

## **Interview:**

### **Hiroki SASA Graduate in March 2022, University of Tsukuba**

#### **1. Why did you select JDP?**

There are three reasons why I selected JDP as my school of higher education.

The first is that I can conduct research in developing countries in Asia. When I studied abroad in the Philippines and Vietnam as an undergraduate, I realized the seriousness of environmental problems in developing countries, and I wanted to contribute to solving them.

Second, I was attracted by the content of what I could learn in JDP. When considering environmental issues, energy and economic aspects must also be considered, and I was attracted to the wide range of classes offered at JDP, including these aspects, ethics, and ecology.

Third, I wanted to experience a variety of sense of values through interaction with people from different countries. I believe that it is very important to be exposed to diverse values to mature as a person, and the fact that JDP offers a rich environment where I can interact with people from many other countries through classes and research was also attractive to me.

#### **2. What are attractive points on JDP?**

I think the most attractive point of JDP is that students can study at Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, which is in Kuala Lumpur, the capital of Malaysia, for about 10 months. In addition, students can obtain a master's degree from two universities, the University of Tsukuba and Universiti Teknologi Malaysia by the joint degree system. I believe that this program is very suitable for those who want to do research at a graduate school in Japan but also want to experience long-term study abroad.

Another attraction of this program is that you can interact with people from different backgrounds. The professors and students have a wide range of ages and nationalities, and since you can interact with people who have a lot of social experience, such as those who are working while attending graduate school or on leave, you can learn a lot of information not only from the professors but also from the students.

#### **3. Could you tell us the reason why you selected your current supervisor on MJIT-UTM and University of Tsukuba?**

The reason why I selected my academic supervisor is I was attracted to his research, which uses simulation analysis to study the optimal balance between energy, environment, and economy.

During my undergraduate years, I belonged to the faculty of renewable energy and researched bioethanol. When I was in 4<sup>th</sup> grade as an undergraduate, I took a class on Energy, Environment,

and Economic Systems which taught me that we must always consider the environment and the economy when thinking about energy issues.

I decided to study under my current advisor because I wanted to learn about the environment and economics behind renewable energy before starting my career.

**4. What kind of lectures and research were conducted during the global pandemic, and what did you learn from them?**

During a COVID-19 outbreak, I did all my lectures and research online in my hometown during the first year of my master's degree. In the second year of my master's degree, I came to the University of Tsukuba, where one part of my classes and research activities were held offline, and other classes and events were still held online.

What I gained through online classes and other activities was the ability to manage myself. When I was living at home during my first year of master's studies, it was difficult to switch on and off to concentrate on my studies because I was inside my home all the time. Therefore, I made a conscious effort to create a to-do list and use a timer to consciously divide my time each day to create a sense of urgency in my day-to-day life. I believe these are habits that will serve me for the rest of my life, even after the pandemic is over.

**5. Could you tell us the impression of the course lecture both UT and MJIT-UTM?**

I felt that many of the classes at the University of Tsukuba focused on specialized content. However, none of the lectures required difficult mathematical knowledge, etc., and they were understandable to students in any major.

I had the impression that MJIT-UTM lectures covered a wide range of topics in one class, such as SDGs and environmental issues. In addition, there were many more opportunities to communicate with other students and professors than in the University of Tsukuba classes, such as presentations, group homework assignments, and professors asking students questions during class. I was not very good at English, but I had so many opportunities to speak English in the classes and assignments that I was able to develop the hesitation and courage to speak English.

**6. Could you tell us the activities on JDP remaining in the impression?**

Due to the COVID-19, I was unable to engage in extracurricular activities.

The class that left the greatest impression on me was a class called Environmental Ethics. In this class, students read the papers on a different topic each week and had in-class presentations and discussions. The class covered a wide range of topics, including business management, economics, food culture, indigenous peoples, and ethnic rituals. These topics were interrelated, and the complexity of environmental issues was covered in this class. In addition, the in-class

discussions were informative because we discussed with people of different nationalities and positions, which helped us to understand the differences in perceptions and values regarding a single issue. Professor Matsui kindly taught how to improve my presentation. His suggestions dramatically improved my presentation skills, and now I have much confidence in public speaking with each passing class.

### **7. What did you acquire through JDP to study?**

There are three things I gained from JDP.

The first is the ability to speak English. All classes and assignments are conducted in English. As I was not very good at English, I often had difficulty understanding the lessons and following the conversation. However, I did not give up, and tried to read the class content from the slides. I did not understand a question, I tried to listen again until I understood it. Although I am not yet perfectly fluent in English, I have become less concerned about my weakness in English conversation through my two years at JDP.

Second, I learned a wide knowledge of environmental problems. Through classes, I learned about various fields. Through master thesis research, I learned economics, global warming, and waste issues.

The third is global human relations. I was able to build relationships with people in the Asian region. They are engineers or government officials working on environmental issues, and I believe that I may be able to meet them again in the future when I am involved in overseas projects related to environmental issues.

### **8. How do you think about your career after graduation?**

After graduation, I will work for Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO) as an engineer involved in renewable energy. The axis of my career is to be involved in the spread of renewable energy and contribute to sustainable development on a global scale. Therefore, after gaining experience as an engineer in the field at TEPCO, I would like to work as a person who makes investment decisions and manages overseas projects. In doing so, I believe that I will be able to utilize the knowledge of energy, environment, and economy, English conversation skills, and global human relations that I have cultivated at JDP.



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