New Year Fireman’s Parade: Ladder-top Acrobatics

Every year at the beginning of January, fire brigades and other emergency services all over Japan hold a dekomeshiki, or first call-out festival. Alongside parades of fire engines and firefighting demonstrations by elite units, firemen clad in traditional costumes perform amazing stunts at the top of ladders and poles in hashigo-nori, or ladder climbing, one of Japan’s historic performing arts.

Some 400 years ago, most firefighting in the Edo period consisted not of discharging water to extinguish a fire but of tearing down houses in the close vicinity to prevent the fire from spreading. Firefighting units would include tobi, or steeplejacks, who would climb tall ladders or poles to try and determine where the fire had broken out.

Today, this hashigo-nori performance, which conveys the zeal and fighting spirit of firefighting units in the days of the Edo period, is performed by members of the local fire brigade and local steeplejack association.

A Growing Renewable Energy Industry

Feature
Global Participation in Wind Power

Mitsubishi Corporation has acquired through its wholly-owned UK subsidiary Diamond Generating Europe a 33.4% stake in Moray Offshore Windfarm (East) Limited (MOWEL) from the Spanish energy company EDP Renewables. MOWEL, a joint-venture in which Mitsubishi Kakoki is a partner, commissioned a 2,245 kilowatt solar power plant in Gujma Prefecture, Japan. Meanwhile, LM Sun Power, a joint corporation of Mitsubishi UFJ Lease & Finance and Mitsubishi Materials, owns five solar power plants that are in operation. And MUFG Bank has entered a loan contract with a special purpose company (SPC) financed by Sonnedix and Mitsubishi UFJ Lease & Finance joint corporation of Mitsubishi Kakoki and Mitsubishi Materials.


Biomass Power Generation

Generating Power from Food Waste

Mitsubishi Materials has established New Energy Fujimoto in Saitama Prefecture to enter the food-waste biomass business. Large quantities of food waste are generated in cities but recycling it into animal feed or fertilizers is difficult. This is why biogas technology, which ferments food waste to give off methane and produce power and heat energy, has been attracting attention in recent years as it helps to reduce incinerator waste and prevent global warming. Meanwhile, Mitsubishi Corporation Power, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Mitsubishi Corporation, has joined with the Kansai Electric Power Co., Inc. to establish a new joint venture, the Aoi Bioenergy Corporation. This project is aimed at changing the fuel used at Aoi Power Station from the current heavy oil or crude oil sources to woody biomass and to promote biomass power generation in Japan.


Wind Power Generation

Clean Solar Projects Keep Rolling Out

The Mitsubishi Kakoki group of companies is contributing to the formation of a recycling-based society as they give consideration to the prevention of global warming and to environmental preservation, and to the supply of clean energy using renewable energy. In September 2017, Akagi Shizen Energy (LLC), a joint-venture in which Mitsubishi Kakoki is a partner, commissioned a 2,245 kilowatt solar power plant in Gujma Prefecture, Japan. Meanwhile, LM Sun Power, a joint corporation of Mitsubishi UFJ Lease & Finance and Mitsubishi Materials, owns five solar power plants that are in operation. And MUFG Bank has entered a loan contract with a special purpose company (SPC) financed by Sonnedix and Mitsubishi UFJ Lease & Finance joint corporation of Mitsubishi Kakoki and Mitsubishi Materials.


AP Development Aims at Carbon Cycle

Artificial photosynthesis is a converting process from energetically little-value materials such as water and carbon dioxide (CO₂) into high-energy substances such as hydrogen and organic compounds using solar energy. It promises to be a technology that greatly contributes to the mitigation of CO₂ emissions and fossil resource consumption. Mitsubishi Chemical Holdings subsidiary, Mitsubishi Chemical (MCC) has been participating in the Artificial Photosynthetic Chemical Project coordinated by the New Energy and Industrial Technology Development Organization (NEDO), as a member of the Japan Technological Research Association of Artificial Photosynthetic Chemical Process. Working on joint research and development with many Japanese companies and research institutions, MCC contributes to all three themes of the project; photocatalyst design, high-performance separation membranes and high performance of the catalytic process for olefin production. Especially in the catalytic process for olefin production, MCC has steadily made achievements by demonstrating innovative technologies such as a reactive separation process surpassing the limitation of thermodynamic equilibrium and a hyper-stable catalyst under very severe conditions in small-scale pilot plants.


Geothermal Power Generation

Generating Power Using Mining Technology

As one sector of its renewable energy business, Mitsubishi Materials is engaged in the development of geothermal energy resources utilizing subsurface exploration technology nurtured through the company’s mining operations. Geothermal power is one of the most promising sources of renewable energy because, unaffected by the weather, it is capable of providing a stable power supply. The company started operation of the Onuma Geothermal Power Plant in Akita Prefecture in 1974. Mitsubishi Materials has also been involved with the Sumikawa Geothermal Power Plant since 1995 to supply steam, together with Mitsubishi Gas Chemical. And now, both companies are working for the construction of the Wanatsuzawa Geothermal Power Plant in Akita Prefecture and the Akioi Geothermal Power Plant in Iwate Prefecture as joint activities with J-POWER.


Solar Power Generation

Apartment complex

A small-scale pilot plant for the production of light alcohols

Aeolian plant

A small-scale pilot plant for the production of light alcohols

V2G Demonstrator Project Using EVs as a Virtual Power Plant Resource

Mitsubishi Motors Corporation and six other companies have been selected by the Ministry for Economy, Transport and Infrastructure (METI) to receive grants for “A Demonstrator Project for A Virtual Power Plant” Utilizing Consumer Energy Resources (V2G Aggregator Project). The Project aims to build a vehicle-to-grid (V2G) system, and a business model that utilizes the electricity storage capabilities of multiple EV/PHEVs to regulate power demand and supply between the grid and EV/PHEV. The companies will also work to establish a VGG business model to encourage sustainable adoption of renewable energy sources and power grid stabilization. Demonstrator Project sites will include the Mitsubishi Motors Okazaki Plant in Okazaki City, Aichi Prefecture, and the Shizuoka Branch of Shizuoka Gas.


Feature

A Growing Renewable Energy Industry

Interest in renewable energy sources has been growing in recent years. Investment and a massive growth market has come into being. Aiming for a wind, geothermal, biomass and other renewables into the main sources of our electrical power, and this is creating opportunities for new growth.

Globally, renewable energy has become a core target for energy-related investment and a massive growth market has come into being. Aiming for a more sustainable society, the Mitsubishi companies are working to turn solar, wind, geothermal, biomass and other renewables into the main sources of our electrical power, and this is creating opportunities for new growth.

Wind Power Generation

Global Participation in Wind Power

Mitsubishi Corporation has acquired through its wholly-owned UK subsidiary Diamond Generating Europe a 33.4% stake in Moray Offshore Windfarm (East) Limited (MOWEL) from the Spanish energy company EDP Renewables. MOWEL has developed the Moray East Windfarm located 22 kilometers from the coast of Scotland in the Moray Firth. It will start construction in 2018 and expects the wind farm to go into commission in 2022. Moray East has signed a conditional agreement for the supply and installation of 100 units of V164-9.5 MW™ offshore wind turbines generators with MHI Vestas Offshore Wind, a part of Mitsubishi Heavy Industries (MHI) Group through a 50-50 joint venture with Vestas. The V164-9.5 MW™ is the world’s most powerful wind turbine until MHI Vestas made the V280-10.0 MW™ in 2018. The V164-10.0 MW™ is the world’s first double-digit offshore wind turbine and is a testament to the Mitsubishi companies’ commitment to the growing renewable energy industry.


■ https://spectra.mhi.com/this_is_the_worlds_most_powerful_wind_turbine


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World’s First Self-driving Taxi Service Demonstration Test on Public Roads

Hinomaru Kotsu, a major Japanese taxi firm, and an autonomous driving technology company, ZMP Inc., on August 27, 2018, started a taxi service demonstration experiment using self-driving vehicles on public roads in Tokyo. Endorsing the significance of the demonstration experiment and looking toward the service being rolled out in Tokyo, Mitsubishi Estate and Mori Building provided facilities managed by them in the city center to serve as the start and destination points for the self-driving taxis. This is the first time a self-driving taxi has carried fare-paying customers on public roads anywhere in the world. Hinomaru and ZMP are aiming not only to eliminate traffic congestion and reduce its environmental impact but also to support those who are mobility disadvantaged and to resolve the chronic shortage of taxi drivers.

Acquisition of Automated Sorting Solution Company ASTES4 SA

Mitsubishi Electric has announced the acquisition of ASTES4 SA, a company based in Switzerland engaged in the development, production and sales of patented automated sorting solutions for sheet metal laser processing machines. With ASTES4 as a wholly owned subsidiary, Mitsubishi Electric will offer integrated solutions to the global market that combine ASTES4’s automated sorting systems with Mitsubishi Electric’s high-value-added sheet metal laser processing machines.


Spring Division Expands into SE Asia

Mitsubishi Steel has decided to produce automotive suspension springs and precision springs for electrical apparatus in Manila, the Philippines. This marks the company’s first step in strengthening its presence in automotive suspension springs in the ASEAN region and in meeting local procurement needs. It also shows the company’s intention to increase production of precision springs in the Manila area where demand is concentrated. The company will use existing facilities in Manila, so this will minimize the initial investment and shorten the time required to move into mass production.

Jile Helps Agile Delivery at Scale

Tata Consultancy Services has announced the launch of Jile™, the first of its kind Agile DevOps product-on-cloud to plan, deliver and track Agile programs within an enterprise. Built by Agile teams and for Agile teams, Jile is a comprehensive platform that enables an enterprise to envision their IT Initiatives in alignment to their core business objectives and subsequently equip project teams with the right set of tools, processes and controls to continuously deliver value to their stakeholders.

http://www.jile.io/

Faster Understanding of Cargo Damage Using AI Analysis of Smartphone Images

Tokio Marine & Nichido Fire Insurance, working with Hitachi Solutions Create, has developed the “Damage Tracer with AI Plus” system which uses AI to assess the extent of damage cargo has suffered in an accident when the distributor submits an insurance claim. By bundling photographs of the accident, taken by a smartphone or other device, together with details of the cargo, the system allows easier management of cargo accident reports, thereby assisting the distribution industry which is currently seriously understaffed. The companies are looking at the possibility of rolling out the service to others in the industry and, with a view to promoting its use in overseas markets, are also planning an English version of the system.

Logistics Joint Venture to Use Automobile Freight Trains in India

NYK Auto Logistics India Pvt. Ltd. (NALI), an NYK Group company, has signed an agreement with Adani Logistics Ltd. (ALL) to form a joint venture that specializes in the transportation of finished vehicles using automobile freight trains. NALI currently provides an integrated transport service for finished cars in India, including inland transport services by trailer, PDI (pre-delivery inspection), and representation for car carriers — thus offering end-to-end service from manufacturer to port and retail store. ALL covers a wide range of businesses mainly related to port operations in India and other countries, including the operation of automobile freight trains. The new company will cater to the increasing demand for domestic distribution of vehicles by rail and will give more choice to better meet customers’ diverse needs.


Fuso eCanter All-electric Trucks Delivered to Lisbon City Administration

Mitsubishi Fuso Truck and Bus Corporation delivered ten Fuso eCanter trucks, the company’s first all-electric light-duty truck in series production, with a range of over 100 kilometers, to the city administration in Lisbon, Portugal, on July 6, 2018. A sustainable alternative to conventional trucks for local governments looking to lower noise and emission pollution in urban areas, the Fuso eCanter currently provides an environmentally friendly solution for city landscape gardening and waste disposal operations in ten parishes selected by the Lisbon Town Hall. Europe- and US-market Fuso eCanteres are produced at Mitsubishi Fuso Truck Europe’s Tramagal plant in Portugal.

Global Spotlight focuses on employees from the Mitsubishi companies who are excelling in their respective fields around the world. In each issue we will get to know different employees, who will tell us about their hometowns, businesses, culture, and pastimes.

Special Places for Me: Bangkok & Chonburi

Elephants have always been a part of my life as I was brought up in an elephant camp, where my father had started to show working elephants to visitors. My father began working with elephants at a very early age and having such a camp was part of this dream. The place was like a large working elephant camp and I remember as a child experiencing the constant sight of elephant dung almost everywhere, the repugnance of its smell and all over the place swarms of flies. This made me wonder why my dad couldn’t do something different and clean, like run a restaurant or work in an office, like ordinary people. So, on graduating from school, I decided to seek change in my lifestyle and go to work in Bangkok. After moving to Bangkok to live with my husband, the first thing I discovered was that I had exchanged the smell of elephant dung and its flies for the pervasive odor of gasoline exhaust fumes and the constant haze of industrial pollution.

A Challenging Job

The next thing I discovered was the change from the gentle rural lifestyle to the hectic pace of a big metropolitan city. I work at Retail Support (Thailand) Co., Ltd., as General Manager of Administration. My job concerns the Distribution Center and while I had no experience of distribution center work at first, it was a challenging job and it became easier to identify the problems that needed to be solved. Every day I have to get up at 4:00 am just to get ready to go to work travelling from Bangkok to Samutprakarn Province, about 70 kilometers. Then after 5:00 pm I must struggle for a couple of hours before arriving home exhausted. Some days the traffic is so bad it can take about 3 - 4 hours. Now, however, I am able to manage my workload and my lifestyle; the work goes smoothly and now I love my job.

Back Home to Refresh

With the motivation gained from experience, in order to give my best to the company and remain fresh for my work I decided that I needed to spend more of my free time with my family at weekends and during holidays. So I thought that it would be nice to take trips back to Chonburi to visit my parents in their rural home. Here, we are able to settle back into my parents’ relaxed and happy lifestyle. Sometimes we all go out to dinner somewhere; sometimes I rent a Karaoke room and enjoy singing with them. After relaxing like this, I can return to my job refreshed and ready to take on new challenges.

Every Day is an Adventure in Portland

The City of Roses. Bridge City (for the 12 bridges that span the Willamette River running through the city), Stumptown. Bike Town, USA. Rip City for basketball fans; Soccer City for Timbers and Thorns fans.

The many nicknames of Portland, Oregon, reflect the unique history and vibrant fabric of the city. Located in the Pacific Northwest where the Willamette and Columbia rivers meet, Portland is nestled between the forested expanses of the Cascade Mountains — including nearby Mount Hood — and the Coastal Range. It’s just a short drive from Portland to the stunning coast, the lush wine country of the Willamette Valley that produces world-class pinot noir, and the air quality of the central high desert and eastern Oregon’s cowboy country.

Known for its quirky, independent streak, Portland has a little something for everyone — a wide variety of street food and world-class dining to please every taste, local coffee roasters and coffee shops, craft beer breweries (currently more than any other city in the world), distilleries, fine arts and cultural events, one of the largest urban parks in the country (Forest Park at 5,100 acres or 2,086 hectares), a Japanese garden considered the most authentic outside of Japan and, of course, significant local businesses with global reach such as Nike and Intel.

In the early days, Portland was a rough-and-tumble town on the edge of the wilderness and an emerging center for logging and agriculture. As the city grew, a man named Leo Samuel founded Oregon Life Insurance Company in 1906, the company that would become The Standard.

Mr. Samuel had a unique vision of a business that could better serve local customers and contribute to the local economy. It was a winning combination.

Many Opportunities for Employees

The Standard — which now has offices across the United States — extended his legacy, becoming a leading national provider of insurance and retirement products and services while retaining its focus on doing good things locally. The Standard became a public company in 1999, and then joined the Meiji Yasuda family of businesses in 2016. It was an exciting transition that brought together two companies that share a very similar purpose — helping our customers achieve financial well-being and peace of mind.

Today, The Standard has approximately 3,100 employees across the U.S., the majority of them working in our Portland offices or at the nearby Tannahouse campus in Hillsboro, Oregon. Our employees take full advantage of the many opportunities for adventure available in the region — from great food and drink to recreational activities such as hiking, biking, joining running teams (the 200-mile Hood to Coast relay is a favorite) and even dragon boating (with boats provided courtesy of Kaohsiung, Portland’s sister city in Taiwan).

The people who choose to work for The Standard also find many ways to support the communities where they live and work. Each year, employees log thousands of volunteer hours helping their favorite schools and charities, using paid time off provided by the company. We also have an annual Employee Giving Campaign during which the company matches employee donations to the charity or school of their choice. Last year alone, this partnership raised $4.4 million for 1,700 different nonprofits. This focus on giving back is a trait our company shares with Meiji Yasuda, and one of the many cultural similarities that made our merger such a perfect fit.

Every day in Portland is the start of a new adventure, and every day at The Standard is a chance to help move our customers, and communities, forward.