

Transportation Museum in Tokyo and Railway Heritage Conservation

Michio Sato

Brief History of Transportation Museum

The history of the Transportation Museum at Tokyo dates back to 1911 when Shimpei Goto (1857–1929), the Director-General of the Railway Agency (the predecessor of Ministry of Railways and Japanese National Railways), established the post of 'officer in charge of railway museum affairs' with a view to establishing a railway museum. What prompted Goto to entertain such an idea is unknown. However, the new post was established just after many private railways in Japan were nationalized and new uniforms and badges had been made to give a sense of unity to the employees. The idea of a railway museum was probably conceived as one such measure and, in view Goto's involvement with the Boy Scout movement in his later career, education of young people may have been another motive.

The Railway Museum finally opened on Railway Memorial Day (14 October 1921 and now called Day of the Railway) as part of a project commemorating the 50th anniversary of the opening of the first railway in Japan. It was built under the elevated tracks on the north side of Tokyo Station and had about 8000 objects and materials on display. It was managed

directly by the Secretariat's Research Institute of the Ministry of Railways and admission was free. This Secretariat's Research Institute was a predecessor of the current Railway Technical Institute (RTRI). Soon after opening, the Museum was damaged by the 1923 Great Kanto Earthquake, but it reopened about 2 years later on 8 April 1925. Since space was limited because it was built under the elevated tracks, there were soon voices in favour of constructing a new building elsewhere and moving the museum. At about the same time, the size of Manseibashi Station in Kanda Suda-cho was cut and the freed grounds were selected for the new museum site; this is where today's Transportation Museum still stands. There was also an interesting 1933 plan for a park city proposed by a member of the Secretariat's Research Institute. It included a big railway park with sports facilities and zoological and botanical gardens arranged around the Railway Museum in a large park, as well as an airfield in the neighbourhood, thereby creating a large park city as a whole. If this plan had been realized, today's Japanese railway heritage would be different.

The move was completed on 24 April 1936. Some people mistakenly believe that the present building is actually the

old Manseibashi Station, but today's structure was built on the foundation of the old station. However, a museum staff member in charge of construction already recorded that the new building was imperfect as a museum facility owing to budget limitations and location restrictions. During WWII, despite its central location, the Museum was miraculously lucky not to be hit by bombs and its building and collections remained intact. However, it was closed temporarily in March 1945 as air raids became more intense.

The Museum reopened on 25 January 1946, soon after the war's end when it was renamed the Museum of Transportation Culture to expand its field to all areas of transportation, i.e., land, sea, and air. Although the Museum had first been under the direct management of the Ministry of Railways and then the Ministry of Transport (now Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport), at that time, its management was deputized to the Japan Travel Bureau. The name was changed again to the Transportation Museum on 1 September 1948 and has remained unchanged since then. Subsequently, ownership of the Museum passed to the newly founded Japanese National Railways (JNR) on 1 June 1949. The Transportation Culture Promotion



Entrance of Railway Museum reopened in 1925 after 1923 Great Kanto Earthquake (Transportation Museum)

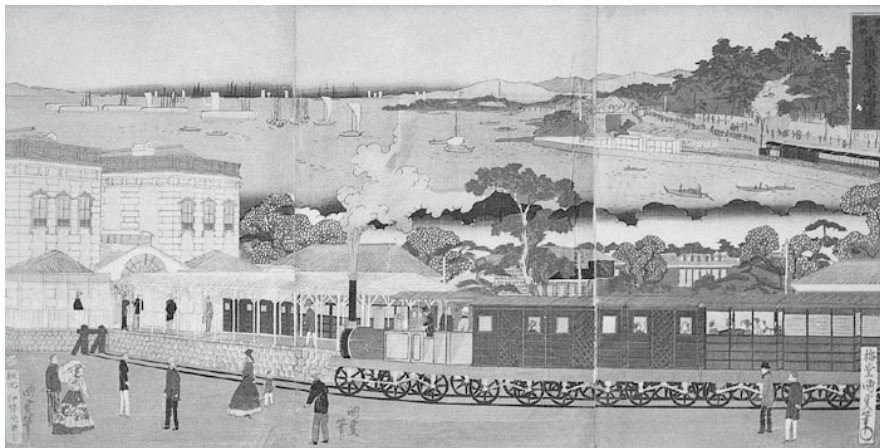


Railway Museum at opening of new building in 1936 (Transportation Museum)

Foundation has managed the Museum since 1 February 1971 and the Museum is now owned by JR East following the JNR privatization in 1987.

Transportation Museum Holdings

The Museum's total present holdings amount to about 240,000 objects. The permanent display in the indoor gallery is mainly technical objects, such as actual railway rolling stock, automobiles, and aeroplanes, as well as machinery, appliances, and models, 70% of which are railway related. The Museum's collection of stored materials include *nishiki-e* (colour wood-block prints) depicting railways and other artworks, crafts, maps, travel guides, drawings, documents, postcards, tickets, uniforms, timetables, microfilms, books, and photographs. Historical materials account for about 99% of the total holdings, but they are not well known by the public. These historical materials include archives from the start of the construction of Japanese railways until the 1890s. They are key official documents about railways in Japan and include manuscripts of speeches written by Kinmochi Saionji (1849–1940), who was Prime Minister at the 1906–07 nationalization of the main private railways. These are designated railway monuments, which I will refer to later. In addition, the Museum houses the historic Iwasaki and Watanabe photographic collections of railways around Japan in the early 20th century, which are an important part of railway heritage. Clearly, the Museum's holdings cover a wide range of objects and transportation-related materials, ranging from steam locomotives to railway tickets, but the rest of this article focuses only on railway vehicles.



A train arriving at Tokyo's Shimbashi terminal

(Transportation Museum)

Conservation of Japanese Railway Heritage

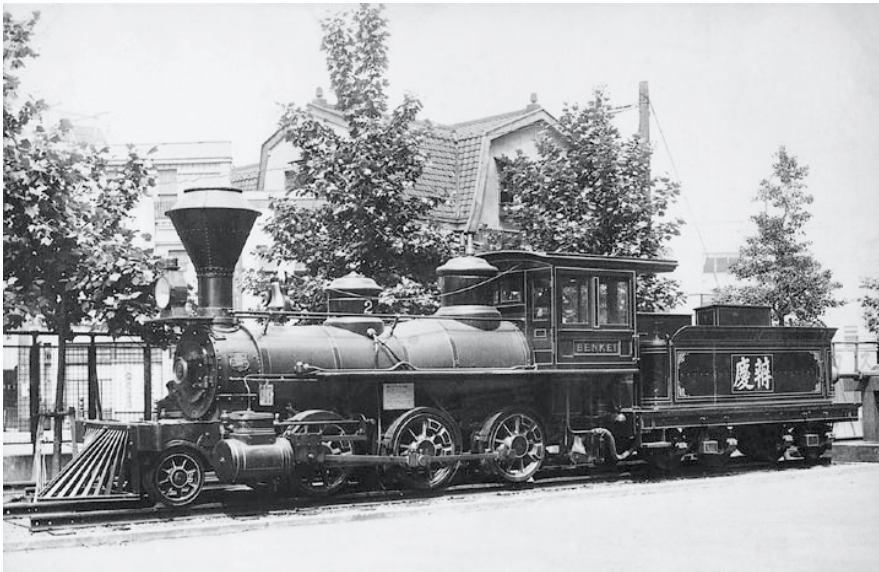
Japan's first railway opened in 1872. Conservation of railway heritage in Japan before the opening of the first Railway Museum focused mainly on preservation of the vestiges of visits by the Meiji Emperor (1852–1912), such as carriages he rode in and places he visited. Passenger carriages, locomotives, and other objects used for the Emperor's tours to various parts of the country as well as at the formal opening ceremony of Japan's first railway were the first items to be preserved. Imperial carriages, the steam locomotive *Yoshitsune* and the passenger carriage *Kaitakushi* (the car for the Head of the Hokkaido Development Project) were also included. Similarly, the original Shimbashi Station building—the birthplace of Japan's railways—was also regarded as something of a sacred place. None of these items were preserved or protected either for cultural purposes or out of recognition that they were important railway artifacts or sites, because such practices were not part of institutional activities in those days. However, such activities turned out to be a primary contributing factor in conserving the railway heritage of the early Meiji Period (1868–1912). The locomotives that hauled the Imperial

Trains have been given due respect even in recent years, explaining why they continue to be conserved.

Opening of Railway Museum

As I mentioned earlier, preparations for establishing the Railway Museum started in 1911 and the Museum finally opened in 1921. Its purpose then was to collect, conserve, and display railway-related materials, fostering education of railway workers, and at the same time spreading railway knowledge to the general public. As such, it was the pioneer in and the nucleus of the conservation of the railway heritage in Japan. Materials were collected through the nationwide railway network. The Museum's display policy was like a science museum; many of the objects were displayed in working condition or so that visitors could touch them. Actual locomotives, passenger carriages, and other vehicles were also displayed using elevated tracks.

The 1923 Great Kanto Earthquake caused great damage to the railway heritage too and many of the collections were destroyed by fire. The original Shimbashi Station building, which by then had become part of Shiodome Station Freight Yard, was burned to the ground along with Yokohama Station building and Ueno Station building opened in 1833.



Restored *Benkei*, American-built locomotive used in Hokkaido (Transportation Museum)



Locomotive *Benkei* Today (Transportation Museum)



Mallet-type locomotive (Transportation Museum)

However, almost all the earlier-mentioned railway archives were rescued by railway employees of the time. The earthquake had repercussions on a steam locomotive claimed to be *Yoshitsune* that was being dispatched from Hokkaido to the Railway Museum for conservation. It was forced to wait a long time at Kuroiso Station yard in Tochigi Prefecture due to confusion after the earthquake. Subsequent investigation showed it to be *Benkei*, another old locomotive of the same type and it was finally brought to

the Museum for conservation in 1940. Both *Yoshitsune* and *Benkei* are American-built tender locomotives first used in Hokkaido in 1880. Following the earthquake, the Museum resumed collecting materials; a German-built Mallet-type Class 9850 locomotive designed especially for running on steep grades was put on display in 1927 with part of it cut open to show the internal structure. Then the Museum moved to its present location in 1936.

Conservation of Locomotive No. 1 (Vulcan Foundry)

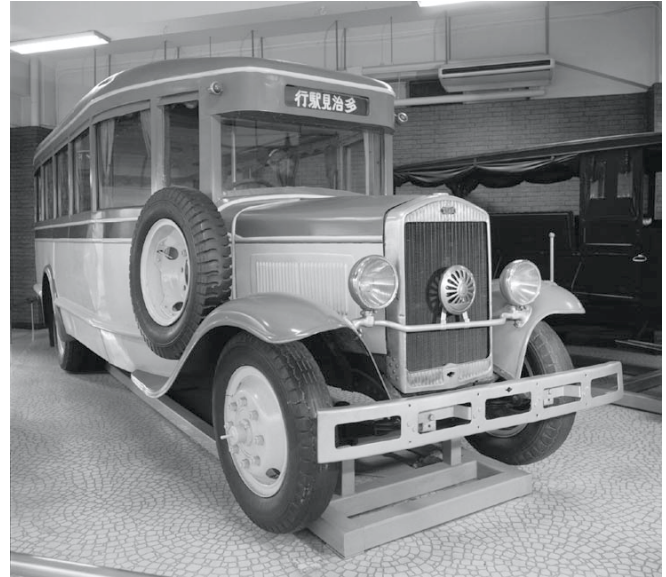
Conservation of Locomotive No. 1 was a major event around the time that the museum moved. Tokyo Nichi Nichi Newspapers (now Mainichi Newspapers) reporter Mr Kaizo Aoki first proposed conserving Locomotive No. 1, which was the first of the 10 locomotives imported in 1871 from Great Britain for the opening of Japan's first railway. It had already been sold in 1911 to the Shimabara Railway in Kyushu but negotiations to repurchase it as a railway artifact when the Railway Museum first opened were in vain. In a last-ditch effort to assure that this important locomotive in Japanese railway history was conserved, the government railways offered to exchange it for another modern locomotive, an offer that met with Shimabara Railway's ready consent. Consequently, Locomotive No. 1 returned to the government railways in 1930. It was first kept at the Omiya Works but was displayed in the Railway Museum's new building in 1936. This story later became part of the children's novel *Kikansha Yaemon* (Steam Locomotive Yaemon) by Hiroyuki Agawa.

The original Imperial Carriage No. 1, which is the oldest existing passenger carriage in Japan, and Imperial Carriage No. 2 were also acquired and displayed then. Around this time, investigations in Shiodome Station Freight Yard relocated Mile Marker Zero, indicating the start of Japan's first railway at the end of the old Shimbashi Station platform that had barely survived. A monument marking the site as the Origin of Japan's Railways was erected in 1936. The exact point is now marked in the rebuilt Old Shimbashi Station museum (see *JRTR* 35, pp. 73-75) but the original monument is removed. In 1938, the government railways' bus No. 1 was conserved and displayed in the Museum. The government railways started bus services in Aichi Prefecture in 1930 when it was called the Ministry-



Locomotive No. 1

(Transportation Museum)



Government Railways' Bus No. 1

(Transportation Museum)

run automobile. Self-sufficient domestic manufacturing was government policy in these prewar days and the government railways' first bus was conserved against such a background. As mentioned earlier, the American-built 2-6-0 tender locomotive *Benkei* was conserved in 1940, followed by *Zenko* in 1942. *Zenko* was the first locomotive used for construction work by Nippon Railway, the company that built today's Tohoku main line, Takasaki Line, Yamanote Line, and other lines. It was built by Manning

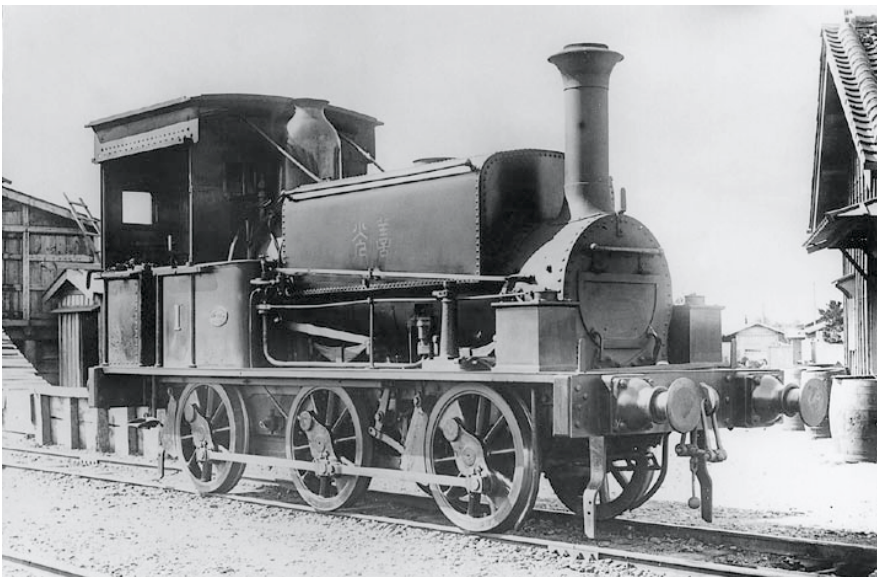
Wardle in Great Britain in 1881 and landed from a ship near Zenko Temple in Kawaguchi City, Saitama Prefecture, from where it took its name.

Losses from WWII

At the 1941 outbreak of the Pacific theatre of WWII, a number of objects were delivered to the government and melted down for reuse in armaments. They included classic locomotives such as Japan's first tender locomotive No. 5000 and a Class 3950 Abt-system locomotive,

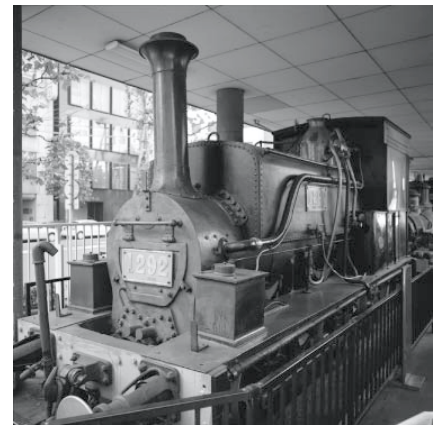
as well as a bronze statue of Masaru Inoue (1843–1910), former Head of the Railway Directorate and known as the 'father of Japanese railways.' The red-brick Tokyo Station building went up in flames in an air raid in 1945, completely destroying its interior. Japan's first electric tramcar, which had been preserved in a shed belonging to the Tokyo Metropolitan Government Transport Bureau was also lost to fire. It had run in the grounds of the Third Industrial Exposition held in Ueno Park in 1890.

However, the Imperial carriages had been moved to several different safe places, and the railway archives had also been sent to the Otsuki Track Maintenance Depot in Yamanashi Prefecture where they were



Locomotive *Zenko*

(Transportation Museum)



Locomotive *Zenko* today

(Transportation Museum)



Special passenger carriage of *Kaitakushi*

(Transportation Museum)

saved from damage. The Railway Museum building and its collections remained intact, but two Imperial carriages suffered considerable damage on their outside sheathing due to moisture filling the Museum building while it was closed. On a sidetrack, Locomotive No. 7, which was one of the first 10 locomotives imported to Japan, was dispatched to Taiwan before WWII and is now conserved in a Taipei park.

After the Railway Museum reopened in 1946 as the Museum of Transportation Culture, passenger carriage *Kaitakushi* that used to run in Hokkaido were conserved in 1948. They had been sent to Tokyo in 1923 as objects for the Railway Museum when *Benkei* was dispatched to Tokyo, but were left unattended and stored in the Imperial carriage shed at the government railways' Oi Works for many years. When a scrapping order was issued after the war's end, they were resurveyed and found to be valuable.

Designation of Railway Monuments

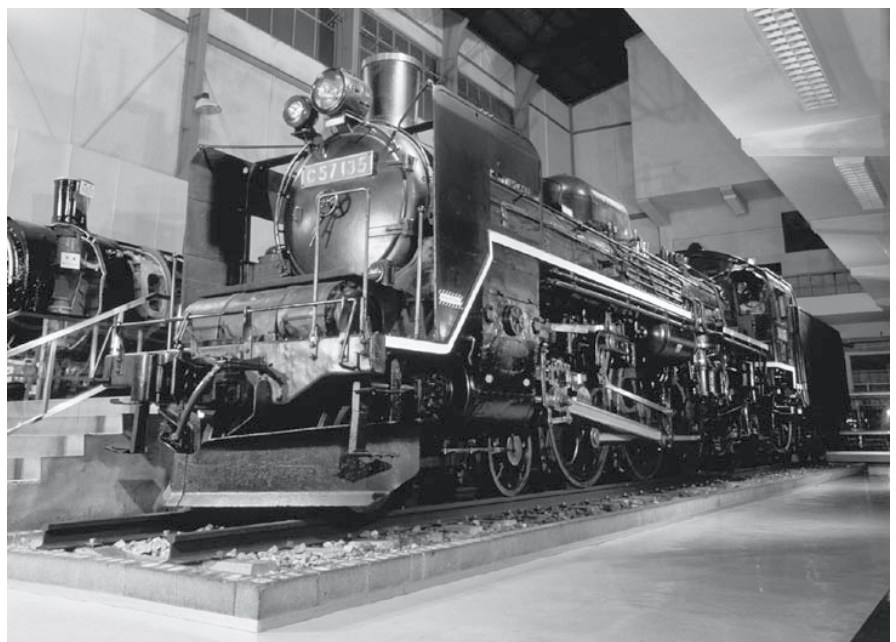
In 1958, JNR formulated the Regulations Concerning the Protection of Railway Monuments by which head office would designate important railway-related objects and sites as railway monuments

solely from a nationwide perspective. To qualify as such monuments, the objects must have great historical and cultural value in the history of railway development in Japan or must be indispensable to understanding the changes in the Japanese railway system and related institutions, or must be sites that are closely linked to railways in Japan. Five objects, including Locomotive No. 1 and Mile Marker Zero

at Shiodome, were designated first with several pieces following every subsequent year. These regulations do not carry the force of law, but are Japan's first public nationwide system for conserving railway heritage. The location of Mile Marker Zero was designated by the government 7 years later in 1965 as a historic site. The railway quasi-monument system was also introduced in 1963 to allow designation at a regional level. The railway monument system has been accepted by every company in the JR group after the JNR privatization.

Following JNR's example, Tobu Railway Co., Ltd., a private railway company in the Kanto region, formulated Regulations Concerning the Protection of Monuments in 1963 and began designating company-related railway heritage as monuments. Chiba Prefecture designated three steam locomotives of Kominato Railway as prefectural cultural property in 1980.

The 90th anniversary project commemorating the opening of Japan's first railway was in 1962. As a main pillar



C57135 Locomotive

(Transportation Museum)



Locomotive No. 1 today (Transportation Museum)



Tokaido Shinkansen Series 0 (right) and D51426 SL exhibited in front yard (Transportation Museum)

of this project, JNR established the Modern Transportation Museum in Osaka, Ome Railway Park in Ome City, Tokyo, and Hokkaido Railway Memorial Hall in Otaru City, Hokkaido—all facilities for conserving railway heritage.

Steam locomotive boom and conservation efforts

With JNR's complete abolition of steam locomotives (SLs) through the early 1970s as part of its traction modernization programme, an SL boom started nationwide with loud cries for SL conservation. JNR had already been thinking about constructing facilities for these purposes since around 1960. After the planning and preparatory stages, JNR opened the Umekoji Steam Locomotive Museum in Kyoto in 1972 to mark the centennial of Japan's railways and started conserving locomotives in mainly working condition. In addition, many local public bodies voiced their desire to conserve steam locomotives in their parks and public facilities, resulting in statically conserved SLs at various places.

In May 1976, the Transportation Museum began to conserve and display the class C57 Locomotive No. 135 as the last SL in actual service in Japan after it had hauled its final passenger carriages in Hokkaido in December 1975.

In addition to the JNR-related museums, Oigawa Railway started running SLs on a commercial basis, taking the lead in conserving them in working condition.

Some tram companies, including Hiroshima Dentetsu in Hiroshima Prefecture, purchased out-of-service trams from other companies and operated them under the 'Moving Transportation Museum' catchphrase, thereby accomplishing the double objective of conserving old trams in working condition, while simultaneously seeking commercial profit. There was also an increase in the number of private railway companies establishing their own museums based on discontinued railway facilities. Good examples are The Museum of Electric Trains and Buses of Tokyu Corp., the Subway Museum, the Tobu Museum of Tobu Railway Co., Ltd., the Igasa Railway Museum, and the Zenkoji Railway Museum.

Attempts at conserving railways in working condition also spread among interested people who mounted campaigns to buy some sections of discontinued lines or old vehicles for conservation or to recruit volunteers for expanded conservation activities, including conservation of railways in working condition. In 1991, the Japan National Trust formed the Railway Conservation Society of Japan in cooperation with other groups and those railway companies conserving railway vehicles in working condition. In addition, the Japan Railfan Club, the Society of Railway History of Japan, the Society of Industrial Archaeology of Japan, the Japan Society of Mechanical

Engineers, and other railway-related organizations and societies started campaigns to conserve railway heritage as a whole, including not just rolling stock but also documentary records and civil engineering structures.

Modern industrial heritage as cultural property

In the wake of such ongoing movements, the government reviewed its cultural property policy to focus more attention on the value of modern industrial heritage. As a result, JR Kyushu's Mojiko Station was designated as an important cultural property. This was the first designation of a station building still in actual use and was an epoch-making event for railway heritage and the government's cultural property administration. Subsequently, the old brick Usui Viaduct on the Shin'etsu Line was also designated.

Then, Locomotive No. 1 conserved by the Transportation Museum was designated as an important cultural property in 1997. This was the first designation of a modern historical object. Subsequently, facilities and mechanisms still in use, which inevitably tend to lose their original shapes and integrity, also came to be designated as important cultural property at the government level. A Cultural Properties Registration System was also started and the old Hagi Station building in Yamaguchi Prefecture was the first site registered under this system.

Present Conservation of Railway Heritage and Problems

In addition to the cultural properties designated by the government and local public bodies, the current total number of railway monuments and quasi-railway monuments is 35 and 49, respectively. The Museum has 12 railway monuments and one quasi-railway monument. In addition, there are many other railway objects and sites at various places including those conserved at Tobu Museum, Sakuma Railway Park, Meitetsu Museum of Nagoya Railroad, other railway company museums, Otaru Transportation Museum, the Museum of Transportation Science and Technology in Kita Kyushu City, other museums established by local public bodies. There are also properties conserved by companies, organizations, and parks. Of course, many others are left without adequate protection. Consequently, we have a great treasury of railway artifacts and sites across the country, but their conservation condition varies greatly.

Condition of conservation vehicles

The general condition of railway vehicles conserved indoors at the Transportation Museum is quite good. Dusting is conducted several times each year. When possible, driving wheels and rods are left unpainted to expose their luster and provide a powerful impression. However, since they are often touched by visitors and are consequently prone to rust, descaling and lubricating are done once every 1 to 2 months. Anti-corrosive treatments are also used when possible to protect invisible parts such as smoke tubes in locomotives and the inside of the water tanks in coal tenders.

However, the vehicles exhibited outside are covered only by a roof and are exposed to harm from wind, rain, and dust. Consequently, rusting, peeling paint,

and discolouring show up, so coatings are renewed once every 5 to 10 years along with minor restoration treatments. We have no special staff engaged exclusively in lubrication, cleaning, and other daily maintenance and care of vehicles. The Museum building itself is already more than 60-years old, and with limited overall space, there is no room for exhibiting more of the larger objects, explaining why only part of a Series 0 shinkansen (Bullet Train) is exhibited in the front yard.

Since many objects are exposed to visitors, they sometimes suffer intentional damage or 'mischief,' which often results in or leads to breakage or loss of parts. Therefore, preventive measures and monitoring are a great problem. For this reason, we are forced to put some objects under glass. Occasionally, objects are mistaken for playthings and treated roughly, resulting in their becoming damaged more quickly.

When restoring or repairing objects, we first investigate the objects and collect data on them and then determine the range and policy for their repair. Reference data and literature, such as various printed data, articles, drawings, and photographs relating to their mechanisms, operation methods, and manufacturing methods are indispensable and important for this purpose. When necessary, we seek cooperation from specialists and researchers outside the Museum.

Restoration always poses the difficult question of how much should be done. For example, Locomotive No. 1 is different from its original form due to modifications. Some opinions call for restoration to the original form, but this involves a risk of further loss of original parts about which the Museum cannot make decisions lightly. For example, the locomotive *Yoshitsune*, which is now conserved at the Modern Transportation Museum, was originally a tender locomotive but was remodelled into a

tank locomotive during use. It was then restored by JNR to working condition in 1952 when a considerable number of parts were replaced with new ones.

Actual restoration and repairs are entrusted to professionals including retired railway employees. Needless to say, Museum staff members are also on-site site to watch the work. However, since the railway vehicles in our holdings were all fixed or well repaired in JNR workshops before they were housed in the Museum, large-scale restoration is not often conducted by the Museum. Nevertheless, the outside sheathing of the Imperial carriages and passenger carriages of *Kaitakushi* have been restored once on a comparatively large scale to their original state. Unfortunately, the interior panels and silk fabrics of the sofas in both of Imperial carriages have deteriorated considerably, but cannot be restored because of the extremely high cost, which is estimated at far more than ¥100 million (US\$1 = ¥115).

An area where we are failing is in transferring old skills to the new generation. We need both people familiar with conservation and restoration techniques as well as people who are versed in the mechanisms and driving principles of machines and vehicles or in their operation techniques, but the number of such skilled technicians has decreased in all these fields. Many of the materials used for the old stock are also difficult to obtain because they are no longer manufactured. For example, green seat cloth is now very scarce.

The Museum also cooperates from time-to-time with repairs and restoration of vehicles conserved at other museums or companies, by providing necessary records and information.

The Railway Monument System

The JNR/JR Railway Monument System is the first of its kind for conserving



Imperial Carriage No. 1

(Transportation Museum)



Imperial Carriage No. 2

(Transportation Museum)

railway heritage, but its designation standard has not been clear in all cases. A major problem is that since quasi-railway monuments can be designated at a local branch level, inconsistency and imbalance has arisen between railway monuments, quasi-railway monuments, and railway heritage that has not been designated. A simple example is the earlier-mentioned Class 9850 Mallet locomotive conserved at the Transportation Museum. It was manufactured in 1912 and, although partly cut open, is the only existing Mallet-type locomotive in Japan, but it has not been designated. On the other hand, some of the mass-produced locomotives from the Showa Period (1926–89) are designated quasi-railway monuments. There is also a case in which a locomotive designated as a quasi-railway monument was placed under the management of an external organization and consequently ceased to be a designated object. We should revise the relationship between these two systems to something like that between designated cultural properties and registered cultural properties.

Another example of inconsistency in the conservation standard is railway forests. Two railway forests are designated, but trees have been felled to build a national highway through them. There is also a question of whether the designation of these forests includes both the land and trees, or only the land. Since this is not clear, people in charge of the forests don't know what to do with old trees—should they be replanted with new trees or not? In addition, there is no budget for protecting railway monuments. In fact, expenses are paid by raising funds somehow at the respective sites when necessary. There has been no designation of railway monuments since 1972, and only a few quasi-railway monuments have been designated.

I am fully aware that there are questions and criticisms about the ambiguity of the railway monuments selection standard. I also question some points of the standard, but wish to positively consider that those involved in formulating the railway monument system had in mind the idea of creating a precedent by keeping the range of objects wide and diversified in the hope that the system will last long.

Problems of current system of railway heritage protection

A major problem with the conservation of railway objects in general is that selection priority tends to be given to rolling stock. Locomotives are an especially good example and a large number of SLs were selected for conservation during the SL boom mentioned earlier. However, we have seen many cases where the care of these conserved SLs has been neglected as the boom subsided. Among rolling stock, passenger carriages and freight wagons have less chance of conservation, probably due to their less distinctive character. The age balance of conserved vehicles is poor as well, with some period blanks. Obviously rolling stock from the Showa Period outnumbers stock from previous periods, but the number of pieces from the late Meiji Period to the early Taisho Period (1912–26) is much smaller than expected. Conserved railway objects other than vehicles, as well as conserved railway-related civil engineering structures are also few in number. Even the Old Shimbashi Station site at Shiodome, which is undoubtedly a first-



Imperial carriage during restoration

(Transportation Museum)



Interior of First Imperial Carriage No. 1
(Transportation Museum)

rate historic site, is conserved only in part. The problems with the conservation system overlap the present state of the Transportation Museum, but I would like to reiterate them here. It seems that public awareness of conservation of modern cultural heritage is still backward in Japan where there is a tendency to consider pre-modern objects and works more important than modern and contemporary ones. In particular, scientific and technological objects tend to receive much less attention than they deserve. However, designation of modern objects under the Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties is now possible, and the situation has improved considerably. Funds are insufficient as a whole for conservation of cultural property. As I have mentioned, modern objects are not fully recognized as cultural property because they are comparatively new. As a result, it is often difficult to appropriate funds for conservation expenses or to secure conservation space due to land problems. In fact, many railway objects have been scrapped, discarded, or lost by

ruin when swimming against the tide of economic priority. Perhaps this can be ascribed partly to the general trend to very quick renewal of things arising from the accelerated progress of science and technology. But this is exactly why we should pay sufficient attention even to recent railway objects, including those from the current Heisei Period (1989-). On a similar vein, almost no tax exemptions are granted to private museums and conservation activities. There have even been cases where donated objects are taxed and museum collections and fixed assets are also taxed. For this reason, donations or collections sometime decline and some objects are discarded rather than being conserved. Now that the Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties itself has been improved considerably, radical amendment of the tax system is required to promote protection of our cultural heritage. I would like to suggest that donations to registered museums or institutions equivalent to museums be exempted from taxation just as designated

cultural properties and that expenses for conservation of cultural properties be made tax deductible.

From the technical viewpoint, transmission of conservation and restoration techniques is important, both in railway heritage and other fields. Many old machines and manufacturing techniques have been lost, and many previous raw materials and parts are now unavailable due to suspension of their production. For example, I am told that Japan now has only one driving wheel truing machine for locomotives. The outside sheathings of the Imperial carriages are lacquered, but now there is no *urushi* lacquer craftsman in the railway world. Facilities for training technicians and conserving techniques and machines are required for transferring techniques just as in the case of intangible cultural properties. In this sense, we really appreciate what the Nippon Institute of Technology has been doing but funds are necessary for these purposes too. Transfer of operating techniques is also necessary to keep objects in working condition. Unlike in foreign countries, due to severe health and safety regulations in Japan, it is difficult for citizen volunteers to participate in operation of vehicles and other conservation activities. This is

probably one reason hindering the progress of citizens' participation in conservation of railway heritage.

Simply conserving an object is not the completion of conservation but is the start of conservation. Long-term daily maintenance and regular care are necessary. There are cases in which locomotives, after having been used for other purposes—in one instance as a nursery school library—have been damaged because of incomplete maintenance to be scrapped finally. In another case, a railway was conserved in working condition, but was discontinued due to poor business performance. This shows that everything can go well while the business and conservation are compatible, but there is a risk of conservation being suspended when the business fails to pay. Corporate philanthropy was once common among industrial circles, but has died down. So can we be secure in relying just on public bodies? Even already started conservation plans are sometimes changed or suspended when the heads of local public bodies change. For example, a plan in progress to build a railway museum in one city was abandoned when a new mayor was elected. Conservation of cultural heritage requires recognizing and continually supporting the importance of conservation activities, including that of museums.

Future Tasks and Conclusion

As we have seen, the problems in Japan involve various interrelated factors that are consequently difficult to solve. However, in the final count, it all seems to boil down to a matter of money. In my opinion, giving some kind of financial privileges to the conservation of cultural property would be a realistic and effective step towards a solution although this may be difficult in the present economic situation.

Making better use of existing systems, like the Railway Monument System, would also be rewarding.

I think the most fundamental and important force in conserving cultural heritage is creating a strong will 'to conserve.' Unfortunately, the situation surrounding the Transportation Museum is severe and our activities have been far from satisfactory, although we are making our best efforts to hand on our railway heritage to the next generation.

Recent Update

There have been several important changes since this article was first written in 1998.

The railway-related cultural asset designation has been updated and the government designated Imperial Carriage No. 1 and the oldest railway policy documents as important cultural properties in 2003. Both are also the railway monuments. Moreover, JR West's four quasi-railway-monument locomotives, including *Yoshitsune*, two other SLs, and a Class EF52 electric locomotive, were promoted to railway monuments in 2004.

At the local government level, the stock in the Kaya Steam Locomotive Square in Kyoto Prefecture was designated an important cultural property in 2004. In addition, the government railways' British-built No. 123 locomotive (1873, later Kaya Railway's No. 2 locomotive) was designated an important cultural property in 2005. Moreover, an old brick

warehouse at the JR Hokkaido Naebo Works and a steam engine of the Maruseppu Forest Railway were designated Hokkaido Heritage. The municipal government of Osaka City designated four tramcars and one subway carriage as the city's cultural properties in 2003.

In museum facilities, 1999 saw the establishment of the Usui Pass Railway Monument Park (Matsuida Town, Gunma Prefecture, see *JRTR* 21 p.2) to commemorate the closed Usui Pass section on the Shin'etsu Line, and the Kyushu Railway History Museum (Kita Kyushu City, Fukuoka Prefecture, see p. 105) opened in 2003. In addition, a full-size replica of the old Shimbashi Station, Tokyo's first railway terminal, was opened in 2003, exactly on the site of the remains, with an exhibition hall for railway history, although it is not a museum.

Conversely, some conserved stock has been scrapped under various circumstances, and the Museum of Transportation Science and Technology in Kita Kyushu City and the Otaru Transportation Memorial Hall have been closed or are scheduled to close. Finally—and perhaps most importantly—the Transportation Museum is scheduled to close in 2006 and will be reborn in late 2007 as the new railway museum in the old Omiya Yard in Saitama Prefecture. ■

Acknowledgment

Part of this article was originally published in Japanese and English in *Conservation of Industrial Collections*, a collection of articles presented at the International Symposium on Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Property in November 1998.



Michio Sato

Mr Sato is Senior Curator at the Transportation Museum. Joined the Transportation Museum after graduating in history from Chuo University in 1971. He obtained degree for curator in 1974. He is author of *Tetsudo monogatari—Hajimete kasha ni notta ano hi* (Railway Story—First Train Ride) published by Kawade Shobo Shinsha and *Nihonshi shohyakkwa—Kotsu* (Japanese History Mini Encyclopedia—Transportation) published by Tokyo Do Shuppan.