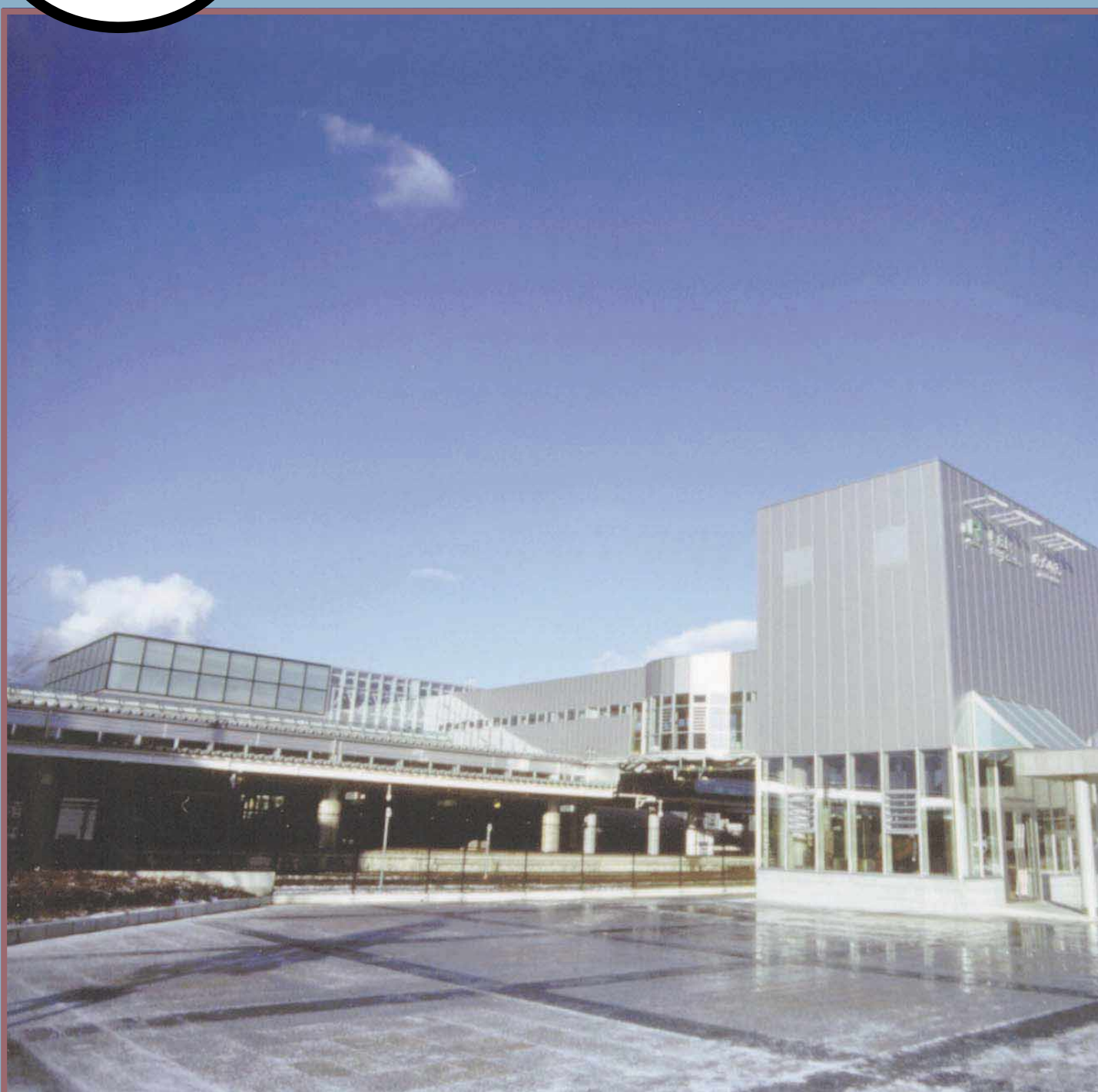


# JRTR

Japan Railway & Transport Review



**FEATURES:** New Stations  
Central Asian Railways and Europe–Asia Land Bridge

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Opened in December 1999, the rebuilt Shinjo Station serves as the new north terminal for Yamagata Shinkansen. (JR East)

## Editorial

### Symbol of Modernity

A serious dispute was provoked 10 years ago when JR West announced the design of the new Kyoto Station. The main issue was whether the huge and ultra-modern new station building would match the old city with many traditional houses and Buddhist temples.

The controversy resembled the dispute in France 100 years ago about whether the Eiffel Tower would match the old townscape of Paris. Many French people at that time disliked the idea of building a huge iron tower in Paris, so the city authorities permitted the Tower only as the symbol of the 1989 International Exposition, hoping that it would be dismantled soon afterwards. But once erected, the Eiffel Tower gave a powerful impression to the city, and people gradually accepted it as a symbol of modernity. Today, it is regarded even as one of the greatest engineering achievements of the 19th century.

Thanks to the firm determination of JR West and the support of the municipal authorities, the new Kyoto Station was completed in 1997 as a huge hotel and department store complex. Attracting many visitors and shoppers, the new station is at least a commercial success. Moreover, it seems that most people now accept this impressive building as a symbol of Kyoto's modernity. But even so, one question still remains. The current Kyoto Station has had three predecessors that stood on the same spot in the preceding 120 years, meaning that their average life was only 40 years. Will the new Kyoto Station survive as long as the Eiffel Tower?

T. SUGA

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