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The people of Aomori and their thoughts about the region's traditional nebuta floats

The Aomori Nebuta Festival, a major festival of Japan, takes place every year in August. Attended by more than one million people, it features large nebuta floats of giant doll-like paper lanterns. Aomori itself is a mysterious place that has been inhabited by humans since the Jomon Period (around 13,000 B.C. to 3,000 B.C.). We asked the people who make it happen about their feelings surrounding the festival.



A large nebuta by the Hitachi Coalition Nebuta Committee displayed in the 2024 Aomori Nebuta Festival. This float evokes the kawazu-gake sumo move.

A trade network in place since the Jomon Period

The Jomon Period dates back to around 13,000 B.C. and continued for approximately 10,000 years. This Period is marked by the nation's first pottery-making and the use of arrows. At this time, the people began living in organized groups of villages. The Sannaimaruyama Ruins excavated at Aomori City was one of these Jomon Period villages. It is currently a World Heritage Site, as part of the Jomon Prehistoric Sites in Northern Japan

Numerous other objects have been found in the Sannai Maruyama

Ruins, such as obsidian stone stools from Hokkaido and Nagano, as well as large jade beads from Itoigawa, Niigata Prefecture, which are indicative of a trade network involving the movement of people and commodities by boat through the Tsugaru Straits and the Sea of Japan. Additionally, clay figures and miniature earthenware pieces believed to be festival implements have also been identified, pointing to the possibility that these early people held festivals and rituals.

The Aomori Nebuta Festival generates lots of enthusiasm

Aomori City, boasting a long history stretching back to the Jomon

period, is also home to the Aomori Nebuta Festival in the month of August. Over the period of August 2-7, the city's main road is closed to the public to create a 3.1 kilometer course. A parade of twenty-plus large nebuta floats carries these doll-like paper lanterns. Each is approximately nine meters wide and seven meters deep, with a height of 15 meters including a platform with two tires. The lanterns are lit from within using LED bulbs shining outward from inside the doll structure.

The parade is accompanied by flute, drums, hand-held gongs, calls of "rasseraa, rasseraa!," and a host of dancers, as well as people wearing Halloween-like masks on white-painted faces. Crowds of energetic people throng the sides of the street. This past year's festival was attended by about one million people. For good reason, the Aomori

Nebuta Festival is regarded as one of the main festivals of the entire nation.

There is no established theory on the origins of the Nebuta Festival, but the generally accepted view is that it is a combination of the lantern-floating, intended to send off the spirits of the dead—which is part of the Tanabata Festival—and the custom of "fighting off sleepiness," as sleepiness was considered the bane of summer farm work prior to the harvest season. The first written mention of the festival appeared in the Kakizaki Diaries in 1843, toward the end of the Edo Period.

A festival to rival the Rio Carnival

“Personally, I think the Aomori Nebuta Festival measures up to the Rio Carnival. My goal is to bring in visitors from around the world—so much that people talk about whether they want to travel to Rio or Aomori,” says Mr. Kawauchi, Chair of the Hitachi Coalition Nebuta Committee. The Committee has been showcasing large nebuta floats in the Aomori Nebuta Festival since 1965. “I’m originally from Sendai City, but I relocated to Aomori for my job at Hitachi, Ltd. eight years ago, at which time I soon became involved in the Nebuta Festival. I really feel the summer has arrived when the Nebuta Festival begins! When the festival was cancelled during the coronavirus pandemic, it really felt like summer never came,” he adds, talking about the prevalence of the festival in the region.

“Also, a major part of its appeal is the fact that people in the community participate in it. Anybody can serve as one of the haneto dancers, who dance alongside the floats, as long as they wear the correct costume and follow the other rules. In addition to the people pulling the nebuta and the musical accompaniment, we also have one of our staff in charge of safety. So all of this means there are many people involved in the festival operations.”

In light of environmental concerns, the Hitachi Association switched the LED lighting inside the floats to solar-powered batteries as of 2022. This low-carbon nebuta, a change from the conventional diesel-powered model, is a first-of-its kind initiative in the history of the floats. Mr. Kawauchi also told us about another strategy of his: with a view to popularizing this traditional Japanese festival, Hitachi Group’s overseas companies invited family members of overseas national employees to the festival. These individuals then put some comments on our internal SNS, sharing their thoughts about the festival with others.

A whirl of excitement caused incited by calls of “rasseraa, raserraa”



Top right: Mr. Yamaguchi, Director of the LOGISTEED East Japan Aomori Office and member of the Hitachi Nebuta Association Committee, walks out in front of the procession holding a lantern
Top left and center right: A large nebuta float paraded at the Aomori Nebuta Festival and enthusiastic dancers
Right: All staff at the Aomori Office of LOGISTEED East Japan Aomori Office participate in the Festival in various capacities, including lifting the float onto the trolley, performing as haneto dancers, and more



The people involved in nebuta-making behind the scenes

These incredibly charming large nebuta are made by specialized nebuta craftspeople. The designs depict myths and legends from Japan and abroad, events of ancient times, as well as themes from classical literature. A preliminary sketch is drawn, followed by the making of a three-dimensional image. The crafting of the lantern alone takes roughly half a year. It is important to note that a large number of people are involved behind the scenes. The Aomori Office at LOGISTEED East Japan oversees transport for warehouse storage of the trollies, parts, etc. needed for the large nebuta.

Another challenging part of the job is the lifting of the completed paper lantern onto a platform, in which an 800-kilogram piece is placed on a two-meter-high trolley. Mr. Yamaguchi of the Aomori office remarked, “The piece is too delicate given that it is comprised of washi paper, wire, and square pieces of wood, that it can’t be lifted by crane. Generally, it takes about five people to lift it, and we do so carefully, checking the overall balance as we go along. It’s nine meters wide and seven meters deep, which means that if we do it wrong there’s a possibility that it can break in the middle.” He explains that the reason his department is qualified to do this work is because they handle mainly transport of machinery for manufacturing plants, including installation, and as such they are experts in the transport and setup of precision equipment. Mr. Yamaguchi gives some backstage details: “We bumped up the number of people lifting the piece to 70 instead of 50 in 2024. This time, the Hitachi Nebuta Association Committee sponsored a nebuta float by Mr. Kitamura Renmei called “Kawazugake,” a sumo wrestling scene. Mr. Kitamura intentionally chose a difficult depiction,



The large Nebuta floats are paraded with pure manpower. In many cases, strong kids from the local high school come together to pull the floats. The pullers signal each other with hand-held fans, moving the floats in a dynamic show.

with the sumo wrestler’s leg high up in the air.

“The difficulty of this depiction meant that it was even more challenging to find the appropriate balance. Since more pieces of the square wood were required, the piece grew heavier, which meant we needed 20 more people. We placed single-tube piping on the steel rungs under the wooden platform of the nebuta. Once we lifted the pipe with the trolley on top of it, the pipe then came out, completing the mounting process.”

Dismantling of the nebuta float—the beginning of next year’s festival

After the large nebuta floats are showcased, awards are presented to the contestants upon screening by a panel of judges. The top four floats are placed in the harbor at the Port of Aomori on August 7, the last night of the festival, for a spectacular festival finale. A fireworks show featuring

LOGISTEED East Japan, East Japan Regional Headquarters, Tohoku Sales Division Transport and Machinery Branch, Aomori Office Various kinds of machinery have been installed here, including for semiconductor manufacturing and foodstuff production.

LOGISTEED East Japan Tohoku Transport and Machinery Branch

The Aomori Branch of the regional division is located in a corner of a wholesale commercial complex in Tonya-cho, Aomori Prefecture. The company’s machinery operations mainly involve inbound operations and installation of mechanical equipment, as well as warehousing and storage. Mr. Yamaguchi of the Aomori Office remarks, “We work to accommodate our



Materials used in the festival belonging to the Hitachi Nebuta Association Committee, such as trollies for the large nebuta floats, drums, etc., are stored in the warehouse.

customers in a variety of different ways, such as inbound operations and installation of equipment for semiconductor plants, mechanical equipment for food product plant production lines, and more. We tailor these operations to the needs of each individual customer.” Mr. Yamaguchi makes sure he participates in the Nebuta Festival as a member of the Hitachi Nebuta Association Committee. The company is also involved with the festival by storing parts such as the trollies that carry the large nebuta floats, festival drums, LED light bulbs, and more. All employees at the branch participate in the festival, filling such roles as ensuring safety, helping the procession along, as well as super-charging the atmosphere of the festival as haneto dancers. Mr. Yamaguchi says, “We’ve also been entrusted with the important task of lifting the competed paper lantern part of the float roughly two meters in the air. Drawing

on the knowledge we’ve gained from our day-to-day machinery work operations, we the committee members lift the heavy float onto the trolley by hand. Yamaguchi also invites anyone involved with LOGISTEED to participate as haneto dancers: “We’ll help you learn so we can all do it together!”



Aomori Office building. During breaks, they have fun chatting about their interests, about good restaurants they’ve discovered, etc.

DATA

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Tell: 017-763-0108
No. of employees: 11



Top: On the night of August 7th, at the Port of Aomori facing the Aoiumi Park—home to the Aomori Prefecture Tourist Information Center (ASPAM), the Aomori Nebuta Festival prize-winning floats are floated on the water, alongside the fireworks festival.
 Right: After the Nebuta Festival, the large nebuta are dismantled and disposed of. LOGISTEED East Japan's Aomori Office oversees the transporting the Hitachi Nebuta Association Committee's dismantled nebuta to the disposal site.

It's our hope that people come to see the procession to witness the power and presence of the nebuta floats in person.

some 10,000 fireworks is also held at the same time. Following the festival, the nebuta are taken apart the next morning, on the 8th, with the exception of those that win prizes.

When he sees his nebutas (commissioned by the Hitachi Nebuta Association Committee) dismantled, nebuta artisan Mr. Kitamura



Top: The Aomori Nebuta Gairyukai members, who participate in the Aomori Nebuta Festival as the musical accompaniment in the festival affiliated with the Hitachi Nebuta Association Committee. These musicians are very much representative of Aomori, having won a total of fifteen awards for their musicianship eight years in a row, including an award at the 2024 Aomori Nebuta Festival.



Right: Tanabata goldfish nebuta lamps offered at the Hirota Shrine (Aomori City), situated near the Aomori Nebuta Festival route. As of the middle of July these lanterns, hand-made by both adults and children, can be seen everywhere, including stations, storefronts, and more. They are considered an indispensable part of the Nebuta Festival. The goldfish, as its name suggests, is said to "carry gold." As such it is well-known as a lucky item that brings happiness.

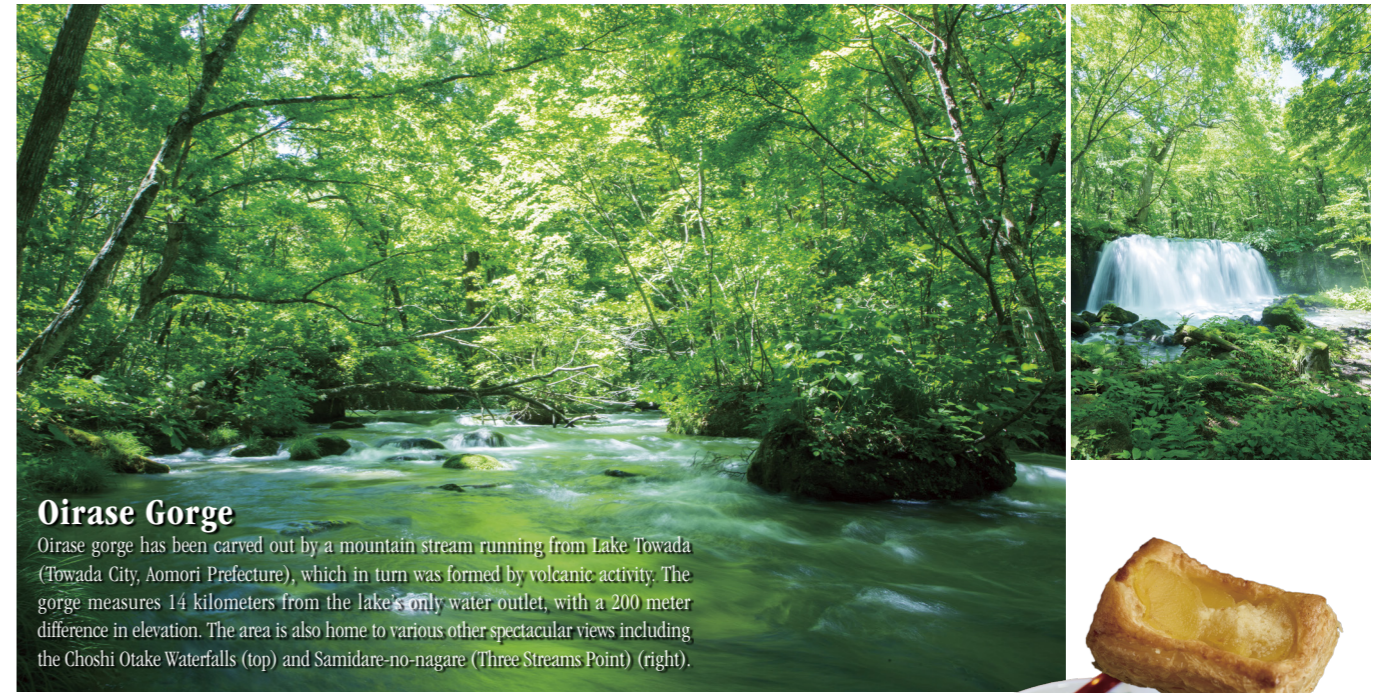
Renmei remarks, "Yes, it's definitely true that I feel kind of sad when I see them being taken apart—after all, I've spent the past half year taking great pains to make them. But they have to be taken apart in order to make way for new ones. So this helps me to be more positive, and I start thinking about how I'll make nebuta again next year—new designs of nebuta like no one has ever seen before."

Mr. Kitamura continues, "You know, you really have to see nebuta in person to get a sense of how imposing and powerful they are. My wish is for lots of people to come to Aomori to see authentic nebuta and be pleasantly surprised at what they see."

Festivals around the prefecture featuring large lantern floats

In Aomori Prefecture in August, in addition to the Aomori Nebuta Festival, there are many unique festivals in different areas featuring the huge lanterns and floats, such as the Goshogawara Tachineputa Festival in Goshogawara City. These neputa are known for their height, with the tallest standing about 33 meters tall, and a weight of approximately 19 tons.

At the Hirosaki Neputa Festival of Hirosaki City, the procession features fan-shaped neputa, instead of human-shaped neputa, with pictures on them. In addition to the festival, the area boasts majestic natural settings and onsen hot springs, including the Oirase Gorge and Mt. Hakkodasan, as well as lots of delicious food. This is the perfect spot to spend a bit of time and enjoy the sights. Next August, take a trip to Hirosaki and take in the power of these authentic floats—and all the enthusiasm they generate!



Oirase Gorge

Oirase gorge has been carved out by a mountain stream running from Lake Towada (Towada City, Aomori Prefecture), which in turn was formed by volcanic activity. The gorge measures 14 kilometers from the lake's only water outlet, with a 200 meter difference in elevation. The area is also home to various other spectacular views including the Choshi Otake Waterfalls (top) and Samidare-no-nagare (Three Streams Point) (right).



Hakkoda Mountains

These mountains are comprised of 18 peaks located to the north of the Towada Hachimantai National Park. The main peak stands at 1,584.5 meters. The area has numerous wetlands, which makes it a literal treasure-trove of high-altitude plant life. Visitors enjoy the ice-covered trees as well as skiing from winter through spring. A point near the summit of Mt. Tamoyachi (1,324 meters) can be reached by the Hakkoda Ropeway gondola.

Aomori Prefecture Tourist Information Center (ASPAM)

The triangular shaped building on the left is the ASPAM building, which was built in the shape of an "A" for "Aomori." Sweets such as apple pie as well as local sake and craft items are available for purchase on the first floor, along with specialty goods and well-known goods of Aomori. The second floor houses a theater where visitors can view footage of the summer festivals of Aomori on a 360-degree panoramic 3D digital screen. The thirteenth floor offers panoramic views of the city of Aomori as well as the Hakkoda Mountains. The red building right nearby is the Nebuta Museum Wa Rasse (Aomori City cultural and tourism facility). It exhibits prize-winning large nebuta in the Aomori Nebuta Festival. The yellow boat on the right in the photo is the Hakkoda Maru Aomori-Hakodate Ferry Memorial Ship. This vessel is moored, preserved and open to tourists as one of the ferries on the Aomori-Hakodate fleet, which was decommissioned in 1988.



Aomori is known for its many delicious foods, including apple pie; miso, curry, and milk ramen; seafood such as scallops, and more



The Sannai Maruyama Site

The Sannai Maruyama Site is one of the largest Jomon Period sites in Japan, and the leading example of the Jomon Prehistoric Sites in Northern Japan, registered as a World Heritage Site in July 2021. The site is believed to be the ruins of a village that existed some 5,900-4,200 years ago. Remnants of pit houses and post-built structures, along with the graves of both children and adults, have been found here. There are also some replicas on the site. It is recommended that visitors take their time going through these interesting ruins.

Getting to know the kitamae-bune sea routes—a major factor Japan's development as a rich nation



During the Edo Period(1603-1868), the nation's shipping industry played a big part in facilitating Japan's distribution network and economic development.

In an example of the secondary impact of the shipping sector, large catches of herring were brought to Osaka from Hokkaido. Herring fishmeal then served as fertilizer for cotton cultivation, leading to the development of cotton production. The vessels plying the Sea of Japan, known as kitamae-bune, generated roughly ¥100 million for each round-trip journey between Hokkaido and Osaka. We visited the former residence of Ukon Gonzaemon, major shipowner of Fukui Prefecture, to explore the history of kitamae-bune.

The Edo Period: a time of no trucks or trains

The Japanese shipping industry, the crux of the nation's distribution network during this time, was the driving force behind the nation's economic development. Though people made use of river sand canals, the only means of carrying commodities over land was on foot or horseback.

For instance, there were transport services available at delivery services, known as *toyaba*, at the post stations along major roads. They provided deliveries of cargo and letters for central government officials as well as the regional lords (who were required to travel back and forth between their domains and Tokyo) to the next station along the road. Yet there were rules placed on maximum weights that this service could offer: approximately 150 kilograms on horseback or about 20 kilograms on foot (through there are mentions of up to about 40 kilograms). Therefore, horses were only permitted to carry about 60 kilogram.

Meanwhile, a type of sailboat called the *benzaisen* boasted carrying capacity of approximately 150 tons of cargo at once. These ships were also known as *sengokubune*, meaning 1000-goku (approximately 150tons) ship. These ships could also carry 2,500 rice bags (60 kilograms each).

The beginnings of large circuitous routes plying the Sea of Japan

The Shogunate government was characterized by a long period of peace, and the population of Edo had reached one million at this point. The *benzaisen* ships were very widely used at this time. In order to accommodate the expanding population, the Shogunate looked for ways to bring the rice tax of the Tohoku region to Edo in a fast-and-efficient manner. The person tasked with the job was civil engineer and lumber merchant Kawamura Zuiken.

In 1671, Zuiken crafted the *Higashimawari* (Eastern Circuit) shipping route for the purpose of transporting rice from Arahama at the mouth of the Abukuma River in present-day Miyagi Prefecture, southward into the Pacific Ocean, travelling through Choshi, Kominato on the Boso Peninsula, and Shimoda on the Izu Peninsula, to the city of Edo. The issue with this route, however, was that it went against the flow of the Kuroshio Current.

The following year, Zuiken developed the *Nishimawari* (Western Circuit), the nation's western shipping route, which began in Sakata at the mouth of the Mogami River in Yamagata Prefecture, continuing on to Shimonoseki via the Sea of Japan, and to Osaka by way of the Seto Inland Sea. There was also a southern shipping route from Osaka to Edo. The Western Circuit route then joined with the preexisting route, developed by merchants known as *Omi Shonin*, from Hokkaido to Fukui Prefecture. This meant that the nation's shipping routes were now connected—and ready for the transport of a vast array of commodities from Hokkaido to Osaka.

The commodity-carrying ships plying these routes came to be known as *kitamae-bune*. There are various theories as to the origin of the name, including idea that the word "*kitamawari*" (meaning "northern circuit") was pronounced as "*kitamae*" in the local dialect. Another possibility is that the Sea of Japan was known as the "close north" sea (*kitamae-umi*). The *kitamae-bune* played a major role in facilitating the Japanese distribution sector. The ships and routes flourished from around 1650 to about 1897.



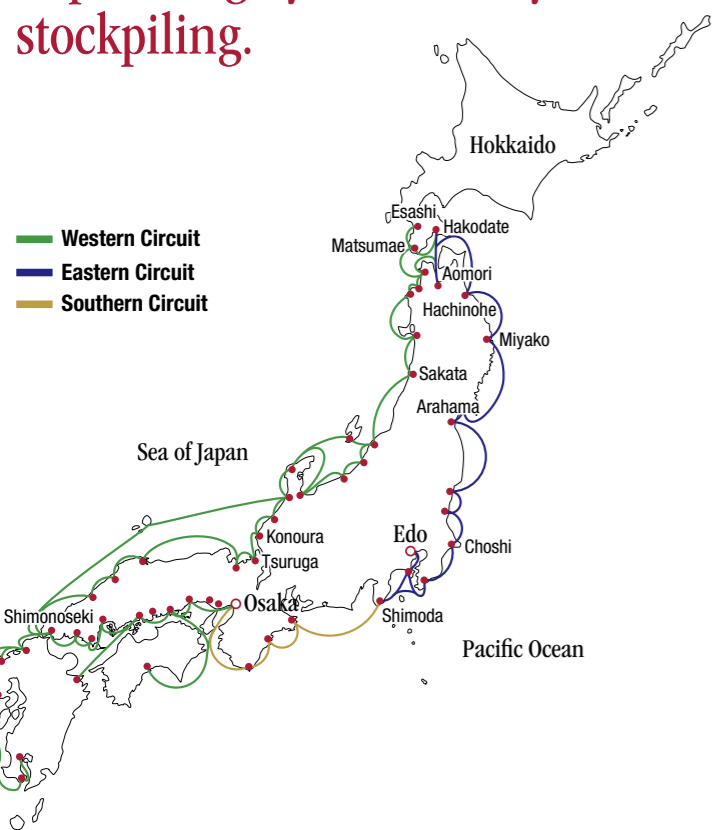
The Kitamae-bune Shipowner Ukon Family Residence, located in Minamiechizen Kono Nanjo gun, Fukui Prefecture, was home to generations of the Ukon family. Today it houses numerous materials pertaining to the kitamae-bune ships.





Exhibit space inside the Kitamae-bune Shipowner Ukon Family Residence. To the front is a model of the Yawata-maru ship owned by the Ukon family. The ship's banner is visible on the back wall. Vessels that plied the Western Circuit are collectively known as kitamae-bune, but the actual name of the type of ship was "benzaisen." It carried 15-16 crewmen, including the captain as well as well as the purser, young sailors, cooks, etc.

Ship owners make the shift from profiting by ship fare to profiting by commodity stockpiling.



Profits of ¥60-100 million per voyage

Mr. Senma, Chair of the Kono Kitamae-bune Society explains, "Kitamae-bune route ships left Osaka at the end of March, bound for Hokkaido via Setouchi, and for Shimonoseki via the Sea of Japan. Calling on a number of ports along the coast, the ships arrived at their destination from around the end of May through the month of June. Next, they departed for Osaka, arriving in November. Just one of these voyages generated profits of about ¥60 million to ¥100 million in today's money."

The Konoura area of Echizen-machi, Fukui Prefecture, was home to the residence of the Ukon family—one of the five primary ship owner families of the Sea of Japan coast. The building is now open to the public as the Kitamae-bune Shipowner Ukon Family Residence. Senma works as a guide to the residence compound as well as the Kono area.

Senma comments: "That's ¥60 million to ¥100 million per voyage. And that's pure profit, excluding personnel costs and overhead. So why were the kitamae-bune trade routes so lucrative? The reason is that the ship's captain bought and sold commodities at the various ports the ship stopped at." "This is called kaizumi (stockpiling). This is different from collecting fare for transported items. Instead of fare, shipowners procured inexpensive items from the regions where they docked and sold them for higher prices in different parts of Japan."

An easy example of this is herring fish. At the time, herring were caught in abundance in Hokkaido. Herring fishmeal made excellent fertilizer for crops, over time becoming indispensable for agriculture in the Kinki and Setouchi regions.

Cotton farming flourished in the Osaka area from the 17th century onward, eventually becoming a key industry. The interesting truth is that cotton became a major crop due thanks to the scraps of the little herring. Meanwhile, because Hokkaido was not a rice-growing area, commodities such as rice and salt from the Setouchi region sold at higher prices. The kitamae-bune ship operators capitalized on the price differential between different regions of the country to earn profits. Senma also notes that commodities brought from Hokkaido to Osaka, called upstream cargo, included numerous marine products such as herring fishmeal as well as konbu. The opposite, known as downstream products, bound for Hokkaido included rice, salt, sugar, cotton, tea, and more.

Making huge profits, giving back to the community

The Ukon family shipping business began when the second son (Ukon Gonzaemon I) of the Konsoji temple located in Konoura, formed his own branch of the family upon receiving one ship and some land. With this vessel he began transporting goods for fare.

Konoura was located on a point jutting out in to the ocean along a horse road in Fuchu, on a route linking Fuchu (Echizen City), which was a central area of the Echizen region, to Tsuruga. It took roughly two hours to reach Tsuruga by sea from this point. If a person were to travel from Fuchu to Tsuruga by land only, they could take the Hokurikudo route, but it was dotted with formidable passes. It took more than double the time of the sea route in total.

Subsequently, it was Ukon Gonzaemon IX, who launched a large sales operation using the kitamae-bune ships. Born in 1816, he became accustomed to being onboard ships from an early age. He gathered information from around the country, becoming captain in his 20s, during which time he gained extensive experience. After taking on the title of Ukon Gonzaemon IX, he owned 11 ships by the end of the Edo



This is the traditional Japanese han ten (half-coat) worn by members of the Ukon family. The back is decorated with the ichizenbashi, business symbol of the Ukon family, comprised of two diagonal lines. "Bashi" or "hashi" includes two meanings: "delivering" the food to the mouth, and "bridge," meaning crossing under the bridge, by boat in this case.

Period, earning a total of 12,000 ryo. It was his policy to give back some of this gigantic profit to the locality, one example of which was the Kasuganomichi road.

Ukon also invested together with the Nakamura family, also powerful shipowners of the Konoura area, to establish a highly convenient route from Fuchu to Konoura. This road is part of the modern National Route No. 8. Ukon also donated large sums for building schools, refurbishing temples, and more.

Later, Ukon Gozaemon X witnessed the beginning of the Meiji Period, which brought about tremendous change to the kitamae-bune shipping sector.

At the dawn of the Meiji Period, there were new sailboat-type ships designed to look like their European counterparts, and the shift to steamships had begun. In addition, because of the modernization of information such as telecommunications, price differentials between regions began to drop, which meant that fewer profits were to be made. Gonzaemon X proceeded to make the switchover to steamships, and also decided to revert to the fare-based business model.

The switch from the benzaisen ships to steamships resulted in astronomically increased cargo capacity, which also meant a dramatically increased compensation burden in the event of a marine accident. For this reason, the onset of modernization required the involvement of insurance companies. The kitamae-bune shipping magnates collaborated to establish Nippon Marine Insurance Co., Ltd. (one of the predecessors of today's Sompjo Japan, Inc.).



View of Konoura from the veranda of the Ukon Family Seiyokan Building 2F.



Chairman, Kono Kitamae-bune Shipowner Street Tourism Committee
Senma Hitomi

"There were three temple schools where the kitamebune route sailors, who came from Konoura, received a basic education and also learned business skills, such as how to read and write, use the abacus, etc.



Top: A model of the Tateishimaru steamship owned by Ukon Gonzaemon X, completed in 1922. At this time, the Tateishimaru ship was engaged in the Cost-and-Freight (CFR) business model.
Left: As of Ukon Gonzaemon X, the Ukon family engaged in establishing and operating the Nippon Fire & Marine Insurance Co., Ltd, facilitating the company's development. The panel of portraits on the left are the historical heads of the Ukon family shipping business.

Kitamae-bune sailors were from the same town

The Kitamae-bune Shipowner Ukon Family Residence features exhibits of kitamae-bune models and banners once flown on the bows of ships, votive tablets with pictures of ships on them offered at shrines, and much more. The Yawatamaru ship, owned by the Ukon family, measured roughly 40 meters long and ten meters wide, with a depth of six meters devoted to cargo capacity.

Mr. Senma remarks, “The kitamae-bune carried about 15-16 crewmen from Konoura. People of the same area were intentionally chosen for the job because the act of seafaring required mutual trust. All of them lived in Konoura, and come mid-March they would head toward Osaka, where the ships were moored, by land.”

Additionally, the Seiyokan, built in 1935 on a high spot on the grounds of the Ukon Family Residence, is also open to visitors. “The Seiyokan was erected over a period of two years as a second house of the Ukon family, starting in 1933. The structure was built entirely by locals, totaling around 10,000 people.”

The Konoura area fell on hard times during this period, due to the impact of the mood of fear gripping the entire nation at the time. Gozaemon XI built the Seiyokan, partly with a view to creating employment as a means of giving back to the people of the community. The Nakamura Residence, also open to the public as of April 2024, is located just a short walk away. The Nakamura family was also a major kitamae-bune shipowner who prospered alongside the Ukon family.



Tokyo-Fukui shinkansen opens

With the launch of the Hokuriku Shinkansen from Tokyo to Tsuruga, there was now direct access to Fukui Station from Tokyo Station by Shinkansen. It takes roughly one hour to get to the Kitamae-bune Shipowner Ukon Family Residence by car. From Fukui Station, visitors can also tour Eiheiji temple, which offers Zen training, as well as the Ichijodani Asakura Clan Site of the Asakura Clan castle ground ruins, in just one day.

The Wakasa area, located to the southwest of Tsuruga, was a primary food source for the capital starting around approximately 1,500 years ago. In fact, there is still a “Mackerel Road” today, a remnant of an era when seafood, including mackerel, were transported from here to Kyoto. Exploring the Kitamae-bune era while travelling around Fukui gives us a sense of the history and development of Japan’s distribution sector.



Top: The inside of the Ukon Family Residence Seiyokan (European-style building), built on a high spot on the Ukon Residence Ground. The building is a two-floor ferroconcrete structure. The first floor has a hall, bedroom kitchen, and bath with a stove called an Inglenook. The second-floor houses two Japanese-style rooms. The front room has four tatami mats while the back room has ten.
Bottom: First floor of the Nakamura Family Residence (National Important Cultural Property)

Top: Votive pictures of ships offered at the shrine report a safe voyage.
Bottom: First floor of the Nakamura Family Residence (National Important Cultural Property), open to the public as of April 2024. There is also a model of the Anzenmaru vessel, which belongs to the Nakamura family collection.



Exterior of the Kitamae Shipowner Ukon Family Residence.
The main house and inner storehouse is located at the opposite end to the left, while the Seiyokan is located on higher ground to the right. The outer storehouse was built toward the outer front to protect the main house from the sea breeze.

The best way to enjoy Fukui Prefecture, birthplace of the kitamae-bune shipping route

The Konoura coast, Minami-echizen-cho, Fukui Prefecture. The Kitamae Shipowner Ukon Family Residence is located near the coastline. The Ukon family is counted among the five great shipowner families of the Sea of Japan kitamae-bune shipping routes. The Ukon fleet of large vessels were not located here, however; instead they were moored at locations such as Osaka and Tsuruga.



LOGISTEED Central Japan, Ltd. Hokushin Division, Ishikawa Branch, Fukui Office

The Fukui office has a perfect accident-free record for the entire 14 years since it was established.

The LOGISTEED Central Japan, Ltd. Fukui Office (Hokushin Division, Ishikawa Branch, Fukui Office) is located in the Technoport Fukui Industrial Park, one of the largest of the Kinki/Central Japan area between Fukui City and Sakai City. The office serves industrial wire and cable manufacturers at their production plants. Office Director Mr. Goto says, “The work we do here involves receiving copper rolls—materials for mobile phone line cables—on behalf of the customer, as well as outbound shipping arrangements for the completed cable.”

We make deliveries throughout the entire

country, from Hokkaido to Okinawa.” At present, the office handles outbound shipments of 5G line cable. “We’ve been told that in the near future we will be making a shift to high-speed cable specifications. We look forward to the launch of different types of shipments at that time.” The Fukui office has existed for fourteen years, and we have been incident and accident-free since then. The whole team works meticulously and with safety as a top priority.



The employees of the Fukui Office. Mr. Goto, Office Director (center), tells us about Fukui’s incredibly delicious rice.

DATA

Address: Technoport 3-1-3, Shirakatacho, Fukui-shi, Fukui Prefecture

No. of employees: Five



Ichijodani Asakura Clan Site

This site is the ruins of a castle town ruled by the Asakura Clan for five generations, 103 years, during the Sengoku Period. Burned down by Oda Nobunaga's armies, it remained virtually buried for about 450 years after that. Today, excavation efforts have now fully restored the townscape. Using excavated building cornerstones, and stone fence material, visitors are treated to a restored townscape including samurai homes, machiya longhouses, merchant homes, and more. The site has been named a national Special Historical Site, Special Place of Scenic Beauty, and Important Cultural Property.



Tojinbo

Cascading columnar joint cliffs stretching one kilometer long, buffeted by the waves of the Sea of Japan, is a popular spot that people tend to visit over and over again. The columnar joints occur when lava or magma cools, hardens, and cracks into columns. The Tojinbo columnar joints were formed from lava approximately 13 million years ago. The area has been named a national Place of Scenic Beauty/Natural Monument. The name "Tojinbo" is believed to originate with a corrupt monk named Tojinbo of Heisen-ji temple (currently the Heisen-ji Hakusan shrine) who, according to legend, was pushed off the cliff by the townspeople.

Fukui Station

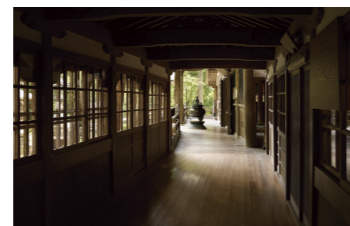
Fukui is known as the "kingdom of dinosaurs" for the numerous fossils discovered there. A dinosaur robot comes to greet at Fukui Station!



Echizen crab, sauced pork cutlet rice bowl, Volga rice, Echizen grated buckwheat noodles, and other local delicacies are also excellent!

Eiheiji, Soto Zen Headquarter Temple

Eiheiji temple was established by Dogen Zenji in 1244. This area of deep mountains and valleys is home to some 70 large and small buildings. Amongst these, the seven halls collectively known as "Shichidogaran" are considered especially important for Buddhist practice. Even today, monks from around the nation gather here for strict training. Temple visitors can witness these monks meditating as they move through the hallways connecting the seven halls.



Top: The Sanshokaku Reception Hall was renovated in 1994. The room is 156 tatami mats. It is known for its decorated ceiling.



Yokoyama Tetsu

LOGISTEED Track & Field Club Athletes at Work & Play vol. 6

It's been four years since Yokoyama Tetsu joined the LOGISTEED Track & Field team, and he's now a key part of it. He started track & field in junior high school, at which time he quickly began to stand out from the other competitors. To this day, he continues to break his own records in the 5000-meter—his best event.

What got you interested in track & field?

When I decided to do track & field in junior high school in my hometown of Tokamachi-shi, Niigata Prefecture, an acquaintance of mine who was a little older than me was already participating in national track & field events. I was inspired by him, and it was because of him that I joined the track & field team. During my second year of junior high, I ran on the national ekiden (relay marathon) team, running two segments. During my third year of junior high school, I competed in the Junior Olympics, coming in 8th in the 3,000 meter race. I played baseball as an elementary school student, but I found that I liked the fact that track & field involves tracking specific times that tells you your exact level.

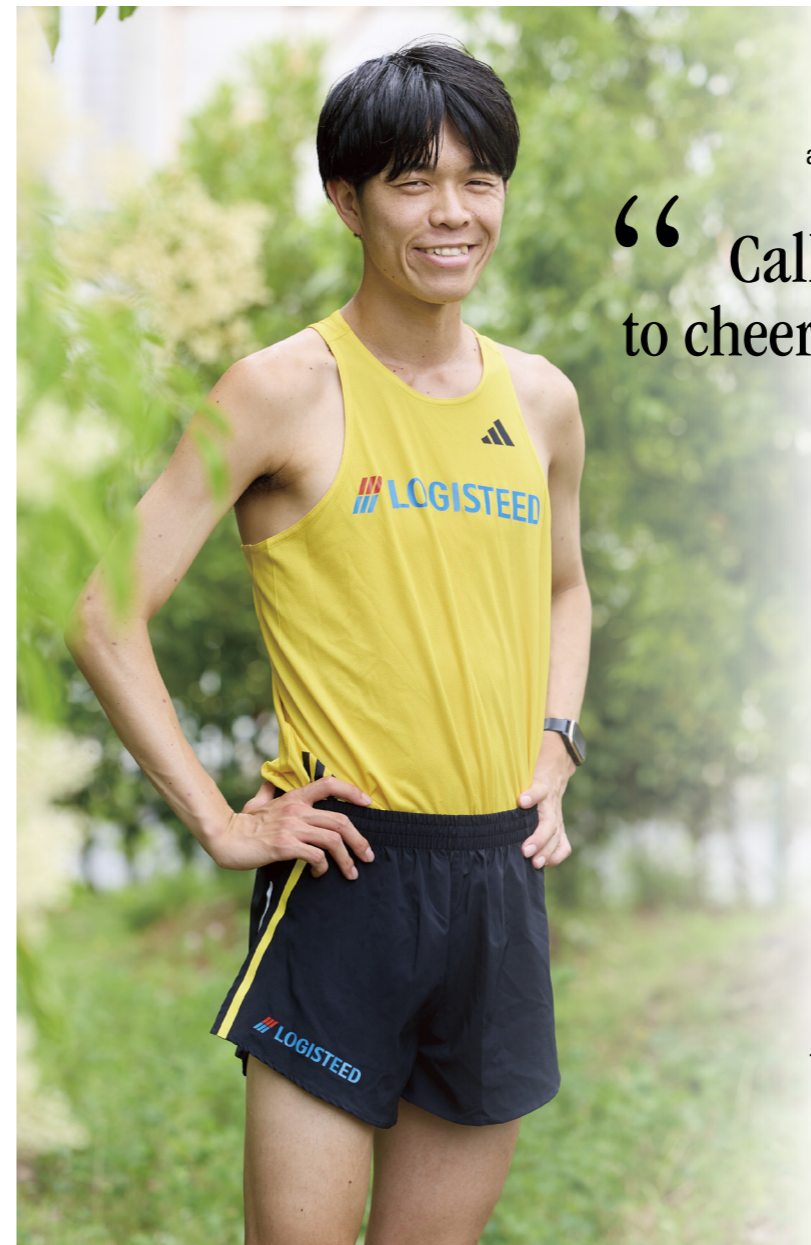
What was your life like at university?

I was part of the Track & Field team at Nihon University. I lived in a dormitory right near the field. Everybody came together for practice at 4:55 in the morning, and we were done at 6:30 am, after which I took a shower, ate breakfast, and headed for the university. Though the dorm was in the suburbs of Tokyo, the campus itself was in the city center, so I had to take a crowded train for an hour each way.

How did you come to the join the LOGISTEED Track & Field team?

I started looking for a job during my third year of university. I even interviewed for jobs at companies that had no opportunities for track & field. But the I really thought about the situation and wondered if I should really quit track & field, especially since I'd been doing it for ten years—through junior high and high school. I talked about it with my coach, and he suggested that I should check out the Track & Field team at Hitachi Transport System (currently LOGISTEED). So this is how I got here.

“ Call out my name “Tetsu!” to cheer my on. It makes me happy. ”



What kind of office work do you do?

I work two days a week at the LOGISTEED East Japan Kashiwa PFC Service Office, where I oversee transport from the warehouse. Our customers' main product is shoes so, for example, I figure out how many cases of how many pairs of shoes and how many four-ton trucks I need. Our outbound cargo loads increase at the end of the fiscal year, ahead of Golden Week, etc. The work is interesting for me because it helps me gain an understanding of the distribution sector, as well as greater economic trends.

Do you have something special you do before a game or a routine?

When somebody asks me that, I say I watch movies. I often don't sleep well before a game, and I get nervous. When this happens it helps me to escape from reality to watch something created by someone else. Then when I go back to my own world after watching someone else's story, my own problems don't feel like such a big deal. I watch movies from different genres.



The Traditional Aomori Nebuta Festival Giant doll-like lantern floats: the stars of the festival

nebuta float artisan
Kitamura Renmei

A nationally designated important intangible folk cultural property The Aomori Nebuta Festival draws in more than a million visitors from around Japan as well as from other countries. The stars of the show are the giant doll-like lantern floats. A light fixture is placed inside so that the float shines in brilliant color. These large floats, made by specialized nebuta float artisans, take roughly nine months each to complete. We asked Kitamura, a nebuta artisan for 66 years, about the nebuta-making process and the charm of these floats. It all begins with a draft sketch, followed by the building of the bony frame, and the color for the finish.

I became a disciple in my second year of junior high school

I can say that at this time I learned to think for myself. The Aomori Nebuta Festival is held in August each year in Aomori City, Aomori Prefecture. The main features of the festival—one of Japan's foremost—is the giant float, which is essentially a giant doll-like lantern. The maximum size is very specifically defined at nine meters wide and seven meters deep. The float stands five meters high and weights a total of approximately four tons.

The float is winds through a course of approximately 3.1 kilometers in length, inspiring excitement in the people watching. The floats are crafted by nebuta float maker artisans—and Kitamura is one of them. He has won the Nebuta Float Grand Prize judged at the Aomori Nebuta Float Festival three times.

Kitamura made his first nebuta when he was in fourth grade. He made a children's floats together with his twin brother and their older brother. The neighborhood association also made nebuta for the Nebuta Festival, and there were many children's floats made as well. "Well, I could make a little extra money," says Kitamura with a smile. "When I was a kid we got donations for making kids' floats. Of course I liked making a bit of money, but then I came to like making them and I found it really interesting. People began to recognize my skills, at which time someone suggested that I become a disciple of Kitagawa Keizo (famous second-generation nebuta float maker artisan) together with my twin brother. We were second-year junior high school students at the time."

Kitamura looks back at that period of this life: "My teacher made it a point to praise me. At that time my float framing work—using bamboo and thread—was not very good, but in my defense there was no blueprint on how to make the parts such as the hands, swords, etc. I simply watched my teacher and made the different pieces as I thought best, and he encouraged me by telling me he thought it looked good. And that's how I learned to think for myself—that is, I learned to look at something and figure out how to make it in the image I had in my mind. And that was how the basis of how my skills formed." Later, when Kitamura was 17 years old, he and his two brothers made their first large float. Together they continued to make small floats, until Kitamura again created a large float in 1978. The three brothers each went independent in 1984, since which time they have been working as separate artisans.

From flat to three-dimensional: encouraging people to view the float from different angles.

The large nebuta floats take their imagery from Japanese legends, incidents from ancient times, classic literature from other countries, etc. The process of float-making begins with

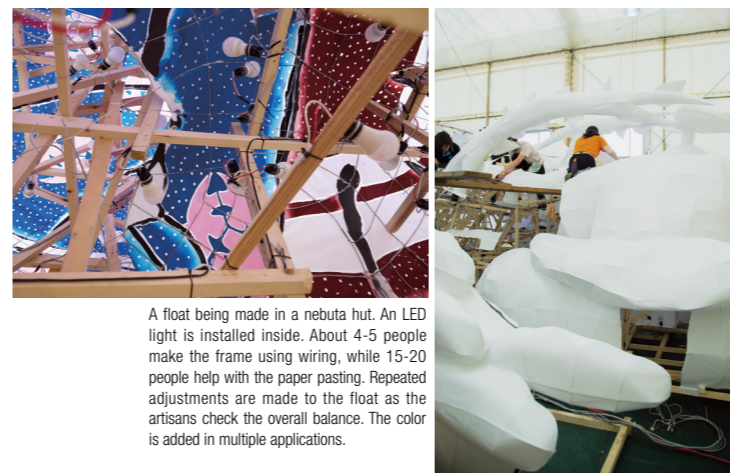
a preliminary sketch. Kitamura begins the float-making process around November, starting with a pencil and then filling in the colors later. This is the blueprint of the float. He notes: "I'm always thinking about the materials I'm going to use. I make a number of sketches, finishing a couple of them by the New Year. Then the client's exhibitor organization chooses between them."

Once the preliminary sketch is complete, then the artisan moved on to the details such as the face, hands, swords, spears, etc. around mid-late February. In May, Lasse Land, a series of a special type of hut, is set up for the making of the large floats at Aoiumi Park near Aomori Port. The floats are made at home through May. For the part of the process done in the huts: first the square pillars are erected, and with these as a support the float takes shape with wire. This is the frame of the float. Next, electrical wiring and an LED bulb are placed in the float so that it can shine from inside out. The next step is the pasting of the external paper—using hoshu paper from the wood of the mulberry tree—creating a white doll-lantern shape. Then black ink is added on the face, kimono etc., followed by the addition of melted paraffin to create patterns on the kimono.

The color is applied at the last phase. Using a traditional brush or air brush, pigment and watercolors are applied. Kitamura remarks about the details: "We do the colors over and over again, especially the face. We use an airbrush to apply about four different coats, going from light to dark." The face then exudes a soft look and texture.

Once the coloring is completed, the float is mounted on a two-meter-high platform—a task requiring 50 people. Kitamura adds: "This part makes me the happiest. It's only when we look at the float from below that we can see what is looks like from other angles—and I'm always nervous at this stage because we really don't know what the result is until this time."

Once the float is mounted, we then look at the entire balance and fix it a number of times. Drawing on his 66 years of experience, Kitamura notes: "The float begins as a two-dimensional concept, but the end result is three-dimensional. The float needs to be looked at from a variety of



A float being made in a nebuta hut. An LED light is installed inside. About 4-5 people make the frame using wiring, while 15-20 people help with the paper pasting. Repeated adjustments are made to the float as the artisans check the overall balance. The color is added in multiple applications.



Kawazu-gake large float at the Aomori Nebuta Festival from every angle, this float exhibits the tension and power of the sumo wrestlers, and the potential to win or lose in every second of the match.



Top: The nebuta pictured here are in the process of being colored. The artisans apply multiple coats to the floats with meticulous attention to detail.
Left: During the festival, the large floats are stored in the float hut, from where they are taken out to be paraded around.

angles. And that's why we really need to make sure we work out all of the details."

Kitamura says he's created more than 100 floats, though he hasn't actually counted them all. He talks about the charm of these floats, and their future: "I love my work because it really is inspiring and moving for people. I've never been bored with it, though the floats are in my head 365 days a year! I plan to continue to doing it. And we're seeing more and more young artisans, so we look forward to new designs."



At the request of the Hitachi Nebuta Committee, Kitamura crafted a large float based on the theme of "Kawazu Saburo Sukeyasu kawazu-gake," which depicts sumo wrestling performed for Minamoto-no-Yorimoto at the end of the Heian Period. The sketching shown here is the first stage of the float-making.



Taking up the challenges of kabuki theater from the tender age of three

Kabuki Actor:
Onoe Ukon

Kabuki has developed over time as a comprehensive art comprised of the three key elements of dramatic performance, dance, and music. Inspired by kabuki from the age of three, Ukon decided to become a kabuki actor, polishing his skills over the years through intense training. He eventually became so popular that he is now known as the "prince of kabuki." In addition to kabuki, he is also active in movies, theater, etc. We asked Ukon how he came to kabuki, and how he makes his way through this fascinating world.

"Lion in the Mirror" dance, a specialty of Ukon's great-grandfather, makes a huge impression on the young Ukon

Ukon is much more than a kabuki actor. He is active in other areas as well, such as in movies, theater, etc. He knew that he wanted to become a kabuki actor when he was just three years old, when he was at his grandmother's house, when he was shown a short documentary about his great-grandfather (Onoe Kikugoro) performing the "Shunkyokagamijishi (Springtime Lion in the Mirror)." Ukon remembers being asked if he wanted to see a video of his great-grandfather, to which he said yes.

This documentary was full of surprises for the three-year-old Ukon. "When I saw the video expecting to see my great-grandfather, the first person I saw was what I thought was a woman, but it was my great-grandfather playing the part of a woman. I didn't really understand that that the time. It was then that I was told that men play the parts of both men and women in kabuki—so that was another big shock. And then the scene changed and a "lion" came out. Then I found that that was also my great-grandfather!

This is how I first learned that kabuki actors play lots of different roles, and I began to think that I wanted to do the lion dance as well. My great-grandfather played the female role with a highly original, soft-and-plump look, which contrasted with the aggressive moves of the lion dance. I really got a sense of inner strength at the time, and I felt a kind of booming vitality."

The key to success in kabuki: daily practice

Ukon began to learn traditional Japanese dance in order to become a kabuki actor. Meanwhile, he comes from a family of traditional music: his father is Kiyomoto Enjudayu VII of the lead family of the Kiyomoto school of joruri (dramatic narrative set to shamisen music). As master of traditional music, he encouraged his son to study music as well. Ukon gave his first kabuki performance at seven years old. "I already liked kabuki at that age, so I think they asked me to perform so that I'd be able to create a good memory of being on stage—and like kabuki even more. I remember this as the beginning of my professional career."

"Even though I as a kid I still felt some pressure to perform well—because I knew if I did a good job I'd be asked to perform again, and I wanted that." Ukon also belongs to the house of Kiyomoto (classical kabuki music). "But it wasn't an environment where I would necessarily be expected to be a kabuki actor. I went through a period of anxiety from my late teens through my early twenties. I loved kabuki, and I practiced a lot and worked hard, but at times felt like people didn't understand how much I wanted to do it."



Ukon plays the part of "Benten-kozo Kikunosuke" of "Benten-musume-me-no-shiranami" at the Kabuki-za Theater in May 2022. "The more deeply I become a part of the world of kabuki, the more impressed I am with its charm and uniqueness."



Top: January 2024. Ukon performs "Shirabyoshi Hanako" of "Kyoga-no-komusume-Dojoji."
Bottom: January 2025. Ukon and Nakamura Kazutaro (left) perform "Ninin-wankyu." This photo is taken from Ken-no-Kai, a performance led by Onoe Ukon, in 2018. © Ken-no-Kai (photo by Taguchi Masami) Ukon played both male and female roles.

Producing Ken-no-Kai

The turning point for me came when I was twenty three years old, when I was the lead in "Ken-no-Kai." I wanted to perform "Lion in the Mirror" while I was still in my twenties, so I produced and performed it myself.

"Springtime Lion in the Mirror" was a big production. I began to realize that you can't get starring roles if you just wait around for them. So that's when I decided to produce and take the lead role myself.

"Lion in the Mirror" can certainly be performed when the actor is in their 40s or 50s, but I feel it's important to have integrated it fully while you're still young."

The performance went well, and Ukon was exhilarated and proud of his achievement. Looking back, however, he says, "My performance really wasn't as powerful as I'd thought, and in fact just because the performance was a success didn't mean that I'd inspired any big change." Since then, "Ken-no-Kai" has been performed every year, except during the coronavirus pandemic.

Ken-no-Kai ran eight times over August-September 2024, including dates in Osaka in addition to those in Tokyo. "We launched Ken-no-Kai with the idea of doing ten performances. It was pretty frantic the first 4-5 times, but as I went along I really came to appreciate the presence of our collaborators. I am very grateful to everyone who gave their support for the production. We've now completed our eighth performance, and at this juncture, on top of my appreciation,



I've also developed great respect for our collaborators. I look forward to many more great experiences on the Ken-no-Kai stage."

"For instance, for our performance, I played the parent lion, while 11-year-old Onoe Mahoro played the child lion. One of the highlights was when the two of us shook our "manes" in unison, creating an explosive moment where we were really together with the audience, and so on the closing day we did even more of this mane-shaking. The members of the audience responded to this exciting moment—which was something different than what we'd experienced before—and it was also an inspiring part of the show for Mahoro."

Kabuki: my "home of the heart"

As I did more and more "Ken-no-Kai" performance, I became more prominent in the kabuki world, and also began to appear in movies and musicals. I was even invited to come on a certain variety show—just because I like curry so much that I eat it 360 days a year! In 2018, I was given the name "Eijudayu" through my father's lineage. As such I came to hold the Kiyomoto lineage in addition to my work with kabuki. I've been able to gain other experiences through movies and theater, and by being invited to appear in various capacities. But really my "home of the heart" is kabuki. My feeling is that the art of kabuki can be likened to a "museum of human potential." Kabuki helps us to sense that potential—and that's what's so great about it. Another wonderful thing about it is that it really takes ten years to appreciate any specific kabuki play. You never, ever get bored!" Ukon plans to continue polishing his skills at his art, in order to convey the great beauty and inspiration of kabuki to as many people as possible.



The Kabuki-za Theater is located at Ginza-4, Chuo-ku, Tokyo. Opened in November 1889, it has undergone major renovation three times, including to repair damage incurred during wartime.

*Born in 2012. He took on the name "Onoe Mahoro I" in 2024, appearing from that time onward in kabuki performances. His mother is actress Terajima Shinobu, and his grandfather is Onoe Kikugoro VII.

Atsuta Distribution Center launched

LOGISTEED, Ltd. is pleased to announce that construction of the Atsuta Logistics Center in Nagoya City, Aichi Prefecture, overseen by LOGISTEED Central Japan, Ltd. has been completed. Operations were launched on July 12, 2024.

This center is a multipurpose general logistics center built to meet the diverse logistics needs of client companies. As such, it is located in a prime area with easy access to major roads, within five km of central Nagoya, and about eighteen km from Nagoya Port. It is equipped with solar power generation, LED lighting, EV charging facilities, and more, designed to provide logistics services with low environmental impact, specifically by reducing greenhouse gas (CO2) emissions and improving energy efficiency.



Ogori Distribution center opens

LOGISTEED Kyushu, Ltd. established the Ogori Distribution Center in Ogori City, Fukuoka Prefecture. Operations were launched as of August 1, 2024. We have taken steps together with LOGISTEED Collabonext, Ltd. to ensure that the new center runs highly efficiently through automation. We achieve manpower reduction through our integrated RCS (Resource Control Service), which was developed in-house, together with efficient equipment. Additionally, we work to render our operations environmentally-friendly with renewable energy procurement (solar panels) that cover a portion of our electrical power consumption.



LOGISTEED receives Special Award at the 25th Logistics Environment Awards

LOGISTEED, Ltd. has received the Special Award at the 25th Logistics Environment Awards, sponsored by the Japan Association for Logistics and Transport, for a joint project implemented together with Kurabe Industrial Co., Ltd., Unicharm Products Co., Ltd., Konoike Transport Co., Ltd., and LOGISTEED Express, Ltd. : a series of initiatives designed to reduce emissions by way of recycling between two companies.



LOGISTEED, Ltd. receives 2024 Japan Packaging Contest Triple Award

LOGISTEED, Ltd. was the recipient of the Logistics Award for our recyclable hybrid pallets with a load capacity of one ton. Meanwhile, the 1) special decks for stacking cargo with detachable stanchions project, and 2) the wooden boxes with ramps for small electron microscopes project won the Transport Packaging Award at the Japan Packaging Contest 2024, held by the Japan Packaging Institute.



LOGISTEED Group sponsors the 31st KINEKO International Film Festival

We are pleased to have sponsored the 31st KINEKO International Film Festival, which was held from October 31 to November 5, 2024 in the Futakotamagawa area of Tokyo, organized by the KINEKO Film General Incorporated Association.



Sponsoring the Tohoku-Miyagi Revive Marathon 2024

LOGISTEED, Ltd. sponsored the Tohoku-Miyagi Revive Marathon 2024, which took place on November 3, 2024. The Marathon was first launched in 2017 with the goal of contributing to the Great East Japan Earthquake recovery efforts.



Supporting athletes from Japan at the Soap Box Derby World Championships

LOGISTEED, Ltd., supports the activities of the non-profit organization, Nippon International Soap Box Derby (NPO_NSBD), the goal of which is to popularize the Gravity Car Race. Our company sponsored the participation of the Japanese national team in the 86th All-American Soap Box Derby (AASBD) Championships held in the U.S. in July 2024. Our LOGISTEED



VANTEC Nippon soap box car competed in the race.



Participating in the Decarbonization 365 project

LOGISTEED, Ltd. took part in Decarbonization 365, a joint project between Osaka Prefecture and STUDIO SPOBY that works to achieve a decarbonized society by boosting awareness and encouraging people to change their actions. It involves hundreds of private companies and over 100,000 employees, as well as hundreds of thousands of residents.

Coinciding with the opening of the Expo 2025 Osaka, the project works to lower CO2 emissions through a variety of actions designed to protect the environment. It also works to contribute to the EXPO Green Challenge by improving visibility of the decarbonization process. The following is a comment from Kuraki Mai, who composed the project theme song "Thank you for every breath."



Comment from Kuraki Mai

"Ever since I was born, I just thought it was natural that we breathe in and out, but I've found that that's not true. We are able to breathe because Mother Earth, who loves us unconditionally, is always supporting us. So I composed this song so that we can pass this idea on to future generations."

"Above the Seven Summits Live!" event held

LOGISTEED, Ltd. was a special sponsor of the "OTTAVA Accademia Special: Aerial Photographer Yamamoto Naohiro and Guitarist Falcon "Above the Seven Summits Live!" event, held November 29, 2024. This event was a unique live experience featuring photographs by aerial photographer Yamamoto along with improvisational music by guitarist Falcon. Yamamoto is currently undertaking the "Above the Seven Summit Project" (sponsored by LOGISTEED) to capture landscapes of the highest peaks on each of the seven continents using a motor paraglider.



LOGISTEED opens new distribution center in Spain

LOGISTEED Europe B.V. (headquartered in the Netherlands) has opened a logistics center near Barcelona, Catalonia, Spain. The facility is conveniently located 30 minutes from El Prat Airport, and 40 minutes from the Port of Barcelona. It serves as a key point in the European logistics network, streamlining the storage and delivery of commodities to local logistics bases and individual delivery destinations within various countries in the region. Additionally, newly-introduced pallet racks with capacity of 41,000 pallets serve to enhance storage efficiency. The center is also environmentally friendly, reducing electricity usage for lighting by LED lighting, solar power generation, and skylights.



Shanghai Pudong International Airport location (China) attains CEIV Pharma

LOGISTEED China, Ltd. one of our group companies, has acquired CEIV Pharma* at Shanghai Pudong International Airport as of October 2, 2024.



LOGISTEED (Thailand) obtains CEIV Pharma at the Suvarnabhumi International Airport location

LOGISTEED (Thailand), Ltd. one of our group companies, succeeded in acquiring CEIV Pharma* at the Suvarnabhumi International Airport location as of October 31, 2024. This marks the first such certification for a Japanese logistics company in Thailand.

*IATA's CEIV Pharma program is a certification for air transport that ensures pharmaceutical products are handled and transported according to Good Distribution Practices (GDPs) and other international standards across countries. It covers various criteria including temperature.



LOGISTEED Claims ITER Award

LOGISTEED, Ltd. has completed the transportation of the superconducting Toroidal Field coils (TF coils) for the ITER (International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor) project. We have received an ITER Award commemorative plaque from the Director General of the ITER Organization, and a certificate of appreciation from the National Institutes for Quantum Science and Technology (QST), in recognition of our contribution to the project.



Forklift driving contestants call on the Minister of Health, Labor, and Welfare

On November 22, 2024, Nakano Yuki of LOGISTEED West Japan, Ltd. winner of the general division of the 38th Contest (2023), called on the Minister of Health, Labour, and Welfare (Mr. Fukuoka Takamaro) together with the 2024 winners.



Expanded Global Business Meeting 2024 held

Over the two-day period of November 14th and 15th, the LOGISTEED group held the Expanded Global Business Meeting 2024 (EGBM2024) at our Japanese headquarters. EGBM is a high-level global meeting held annually since 2010, where the top management of the LOGISTEED Group gathers in Japan from around the world to discuss the broad management strategy of the group. At EGBM2024, we held dynamic discussions on business and management issues with a view to enhancing corporate value as we prepare for re-listing on the stock market as a global logistics company.



Tram-wrap advertising in Amsterdam

As part of strategies to make the LOGISTEED brand better-known outside Japan, we placed a "train-wrap" advertising on trains in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. The design featured traditional Japanese motifs such as clouds, waves, pine trees, etc., against a backdrop of the cityscape of Amsterdam. The image is designed to convey the idea that LOGISTEED is a part of the life-blood of Amsterdam—and a key support to the city. In addition, in order to get across the idea that we are a Japanese company, our slogan "Michi ni Idomu" ("Taking on the Future") is written in Japanese in the advertisement.



LOGISTEED invites Matsudo City residents to Chiba Jets home game, gifts basketball and bibs

LOGISTEED, Ltd. invited local residents in Matsudo City to a home game of the Chiba Jets, which is part of the Japan Professional Basketball League (B League). For this project, we invited 1,000 people (500 on each day) to games on November 9th and 10th, and provided each of them with an original megaphone. The game on the 10th was a LOGISTEED-sponsored game, and children from Matsudo City participated in a shooting showdown at halftime. Additionally, our company has been sponsoring Chiba Jets' visits to elementary schools in Chiba Prefecture as of this year, and we have donated 10 basketballs and 10 bibs to each of the 12 elementary schools in Matsudo City.



Three contestants from LOGISTEED place in the 39th National Forklift Driving Contest

The 39th National Forklift Driving Contest was held on September 28-29, 2024, at the Chubu Truck Driving Training Center (Miyoshi City, Aichi Prefecture). The goal of this forklift driving competition is not only to improve knowledge and driving skills, but also to inspire people to develop a law-abiding spirit and proper awareness of safety. This event is held annually with a view to preventing work-related accidents and to ensuring safety at the workplace.

Our Group did especially well in the prefectural-level competition: in total,

there were 62 contestants sent to compete upon recommendations made by the branch directors at prefectural-level offices (47 in the Regular Division and 15 in the Women's Division). Amongst these, the LOGISTEED Group sent eight men and four women, for a total of twelve.

The following contestants placed in the contest: Mr. Osawa, Runner-Up, Regular Division, LOGISTEED Central Japan, Ltd./Mr. Tamura, 3rd Place, Regular Division, LOGISTEED West Japan, Ltd./Ms. Miyamoto, 4th Place, LOGISTEED Central Japan, Ltd. Women's Division

Runner-Up, Regular Division



LOGISTEED Central Japan, Ltd.
Osawa Mitsumasa

3rd Place, Regular Division



LOGISTEED West Japan Co., Ltd.
Tamura Ren

4th Place, Women's Division



LOGISTEED Central Japan, Ltd.
Miyamoto Ayumi

Six contestants from LOGISTEED place in the 56th National Truck Driver Contest

The 56th Truck Driver Contest was held over the two-day period of October 26th-27th, 2024, at the Vehicle Safety Center Safe Operations Chuo Training (Hitachinaka City, Ibaraki). A total of 142 contestants (including 28 women) who had won out in prefectural competitions competed in the 4-ton, 11-ton, Trailer, and Women's Divisions. The contestants in this event compete on the high level of driving skill required of commercial truck drivers, and on specialized knowledge of the relevant laws, vehicle structure, and more. The purpose is to encourage truck drivers to take pride in their work—which involves a high degree of responsibility to society—to bolster safety awareness

throughout the sector, and to move forward with accident prevention initiatives.

The LOGISTEED Group sent a total of 11 contestants to the competition, six of whom placed: Mr. Takanozawa, Runner-Up, 4-Ton Division, LOGISTEED East Japan, Ltd./ Mr. Yokoi, 5th Place, 4-Ton Division, LOGISTEED West Japan, Ltd./ Mr. Yamamoto, 3rd Place, 11-Ton Division, Vantec Kyushu Logistics Corporation / Mr. Mochizuki, Runner-Up, Trailer Division, VANTEC CORPORATION/ Mr. Honda, 4th Place, Trailer Division, Vantec East Logistics Corporation/ Ms. Kawabata, 3rd Place, Women's Division, Vantec Central Logistics Corporation.

Runner-Up, Trailer Division



VANTEC CORPORATION
Mochizuki Ryunosuke

Runner-Up, 4-Ton Division



LOGISTEED East Japan, Ltd.
Takanozawa Akira

3rd Place, 11-Ton Division



Vantec Kyushu Logistics Corporation
Yamamoto Yusuke

4th Place, Trailer Division



Vantec East Logistics Corporation
Honda Kenji

5th Place, 4-Ton Division



LOGISTEED West Japan, Ltd.
Yokoi Hiroaki

3rd Place, Women's Division



Vantec Central Logistics Corporation
Kawabata Haruna



Lots of dinosaur statues live up to the name "Fukui: Dinosaur Kingdom" at the JR Fukui Station West Exit Plaza



Purification water trough at Hirota Shrine, Aomori City

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