

Kyushu Railway History Museum

A Rail Fan's Dream

The former Kyushu Railway head office is now a museum that combines interactive exhibits with objects from the history of railroad development. The exhibits include decommissioned locomotives and a professional-grade train-conducting simulator.

On the Rails

The museum's entrance is at the original location of Moji Station, which was later relocated and renamed "Mojikō Station." It is also the location of the zero mile marker, the point from which all track distances on the island of Kyushu were measured. This outside area combines a locomotive exhibit with a miniature railway where children can get behind the controls of miniaturized trains that travel along 130 meters of track.

A series of decommissioned locomotives and train cars are displayed along tracks near the entrance. The lineup begins with an SL 9600 steam locomotive, one of the first to be mass-produced domestically, that hauled freight across Kyushu from the 1920s until the 1970s. Farther down is an EF10 35, the first locomotive to pass through the Kanmon Tunnel. Other vehicles on the track include a diesel locomotive (Kiha 07 41) and a sleeper car (Kuhane 581-8) that was in use until the year 2000.

Brick Patterns

The building, which dates to 1891, was built with an unusual mixture of bricklaying patterns. The lower brickwork is laid in what is called "English bond," with alternating layers of end-to-end and side-by-side bricks. Higher up, the bricks are Flemish bond, laid short-long-short in offset layers. The British style, which is more resistant to earthquakes, came to be favored in Japan.

Interactive History

Some of the museum's exhibits are interactive. Just past the ticket desk is a passenger car from 1909 with a clerestory roof. A route leads through the car and between its anachronistic tatami seats and incandescent lamps. Nearby is one of the museum's most popular exhibits: a driving simulator that uses a real control panel from a Class 811 train. Visitors can test their train-operating skills against one of three difficulty levels.

The first floor also has a large model railway based on Kyushu and its actual trains, with miniature stations modeled on Mojikō and Hakata, among others.

Reflections of a Changing Industry

Change is a common theme of the exhibits, as seen in the second floor's wall-length timeline and exhibits on the different eras of rail technology. These exhibits show the transition from telegraphs to telephones, changes to the ticket designs, and changes in the uniforms worn by conductors. One case shows the many styles of boxed lunches served on trains and at stations around Kyushu over the years. The second floor also has a space for temporary exhibitions and a small library of books, newspapers, and other documents relating to rail transport. (The book collection is open only on holidays and weekends.)