

Already 10 years, still 10 years more

Kaori Otsuka (Née Funahashi)

(Completed studies in 1998; Nagoya Research and Engineering Office for Port and Airport, Chubu Regional Bureau, Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism)

After completing university studies I was hired by the Transportation Ministry's No. 5 Coastal Engineering Bureau (now the Chubu Regional Bureau, MLIT) and I have been here now for ten years. Everyday I've learned something new and it seems like it all passed so quickly. I would say it has been a satisfying ten years.

The most satisfying time I can think of during the time I was a student was during the seminars and labs. I was part of the Aoki Laboratory and got first hand experience at being on-site doing things one can't do stuck inside the lab all day such as surveying and wave measurement. Being on-site was one of the reasons I chose my occupation. When I went out to survey water quality of the Mikawa bay, it was the Chubu Regional Bureau where I work now that lent us use of their boats, at the Mikawa coast office at the Jinno Pier in Toyohashi. As I talked with the captain I became interested in building ports as a job.

Building ports

After entering service I discovered the work of building ports was both broader and more profound than I had heard about as a student. In order to build a port we first need to perform a variety of surveys and studies into what kind of port is needed by the area covering aspects such as safety, economics and environment. Thereafter we determine the shape of the facilities considering the overall shape of the bay, wave breaks and so on, before designing and constructing the various facilities.

As you can see, all the steps leading up to building a port, planning, surveys, studies, design, etc., are all extremely important. I have been involved in planning ports including Shimizu, Mikawa, Nagoya and Yokkaichi. Recognizing the importance of what I am working on gives me a sense of responsibility and pride in the work.

Thinking about ports

There is a project to turn the Ise Bay (including Nagoya and Yokkaichi ports) into a super-scale core port bay being advanced by the government to provide good quality services cheaply and rapidly comparable to other ports nearby in Asia. When I was made part of this project, I realized how I had been looking at a port as a single point. Thinking about ports required me to widen my perspective to include factories and the road and rail connections to the port, and beyond that to including not only domestic but also international connections. When seen from a global perspective, what makes a port attractive and what kinds of ports do ships want to use? As I consider these issues, my work has grown to cover a much broader definition of what a port means to me.

Not limiting work to ports, when it comes to a "manufacturing" perspective, it is important to work with a broad field of vision.

In college I majored in architecture. As I have continued working in ports (which fits under civil engineering) I have learned architecture, civil engineering, environment and other topics called architectural engineering at the university giving me a broader perspective. I want to keep growing and learning more, doing my best to build what many people can call their port of call.



Picture: Nagoya Port as it is now