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Feature: 20 Years After JNR Privatization Vol. 2

- Twenty Years After
- Increasing Efforts to Strengthen Position as Leading Transportation Provider in Hokkaido
- 20 Years of JR East—Making a Fresh Start to Shape the Future
- Stable Growth through Expansion Based on Tokaido Shinkansen
- Our Goal—A Corporate Culture that Places Top Priority on Safety
- 20 Years of Working for Brighter Shikoku Future
- Achieving Sustainable Growth as Local Leading Company in Kyushu
- Celebrating 20 Years of JR Freight



Editorial

A Note On 130 Years of Rail Freight Transportation

In 1997, 10 years after the Japan National Railways privatization and division, there was little prospect of JR East, JR Central, and JR West on Honshu escaping the scope of the JR Company Law with its stringent regulations requiring the Minister of Transport approval for some business decisions, such as fare increases, and moving to full privatization. At that time, some of the JR companies were still appealing for temporary special measures, such as fixed asset tax reductions, to remain in place. However, in December 2001, the JR Company Law was revised and the 3 companies on Honshu were fully privatized. Although the conditions surrounding each company are very different, the operating environment for the JR companies has generally stabilized. Probably for this reason, many of the JR companies therefore published company histories in 2007—the 20th anniversary of their founding.

Among these publications, JR Freight's *130 Years of Rail Freight Transportation* is especially interesting. During the JNR era, passenger and freight operations, telecommunications, and systems were all integrated, but were separated at the privatization. Passenger operations were further divided by region. One problem faced by researchers relying heavily on railway statistics is that there are no separate figures from the JNR era for the geographical areas now served by the 6 JR passenger companies. Likewise, there are no figures for passenger operations throughout Japan since the 6 JR companies were established for comparison with statistics from the JNR era. However, a complete record is available for freight because freight operations were not divided by region when JR Freight was established. Although a history of JR Freight can only cover 20 years, *130 Years of Rail Freight Transportation* is a comprehensive history of freight transportation from the first days.

During the JNR era, it was difficult to obtain an overall understanding of freight transportation, because JNR's management structure was divided by bureaucratic sections such as sales, operations, rolling stock, infrastructure, electric power, signaling and telecommunications, etc. Neither does *100-Year History of Japanese National Railways* contain a broad review of freight operations. Consequently, *130 Years of Rail Freight Transportation* is the first comprehensive review of the history of rail freight covering both national and private railways in Japan. Especially worth reading is *A Photo History of Freight Railways in Japan*, which is published as a supplement with an English summary to the massive main books in three volumes. These publications can be purchased from Kotsu Shimbun Service Inc. (Fax +81 3 5216 3357)

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JR's 20th anniversary party: 27 July 2007 (Photo: Kotsu Pen Club)

JR group foundation ceremony: 1 April 1987 (Photo: Kotsu Shimbunsha)

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