

On my first day, I arrived at Via Inn Prime Akasaka in Tokyo and was pleasantly surprised by the modern accommodations provided by the IPBA Scholarship Committee for the scholars. (see the attached picture)



The next morning, we met the Scholarship Committee in the hotel lobby. Mr. Kazuya Yamashita - Partner and Mr. Peter Cassidy who both came from at HIGASHIMACHI, LPC, warmly welcomed us and gave a short introduction. I then visited the Court in Tokyo, where I had the opportunity to attend two hearings. It was my first time seeing Japanese judges, prosecutors, and lawyers in action. I was particularly impressed by how the lawyers organized and presented their documents during the hearings.

Following the court visit, Mr. Kazuya, Mr. Peter, Mr. Zhiming Mai, and Mr. Takafumi Mise held a brief discussion on the Japanese legal system for IPBA Scholars. Then, we then enjoyed a delightful Japanese lunch with Mr. Satoru Kohdera, the Managing Partner of HIGASHIMACHI, LPC, who, along with everyone else, treated us with enthusiasm, warmth, and friendliness. (see the attached picture)



Later, I visited Nagashima Ohno and Tsunematsu Law Firm, one of Japan's largest law firms (see the attached picture). I was amazed by the size of their offices, meeting rooms, and their library, which was filled with books, magazines, and legal documents. I had a direct meeting with Mr. Akihiro Tokura - Partner, and Mr. Fumihide Sugimoto - Partner/Co-chair. During this meeting, I was introduced about their law firm and discussed strategies for increasing the ratio of female lawyers in law firms. (see the attached picture)



In the afternoon, I moved to Okura Tokyo to meet the IPBA Secretariat. I finally met Ms. Randa Morioka, who had been a great support during the application process, and Ms. Yukiko Okazaki, who kindly assisted with the payment process.



At the end of the day, we attended the Welcome Reception, where I proudly received the Scholarship certificate from the Scholarship Committee. I was astonished by the large turnout, with thousands of people joining the event. (see the attached picture)



The following day, the Opening Ceremony took place, focusing on AI as the main topic. Numerous plenary sessions followed, covering a wide range of subjects and committee discussions. Each session I attended featured lawyers who were eager to share their experiences and insights into their respective legal systems. (see the attached picture)



One of my most memorable experiences was the camaraderie among the participants. Everyone I met at the IPBA Annual Meeting and Conference was incredibly nice, friendly, and easy to connect with. Senior lawyers generously shared advice on running a firm and enhancing my legal skills, providing unique insights that I had never encountered at domestic events.

On 26 April 2024, there were also many concurrent sessions which were organized. Then, I had chance to join the Farewell Dinner at Happo-En. The party was organized in a nice place with many traditional games in Japan. All people, of course, including me were very happy. I made a lot net working during the sessions and the party as well. (see the attached picture)



On the last day of the event, I joined the Annual General Meeting and Lunch.

During the conference, I gained invaluable insights into building relationships, honing professional skills, acquiring new knowledge, and connecting with peers in the legal world. I formed many meaningful friendships with fellow scholarship recipients. From them, I learned valuable qualities such as kindness, diligence, and the importance of constantly thinking and asking questions in every situation.

I am deeply grateful to the IPBA family and the IPBA Scholarship Committee for selecting me and giving me the opportunity to attend what has been the most wonderful event of my life thus far. I will strive to promote and share information about IPBA with my colleagues in Vietnam so they can learn more about this incredible organization. I look forward to seeing all my friends again at the next IPBA conference.

Phong Lan Thi Nguyen "Megan"