

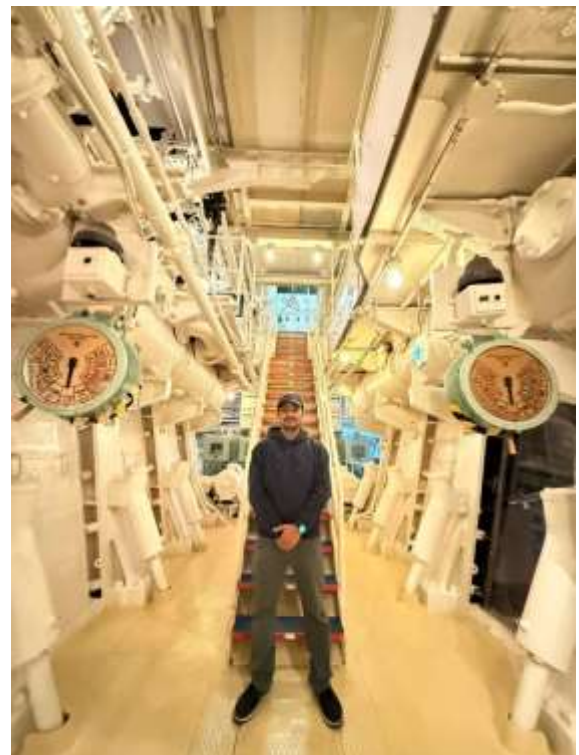


My recent one-day trip to Umihotaru on the Tokyo Bay Aqua-line, Yamashita Park, and the Isuzu Plaza was a profound eye-opener to understand Japan's engineering feats, maritime history and industrial innovation. The trip started at Tokyo Metropolitan Theater in Ikebukuro, where all the students met along with MPMA Professors and staff. By around 9:00 am we reached Umihotaru: the artificial island amid Tokyo Bay. The moment I stepped out, the sight and sound of the ocean hit me all at once. I was stunned by the vast ocean encircling us in a 360-degree panorama- a mesmerizing expanse I'd never imagined. It was an unforgettable moment to me- a person who grew up far from the ocean that wide. I loved the cool breeze on the observation deck. It carried a fresh, welcoming feeling, as if the whole place was greeting us. Inside, we watched an audiovisual show that explained the Aqua-line construction- a 15.1 km mix of tunnel and bridge connecting Kanagawa and Chiba since 1997, dug by massive shield machines through seabed and high-pressure waters.



I wondered at how engineers conquered such underground tunnels, soaring bridges and this artificial rest stop, pondering the immense risks without today's modern technologies. Before leaving, I was drawn to the Fortune Bell present on the observation deck and rang it, hoping for the good luck in my studies and future endeavors.

The next exploration destination was Yamashita Park, a post Great Kanto Earthquake reclamation seaside park. When I arrived there, the first thing that caught my eyes was the massive silhouette of the NYK Hikawa Maru "a cultural heritage ship" moored quietly along the waterfront. My friends and I boarded the ship, and it felt like stepping into a different era. It was fascinating to know how she served as a luxury cargo-passenger liner between Japan and Seattle, became a navy hospital ship during World War II, and survived being struck by mines on three separate occasions. The preserved interiors revealed the class-specific artifacts: deluxe cabin's original wallpaper and first-class nursery's Japanese child paintings. Up on the bridge, there were antique navigation tools like water pressure steering gear, speaking tubes, telegraphs and compasses. Descending into the engine room, the smell



of old oil and grease filled the air, making me feel as though the massive engines were still thundering to life. Seeing the massive engines of the ship up close for the first time was incredible. At the same time, I couldn't help but wonder; could we build ships in Nepal to carry goods on our big rivers? I also imagined how much easier it would be to develop the country if we had better connectivity through sea/water.



Our final stop was the Isuzu Plaza, which provided a different but equally engaging learning experience. It showcased the evolution of Isuzu from its early vehicles to the advanced trucks and buses that support logistics and transportation today. Observing this progression made it clear how innovation in automotive technology is deeply connected to both industry and daily life. Trying the driving simulators was one of the highlights of the visit. It was exciting to “drive” in a virtual environment, and competing playfully with friends for better control and performance added a fun, interactive element to the learning.

Looking back, this field trip was far more than just a day away from the classroom. At Umihotaru, I learned how ambitious engineering can connect regions across the sea. At Yamashita Park and the NYK Hikawa Maru, I was reminded of Yokohama's history as a port city and a gateway to the world. At Isuzu Plaza, I saw how a Japanese industry still continues to innovate and support transportation globally.

The MPMA professors and staff at Rikkyo University thoughtfully select destinations that don't just look interesting, but actually help us understand how Japan works on the ground- its infrastructure, its maritime roots and the way its industries keep evolving. It also builds on what we have learned from our past field trips. The 2024 Winter trip to Asahikawa revealed about Hokkaido's natural heritage and resilient economies, and the 2025 Summer trip to Kumamoto showed us how a place can rebuild after disaster while still protecting its heritage, history and planning ahead.

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