

**RAILWAY  
TRANSPORTATION  
IN JAPAN**

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Railway Transportation in Japan by Riotaro Kodama

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**RIOTARO KODAMA, Ph. D.,**  
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## PREFACE.

THE present paper was prepared for the presentation to the Faculty of the University of Michigan for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. Considering the growing importance of the railway question in Japan and the absence of any systematic treatise on this particular question I have chosen the present subject.

As to the sources of information I owe much to the Annual Reports of the Railway Bureau in the Department of Communications of the Imperial Government, several legal documents relating to railways, the Life of Sir Harry Parkes by F. V. Dickens, Young Japan by J. B. Black, Special Consular Reports of the United States, etc. Several periodicals both at home and abroad have also rendered services, especially *Engineering*, (London), *Tokio Niche Niche* and *Jiji*. Besides, by means of personal communications I obtained assistance from many quarters.

Regarding to the future railway policy in Japan the reader will notice rather optimistic tone of my argument, while some improvements in various ways are suggested. I am conscious of this fact myself. Yet before coming to the final conclusion well-known authorities on the history and problems of railways abroad were often consulted; above all; A. B. Stickney: *The Railway Problem*; Professor A. T. Hadley: *Railroad Transportation*; J. S. Jeans: *Railway Problems*; C. F. Adams: *Railroads, their Origin and Problems*, and the Reports of the Interstate Commerce Commission have rendered greatest services in offering many suggestions to the writer.

I am under special obligations to Dr. Frank H. Dixon for reading the of manuscript and offering valuable suggestions and criticism, to Mr. F. Shimomura, formerly president of Tokio Post and Telegraph College, for kind encouragement and assistance in various ways. I am also indebted to Mr. U. Mochizuki, formerly member of the Railway Council, etc. Mr. T. Shirane of the Department of Home Affairs, Mr. S. Tabata of the Department of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Y. Ono of the Bank of Japan, and Mr. Romanzo C. Adams, a fellow student in the University of Michigan, all of whom helped me in many directions. My thanks are also due to the Kinshu Railway Company which kindly sent me its own reports covering several years since its establishment.

R. KODAMA.

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## CHAPTER I.

### General Remarks.

Before making any general remarks on Japanese Railroads, it may be allowable to examine primitive conditions of transportation in Japan, and then turn our attention to modern developments.

After the middle of the seventeenth century the well-known policy of exclusivism was rigidly carried out under the government of the Tokugawa family. The leaving of home to go abroad was strictly prohibited. All ships of more than fifty tons displacement were ordered to be destroyed. The building of a boat which had more than one mast was made illegal. Thus were the Japanese people prevented from navigating the open sea and so coming into contact with foreign nations. It is self-evident that these restrictions would result not only in stopping intercourse with other countries but would also hinder domestic trade, for Japan consists of several islands. The importance of water transportation in such a country in domestic trade, as well as foreign, cannot be overestimated. Yet the policy of exclusivism was continued until the middle of the present century.

When Commodore Perry, of the United States, went to Japan in the year 1853 the Tokugawa Government came to believe that it was not wise policy to continue the prohibition against the building of large ships and the restrictions were removed. A Russian ambassador who arrived after the American, had to build a new vessel in Japan, his warships being destroyed by a violent earthquake. The Tokugawa Government was deeply impressed by the design of the Russian schooner and determined to build ships of the Western construction. Soon afterwards the Government