

Ambassador Keiko Tsuruoka
Ambassador for International Economic Relations and
Arctic Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan

Ambassador Feng Gao
Ambassador, Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
China

Ambassador Youngki Hong
Arctic Ambassador, Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
Republic of Korea

Hideto Sakurai
President of the Asian Policy Research Institute
(OPRI) Executive Director of the Sasakawa Peace
Foundation, Japan

H.E. Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson
Chairman Arctic Circle; President of Iceland 1996-
2018

Holding of the “Arctic Circle Japan Forum”

From March 4 (Sat.) to March 6 (Mon.), the Ocean Policy Research Institute of the Sasakawa Peace Foundation (OPRI-SPF) held the “Arctic Circle Japan Forum” jointly with the Arctic Circle¹ based in Iceland and The Nippon Foundation. The forum was attended by approx. 300 participants comprising Arctic Council officers, government personnel, researchers, business people, and NPO representatives from approx. 20 countries and regions. Speakers representing the Japanese Government included H.E. Ms. Keiko Nagaoka, Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology; H.E. Mr. Akihiko Nishimura, Minister of the Environment; and H.E. Mr. Shunichi Suzuki, Minister of Finance. From overseas, speakers included H.E. Mr. Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson, Chairman of Arctic Circle and former President of Iceland; and H.E. Mr. Gudlaugur Thór Thórdarson, Minister of the Environment, Energy and Climate of Iceland. The theme for this year’s forum was “ASIA IN THE FUTURE OF THE ARCTIC: Science - Geopolitics - Economy - Oceans - Climate - Technology”, and proactive discussions were conducted regarding participating countries’ Arctic policies and international cooperation from an Asian perspective.

Against the background of sea ice decreasing in recent years due to global warming, interest in the Arctic has been increasing both within Japan and in other countries. In particular, a switch to full commercial use of the Northern Sea Route connecting Europe and Asia is anticipated in the future for around 60% of



ships sailing southern routes via the Suez Canal and the Malacca Straits. Moreover, the Arctic holds a multitude of mineral resources as well as undiscovered oil and gas reserves, so efforts to develop these resources are becoming increasingly active in various regions. Thus when considering Japan’s future development, the Arctic is expected to become more and more important moving forward. However, the fact that the sea ice is decreasing does not change the fact that the Arctic continues to be a special environment where it is difficult to conduct economic activities due to the harsh natural environment, insufficient infrastructure, and fragile ecosystem. Accordingly, accurate information, knowledge and skills, and international cooperation are all necessary for protecting the Arctic environment appropriately.

The Sasakawa Peace Foundation has been focusing on Arctic Ocean dynamics since very early on. For more than 30 years, it has been implementing various related projects. One of those projects, the International Northern Sea Route Development Plan (INSROP), was jointly carried out - from 1993 to 1999 - by



H.E. Mr. Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson

¹ Arctic Circle is the largest network of international dialogue and cooperation on the future of the Arctic and our Planet. The organization’s annual Assembly, held each October in Iceland, and regional forums held irregularly together with national governments, NGOs, and other organizations interested in the Arctic are events where representatives of the governments of not only Arctic countries but countries throughout the world, indigenous Arctic groups, private companies, NGOs, research institutions, researchers, and other Arctic stakeholders can come together in one place to discuss Arctic issues. Held in March, the Japan Forum is one of Arctic Circle’s regional forums.

Russian and Norwegian research organizations, with the support of The Nippon Foundation. The purpose of the project was to explore the possibility of a Northern Sea Route traversing the Arctic, which had been impervious to navigation since the dawn of time. Through various studies and actual navigation testing, the project determined that it is technologically possible to operate ships in the Arctic Ocean all year round and received high praise worldwide. In opening speech of Mr. Yohei Sasakawa, Chairman of The Nippon Foundation, he also touched on the foundations's contribution to the Arctic.



(The following is an excerpt from Chairman Sasakawa's speech.)

Thirty years ago, developing a northern sea route was thought to be impossible. However, I felt a sense of romance regarding the Arctic Circle, which was unknown territory for humankind. Together with Professor Emeritus Hiromitsu Kitagawa and Mr. Eisuke Kudo, we attempted to realize the "Dream Shipping Route". One of these projects was the International Northern Sea Route Development Plan (INSROP), which was jointly conducted over a 10-year period by Norway's Fridtjof Nansen Institute and Russia's Central Marine Research & Design Institute (CNIIMF). We also implemented an equivalent but independent Japanese project, the JANSROP (Japan Northern Sea Route Programme). The results of these initiatives received high praise among the international community and were even taken up by the Arctic Council. Today, the "Dream Route" that I romanticized and approached as a challenge into the unknown has become a reality, with the number of ships using the Northern Sea Route rapidly increasing worldwide.

The oceans, including the Arctic Ocean, are in crisis. There are many and myriad issues related to the Arctic Circle, including changes to the natural environment of the Arctic Ocean caused by global warming, the impact on ecosystems and indigenous peoples, and the danger to island countries caused by rising sea levels due to melting ice, and realization of my long-held romantic dream of the Arctic Circle is being threatened. SDG 14 LIFE BELOW WATER states that "Healthy oceans and seas are essential to our existence." Accordingly, a threat to the oceans, including the Arctic Ocean, is a threat to human existence. Up until now, however, Japan and other countries have unfortunately had no clear vision of how they should be involved in Arctic Ocean issues. Now is surely the time when we need to peacefully and in an orderly manner work to sustainability maintain and

manage the Arctic Ocean under the philosophy that "The oceans are a common asset of humankind."

In the past, the Arctic States² have maintained discussions even during international emergency. Utilizing the platform of the Arctic Council, they have been continuously endeavoring to resolve various issues facing the Arctic. However, following drastic changes of international situation in 2021, sparking a war that continues to this day, the Arctic Council's functions were completely suspended, with the result that dialogue as well as joint research and observations have also been suspended, creating a crisis situation. In May 2023, chairship of the Arctic Council was smoothly transferred from Russia to Norway, but the future of the Council is difficult to foresee.

However, as Chairman Sasakawa mentioned in his speech, the environmental changes occurring in the Arctic are becoming more and more serious as each day passes, and we need to urgently take measures to prevent these changes. One outcome of the Forum was the opportunity for discussing Arctic matters with the active participation of not only government representatives, but also scientists and indigenous peoples. In the session on "Dialogue on the Arctic: Japan, China and Korea", the Japanese, Chinese and Korean Ambassadors for Arctic Affairs held fruitful discussion. The importance of having Asian States continuing to tackle Arctic issues was particularly emphasized. Furthermore, in the session on "Global Consequences of Melting Ice", discussions were held between H.E. Mr. Gudlaugur Thór Thórdarson and Mr. Hiroyuki Enomoto, Deputy Director of Japan's National Institute of Polar Research, and a strong message was issued stating the importance of raising awareness in the region through cooperation in order to protect against damage caused by global warming.

Environmental changes in the Arctic are progressing at a rapid pace with no regard to international situation, with glacier melting impacting the entire world. Isn't it time that we all come together under the philosophy of "One Ocean, One Future" and think about Arctic issues?



² Formed in 1996 by the eight states within the Arctic Circle with territory north of latitude 66°33' N (Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the USA), the Arctic Council is a forum where high-level government representatives gather to discuss common Arctic issues.

The Most Robust Sector in the Maritime Industry: In-Water Cleaning of Ship Hulls

- Robotics, Artificial Intelligence and Global Efforts to Save Our Environment



Mr. Yusik Kim
CEO, TAS GLOBAL Co., Ltd.
Member of the Global Industry Alliance
for Marine Biosafety

Robotic In-Water Cleaning (IWC) is one of the fastest growing and developing sectors in the maritime industry. Driven by IMO's greenhouse gas reduction (GHG) convention and the GloFouling Partnerships Project, it aims to preserve aquatic biodiversity. IWC is the best way to maintain a ship's energy efficiency; thus, the robotic IWC system, with its capture and water treatment capabilities, is needed for keeping off aquatic invasive species from the hulls of ships. Evidently, IWC demand is soaring, and the supply paradigm is transforming from divers to robots with capture and water treatment. Let me elaborate on the reasons these robotic IWC technologies are needed and what fascinating technologies will be arriving soon.

Why Do We Need IWC?

Biofoulings are biofilms - or simply, slime, algae, sea grass, barnacles, etc., and yes, they normally build up in this order. Biofouling increases surface roughness of hulls, reducing the speed of the vessels. Antifouling coatings work well, but not 100% perfectly. Transparent partial biofilms and barnacles can reduce speeds of vessels down to 1.7% and 15%, respectively. This implies that 5% to 62% extra fuel is needed to recoup the speed loss. Speed and fuel consumption have an exponential relationship; greenhouse gas emissions are directly proportional to fuel consumption. Altogether, biofouling is responsible for an extra \$10~20 billion USD in fuel cost, and 0.30%~0.6% in extra CO2 emissions to the world total of CO2 emissions annually. For shipping companies, it means millions to billions in extra fuel cost. **IWC is therefore financially beneficial and necessary to reduce ships' GHG emissions.**

GHG Reduction Convention

From 2023, ships of 5,000 gross tonnage and above will be rated A, B, C, D, E, according to the Carbon Intensity Indicator (CII). If ships are rated D for three consecutive years or rated E even once, these ships must submit a corrective action plan to illustrate how a rating C or above will be obtained in a given period. These companies must clean the ships or most likely, speed down. As of 2019, about 48% of global fleets are rated D or E. As this CII rating gets tougher each year, IWC would provide one of the best ways to act on the CII convention. Some bulk carriers and tankers are even increasing their IWC frequency to five times higher than before.

The GloFouling Partnerships Project

As a sister project of the GloBallast Partnerships Project, the GloFouling Partnerships Project addresses the transfer of harmful aquatic species through biofouling on the hulls of vessels. The revised guidelines from 2011 are to pass in 2023 and are not a convention yet; however, many countries are abiding by the guideline-based regulations. The guidelines, in short, specify that ships should maintain at most biofilm level, and when the ship is being cleaned at different



levels of fouling, biofouling needs to be captured at a certain rate and treated at a certain level.

IWC is done in terminals, anchorage and ships are up to 400 m long, 65 m wide, 20 m deep, total wetted area can be well above 20,000m², and these biofouling don't come off easily. Visual range can be 20 cm and shorter, less than 1 m tight area between the wall, sea bottom from the hull, and in complete darkness. In anchorages, there are strong currents and waves. Even without biofouling capture and water treatment, this is not a job for human, because then the divers have to drag 10cm in diameter, at least 100m long capture hose and cables.

These IWC robots are also called Remotely Operated Vehicles (ROV), and there are about a dozen ROVs at present, but their locomotive technologies are only based on 3 methods: magnetic belts, thrusters, and magnetic wheels. The performance of these ROVs vary significantly in efficiency (sometimes 10 times), capture rate, water treatment, and location flexibility. No system is alike. No system has been authenticated and certified at global level, in all aspects, when this is written. There might be one that passes Global Industry Standard, made by Baltic and International Maritime Council (BIMCO), solving the identified major obstacle raised by IMO's 2nd GloFouling Partnership Task Force meeting in April 2022.



Other than the ROVs, more technologies are coming, artificial intelligence hull inspection has reached above 96 % accuracy on finding fouling, 99.6% on species recognition. Early biofouling warning system based on deep learning, latest generation of hull performance analysis and prediction based on deep learning, multi and fully autonomous ROVs. In addition, in the very near future, these ROVs will have robotic arms to clean niche areas and repair ships under water. Lastly, another major obstacle, capture test method, is being developed using semi bio and artificial biofouling.

This new generation of robotic IWC industry is exciting, as it not only saves our atmosphere but also ocean pollution, reducing fuel cost of ships. The industry is growing very fast and still much to learn about the robotic IWC. I hope readers find this article inspiring however you're involved; as users, authorities or perhaps, the industry itself.

Approaching Industry 5.0

Knowledge — Collaboration — Innovation



Jillian Carson-Jackson, M.Ed., FNI, FRIN
President, The Nautical Institute
Managing Director, JCJ Consulting

What does it mean to be human in an increasingly digital world? Even as I promote digitalisation, teaching the use of decision support tools with integrated artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML), I am continually questioning and asking myself; What does it mean to be 'me', to be human, while using digital tools? Working with technology, rather than working for technology?

We have spent the past century inventing and refining norms for organisations, leadership and collaboration—norms that suited the problems and technology of 100 years ago. But we are now facing new challenges: adapting to a post pandemic world, dealing with the implications of climate change, working towards a sustainable environment which calls for us to evolve, to find new solutions.



Humans and Machines Collaborating
(Image created using AI)

This societal shift means we need to evolve our skillsets, developing a new mindset for work, and teamwork. We need to ensure equal, and equitable, access to digital skills, addressing the digital divide.

According to The World Economic Forum (WEF), by 2025 technology advances will result in machines and humans spending equal amounts of time solving tasks. We are beginning to see this in the recent developments in AI, and the speed of change is increasing. The

consequence of this means that over 85 million jobs will change in just five years, creating new roles that we can't even imagine yet.

This means we need to navigate an uncertain and rapidly changing global ecosystem. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Learning Compass 2030 has been created to provide a framework that supports a future vision for learning, education and development. Building on the existing educational concepts of Knowledge (creating value); Skills (taking responsibility) and Attitudes (recognising and adapting competencies) the OECD learning compass now includes Values (reconciling tensions and dilemmas).

Knowledge

Information and Knowledge: The digital age has revolutionized access to information and knowledge with vast repositories of data,



OECD Compass (ref: <https://www.oecd.org/education/2030-project/>) Shared under Creative Commons Licence)

instant communication, and unprecedented connectivity. Being human in this context means being able to navigate and critically evaluate the abundance of information, distinguish between reliable sources, and use technology to enhance our learning and understanding.

Digital Intelligence, Identity and Presence: In today's digital world, we need an understanding of what the digital tools can, and should, be able to 'do'. As individuals we have an online presence through social media, digital profiles, and governmental online platforms. Our digital identities are extensions of ourselves, presenting opportunities for self-expression, networking, and engagement. However, it is essential to remember that our digital personas are curated representations and may not capture the entirety of our human experience.

Skills

Adaptability and Lifelong Learning: The digital landscape evolves rapidly, requiring individuals to adapt and acquire new skills continually. Being human in a digital world involves embracing a growth mindset, being open to learning, and developing skills to navigate emerging technologies effectively. It also means recognizing the importance of human qualities such as creativity and emotional intelligence, that complement technological advancements.

Critical Thinking: As we encounter an increasingly fast pace of change, we cannot 'learn' what we need in the traditional sense. We can, however, develop our own ability to think critically – analysing what is presented, using our knowledge and digital intelligence to work effectively with the different, and evolving, digital tools available to us.

Attitudes

Physical and Biological Existence: Despite digital advancements, humans remain biological beings with physical bodies and basic needs. The integration of digital technologies into our lives should not overshadow the importance of maintaining our physical health, well-being, and human connections. Our attitudes towards ourselves, and towards others, and celebrating our differences is key to our future strength in a human/machine collaborative environment.

Social Interactions and Relationships: Human connection and social interactions are fundamental. In the digital world, these connections can take place through social media, video calls, online communities, and virtual reality. While digital interactions offer convenience and enable global connectivity while reducing emissions, it is important to provide balance with meaningful and personal connections, interactions and face-to-face relationships.

Values

Ethical Considerations: As technology increasingly integrates into our lives, ethical questions arise. We need to grapple with moral dilemmas related to data privacy, surveillance, algorithmic biases, and the impact of automation on employment. We need to consider the ethical implications of our digital choices and advocate for responsible and inclusive technology development.

Striking a Balance: Being human in an increasingly digital world necessitates finding a balance between the benefits of technology and the preservation of our humanity. It entails using digital tools and platforms to enhance our lives, work, and relationships while being mindful of the potential pitfalls such as digital addiction, information overload, and social disconnection.

In summary, being human in an increasingly digital world entails embracing the opportunities and challenges presented by technology while remaining grounded in our physical existence, maintaining meaningful connections, nurturing our ethical compass, and continually adapting to a changing landscape.





8th Our Ocean Conference in Panama

Working Together Towards Achieving a Sustainable Ocean

Masanori Kobayashi,
Senior Research Fellow,
Ocean Policy Research Institute of the Sasakawa Peace Foundation

The 8th Our Ocean Conference (OOC) was held in Panama City from 2 – 3 March 2023. It is an initiative originally launched by then US State Secretary John Kerry in 2014 to engage government leaders and high-level stakeholder representatives to develop partnership to protect the ocean from pollution and marine resource depletion and to promote a sustainable ocean and sustainable marine resource management. Delegates pledged 341 commitments – planned activities worth \$20 billion in total. H.E. Laurentino Cortizo Cohen, President, Republic of Panama addressed the Conference together with Foreign Minister, Environment Minister, US Presidential Envoy for Climate, President of Palau, Prime Minister of Fiji and so many leaders and other prominent experts. The participants discussed (i) marine protected areas, (ii) marine pollution, (iii) climate change, (iv) sustainable fisheries, (v) blue economy, and (vi) maritime security. Reference was also made to sustainable tourism, marine plastic pollution and ecological connectivity.

3 persons from OPRI-SPF attended the Conference. OPRI-SPF organized a side event on sustainable blue economies in island and low-lying countries. OPRI-SPF sponsored 12 students to attend the Our Ocean Youth Leadership Summit held from 27 February – 1 March 2023 and OOC. I moderated the Youth Session on Day 2. A youth delegate articulated the adverse impacts of sargassum (brown colored seaweed/algae) outbreak in the Caribbean presumably due to the eutrophication caused by the discharge of fertilizers in the continental countries. He learned the method from a German expert who came to a university in Trinidad and Tobago and experimented the conversion of sargassum to bioenergy. The recording can be viewed at YouTube (@minrexpanama).



After spectacular cultural performance, Foreign Minister Janaina Tewaney Mencomo of Panama welcomed the participants. Mr. Juan Monterrey, Director of Geoversity's School of Biocultural Leadership advocated to eliminate subsidies to fisheries, rid subsidies to fossil fuels, and enact a global moratorium on deep sea mining. Environment Minister Milciades Concepción of Panama followed to articulate the Panama's ocean conservation policies and programs. President



The author (left)

Laurentino Cortizo Cohen of Panama underlined the significance of the Conference and the Panama's initiative for a sustainable ocean. At the Conference, leadership spoke about their policies eloquently. Experts spoke and interacted vibrantly at thematic panels. Representatives made 1 minute statement on their commitment of actions to achieve a sustainable ocean. The Conference was very intense, informative, and inspiring.

Panama is positioned to be very special on ocean issues. The Panama Canal connects the Pacific and the Atlantic. Over 14,200 ships passed through the Panama Canal in 2022. The revenue from the toll reaches \$4.2 billion with the assumption that about 40% of the proceeds goes to the Panama's General Treasury and could constitute about 3 per cent of its GDP. Having the revenue from the Canal gives an advantage and self-reliance in promoting the sustainable management of the Panama's natural resources. While EU and Japan targets to achieve a net zero greenhouse gases (GHGs) emission by 2050, Panama has achieved the net zero and now goes beyond it by promoting carbon sequestration in vast forest covers. Panama, Bhutan and Suriname are members of the Alliance of Carbon Negative Countries. Panama also joined Ecuador, Colombia and Costa Rica in expanding marine protected areas in the Eastern Pacific in 2021 called "Eastern Tropical Pacific Marine Corridor (CMAR)". Panama hosted the 19th Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES COP19) in November 2022 and spearheaded the adoption of conservation measures including the listing of 54 sharks species in Appendix II to regulate their trade.



The Panama Canal is a landmark to visit. The Panama City Fish Market is a lively place to see diverse local fish and cheerful retailers. The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) supported its construction in 1995. Panama offers a lot more to see. I encourage you to see vibrant blue economy efforts there if you have a chance to visit Panama.

Alarm Bells for Ocean Acidification

- Please Visit Friends of WMU, Japan Website for Full Contents -

On February 2nd, the Nippon Foundation hosted an international symposium titled, Ocean Acidification: A Crisis in the Making, as part of the Back to Blue initiative with The Economist Group in Tokyo, Japan. In his opening remarks, Chairman Sasakawa called for urgent action to tackle this crisis by thinking and acting together in order to pass on “Mother Ocean” to future generations for thousands of years and beyond.

UK Plymouth Marine Laboratory Science Director and co-chair of the Global Ocean Acidification Observing Network,



Prof. Steve Widdicombe

Prof. Steve Widdicombe, who has been researching the biological effects of ocean acidification for about 20 years, stated, “The health of the marine ecosystem is threatened by global warming, deoxygenation, and acidification.”

The full text of his manuscript,



which was written in an easy-to-understand format for this newsletter, is posted on Friends of WMU, Japan website. We would like all of our Fellows to read the contents – as professionals working closely with the ocean, this matter is sure to be highly relevant.

Please visit following link for the full text:

<https://www.wmujapan.net/global-data/20230626144609473.pdf>

WMU Viet Nam Alumni Chapter Organized the Celebration of World Maritime University's 40th Anniversary



Dat Viet Hai Tran
(Viet Nam, 2017)



To commemorate the World Maritime University’s (WMU) awakening achievements in the 40 years since its foundation, 56 Vietnamese alumni showed outstanding solidarity by organizing a ceremony on 12 May, 2023.

Mr. Kitack Lim, the Secretary General of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and a 1991 alumnus, attended the ceremony as a guest of honor.

Participants were shown a video of WMU history and the image of all Vietnamese students since 1991, and looked back fondly on beautiful memories of the campus. In his opening remark, Mr. Dao Dinh Tien, Chairman of the WMU Viet Nam Alumni Chapter proudly stated the historical development of WMU, the significant role played by the institution in shaping the careers of alumni in Viet Nam and meaningful activities of Viet Nam Alumni Chapter over the years. He also highlighted skills imparted by WMU have enabled the alumni to contribute greatly to the development of Viet Nam’s maritime industry and transportation sector.

In his keynote speech, Mr. Kitack Lim referenced the WMU’s legacy and its excellence in maritime education,

research and capacity building over the past 40 years, serving the IMO mission by offering stakeholders unparalleled access to a global network of experts, knowledge, and expertise to support the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. He also mentioned that his visits to various maritime related destinations in Viet Nam impressed him with the rapid development of Viet Nam’s maritime industry, and made a promise to support Viet Nam’s maritime industry in the future.

Mr. Nguyen Hoang, Deputy Director of Maritime Administration of Viet Nam who is also a WMU fellow expressed his sincere gratitude to Mr. Kitack Lim for IMO’s contribution to the global maritime community, especially ensuring safety, security and sustainability of the maritime industry.

The meeting concluded with the singing of the WMU song, a beautiful tradition, together with Mr. Kitack Lim.

The WMU Viet Nam Alumni Chapter intends to organize the celebration of 20 years anniversary in the end of 2023 for the purpose of further strengthening the relationship between the WMU Viet Nam Alumni.

WMU Alumni Finds Each Other at JICA's Alluring Training Program



Mai Thanh Truc Nguyen
(WMU 2019, Viet Nam)

I was fortunate enough to attend the Sustainable Port Development course in Japan. The program was organized by JICA, OCIDI, and other affiliated organizations. During the two months duration of this program, I had a chance to visit numerous ports in Japan where I was exposed to cutting-edge cargo handling, automated systems, and eco-friendly port practices (Green port). Witnessing these advancements firsthand instilled me a deeper understanding of the significance of sustainable port development – a balance between economic growth and environmental conservation.



During the training, I could reconnect with my WMU classmate who are now residing in Japan. The reunion was a moving and gratifying event and she broadened my knowledge in maritime policies, sustainable port development. I

am eager to apply my newfound knowledge and skills to contribute to our maritime industry's growth.

Overall, the trip was an exceptional experience that broadened my horizons, enhanced my knowledge, and facilitated valuable connections with industry peers. It emphasized the importance of encouraging global cooperation, knowledge-sharing, and friendship among maritime professionals worldwide.



Mirana Rabarijaona
(WMU 2017, Madagascar)

The theoretical part of the studies was conducted online, started in September 2022 and the visit to Japan mostly consisted of visiting ports and infrastructures in the context of field studies. Through the program, the member of JICA in collaboration with partner organizations, led us on tours to the majestic ports of Osaka, Kobe, Hakata, Fukuoka, and Shimonoseki, each of which displayed its own attributes, characteristics, and resilience. We also visited some of Japan's infrastructural wonders, including the Akashi Kaikyo Bridge and Tokyo Skytree while being welcomed by businesses which produce port-related materials and equipments such as Shibata Industrial Co.,Ltd. and Fudo Tetra Corporation.



I met Mai-san, who enrolled in the same program. When we realized both of us attended WMU, we joyfully hugged each other as though we found a long-lost relative. She introduced me to Mr. E.Kudo as well as Ms. Y.Suzuki (2003) and Mr.K.Taguchi (2022), both WMU Sasakawa Fellows. The program culminated with the individual presentation of our action plans which we are to bring back to our respective countries for the purpose of sustainable development. A ceremony was conducted to officially close the program and for us participant to be awarded our completion certificates.



The overall experience was amazing, and I will always treasure the souvenirs of each day I spent in Japan.



JICA provides a variety of learning opportunities for people who engage in maritime affairs. Many Sasakawa fellows have participated in the past and returned to their home country with new knowledge and connections with world wide maritime peers and global industry. These programs are provided mainly for government officials from countries designated by JICA each fiscal year. Please note that all the candidates for a training program should be officially recommended by their government. Please contact your government's relevant department to apply for a course.

For details, please visit:

<https://www.jica.go.jp/english/faq/faq.html#02>

FY2023 Course	
1	Sustainable Port Development and Planning (for Port Engineer)
2	Hydrography for Charting and Disaster Management (Internationally Accredited Category B)
3	Strategic Port Administration and Management
4	Capacity Development for Port Facility Security
5	Port Maintenance Planning
6	Strengthening Surveys and Inspections for Ship Safety
7	Maritime Law Enforcement
8	Maritime Search and Rescue, Maritime Disaster Prevention, and Marine Environment Protection for Coast Guard Officials
9	Maritime Safety and Security Policy Program

Reunion with My Little Son "Kavinu"

Kelum Prasanga JALATH MUNASINGHE

(Sri Lanka, 2022)

I'm excited to share my thoughts and experiences on my son, who was one month old when I arrived in Malmö to attend WMU as a Sasakawa family member.

My life was totally changed after the son "Kavinu" came to our world on August 4, 2021. The happiest day of my life served as a turning point that has changed the person I am. Being a father is an emotion that cannot be adequately articulated in words. When I make the decision to travel to Malmö, the adorable smile and cries of little Kavinu put me in a tough situation of choosing whether to leave the home.

I was able to take advantage of this wonderful opportunity to study in Malmö thanks to The Nippon Foundation and SPF. One of the greatest achievements of my life would have been completing my master's degree in maritime affairs with the help of friends in WMU, faculty, and staff. On the other side, I had to leave my wife and son alone in the house, which made this difficult for me.

Now I am back with my child and wife and spending happiest day of my life. Tiny Kavinu can now utter a few words and go around the house playing with the toys that his mother



has bought for him. He always waits for me to get home from work before coming over and giving me a hug.

The opportunity, I had in life to study at the World Maritime University and receive a fellowship from the Sasakawa Foundation, was extraordinary, unanticipated and remarkable. One of the best opportunities I've ever had will be this one. I have been able to scar my child's beautiful smile for a year, but now that I am recalling that experience I had in Sweden with a proud and well satisfied mind. I'm thrilled to be able to share it with my child as a proud parent to motivate him in life as he grows up.

Editor's note

The Northern and Southern Hemispheres have different seasons, and in Japan we have already welcomed spring, with the cherry blossoms heralding spring's advent flowering and the amount of sunlight increasing each day, bringing warmth. The trees are lushly approaching abundance, and their trunks have firmly added a new growth ring. The Friends of WMU, Japan also continues to expand, adding a

new growth ring each year. By continuously adding new members under the philosophy of "One World, One Family", we are creating a bountiful forest. Currently there are some 760 Friends of WMU throughout the world. The Friends of WMU, Japan Newsletter is continuing its efforts to provide the soil for conveying information about this forest, so please make sure you have taken root firmly in the forest floor.



Dr. Koji Murai

Tokyo University of Marine Science and Technology



Cherry blossom in TUMSAT