

Spotlight on Tetsuya Shiraishi, ICHCA Japan and ICHCA International Board Member



In this series of interviews with ICHCA Members, Spotlight is in conversation with Tetsuya Shiraishi, ICHCA Japan and ICHCA International Board Member.

Spotlight: Shiraishi-san, how long have you been part of ICHCA Japan and held the position of Chair of the association?

Tetsuya Shiraishi: The Ministry of Transport, to which I previously belonged, became a member of ICHCA in 1956, so I had been aware of the existence of ICHCA since I joined the Ministry in 1980, but it was not until the Casablanca Assembly in 2010 that I actually started to participate in its activities. I then joined Japan Association of Cargo-handling Systems (JACMS) and became the Secretary General of ICHCA Japan. And after seven years as Secretary General, I became Chairman of ICHCA Japan in 2022 and at the same time became a member of the Board of Directors of ICHCA International.

Spotlight: What are the chief reasons for your dedication to, and hard work for ICHCA?

Tetsuya Shiraishi: By participating in the various activities of ICHCA, I am able to come into contact with the world's most advanced technology and information on the safety and efficiency of port cargo handling, and by reflecting the results in the domestic operations of JACMS, I believe that we can improve the productivity and international competitiveness of Japanese ports and harbours. I am convinced that this will help to secure a stable supply of goods and energy, which are indispensable for the use and development of Japan's land and for the lives of its people.

I am also attracted to the networking with practitioners worldwide through the activities of the International Technical Panel (ITP) and various working groups, as well as the Board of Directors.

Spotlight: What do you feel is the major role of ICHCA in the international cargo handling industry?

Tetsuya Shiraishi: ICHCA International is dedicated to improving the safety, security, sustainability, productivity and efficiency of cargo handling and transport by all modes.

Promote efficient cargo handling in appreciation of its vital function to world trade, national economies, business and industry, and the livelihood and wellbeing of many hundreds of thousands of workers right around the globe.

Assist co-operation between many different parties as a critical factor to the safety and overall performance of today's increasingly complex cargo chains, which often reach across multiple continents, cultures, jurisdictions, transport modes and logistics nodes.

Provide a platform, both internationally, and through its various chapters, to co-ordinate the dialogue and build relations between the many private and public sector stakeholders, to foster greater cross-party understanding, and to shape and share good practice for the benefit of all.

Spotlight: What are the advantages that membership of ICHCA bring to professionals?

Tetsuya Shiraishi: The first advantage of being the Chairman of ICHCA Japan is that as a board member of ICHCA Internationals, I can participate in the board meetings and general meetings and disseminate information about ICHCA Japan to the world. My predecessor reported on the safety of radiation levels in Tokyo Bay at the Board meeting in May 2011, which was held immediately after the Fukushima nuclear accident, and was able to immediately make the reality of Japan's ports known to the global membership through the ICHCA Newsletter.

ICHCA also participates in the formulation of various guidelines as an advisory body to the IMO and the ILO. When the Transport Ministry in Japan proposed the preparation of a casebook on the maintenance and replacement of mooring ropes and the adequate communication of information between ship's crew and shore-side workers, ICHCA's technical advisor gave a speech of support to the working group concerned to instruct the Japanese proposal from ICHCA's standpoint. This led to the successful approval of the Japanese proposal, which is one of the advantages of the Ministry being an ICHCA member.

Furthermore, attending the biennial international conferences and general meetings hosted by ICHCA International is a great advantage in that it gives us access to the world's most advanced technology

and information on the safety and efficiency of port cargo handling, as well as the formation of a personal network.

Spotlight: Have you seen any changes in the work ICHCA does over the time you have been a member?

Tetsuya Shiraishi: There are three things I have been working on since I became Secretary General of ICHCA Japan.

One is the International Cargo Handling Seminar, which is held every two years. ICHCA is a group of experts at the highest level in the world regarding port cargo handling safety issues, mainly consisting of ITP members. ICHCA Japan, in collaboration with JACMS, invites two experts from ICHCA Internationals to hold seminars with the aim of sharing their know-how and the latest information with its members on a regular basis.

Second, in response to the growing need for overseas port research in Japan, we have decided to conduct a study tour of overseas ports every two years. By holding these seminars alternately with the international seminars mentioned above, ICHCA Japan and JACMS have created a system that enables them to continuously obtain cutting-edge overseas information on port cargo handling technology. In particular, on-site study tour can be conducted with the cooperation of ICHCA International, which enables effective information gathering and is highly appreciated by the participants.

The third is the Cargo Handling Safety Research Project in cooperation with ICHCA International. As technologies in the field of port cargo handling are evolving day by day in response to increased awareness of the need to strengthen international competitiveness and ensure safety, the collection of relevant information from overseas has become an urgent issue. In order to respond to these demands, ICHCA Japan and JACMS, in cooperation with ICHCA International, continue to collect the latest reliable information on relevant technologies from around the world.

Spotlight: What are the major issues in the industry that you feel ICHCA should be researching and offering advice on?

Tetsuya Shiraishi: Advice would be appreciated on ensuring safety related to cargo handling on board ships and in container yards, and on improving productivity in container terminals and other port cargo handling operations. ICHCA Japan is also interested in improving productivity at container terminals, as the Ports and Harbours Bureau of the Transport Ministry in Japan is promoting a policy of “AI terminals that support people”, which ensures a good working environment and world-class productivity.

Spotlight: What specific knowledge and guidance can your members of ICHCA Japan bring to the wider international community of cargo handling operators?

Tetsuya Shiraishi: As the port cargo handling sites in Japan are considered to be relatively safer than in other countries, it may be possible to provide knowledge on the maintenance and replacement of facilities for mooring operations and information communication methods between workers, as mentioned above.

In addition, Japan was the first country in the world to put the remote operation of RTGs to practical use and is partly ahead of other countries in terms of automation and remote control equipment, so information could also be provided in this respect.

Spotlight: As you might know Spotlight like to learn a little about the non-professional interests of those it interviews. Do you have pastimes and hobbies outside the industry that help you relax, and would be of interest to our readers?

Tetsuya Shiraishi: I have loved listening to British rock since I was in secondary school and I still listen to it a lot between work and on my commute to work. I like the Beatles, but I prefer prog rock, especially Pink Floyd's 'The Dark Side of The Moon', Yes's 'Yessongs' and Emerson, Lake & Palmer's 'Pictures at an Exhibition'. I also listen to Led Zeppelin and Eric Clapton's Cream a lot.

Apart from that, I watch a lot of films. Recently, it has become very convenient to watch films on the internet.