development, as noted by Adam Smith. Specialization can lead to siloed thinking, especially in higher education, contrasting with the need for systems thinking. To address this, collaboration and soft skills are essential for combining diverse perspectives, making contexts like the IMO crucial for fostering both specialized solutions and collective collaboration.

A case in point is the different perspectives of different stakeholders regarding the concept of "sustainable development". In spite of the different perspectives – one may even say, because of the different perspectives - the term successfully brings diverse groups together for dialogue. The real value lies in these discussions, where listening and collaboration can lead to mutually-beneficial solutions. While some criticize organizations like IMO for being slow, we need to move forward as one world, addressing problems as one world.

**AH:**

Talking about sustainability and how we work together as a system reminds me of how quickly we adapted to online learning during COVID at WMU. It highlights the concept of resilience, as different systems responded swiftly and decisively to unprecedented challenges. Resilience is a key focus for our students, both as individuals and future maritime leaders. By building resilience, they are prepared to tackle unforeseen challenges and contribute to resilient societies.

**MM:**

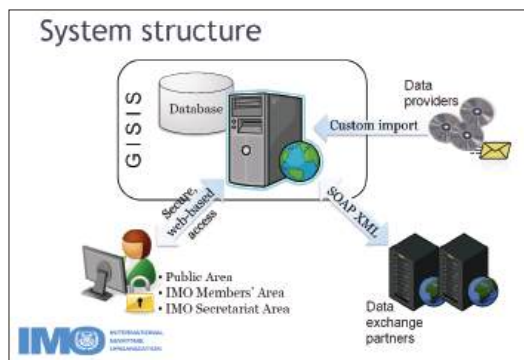
Exactly. Resilience is vital not only for individuals but for systems as a whole. While WMU adapted quickly to COVID due to foresight and infrastructure, many regions struggled due to inadequate resources. This highlights the need for a global baseline of infrastructure to ensure equal participation. The focus on resilience, particularly for seafarers, should shift from constantly increasing individual resilience to optimizing system resilience to avoid overburdening people. We should focus on system resilience rather than pushing individuals beyond their limits, as overburdening humans leads to inefficiency and harm. Solutions should improve systems to support seafarers and other maritime workers, ensuring a balance between work and well-being, while integrating appropriate technology to achieve humane goals. Technology must serve human well-being, but as digitalization and automation progress, technostress becomes a growing issue, particularly in maritime. Rapid technological changes can cause stress for seafarers if they lack proper training, and while modern advancements offer efficiency, they also reduce confidence in handling vulnerabilities, highlighting the need for a balance between technology and human competence.

A person in an organization may work incredibly hard,

be very resilient as an individual, and be deeply appreciated and applauded by the organization. However, the fact that organizational functioning places such a burden on an individual might indicate that the organization's operational systems are not set up correctly. Ideally, the whole system should be so structured to be resilient as a system and not place undue burdens and pressures on individuals in doing so. The same goes for the maritime world; we need to find solutions that prevent crew members from being overworked, which in turn will provide the entire system with greater resilience.

**AH:**

Identifying risks and measuring their impacts is crucial at all levels, and in a digital world, data collection and analysis are key for improving and predicting outcomes. For instance, IMO now collects vast amounts of data, including digital twins of vessels and fuel usage, to enhance decision-making and monitoring. It's essential to determine which data to collect and how to measure responses, such as the impact of COVID on seafarers, and to analyze it effectively for decarbonization, digitalization, and safety. As we move towards a data-driven society, universities must teach students to handle large datasets ethically, marking a crucial shift in research methods.



**MM:**

I hope that in the future, we can have in-depth discussions about data and measurement. The key takeaway here is the many benefits of automation and digitalization. While there are numerous challenges, as we push these boundaries, we must not forget our humanity, mutual respect, and the importance of collaboration. The policy and legal challenges are significant, but WMU provides a platform for ongoing engagement. Here, students can learn and, hopefully, develop a commitment to lifelong learning.

**AH:**

Let me introduce a small meme to close this dialogue. Two people are enjoying a drink. A robot enters the bar and says it doesn't know what it should do here. Humans know how to express emotions and enjoy. That will not be taken over by digital societies or robots. Having emotions is something unique to humans, therefore, humans will always survive and thrive.



# Filipino Sasakawa Fellows Honor Chairman Yohei Sasakawa

For Jabeth Sena Jephath Aleman Dacanay (Philippines, 2003)

By Herbert V. Nalupa (WMU 2022, Philippines)



Chairman Sasakawa and Jabeth DACANAY

On May 30, 2024, the Filipino Sasakawa Fellows and the World Maritime University – Philippine Alumni Association, Inc. (WMUPAAI) hosted the inaugural Maritime Regional Conference at the iconic Manila Hotel. The event, themed “Navigating the Future: Safety Through International Cooperation,” brought together industry leaders, maritime experts, and policymakers to discuss strategies for enhancing safety in the maritime sector.

Atty. Jabeth Sena Jephath A. Dacanay, Sasakawa Fellow and President of WMUPAAI, highlighted the conference’s significance as a platform to strengthen the maritime industry through knowledge sharing and collaboration. She emphasized the importance of exchanging insights, best practices, and experiences to address the industry’s evolving challenges.

Mr. Gerardo A. Borromeo, Chairperson of the WMU Executive Board, praised attendees for their affiliation with WMU, an institution committed to building capacity and navigating the future of shipping. He encouraged participants to take pride in their alma mater’s growing influence.

Dr. Yohei Sasakawa, Chairman of the Sasakawa-Nippon Foundation, delivered a congratulatory message via recorded video. He commended the conference’s focus on international cooperation and stressed the urgency of developing human resources to address the crisis in the maritime and ocean sectors. Dr. Sasakawa urged WMU alumni worldwide to continue their efforts in overcoming challenges facing the oceans and to take pride in WMU’s achievements.



The conference’s opening session delved into global best practices and challenges in the Just Transition, particularly regarding greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and the Standards of Training, Certification, and Watchkeeping (STCW) Convention. The discussions underscored the need for updated maritime education and training programs to keep pace with evolving standards.

WMU President Professor Maximo Q. Mejia, Jr., Ph.D., delivered the keynote address, stressing the importance of global collaboration and continuous improvement in the maritime industry. He emphasized the need for enhanced education, training, and capacity development to equip future maritime leaders with the skills necessary to drive sustainable development as the industry transitions to decarbonization.

Panelists from Japan, Lithuania, and the Philippines discussed the importance of mental health and wellbeing in the maritime sector, advocating for Just Transition and the promotion of skills for seafarers to adapt to new environmental and technological demands. They also explored the relationship between GHG reduction and safety, particularly concerning the adoption of alternative fuels.

The second session focused on regional best practices in maritime emerging technologies, ports, and shipping administration. Experts from the Republic of Korea, the Philippines, and Bangladesh discussed topics such as the optimal selection of sustainable alternative-fueled commercial vessel engines, shipbuilding and ship recycling, and promoting gender equality and diversity. Mr. Eisuke Kudo, Senior Advisor of the Ocean Policy Research Institute and representative of the Sasakawa Peace Foundation, was the keynote speaker for this session. He shared his experiences and advocacies for advancing the maritime industry.

The final session featured panelists from Thailand, the Philippines, and Malaysia, who shared their nations’ best practices and challenges in maritime administration, marine environmental protection, and port administration. Sasakawa Fellow and MARINA Administrator Sonia B. Malaluan delivered the keynote speech, highlighting the challenges posed by rapid technological

advancements to Maritime Administration. She discussed MARINA’s commitment to reducing GHG emissions through innovative systems like blockchain-enabled automated certification and emphasized the need for collaboration to improve maritime security and environmental protection.

In his closing remarks, VADM Eduardo Ma R Santos AFP (Ret) reflected on the strong bond among WMU alumni and reminded them of their unique responsibility to give back to the community and industry. The conference, inspired by the Sasakawa Peace Foundation’s advocacy on global maritime issues, aims to expand the influence of Filipino WMU Sasakawa fellows and members of WMUPAAI in contributing to the Philippine maritime industry and addressing ocean-related challenges.



Chairman Sasakawa and Sonia Bautista MALALUAN (Philippines, 1998)

## Special Timonel Award and Coast Guard Honors for Chairman Yohei Sasakawa

On June 1, 2024, the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) of the Philippines honored Chairman Yohei Sasakawa with a Special Timonel Award during its 50th Anniversary. The award recognized Chairman Sasakawa’s exceptional contributions to capacity building and professional development within the Philippine maritime sector. The Sasakawa Fellowships, which have supported numerous MARINA personnel studying at WMU, have been instrumental in forming leadership within the industry.

Chairman Sasakawa’s efforts have significantly impacted the professional development of Filipino maritime leaders. His advocacy has resulted in over 800 fellowships for individuals from 84 countries, including 77 Filipinos, many of whom now hold key positions in the Philippine Coast Guard, MARINA, and other maritime institutions.

On June 2, 2024, the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) awarded Chairman Sasakawa the Outstanding Achievement Medal and Ribbon in recognition of his contributions to enhancing maritime education and training. His support has enabled many PCG officers to pursue advanced degrees, significantly advancing the capabilities of the Philippine maritime sector. During his visit, Coast Guard officials and WMU Sasakawa fellows celebrated Chairman Sasakawa’s unwavering dedication to maritime excellence. VADM Victor Allan T. Dela Vega (Philippines, 2004), PCG Deputy Commandant for Administration, praised Sasakawa as a visionary leader whose contributions will resonate within the maritime community for generations.



# Business Trip to the Land of the Rising Sun A Journey Back to the Past to Find Unforgettable Memories of My Life

**Hai Ha Nguyen** (Vietnam, 2003)

Upon receiving the Decision of the Vietnamese Ministry of Transport to establish a working delegation to Japan, I was overjoyed at the opportunity to revisit the Land of the Rising Sun, with its cherry blossoms, Mount Fuji, and the chance to reconnect with the Sasakawa Peace Foundation, Chairman Yohei Sasakawa, Mr. Eisuke Kudo, and colleagues. The Nippon Foundation has given wings in realizing my dream of studying abroad and pursuing self-improvement, creating a major turning point in my life. It had allowed me to reach the horizons of knowledge and build a successful career, shaping me into the person who I am today.

My business trip to Japan centered on a training program focused on developing technical standards for ports and harbors, as part of a broader project to enhance Vietnam's seaport management. Key objectives included learning about the Japanese seaport system, technological advancements, and infrastructure maintenance, as well as visiting key institutions such as National Institute for Land



In front of the National Diet Building.

Infrastructure Management (NILIM), Port and Airport Research Institute (PARI), Data Empowered Management of Ports, Harbors, and Intelligent Systems (DEMPHIS), MEMPHIS, and the Ports and Harbours Bureau under MLIT. The trip also featured site visits, including a tour of Shimizu Port and Tokyo International Cruise Terminal.

During this business trip, I gained invaluable experience, expertise, and insights into the work styles and methods of my Japanese colleagues. Japan, despite being one of the countries most affected by natural disasters, earthquakes, and tsunamis, has developed a way of living and working that makes the whole world tilt 22.5 degrees in admiration and learning.

I also took the opportunity to visit the Sasakawa Peace Foundation, where I was warmly welcomed by the Friends of WMU, Japan Secretariat. The next day in Tokyo, I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Kudo again as part of a program to collaborate with Mr. Nomura, a Japanese maritime expert, on connecting Japanese ship owners with Vietnamese seafarers.

The business trip to Japan from July 16-26, 2024, was a great success. During the 10 days, I gained a comprehensive understanding of maritime infrastructure and maintenance, which I applied to developing new Vietnamese technical standards for seaports. I also acquired insights into construction technologies, new materials, and maintenance practices in Japan, and had valuable exchanges with leading Japanese experts on the differences in maritime management between our countries. On a personal note, this trip was a nostalgic return to the Land of the Rising Sun, over 20 years after my initial visit as a Sasakawa Fellowship Student of the WMU at the invitation of Mr. Yohei Sasakawa.



The author is seated on the right in the front row.

## Request to Update Directory Information

As is our tradition, the Friends of WMU, Japan Secretariat will be sending seasonal greetings to everyone who has registered their home address in the directory. To ensure that you receive yours, please check the directory before the end of October to confirm that your home address is up to date.

### Editor's note

**E. Kudo** (Senior Advisor, SPF)

The discussion between the two WMU professors was recorded exactly a year ago and, after much struggle, I took responsibility for significantly condensing it. I hope it serves as a useful reference when discussing the development of young talent in your workplace. I intend to plan similar discussions from time to time in the future. Your feedback on this session, as well as suggestions for future topics, would greatly encourage the editorial team.

With the significant increase in postal rates and the era of digitalization, it is uncertain how long we can continue distributing printed materials. However, I believe that showing the printed articles to people nearby might provide a stronger sense of engagement than digital formats. I hope to continue printing and mailing until the 100th issue, but for this to happen, we need enthusiastic support from everyone.

As the SPF offices modernize, I find myself compelled to dispose of the piles of document files and business card files accumulated around my desk. While I am prepared to undertake this as part of my 'end-of-life organization,' I find it difficult to part with the business card file containing over 1,200 cards exchanged with 'WMU associates' over the past 20-some years. My old Japanese-English dictionary does not include the term 'end-of-life organization.'



Drawn by Mr. Mitani



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