



‘Let’s become a seafarer’

Job fair on oceanic fisheries held at Hokkaido Otaru Fisheries High School

A job fair on oceanic fisheries was held on Aug. 1, 2020 at Hokkaido Otaru Fisheries High School’s boathouse. At the event called “Funanori ni Naro! (Let’s become a seafarer),” 20 junior high school students from Otaru and Sapporo participated, accompanied by their parents.

Today, there is a glaring shortage of seafarers in Japan. To secure and develop successors, it was designed to demonstrate the appeal of being a seafarer to middle school students who are thinking of their future and to encourage them to consider it as a career decision. The hope is that such efforts would lead to eliminating the shortage of seafarers facing the shipping and fisheries industries.

It was the first such attempt, in which the All Japan Seamen’s Union (JSU) participated actively.

At the beginning of the job fair, a DVD showed the important seafaring jobs held by women. Six girls who attended the event expressed interest. Mr. Tsukasa Kimura, headmaster of the high school, gave an address. “It was the first such event for our high school, too,” he said. “I hope that through this job fair, the attendees will become interested in seafaring even just a little bit and that it will help them chart a course and/or make a career choice.”

After a speech by Mr. Kazaru Endo, director of the JSU’s Hokkaido Regional Office, Mr. Hidekazu Yamazaki, vice-director at the regional office, gave a presentation using PowerPoint slides. He outlined the domestic shipping business and gave a briefing on a wide variety of relevant subjects, such as what seafarers do and how they live on board ships. Another DVD was played, which was on domestic shipping and entitled “Umi e (To the Sea).”

As the job fair answered questions from the students, one of them said that they were already interested in seafaring, and that the lectures gave them a better idea what it would be like to be a seafarer. The attendees were then invited to board a small vessel. With the sun shining, they all had smiles on their faces.

Training vessel *Wakatake-Maru*



A job fair is held for local junior high school students.



Hokkaido Otaru Fisheries High School.



Mr. Hidekazu Yamazaki gives a lecture on seafarers’ duties.



Otaru Port



Cyber attack knocks out some IMO web services

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) has been hit by a cyber attack that has taken out a number of its web-based services.

Since Sept. 30, the issue has been affecting IMO's public website and internal intranet services.

"The interruption of service was caused by a sophisticated cyber-attack against the Organization's IT systems that overcame robust security measures in place," the IMO said, adding that the organization's IT technicians shut down key systems to prevent further damage from the attack.

"The IMO is working with UN IT and security experts to restore systems as soon as possible, to identify the source of the attack, and further enhance security systems to prevent recurrence."

As informed, internal and external emails are working as normal while service has been restored to the GISIS database, IMODOCS and Virtual Publications.

Furthermore, the IMO Secretariat has continued to function with some limitations and the Facilitation Committee has continued meeting this week on the external platform.

Earlier this week, French container shipping giant CMA CGM also confirmed a cyber attack impacting the company's peripheral servers. CMA CGM thus became the fourth major shipping company to experience a cyber attack, after Swiss Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC), China's COSCO Shipping and Danish Maersk. (Source: *Splash*, October 1, 2020, by Naida Hakirevic)

CDC issues new social distancing guidelines

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued updated guidance to its How COVID-19 Spreads website, which includes information about the potential for airborne spread of the virus that causes COVID-19.

The CDC, a U.S.-government institute based in Atlanta, Georgia, continues to believe, based on current science, that people are more likely to become infected the longer and closer they are to a person with COVID-19. Today's update acknowledges the existence of some published reports showing limited, uncommon circumstances where people with COVID-19 infected others who were more than 6 feet away or shortly after the COVID-19-positive person left an area. In these instances, transmission occurred in poorly ventilated and enclosed spaces that often involved activities that caused heavier breathing, like singing or exercise. Such environments and activities may contribute to the buildup of virus-carrying particles.

Airborne transmission

Some infections can be spread by exposure to virus in small droplets and particles that can linger in the air for minutes to hours. These viruses may be able to infect people who are further than six feet away from the person who is infected or after that person has left the space.

This kind of spread is referred to as airborne transmission and is an important way that infections like

tuberculosis, measles, and chicken pox are spread.

There is evidence that under certain conditions, people with COVID-19 seem to have infected others who were more than 6 feet away. These transmissions occurred within enclosed spaces that had inadequate ventilation. Sometimes the infected person was breathing heavily, for example while singing or exercising.

Under these circumstances, scientists believe that the amount of infectious smaller droplet and particles produced by the people with COVID-19 became concentrated enough to spread the virus to other people. The people who were infected were in the same space during the same time or shortly after the person with COVID-19 had left.

Available data indicate that it is much more common for the virus that causes COVID-19 to spread through close contact with a person who has COVID-19 than through airborne transmission.

Recommendations

The CDC's recommendations remain the same based on existing science and after a thorough technical review of the guidance.

People can protect themselves from the virus that causes COVID-19 by staying at least six feet away from others, wearing a mask that covers their nose and mouth, washing their hands frequently, cleaning touched surfaces often and staying home when sick. (Source: *Linda Hohnholz, eTN editor*)

Asia campaign addresses crew change crunch

A host of the world's leading shipping organizations have started a campaign, writing letters to governments of Asian nations, in a bid to unlock the crew change crunch.

The campaign has started with the Philippines, the country that supplies more crew than anywhere else.

The heads of many of the world's top shipowning associations as well as unions, ship managers and P&I Clubs have written to Arthur Tugade, the secretary for transport in the Philippines and Robert Empedrad, the administrator of the country's Maritime Industry Authority.

While praising the country for many of its initiatives to process crew throughout the pandemic,

the letter has two specific recommendations for how Manila can help fix the crew change crisis. The group of shipping heads are calling on the Philippines to introduce temporary visa waivers for crew changes through appropriate means, to be implemented for seafarers holding a seafarer's identity document issued in accordance with the ILO Conventions No. 108 or No. 185, or the IMO Convention on Facilitation of International Maritime Traffic, or a valid ticket or booking with the ships' agents as the guarantors of their bona fide identities.

Moreover, given the territorial limitation of such a waiver to the state granting it, the group also calls for cooperation between

Asian countries to temporarily allow for a visa free transit area in Asia for seafarers.

The other area the group is keen to bring to the attention of the authorities in Manila regards the limited availability of flight connections between world seaport hubs and the Asian seafarer supplying countries. The group is urging the Philippines to create, in consultation with the aviation industry and other countries, the necessary conditions for seafarer air corridors between crew supply countries and major seaport countries so as to increase access, as soon as possible, to commercial flights.

The limited flight options also cause difficulties in aligning flights with vessel embarkation and disembarkation times, the group pointed out, commending the Philippines for allowing seafarers of any nationality to stay in the country until the arrival of the flight or ship without restricting the number of days. The group called on the Philippines to urge other governments to remove national restrictions and to allow for seafarers to stay in their countries for at least 10 days for the purposes of on-signing and repatriating albeit restricting seafarer movement.

The letter to the Philippines is the first step calling for leadership actions and the group will be communicating with other Asian governments with specific crew change recommendations in the coming days. (Source: *Splash*, by Sam Chambers)

Handling anxiety of fake news in the era of COVID-19

Conspiracy theories and misinformation spreading are typical features of an unprecedented situation, such as a global pandemic that is in the spotlight of media attention. But what is the effect of this phenomenon to seafarers, at a time when discussion about mental health issues is already at the top of shipping agenda?

"We are not just fighting an epidemic. We are fighting an infodemic. Fake news spreads faster and more easily than this virus and is just as dangerous," Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director General, WHO.

Several factors associated with the nature of life onboard have been identified as having an adverse impact on seafarers' mental health and COVID-19 is at the forefront of discussions in the last six months.

In a time when thousands of seafarers are trapped on ships due to travel restrictions in breach of their labor rights, increased con-

nectivity is seen as positive for seafarers' mental health enabling them to keep in touch with their beloved ones. And while adequate information is seen as positive in a time of crisis boosting their sense of belonging, the increased use of social media onboard hides a red zone: dangerous misinformation.

More specifically, the stress associated with the pandemic uncertainty can be easily exacerbated through fake news, which finds a fruitful ground in the era of social media. Although fake news hardly is a new phenomenon, the critical point to consider is that social media spreads disinformation at an unprecedented speed and reaches wider audiences far beyond the traditional limitations of distance.

How does fake news work?

Fake news refers to both misinformation (false information shared by misguided individuals) and disinformation (false information

shared with the explicit intention to deliberately mislead its audience).

Spreading misinformation can start from:

- individuals, such as criminals, after some sort of profit;
- states and state-backed actors seeking to advance geopolitical interests;
- opportunists looking to discredit official sources.

"Human attention is drawn to novelty, to things that are new and unexpected. We gain in status when we share novel information because it looks like we're in the know, or that we have access to inside information," explained data scientist Sinan Aral, over 20 years ago.

"In a time of high fears, uncertainties and unknowns, there is fertile ground for fabrications to flourish and grow. The big risk is that any single falsehood that gains traction can negate the significance of a body of true facts,"

says Guy Berger, who is the Director for Policies and Strategies regarding Communication and Information, UNESCO.

Why is it more critical now?

Hence, Covid-19 creates the perfect case study for fake news to flourish. In a time of crisis, we're desperate for information—and the public's response to news is swift.

Particularly, misinformation about the virus can be dangerous, ranging from wide confusion and distrust to harmful fake coronavirus cures. A study conducted in the first months of the pandemic revealed that at least some 800 people died from misinformation, by drinking bleach to disinfect their bodies or eating cow dung to prevent infection.

Onboard a ship, increased stress due to isolation comes to act as a catalyst for seafarers to be more susceptible to fake news consum-

ing.

Prominent examples of misinformation during COVID-19

- "Coronavirus was made in a lab"
- "Coronavirus can transmit through mosquito bites"
- "African people are immune"

Did you know?

• Facebook reports nearly 50 million pieces of COVID-19-related content had to be flagged with warning label for disinformation, in April alone;

• "Fake news" as a term originates from the 2016 U.S. presidential election

• Studies showed many American students cannot tell what news is fake and what news is real.

What can you do?

EUROPOL has shared several

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On-board Exercises

Actress **Kaoru Yumi** presents the **Nishino Breathing Method**

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Jonyo—imagine your body becoming as clear as crystal with energy generated from your body.

Take breaths in deeply through the Sokushin Breathing Method as if they were guided with your hands. In Jonyo, face your palms downward (2. and 3.), and when doing so, pay full attention to your hands. Bend your wrists gently(5.), and stretch your arms relaxingly as if they were taken to “heaven” and “earth”. Pay attention exclusively to your hands and lower abdomen, and imagine that the other parts are all gone. Jonyo helps clear your head and improve your body balance.

1. Relax your entire body, and stand with your legs together.



2. While taking breaths in through your nose as in the Sokushin Breathing Method, have your palms face downward, and have your hands slowly up until the level of your chest.



3. While continuing to breathe in, move your left hand up and right hand down. Be sure to relax your shoulders.



4. Turn your left palm to your left and right palm to your right. Cross your left leg over your other leg. When doing so, have your right leg on tiptoe.

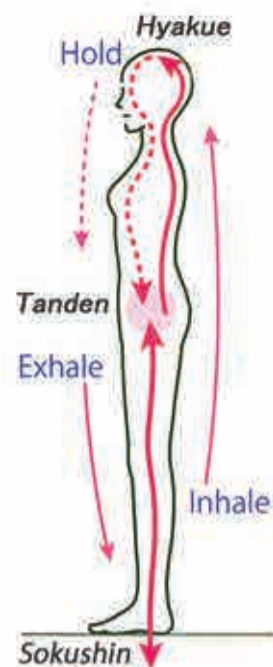


5. Hold your breaths gently when they have reached the top of your head, and then, bring them down to your lower abdomen. Have your left palm face upward and right palm downward.



Points to do 'Sokushin' breathing

Imagine a big tree absorbing water from its roots and deliver to each leaf. Inhale as if breaths were taken from sokushin (the soles of your feet) and up through your knees, thighs, tanden (lower abdomen). While keeping attention on your anus lightly, continue to breathe in through your backbone all way to hyakue (the vertex of your head). Then hold your breath lightly until your breathing traverse through your tanden. And then take breaths out toward sokushin.



6. While breathing out through your mouth, bend your knees lightly, and move your left hand down.



7. Continue to take breaths out and move your left hand down with your left palm facing your left.



8. When you have finished breathing out, return to your starting position. Do 1 through 7 the other way around.



Institute of Nishino Breathing Method

Email: info@nishinoyuku.com

Internet: https://www.nishinoyuku.com/english/e_top.html

ALL JAPAN SEAMEN'S UNION
15-26, Roppongi 7-Chome,
Minato-Ku, Tokyo 106-0032

Tel.: (03) 5410-8320
Fax: (03) 5410-8336
E-mail: iss@jsu.jp
Internet: <http://www.jsu.or.jp>

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Send inquiries to the attention of
Mr. Hiroyuki Watanabe,
Director, International Dept.

VOICES from SEAFARERS

**Officers and crew of MV CAPE GREEN**

The present pandemic is a cause of great concern to the seafarers, ship-owners and governments all around the world in dealing with crew-change, cargo operations and all ship-related activities. We, seafarers should encourage everyone to follow the health protocols in dealing with the prevention of this infectious virus. Everyone please stay healthy and stay safe!!!

**Master and signing off crew of MV DEVON BAY**

We are grateful to our beloved company and to the authorities who have allowed this crew change in Japan. It is our wish to be patient in tackling this on-going pandemic and to think safety at all times.

**Crewmembers of MV COMET ACE**

The surge of corona virus had widely spread around the globe. Nobody knows yet the cure and cause of this pandemic. To ensure one's health and safety, everybody was advised to follow the safety protocols of wearing the prescribe gears against the covid-19.

**Officers and crew of MV MORNING CHRISTINA**

With or without pandemics, seafarers like us are obliged to the call of duty of maintaining the ship's course going. To our love ones and friends, please remain at home and be safe while we're still away.

**Officers and crew of MV ULTRA LANIGAN**

May we call on our fellow seafarers to adhere to the principle of safety first. As one of our precautions, we are observing the proper hygiene and clean sanitations to stop the spread of the corona virus. Good luck and take extra care everyone.

**Signing off crewmembers of MV CAPE BRITANNIA**

Signing off is one of the happiest moments in a seafarer's life especially on the midst of the pandemic. We are glad that our company and the concerned union had initiated this crew change in Manila Bay. Thank you so much!

IMO establishes action team over crew change crisis

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) established the Seafarer Crisis Action Team (SCAT) in efforts to resolve the crew change crisis.

The IMO reports that a large number of seafarers, as well as their spouses and family members have contacted the IMO to share their concerns about a variety of difficult situations caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Therefore, SCAT focused on contacting representatives from national governments, NGOs,

trade unions or relevant associations, or orienting seafarers towards the right organization, to find solutions.

The IMO further provides examples on how SCAT helps seafarers. In one case, on May 10, the IMO was contacted by a fatigued seafarer on an offshore support vessel. He and many of his colleagues had spent 100 days offshore—some had already counted 140 days—with no break and no prospect of crew changes. The seafarer was worried because his employer was planning to extend

crew contracts by another two months.

SCAT brought the message to the attention of the relevant NGOs in consultative status with the IMO and liaised with the maritime authorities of the flag and port states concerned. Following this swift intervention from the IMO, the port state confirmed it would take the necessary measures to facilitate crew change while the ship was in its port or terminal, and the seafarer was able to go home and be reunited with his family.

In another case, a seafarer onboard a container ship called the IMO on April 12. His contract, which was due to finish at the end of March, had been extended for another month. The seafarer claimed that his company was failing to take action to change crew, even though government assistance made that option possible.

Though the seafarer admitted they were not in a critical situation physically, it had serious impacts on their mental health.

SCAT referred the seafarer to

the relevant national maritime administration and trade unions, while also bringing the matter to the attention of the flag and port States concerned. This diplomatic intervention helped resolve the case, and the flag state confirmed it would assist the seafarer with his contract and repatriation.

The IMO had issued a circular concerning the Framework of Protocols emphasizing the need for compliance and strict adherence with COVID-19 testing and quarantine requirements. (Source: SAFETY4SEA)

Fake news: Learn to identify the validity of information

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tips anyone can follow to help break the fake news chain:

1. Learn how to identify information:

— Be mindful: fake news will often tell you what you want to hear with clickbait headlines.

— Look around: is the website trustworthy? Check the website's about page, mission and contact info.

— Check the sources: is any

other news source reporting on the same thing? How many sources does the story quote?

— Photo search: is the news you are reading accompanied by a photo that strikes you as out of context? Run an online search, it might be your clue towards figuring out that this is an example of misinformation.

— Check the date: some news outlets re-publish old posts or promote old news as current stories. Check the publication date

of the article and check if the timeline it refers to makes sense.

— Turn to the experts: go to reputable websites, such as the World Health Organization, your national health authority and the European Commission. Is the information also available there?

2. Since you have learned how to identify misinformation, do not engage with it, do not comment and do not share further. Doing so would just help make the post more popular.

3. If it was on social media, report the post to the platform. If you know the person who shared the fake news, send them a private message and tell them the information is likely false.

4. Finally, contribute to sharing official information. Share updates from trustworthy, official websites that report on COVID-19.

The world is changing fast, and so is the way we find out about it. Stop consuming yourself with science-fiction garbage. The truth

is out there! And remember, fake news spreads when it is angry!

Did you know?

In May 2019, Singapore, a major maritime hub, passed the Protection from Online Falsehoods and Manipulation Act, requiring online platforms, including social media, to issue corrections or remove content that the government deems false. (Source: SAFETY4SEA)