

Railway Heritage in Japan (part 2)

Station buildings

Mojiko (Moji Port) Station (top) was opened in 1914 as Moji Station at the north end of the Kagoshima main line. It is located just opposite the Moji Port wharf from where ferries linked the rail networks of Kyushu and the main island of Honshu until the undersea Kammon Tunnel was opened in 1942. The tunnel's south portal was built at the next station of Dairi, which then became Moji Station. Consequently, the former Moji Station became Mojiko Station and survived the war and noisy postwar economic growth when the entire harbour area stagnated due to the postwar decline in trade with the Korean peninsula and China. It was designated as an important cultural property in 1988.

Muroran Station was first opened in 1897 by the Hokkaido Coalmine and Railway. Muroran has a good natural harbour where coals were shipped to Honshu. The railway was nationalized in 1906 and the government railways built a new station in 1912 that has survived to the present day. In 1997, JR Hokkaido built a new station on a new site, and the old Muroran Station (middle) was transferred to the city, which refurbished it as a tourist information centre and public hall. It became a registered cultural property in 1999.

Hagi Station (bottom right) building on the San'in main line became a registered cultural property in 1994. Hagi was the capital of the powerful former Choshu fief where various prominent figures in the Meiji Restoration (1868) and subsequent modern government were born. The station was built in 1925 when the San'in main line reached the city. The building now belongs to the city, which restored it as a small museum. One exhibition hall (bottom left) is dedicated to Masaru Inoue (1843–1910), one of five Choshu samurai who ignored restrictions on overseas travel by the Tokugawa government and stowed away on a vessel to Britain in 1863. Inoue studied railway engineering at University College in London and later became Head of the Railway Directorate in 1871.



(JR Kyushu)



(Muroran Tourism Association)



(T. Tomiyama)



(T. Tomiyama)

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Station buildings (continued)

Izumo Taishamae Station (top) of the private Ichibata Electric Railroad is a small but unique concrete building serving as the railway's western terminal and gateway to the famous Izumo Taisha Shinto shrine (middle right). It was completed in 1930 with a design strongly influenced by the avant-garde architecture of Europe. It has been a registered cultural property since 1996. By contrast, the former JNR/JR West Taisha Station (middle left) built in 1924 as the terminal of the 7.5-km Taisha Line is a wooden structure in traditional Japanese style. The line was closed in 1990 but the building has been preserved by Shimane Prefecture as a designated monument.



(Ichibata Electric Railroad)

Hieizan Railway Company is a subsidiary of Keihan Electric Railway, a major private railway linking Osaka and Kyoto. It runs a 2-km funicular from Sakamoto (on Lake Biwa) to the top of Mt Hiei overlooking the city of Kyoto and known as the seat of the famous Enryakuji Buddhist temple. The lower terminal at Sakamoto (bottom right) is a wooden building and the top terminal at Enryakuji (bottom left) is a concrete building. Both were completed in 1927 and are still in use. They have been registered cultural properties since 1997.



(Taisha Town Hall)



(Ichibata Electric Railroad)



(Hieizan Railway)



(Hieizan Railway)