

## The Sentiments of Graduate Students on the Symposium

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Unique to the other conferences I've participated in, the Kuroshio Science Symposium (KSS) gathers not just people from the academe but also the equally important public and private sectors. My PhD dissertation revolves around the topic of the influence of the Kuroshio Current in designing a transboundary marine protected area network (TMPAN) between the Philippines, Taiwan and Japan. Through the KSS held in Taiwan last March 2023, we have convened key people from the three countries composed of professors, students, government officials, and non-government organizations to discuss about the possibility of having a TMPAN within the Kuroshio region. It was a fruitful discussion that led us to visit and conduct a consultation workshop to the local stakeholders in the Philippines.

Apart from the milestone we have achieved for our project, I was also able to meet and chat with co-students from Japan during conference breaks and spent time with them for a leisure side trip that was also arranged alongside the symposium. This experience allowed us, nascent researchers, to share our research topics and academic experiences with each other which unconsciously ushered us to develop our collaboration skills in the form of friendship.

The KSS 2023 experience was indeed one of a kind!

Joela Mizchelle A. dela Vega  
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Attending the 15<sup>th</sup> Kuroshio Science Symposium on March 24-27, 2023, at one of the prestigious universities in Taiwan is a memorable experience. It was a good avenue for learning diverse topics - from social sciences to natural sciences. It was inspiring to see how various disciplines of study can interconnect and contribute to a greater goal. This meeting broadened my knowledge not only from an academic point of view but also in the cultural aspects of Taiwan, as we got a chance to visit some places such as Pingtung County and Tainan City. This symposium is a testament of collaborative research and international cooperation. I got the opportunity to meet and talk to competent academicians, scientists, researchers, as well as representatives from government and private institutions across the countries of the Philippines, Taiwan, and Japan.

It was a productive conference. My sincerest thanks to all the organizers of the successful event headed by the National Sun Yat-sen University as well as to Kochi University for giving us support in this undertaking. I am hoping to attend future conventions and continue to contribute to the Kuroshio

Region's sustainable development.

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I first joined the Kuroshio Science Symposium (KSS) conference way back in 2019 after being invited by Professor Nathan Chen from National Sun Yat-sen University (NSYSU) as an initiative collaboration to generate young scientists involved in Kuroshio waterways and the South China region. This 2023, I joined again in the Kuroshio conference to present my PhD progress research which involves the taxonomic review of the genus *Johnius* (family Sciaenidae) from the South China Sea, with a significant finding on zoogeographical distribution. This study involves a multi-country collection sample from Taiwan, Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, and Philippines coastal region. The result of the study helps a lot of researchers and academicians to better understand the species boundary that exists in each country, especially the littoral coastline either in the South China Sea or Kuroshio currents to mitigate and manage fisheries resources in better ways.

Through KSS, we were able to exchange ideas and knowledge, it also expands collaboration and develops connections among universities and fisheries agencies in various countries. Hopefully, this Kuroshio Symposium can be extended every year as an opportunity for us to maintain our collaboration and research skills.

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The 15th Kuroshio Science Symposium was my first scientific conference and hence a very memorable one for me. It came at a point where I was losing interest in research. Following the diverse presentations by several scientists and students, my interest in research has been rejuvenated. I came back to my desk refreshed and research has been exciting and fun since. Given that it was a 'speciality' symposium, not was showcased from my area of research. But the empowerment and excitement from the experience have got me applying for and participating in more conferences, which are being very helpful to my development. The reception and travel support from the Kaohsiung International Airport, organization, wonderful presentations, and the tours through the beautiful cities live endearing memories of the 15th Kuroshio Science Symposium and of the vibrant city of Kaohsiung and the surrounding cities we visited.