



[Profile]

Name :Julien Marguerie
Company :Hitachi Astemo, Ltd.
Nationality :France

Julian and his family in front of the Nebuta float.



Julian is looking at the center of Aomori city from Hitachi Aomori Branch office.

Q. What is your impression of Aomori?

I've been to Aomori three times. I was already interested in Nebuta. The first time, I visited Wa-Rasse, the Nebuta House, where Nebuta's history and actual Nebuta float were on display. It was in winter. I remember that there was a lot of snow at that time and it was very cold. I like art, so, the second time, I went to the Aomori Museum of Art, which is famous for its giant white sculpture with a dog as a statue, and the Towada City Museum of Contemporary Art, which is visited by many art lovers. This is the third time. It was my first time visiting during the Nebuta Festival, so I was very excited.

Q. What is the atmosphere at Hitachi Union Nebuta house?

There were a lot of people around the Nebuta house, and it felt a very festive atmosphere. Hitachi's Nebuta had a great community atmosphere. This year's Hitachi Nebuta festival was titled "The Legend of Nitta Yoshisada: Offering the Sword to the Dragon God," and we listened to an explanation of the story. We also asked about how many workers and time it takes to make a new Nebuta, and how many people involved including the Nebuta maker who designed. One of the famous Nebuta artist, Mr. Renmei Kitamura worked so hard to make the Nebuta. I was moved by everyone's efforts to create such an artistic float. I learned that the top prize-winning Nebuta float will be displayed at the Nebuta House Wa Rasse for a year, but the other Nebuta float will be dismantled immediately after the festival ends. "Mottainai" I wish all the beautiful Nebuta floats can remain as they are. It was great experience to meet and talk with Hitachi Chairman Higashihara, who came to encourage Hitach Nebuta Union and made a kickoff speech.



With Chairman Higashihara



Julian and his family at the jumper meeting place



Q. How do you feel about participating in the festival as a haneto jumper?

Being dressed in a Haneto costume by the professional team was an interesting experience, learning where to fold and tie the costume. I had worn a yukata before at a Ryokan (Japanese style hotel), but this was my first experience walking and dancing around town wearing a yukata. Haneto Jumper's costume has a bell. This bell is called the "lucky bell". Bells may fall while dancing, but it is said that picking up the bells will bring good luck. I don't usually attach bells to my clothes, so it was pleasant and refreshing to hear the sound produced when everybody moved. It was very interesting to see the preparation steps, such as dressing the traditional costumes, warming up before the jumpers started, and interacting with the jumpers and the extended Hitachi union members. Although jumpers have different ways of jumping, I was able to quickly learn the simple way to jump with the chant "Rassera, Rassera". At first I was worried if I could dance properly, but it turned out to be easier than expected. I had a lot of fun dancing with everyone. Nebuta is a great festival and I fell in love with the friendly atmosphere.

Q. What are your impressions of the Aomori Nebuta Festival from the special seats?

We were guided to the special seats along the way and watched the Nebuta Festival parade from the roadside. I was able to enjoy the show in a different way as observer. I enjoyed the parade seeing it from very near. Indeed, the Nebuta parade was very impressive. I was fascinated by the gigantic Nebuta float approaching fast and very close towards the public, and evading at the last second. The leader who pull the Nebuta float with young people was so professional. The sound of Hayashi, the group of musicians playing traditional music instruments made us feel like festive mode.



Hitachi Union Nebuta Float in the parade



Julian drinking Aomori local sake at special seat



Julian watching the Nebuta parade



Julian watching the Nebuta parade



Julian is interacting with new employees of Tohoku Hitachi Group at the networking party.

Q. How did you feel about participating in the social gathering with new employee jumpers?



After the Nebuta parade, I participated networking party. We attended a social gathering and interacted with new employees from the Tohoku Hitachi Group.

I got the impression that the young talents of the Hitachi Group have open mind-set. There were many people like me who liked discussions with foreigners about various things. I believe that these interactions are very valuable for Hitachi's future. During the social gathering, it was announced that Hitachi's Nebuta had won the "Tourist and Convention Association Chairman's Award" and the "Hayashi Award." We celebrated the award!

Q. Recommendation for visiting Nebuta and Aomori

It was a very valuable experience to participate in the Aomori Nebuta Festival, one of the biggest traditional Japanese festival, and to experience it as one of the members. The Nebuta Festival is truly a wonderful event, filled with excitement, including the colors of the Nebuta and jumpers, the music of the hayashi, and the interaction between people. We hope many people will join next year.

I first learned about this festival when I visited "Nebuta House Wa Rasse" in winter. Even if you don't have a chance to go to the festival in mid-summer, you can still see part of the festival at Wa Rasse. As the works that won the best prize at the latest Nebuta Festival are on display, so you can imagine the feeling of being at the festival.

Besides the festivals, there are other things worth visiting in the Tohoku region. There are many famous museums and natural areas (mountains, lakes, and oceans) in and around Aomori Prefecture. In addition to Nebuta, we also recommend spending several days enjoying Aomori itself and its surrounding areas.



Julian and his family participating as Haneto jumper