

Loco Shed

Asia Pacific Heritage and
Tourist Rail Organisation



APHTRO

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Rail Heritage: social and historical background

(Kyoichi Oda, President)

I have visited rail heritage sites in more than thirty countries. This experience makes me realise that the state of railway heritage depends, of course, on the social and historical background of its country.

Some countries in Europe and North America joined the early development era of industrial revolution. The people in those countries probably understand industrial heritage and its value naturally. However, the history in most other countries is not that simple.

It seems there are roughly two types of social and historical background in such countries:

The first group comprises the countries which have a single ethnic group, single language, single culture and single religion. In these circumstances, people tend to have a strong view of their own culture and people's interest in ideas from abroad is inferior to their culture. Industrial heritage is precisely this.

The other group is the countries which have multi ethnic groups, multi languages, multi culture and multi religion. They do not suffer this disturbance so strongly. It is easier and more beneficial to progress with industrial heritage activities.

So, how can we make it in former countries? I cannot find any 'royal road' as an answer. Probably, there is no alternative but to persistently and patiently continue appealing to society. Twenties years ago, I told my relatives and colleagues what I was doing. Their typical reply was "Industrial heritage? Preservation railway? What's that?". Now the industrial and rail heritage are valued and activities become known little by little. We must keep on steadily and diligently in any situation.

Supporting members' projects

We are currently supporting the following projects:

- a. The inauguration event of the new Taipei Railway Museum in November 2027;
- b. Proposing TICCIH Congress in Indonesia and India;
- c. Steam Loco parts supply to Hawaiian Philippines Co.;
- d. Holding a Rail Heritage Trail Tour in Thailand and Taiwan;
- e. Holding photography tours in the Southern region of Jordan Hejaz Railways;
- f. New management at Rewari Steam Centre in India;
- g. Financial assistance for some delegates coming to our visit programme.

Conference Visit Programme 2025

(Naiyi Hsu, Vice President)

2025 APHTRO Conference was held on Nov. 28 to Dec.5 in Negros Island of Philippines and Thailand.

Part I: Hawaiian Sugar Company in Philippines



First part we visited the Hawaiian Phillippines Company (HPCO) in Negros Island on Nov. 28 and 29. Phillippines is an important sugar producing country. There are about 20 sugar factories in the whole country, and eight of them with the total production of 2.5 million tons sugar are in Negros Island. HPCO is the only place still using trains to carry sugarcane.



Many Philipino were recruited to Hawaii in the 19th century as planters or workers. In 1918 a Hawaiian company established a sugar mill in Negros Island, thus named Hawaiian Phillippines Company. At that time there were many lines to carry sugarcane and one line to carry product to harbor with total length of 56 km. While only 5 km is still in use. There were 7 steam locomotives used here. Two of them, #2 & #7, are still operable and #6 is under repairing. All these engines use bagasse as fuel from the very beginning and you will smell the scent from the engines when they operating. Almost all the sugarcanes are carried by trucks now with only a minimal portion by trains. But to speed up the unloading process in the mill, there is a device to transfer sugarcanes from trucks to sugarcane carts (bagos) which are pulled by a wire into the unloading point in the mill. All the procedures from harvesting, loading, unloading are made by people. But the total capacity of compressing sugarcanes is 7000 ton per day. The sugar season is from mid-October to mid-May or maybe postponed to June.



Visitors can book a charter train and ride on the special seats which is reformed from the coal tank of steam engine. During the sugar season, the charter train will go to the loading point to carry sugarcanes back to mill. On the way to the #7A loading station, train crosses the Malisbog River Bridge which is a road-rail bridge and an important access for local people.



And also will pass a junction where a branch line to another loading station. And if you are lucky, you may meet many children chasing after the train and enjoy a vintage train trip. We would like to thank all the staffs' reception. We had a very nice trip.

Part II: Thailand Railways

After visiting Phillippines, we moved to Bangkok Thailand on Dec. 1. The main target is the steam train on Dec.5 annually.



On Dec. 2 we made a test run by a chartered van to search the proper route and sites for taking photos. After a long discussion, we chose a point near Makkasan Station where we can see the train moving out of Makkasan Station as the starting point, and Klong Bang Phra Station as the 2nd point, then Chachoengsao Station the destination. On Dec. 5 we went to Hua Lamphong Station before 6am to catch steam locomotives going to the station and moved to the 1st point by metro and then just did as the route we searched on Dec.2. But we rode the steam train back from Chachoengsao. Train went smoothly without any front and rear impact, neither left and right shake. We enjoyed this train trip.



On Dec. 3 we went to the Mae Klong Line to see the train passing through crowded people alongside the market.



To go to Mae Klong from Bangkok, we needed to go by metro to Si Lom, walk to Sala Daeng to ride BTS (another train system in Bangkok) to Wongwian Yai, walk to State Railway Thailand (SRT) Wongwian Yai Station, take the SRT train to Maha Chai, change to a ferry to Ban Laem then another SRT train to the destination. It took totally 4 hours of the oneway trip. Some group tours got on the train from 2-3 previous stops after visiting the salt fields nearby. It is an unique experience to be so close to a train that you can touch passengers on the train.

On Dec. 4 we visited the Makkasan Railway Workshop, the only one workshop of SRT with 118 hector area. There are factories for locomotives, passenger coaches, and freight cars. We are guided by Mr. Wanwit Niampan, a young staff of international relationship department of SRT. Thanks to him and the workshop staffs, we could go into the locomotive factory to see their working.

Later we went back to Hua Lamphong Station to visit the old Station Hotel where now is reformed to be office of SRT. Then we visited the Railway Museum in Hua Lamphong Station. Prof. Siripong Preutthipan, pre Deputy Governor of SRT himself guided us warmly. He told us the history of Thailand railways and Hua Lamphong Station, the different colors of train destination plate. Also showed us the token machine. Old tickets, stamps and the unique clock of this station and etc.

In the afternoon, we rode the ferry crossing the most important in Thailand the Chao Phraya River to visit the Thonburi Depot where steam locomotives #824 and #850 stay. All the staffs were preparing them for the next day performance to run from Hau Lamphong to Chachoengsao and back. Very luckyly, we met the major and people called legend master driver of steam locomotives and his best partner there. Waiting for the fire burning, we saw the steam starting smoking. The locomotives were now modified to burn oil but did not influence their performance which means drivers are well experienced with highly skill.



In this short period, we experienced a different culture of railway in Thailand. Thank those who hosted us so warmly.

Conference Webinar 2025

This year's Webinar was successfully held on 20 and 21 December.

Saturday 20 December

Slot2 UTC 09:45-10:15 Mr. Jeff Tollan, FRONZ and Conference 2026

Q&A UTC 10:15-10:30

Slot3 UTC 10:30-11:00 Mr. Kayden Akisan, Malaysian Heritage Rail

Q&A UTC 11:00-11:15

Sunday 21 December

Slot5 UTC 09:00-09:30 Mr. Rodeo Suating, Hawaiian Philippines Co.

Q&A UTC 09:30-09:45

Slot6 UTC 09:45-10:15 Mr. Victor Nierva, National Rail Museum
in the Philippines

Q&A UTC 10:15-10:30

Break UTC 10:30-11:00

Slot7 UTC 11:00-11:30 Mr. Tim Doling, The railway history of Vietnam

Q&A UTC 11:30-11:45

Slot8 UTC 11:45-12:15 Mr. Naiyi Hsu, Visit Programme 2025 Report

Q&A UTC 12:15-12:30

Further conferences beyond 2026

Our Conference will be held as a 'hybrid' - comprising a real visit programme and Webinar usually held in December.

Our Visit Programme beyond 2026:

2026

We will join FRONZ conference, 29 May to 1 June in Auckland in New Zealand.

<https://fronz.org.nz/conferences/>

and expect to visit DaNang, Vietnam in December for The Revolution Express.

<https://revolutionexpress.com/>

The steam train in Thailand runs on 5 December can be taken before this, and hopefully the other steam runs from Kanchanaburi with 'River Kwai Bridge Week'.

2027

Taiwan, November Expected to be held with the inauguration event of new Taipei Railway Museum and possibly ANIH congress.

Beyond 2028

Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia
Chengdu and Sheoyang, China
Sri Lanka
Pakistan

Vacancies

Please recommend if you or someone you know would be happy to help us.

Secretary

We are seeking a new secretary.

Treasurer

We are seeking a new treasurer.

Volunteers

All APHTRO activities are maintained by volunteers and we are currently seeking a

- Newsletter Editor - This newsletter appears at least twice a year.

Our Newsletter cannot be sustained without fresh content.

Latest news, photos and articles from your heritage railways will be very much welcomed and will be a useful promotion of your railway.

Our next issue will appear in June 2026.

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(We thank *tw* for checking the draft)