

JRTR

Japan Railway & Transport Review

Feature

Globalization of Japanese Railway Business

- JR East Overseas Business
- Tokyo Metro Lending a Hand to the Hanoi City Urban Railway Development Project
- Participation in Brazilian Passenger-Railway Operation Project through Concession and PPP

Special Feature

- Construction of Ueno-Tokyo Line

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Class 800 being shipped to UK (Hitachi)

Expanding Railway Industry Overseas

Railways were introduced by countries as a means of modernization and industrial advancement. However, railways as a transport mode require large capital investment. And building railways as industrial domestic products requires industrialization in broad areas, such as rolling stock and rail manufacturing, as well as much time. So, countries other than the UK, where railways were invented, progressed by importing from other countries with advanced railways that already had railway industries in place. There are no examples where railways have been built after domestic production of railway products was fully completed, and railways have advanced as a means of transport in many countries without much domestic production of such products. This scheme remains in place today, so few countries export railway products, although railways have advanced in many countries. The same applies to aircraft and automobiles, where there is fierce competition among a select few.

At the same time, railways are social infrastructure requiring large funding, and they are greatly influenced by social backgrounds, such as people's way of living and industry along with the natural environment, including the country's climate and topography. Solutions to railway-related issues are inseparable from the politics of the country, so a deep understanding of the country's society and land is imperative.

Unlike aircraft and automobiles, railways cannot be adapted for uses other than transport. Entering overseas markets without keeping this in mind is reckless, and success cannot be expected in such cases. It is vital to understand all the factors in a country needing railways, such as its politics, economy, culture, geography, and nature. And at the same time, we must have the passion and magnanimity to look objectively at our own country and company and at our own abilities.

K. Aoki

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