



## Japanese Railway Scenery 31

Series *Kiha* 47 diesel railcar running near Okoba Station on JR Kyushu's Hisatsu Line. The 124.2-km line with steep gradients and 21 tunnels runs through scenic mountain areas between Kagoshima and Kumamoto prefectures. Here at Okoba, the line negotiates the most difficult slope helped by a combined switchback and loop alignments. First opened as a part of Kagoshima main line in 1909, the Yatsushiro–Hitoyoshi–Kagoshima section was renamed Hisatsu Line in 1927 when the coastal route via Sendai was completed. A parallel expressway opened in 1995 hit the line severely that had been already suffering from low traffic. (Photo: M. Mashima Photo Office)

EAST JAPAN RAILWAY  
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¥ 1,000