

# The JITI Journal

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## Welcome

*The JITI Journal is a bimonthly publication of the Japan International Transport Institute, USA (JITI), in which JITI shares information on transportation developments in Japan and elsewhere, as well as recent JITI programs. As a supplement to our regular events, we hope that the Journal likewise serves as a resource for the transportation community.*

In this issue, JITI staff member Yoshitaka Araki reports on the inaugural Hokkaido Shinkansen line and the planned operation for the area. Additionally, JITI staff member Sarah Fraser brings us a short article on the Kamata Ryokan, which she visited during her time in Japan.

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## JITI Events

**UPCOMING:** [JITI Railway Workshop 2016: Initiatives Targeting On-Time Departures for Metro Areas](#)

One of the more important aspects in creating a trusted and useful public rail transportation system is the punctuality and reliability of the system. On-schedule departures and arrivals are a universal theme from an operations control perspective, and both the U.S. and Japan deal with this aspect of their rail systems on a daily basis.

For this workshop, JITI has invited representatives from Tokyo Metro Co., Ltd to discuss the various initiatives and methods they use to create an on-time and reliable metro service, as well as representatives from the MTA New York City Transit to hear about new initiatives to create a more punctual schedule for their train systems. In the workshop, they will discuss how to make safer, on time, and more trusted operations of rails a reality, aided by the use of real examples such as methods and procedures for restoring rail service after unforeseen events or delays. [Click here](#) to register for this event.

## Quick Links

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## January 29th: Metro Workshop 2016

On Friday, January 29, JITI will host a workshop focused on metro and issues metros face:

### ***"Initiatives Targeting On-Time Departures for Metro Areas"***

The Four Seasons, Washington D.C.

Time: 12:30 - 3:30 p.m.

The event will feature speakers from the NY MTA and Tokyo Metro.

You may register for this event [here](#).

## Our Sponsor



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## UPCOMING: [JITI Drone Seminar 2016: Strategies on Drone Application in Transportation](#)

To be held at the Ritz-Carlton, Washington D.C. on March 3rd, more information to follow soon.

## PAST: [JITI Aviation Seminar 2015: Future Challenges of Open Skies Agreements](#)

On October 9th, JITI hosted a seminar at the Willard International in which audience members heard from aviation industry experts from the United States and Japan. The speakers explored future challenges of open skies agreements and held a panel discussion. [Click here](#) for an overview and presentation materials.

## Inauguration of Hokkaido Shinkansen and "Partial" Operation

by Yoshitaka Araki

### ◆ Introducing A New Route for the Hokkaido Shinkansen



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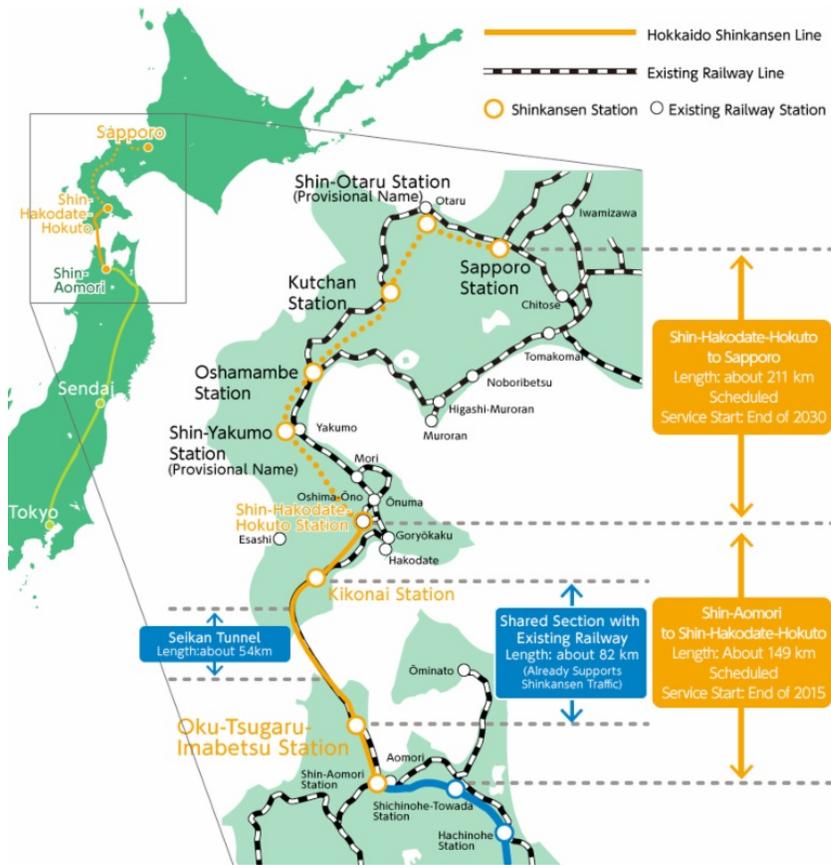
On March 26th 2016, the Hokkaido Railway Company will launch the Hokkaido Shinkansen, which connects Shin-Aomori and Shin-Hakodate-Hokuto station.

The Tohoku Shinkansen began its operation in 2010 and extended the network of shinkansen to Shin-Aomori Station, which is the northernmost station in Honshu. Honshu is the Japanese name for the mainland of Japan from Tokyo northwards.

Once complete, the Hokkaido Shinkansen will connect Shin-Aomori to Sapporo, a major city in Hokkaido, and span over approximately 360 kilometers. The initial operation, however, will only cover around 150 kilometers, extending to Shin-Hakodate-Hokuto, which is in the southern region of Hokkaido.

The entire route is expected to become operable in the spring of 2031. The establishment of this line will make it the first shinkansen to service Hokkaido.

### ◆ Characteristics of Hokkaido Shinkansen: The Seikan Tunnel



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During this initial operation period, one of the most notable aspects of the Hokkaido Shinkansen will be the Seikan Tunnel.

This tunnel became operable in March 1988, with a construction design that could accommodate the services of shinkansen in mind. It has been providing a link between Honshu and Hokkaido, beneath the Tsugaru Strait, an area which constitutes a large portion of the initial service route measuring nearly 54 kilometers.

As railway tracks for local trains, the Seikan Tunnel plays a significant role in freight transportation to and from Honshu and Hokkaido, as well as in the communication infrastructure through fiber-optic cable installation.

This tunnel maintains services for conventional local trains, along with the planned shinkansen operation. This required the installation of dual gauges; as well series of close testing for shinkansen to ensure the shinkansen could pass by the conventional trains and freight trains.

#### ◆ Severe Climate and Disaster Preparation

Severe weather and natural disasters are the major issues for railways in Japan, both the shinkansen and other conventional trains.

With regards to earthquakes; in addition to the seismic equipment found in all stations, tracks, and tunnels; seismic detection systems and alarm systems have been installed, as well as rail deviation prevention stoppers and overturning prevention devices, in order to ensure the safety of all operating trains.

These systems are implemented in the existing shinkansen routes and prevented derailments of operational trains during the 2011 Tohoku Disaster.

In addition, due to the Hokkaido Shinkansen being located in the northernmost area of Japan, various systems will be implemented to keep trains operable during severe winter weather. Although Tohoku Railways are likely to be well-prepared for snow, near-arctic level of preparation and winter systems may be required in Hokkaido.

Some attempts have already been made at railway junctions to prevent system failures due to icing and snowdrifts by installing air-jet point snow blowers, as well as by covering the areas with snow shelters.

#### ◆Operation through Sapporo

By the spring of 2031, Hokkaido Shinkansen plans to start service to Sapporo, which is located in the center of Hokkaido. Once this route is completed, traveling from Tokyo to Sapporo will be able to be done within 5-hours.

Of course, airlines are likely to have a shorter travel time than the shinkansen. The Hokkaido Shinkansen, however, has a potential to hold a sufficient competitive edge once the Seikan Tunnel implements high-speed passing for the shinkansen. This is because of the lack of accessibility between the airport and Sapporo city, which adds another hour to travel time.

Growing number of tourists from overseas have been visiting Sapporo and Hakodate, suggesting that the linkage between these cities will substantially increase their attraction as tourist destinations. Also, the Hokkaido Shinkansen network has another well-known tourist destination, Otaru. Increased accessibility among these cities is expected to promote the tourism in these areas and, in turn, to stimulate the economy.

In sum, the expansion of the shinkansen network reaching Sapporo will lead to increased accessibility between Honshu and Hokkaido, and further stimulate the economic activities in the region.

#### ◆Conclusion

Inauguration of the Hokkaido Shinkansen is expected to invigorate the local economy in areas along the shinkansen route, as well as the entirety of Hokkaido.

However, there are unavoidable issues surrounding the facilities that are unique to Hokkaido and create challenges in the maintenance of the Hokkaido shinkansen. JR Hokkaido has been facing various operational challenges, even with their conventional trains, that have to be overcome.

In order to widely promote Hokkaido as one of the most popular tourist destinations JR Hokkaido, and also the national and municipal government, must make efforts focusing on the shinkansen, as well as the conventional railroad operations in the area.

**Kamata Ryokan**

*by Sarah Fraser*



Kamata Ryokan ( ) tucked away about two and a half hours South-West of Tokyo, remains one of my most vivid and fond memories of Japan. The ryokan, which means Japanese style inn, is historically important and housed many Japanese novelists and writers who escaped from the bustle of the cities to relax in its peaceful interior. The proprietress of Kamata Ryokan has worked hard to give the inn a relaxing and comfortable atmosphere of traditional Japanese style and aesthetics.



Natural gardens, private and shared onsen baths, tatami rooms, and traditional Japanese service all combine to make Kamata one of my favorite places I visited during the years I lived in Japan. Onsens are a treat anywhere in Japan, but the baths overlooking natural scenes, as well as private open-air baths made Kamata particularly memorable. The food served at Kamata Ryokan was absolutely delicious; expertly prepared Japanese food and fresh local ingredients were delightful, both for the eyes and the stomach.

Though a bit of a journey from central Tokyo, Kamata is well worth the trip for any traveler in Japan.

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look forward to providing you with the most up to date information on our organization and events.

*Thank you for reading the JITI Journal. Until the next issue, whatever your mode, travel safely!*

*The JITI Team*