

# JRTR

Japan Railway & Transport Review

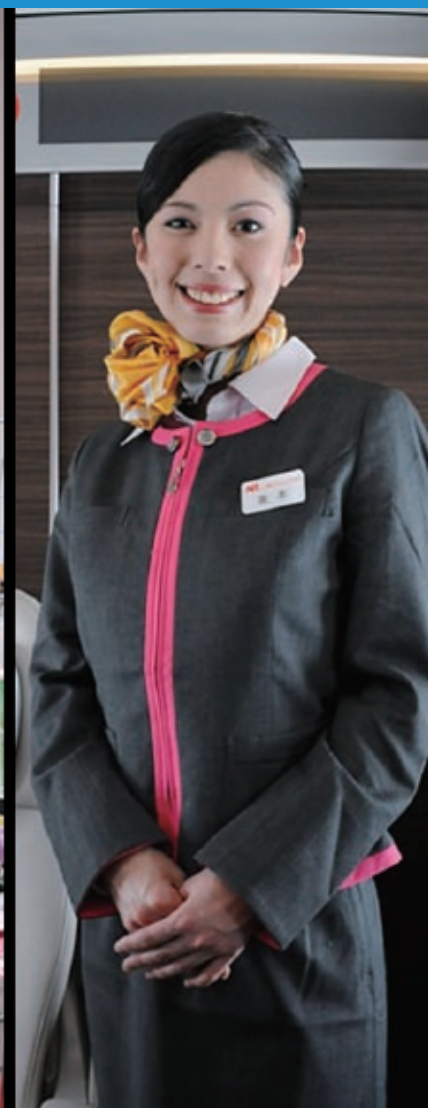
Feature

## Onboard Services

- The *Hayabusa* Tohoku Shinkansen *GranClass* Service
- Shinkansen Onboard Sales
- Dining Car and Meal Services on the Train
- Developments and Onboard Services on Odakyu's *Romancecar* Type 50000 (VSE) Limited Express on Hakone Sightseeing Line
- Catering on State Railway of Thailand (SRT) Trains
- Fine Dining on *Orient Express*
- Advent of Railway Dining Car

59

Feb. 2012



# JAPAN RAILWAY & TRANSPORT REVIEW

February 2012 No. 59

Published by **East Japan Railway Culture Foundation** (EJRCF)

2-2, Yoyogi 2-chome, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo 151-0053, Japan

Tel (81 3) 5334 0623

Fax (81 3) 5334 0624

Email [feedback@jrtr.net](mailto:feedback@jrtr.net)

Chairman: Mutsutake Otsuka

## Chief Editor:

Kunio Aoki

## Editorial Board:

Yoshihiro Akiyama, Director, Japan Railway Technical Service

Mami Aoki, Professor, Doshisha University

Makoto Ito, Director, Planning Division, Japan Institute for Transport Policy Studies

Yasunari Nakajima, Deputy General Manager, Technology Planning Department, East Japan Railway Co. (JR East)

Yutaka Oguchi, Deputy General Manager, Management Administration Department, JR East

Hideyuki Takai, General Manager, Planning Division, Railway Technical Research Institute

## Consulting Editor:

Tatsuhiko Suga

## Editorial Staff:

Robert Hancock

Yoshihiro Abe

Mizuki Naito

## Translation, Design & Production:

ALAYA INC.

© All rights reserved. Reproduction of the contents in part or whole of this magazine in any manner is prohibited without the prior written consent of EJRCF.

JRTR is printed in Japan.



On board service attendants of Odakyu (2 photographs on the left side, courtesy of Odakyu Electric Railway) and JR East (2 photographs on the right, courtesy of K. Sakurai)

## Dining Cars and Boxed Lunches

I recently visited the SCMAGLEV and Railway Park in Nagoya. The dining car of the Tokaido Shinkansen on display made me feel nostalgic about past railway trips, bringing back old memories, such as the delicious beef stew, which I ate frequently for 10 years or so in those dining cars after starting work in 1970. However, Japan also has a long tradition of *bento* boxed lunches used on occasions such as trips, flower-viewing parties, and visits to the theatre or sumo tournaments. Consequently, the Japanese bento has developed almost into an art form unparalleled in most of the world. When railways spread their reach, dining cars helped make the long train rides more enjoyable, as did *ekiben* (boxed lunches sold at stations) that were easier and cheaper than menus in dining cars. Ekiben are still very popular and always sell out at ekiben festivals in department stores featuring the various styles of boxed lunches sold at stations across Japan. Originally, ekiben were sold on platforms to passengers leaning out the windows while the train was stopped for a passing express, etc., but the appearance of limited expresses with permanently closed windows forced the boxed lunch onboard, bringing it into direct competition with the dining car. Eventually, the boxed lunch won out—in some ways the boxed lunch killed the dining car and now only a few remain in service on top-class, long-distance night trains in Japan where many passengers are seeking pleasure in the journey itself—rather like passengers on a cruise liner. However, since even these top-class dining cars have too few seats for all the passengers at one time, many people still bring a prepared luxury bento. Unfortunately, despite my nostalgic fondness for beef stew in the dining cars of old, being realistic about the maintenance and running costs, it would be difficult to bring them back.

K. Aoki

## CONTENTS

### Feature: Onboard Services

The <i>Hayabusa</i> Tohoku Shinkansen <i>GranClass</i> Service .....	6
Shinkansen Onboard Sales .....	8
Dining Car and Meal Services on the Train .....	12
Developments and Onboard Services on Odakyu's <i>Romancecar</i> Type 50000 (VSE) Limited Express on Hakone Sightseeing Line .....	18
Catering on State Railway of Thailand (SRT) Trains .....	22
Fine Dining on <i>Orient Express</i> .....	28
Advent of Railway Dining Car .....	36

### Breakthrough in Japanese Railways 10

Railways and Bridges 2 .....	48
------------------------------	----

### Another Perspective

My Japan Fellowship Programme .....	56
-------------------------------------	----

Topics .....	58
--------------	----

### Photostory

Japanese Station Lunchbox Wrappers .....	2, 65
--	-------