

# JRTR

Japan Railway & Transport Review

## Feature

### The Great East Japan Earthquake and JR Group Response

- Damage to JR East from Great East Japan Earthquake and Current Situation
- Technological Development for the Tokaido Shinkansen: Recent Efforts in Countermeasures against Earthquakes
- Transporting Oil Products to Disaster Areas
- Preparing for Major Earthquakes

### 25 Years Since Start of JRs

- Establishment of Japan International Consultants for Transportation and Expansion of Future Business Overseas
- Assessment of Success of 1987 Railway Reforms and Future Issues
- Achievements and Issues of Railway Management
- Railway Technology Achievements and Issues—Problems Over the Years

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Clockwise from bottom left: earthquake damage at Sendai Station, and tsunami damage at Shinchi Station (top left), Nobiru Station (top right), and sections between Mito and Katsuta. All of the above photographs are courtesy of JR East.

## SAN SEI

*Sansei* (literally 'three reflections') in the name of the well-known Japanese publishing company Sanseido is said to come from teachings in the *Analects of Confucius* that one should reflect on his or her actions three times a day. 'Reflect' here means broadly the same as 'see' in the 'plan, do, see' ideal management action pattern. However, this see (reflect) part to which a third of one's energy and time should be devoted, sometimes seems to be neglected in Japan. When reflection is neglected, archiving has little meaning.

A typical example of neglected reflection is the fact that no records were kept of Japanese government meetings dealing with the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant accident last year. Records of an incident must be kept if we are to reflect on it, but records are not kept due to a lack of recognition that leads to an inability to argue the foolish question of 'what good are they?' Management ability is demonstrated by keeping records, making use of them on future occasions, and understanding lessons learned. In other words, records must be kept rigorously and made good use of.

We see no overall trend to keep records on transport following the Great East Japan Earthquake. The process from disaster through to restoration needs to be recorded in a comprehensive manner. However, I have not heard of the central government, which should take the lead naturally, instructing local governments and transport operators to keep records. The details regarding damage that changed from moment to moment in particular need to be recorded to the best degree possible. This cannot be put off until recovery is completed. People's memories fade and documents go missing. Record keeping is an urgent issue, and it must be done in parallel with recovery projects. We bear the responsibility of passing down to the next generation the lesson materials we have now.

K. Aoki

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