

## **IPBA Tokyo 2024 – Conference Report**

I attended the IPBA Annual Meeting and Conference in Tokyo on 24 – 27 April 2024 as an IPBA Scholar. It was a splendid experience and I owe a debt of gratitude to, among many others, Ms Randa Morioka and Ms Yukiko Okazaki of the IPBA Secretariat, as well as Mr Mahesh Rai, Mr Kazuya Yamashita, Ms Varya Simpson and Mr Ashish Kabra of the IPBA Scholarship Committee for the opportunity.

On the first day, the Scholars were treated to a full day of planned programmes ahead of the official welcome reception for all conference attendees in the evening. The highlights included a visit to the Tokyo District Court where we had the opportunity to observe civil and criminal proceedings that were being heard (with the kind Japanese-to-English interpretation provided by our fantastic day guides from Higashimachi LPC), as well as an office visit to Nagashima Ohno & Tsunematsu where we had the opportunity to engage with Partners Mr Fumihide Sugimoto and Mr Akihiro Tokura to learn about the history of one of Japan's 'Big 4' firms and the differences in legal practice across different jurisdictions.

The conference officially opened the next day with plenary sessions on relevant topics, such as the deployment and regulation of artificial intelligence. The consistent theme, which was continued by the varied and interesting concurrent sessions throughout the rest of the conference, was the insight offered into the law and practice in many jurisdictions outside of my own. In view of my own practice area, I found myself in the concurrent panel sessions addressing international construction, dispute resolution, arbitration and insolvency, though I was also tempted by the other topical panels on offer – including ESG and sustainability, cross-border M&A and tax.

Complementing the serious discussions were the numerous social events and activities that were peppered across all 4 days of the event. Be it the official welcome, gala and farewell dinners, the breakfast and drinks receptions hosted by Japanese or non-Japanese law firms, or the daily after-parties taking place in the liveliest spots in Tokyo, the one constant was the enthusiastic and diverse crowd that would be ready to engage in conversations about almost all things under the sun.

There is no doubt that what makes the IPBA and the IPBA Conference tick is the people that participate in them, as I have been told many times by the more experienced "IPBA go-ers" in the short time in Tokyo. It is not difficult to see why people keep coming back. The mood is always jovial, open and welcoming. In today's troubled world, it is a refreshing reminder that diversity is a huge strength and not necessarily a fault line.

I look forward to contributing more to the IPBA and its continued development.

Finally, I would like to record my deepest thanks to everyone who has made this experience possible, including others whom I have not identified above. I am certainly looking forward to Chicago 2025.

**LOH Tian Kai 罗天锺**

**Associate Director  
Drew & Napier LLC  
Singapore**