

20 December

Slot 2

Daniel Chien

Hi Jeff, Does the current legislation provide any concessions or waivers for coal use specifically for heritage rail operations? If not, have there been any preliminary results or progress from the use of alternative fuels so far?"

Jeff Tollan

Sorry, Daniel, I just saw your message. There's no laws preventing coal use, however local councils can and have enacted bylaws that limit what can be burnt. One of our members in Nelson has had issues, but after several years of fighting they've finally been given approval to burn wood. Some smaller locomotives have trialed pellets, however they're impractical in larger locomotives

Slot 3

Daniel Chien

Hi Kayden, thank you for the inspiring presentation.

I recently traveled by rail from Bangkok to Singapore, passing through Malaysia. I made a brief stop in KL specifically to visit the old Kuala Lumpur Railway Station. At that time, I felt it was such a pity that there wasn't a dedicated railway museum there to showcase its history.

Seeing your presentation today, I am very glad to know that you and the community are working hard towards this goal. I really hope to see these results come to fruition soon!

Daniel Chien

21 December

Slot 5

Jin Yu

Hi! Greetings from China. Is there any connection between these locomotives and local tourism? Thank you

Noning Suating- HPCo

yes we are catering tourist for a fee to experience the locomotive operation

Chien Daniel

Are there any environmental regulations restricting steam locomotives in the Philippines? If so, how are they addressed?

Daniel Chien / XPX Taiwan Coal Mine Museum

Noning Suating- HPCo

yes, but we are using bagasse a biomass product derived from sugarcane so we are using green energy

Chien Daniel

Yesterday, Jeff from New Zealand mentioned that obtaining a special permit to use coal was not possible. In the Nelson region, after a long period of effort, they substituted wood for coal as fuel, which was approved by the local council. The issue of climate change is the greatest risk to the future operation of steam locomotives.

Noning Suating- HPCo

actually we are also using wood if the bagasse is insufficient during the time that we are using most of our bagasse for our main boilers.

Thats why we are allocating a portion of our bagasse for our steam locomotive operation to do away with regulatory problems

Chien Daniel

I was truly moved to see Locomotives No. 2 and No. 7 running smoothly in the

Philippines last month. I really appreciate your team's hard work.

Noning Suating- HPCo

Hi Daniel we are trying our best to have it in tip-top condition to cater to more steam enthusiasts in the future. i would love to see you here in the future..

Chien Daniel

Dynamic preservation of cultural heritage is extremely difficult, and we face many challenges in Taiwan as well. Many steam locomotives have been forced to switch from coal to using diesel boilers to generate steam. Is this a solution being considered for the future?

Noning Suating- HPCo

No, we will continue to maintain the originality of our locomotives as long as we are milling canes for sugar, then green feed stock will not be a problem.

Naiyi

I also visited HPCO in last month and enjoyed the steam train very much. Thank the staffs not only doing hard but also very warmly.

Noning Suating- HPCo

Glad to hear good feedback from experts that fuels us to strive more. if there are no more questions, i would like to express my appreciation to you guys for the invitation. Thank you very much and have a happy holidays everyone. regards to all.

Naiyi

I think the share of railway is very small now. To speed up transportation and unloading to mill. Is it possible to raise the share of railway? Or its cost is higher than trucks. ?Thank you

Noning Suating- HPCo

Naiyi its very expensive to maintain the rail lines. cheaper to bring canes by truck.

Naiyi

We have a sugar factory in Huwei still using railway to carry sugarcanes. The season of this year is just beginning in recent days. Only 15 km of railway operates now, carrying 1000 to 1500 tons sugarcanes per day, about 48%.

Thank you very much

Ripan Dhawan

Thank you Mr. Suating

We missed this time but shall try to come sometime

Slot 6

Chien Daniel

Vic, regarding the 'Urgency' you mentioned about the gauge change from Cape to Standard gauge. Does your team have a timeline for transferring the rolling stock from Manila to Legazpi? Will they be towed on the existing rails before the gauge change, or will you need to transport them by road? Moving them by road sounds extremely costly, so is there a 'window of opportunity' you are aiming for?

Nierva Vic

Hi, Daniel. This will be the content of the next dialogue with the Philippine National Railways which will happen early in 2026. As far as we know, I believe they can still be towed, because most of them are in Calamba, Laguna, south of Manila now.

Oda Kyoichi

Did you form a group or an organisation etc., for this project?

Nierva Vic

I've been talking with Albert Nual about this and my proposal to him is to form a new one, one with a national vision and not just for Metro Manila. It's still timely to form one, since the endeavor now is relatively personal. But the interest from fellow Filipinos and even foreign expats in the Philippines is strong.

Chien Daniel

Before attending the APHTRO conference in Bacolod, I stayed in Manila from November 23rd to 27th, right near Intramuros. I actually tried to visit Paco Station during that time, but I was unable to gain access.

After hearing your presentation, I finally understand the 'why' behind the project. It makes perfect sense now why you need to 'escape' the congestion of Metro Manila to establish a proper railway museum.

Perhaps the transfer of the rolling stock in 2026 could be organized as a special public event. I would be very interested in visiting to document this process.

Nierva Vic

I haven't thought of that "special public event." Now you gave me a great idea! Thank for this.

In the next sit down meeting with the leadership of the Philippine National Railways, I will share with them more concrete ideas and lay down program of actions that are easier to implement without much legal impediment,

My expertise is not technical, but cultural. I'm a writer, a poet, but I grew up along the tracks of the Bikol region, south of Luzon. So I am approaching this from the point of view of culture.

I'm also approaching this from the point of view of curatorial experience, since I've been putting together museums in the country in the last few years. After working on the Maritime History Museum in Iloilo City, I think it's very viable. It will give us the reason and the space to restore materials that need preservation.

Doling Tim

How long is it since steam was phased out by PNR?

Nierva Vic

It's been more than 50 years!

Nierva Vic

Thank you very much, everyone! It's really wonderful time to be able to share these things with you as we also need external thoughts, especially coming from those who have been running heritage lines.

Chien Daniel

Vic, just to share a bit more context: I have another ongoing research project regarding the 17th-century historical connection between Intramuros, Manila and the Spanish fortress (San Salvador) in Keelung, Taiwan.

Because of this project, I am already planning to visit Manila again in 2026. I sincerely hope the timing aligns so I can have the privilege to witness and document the 'Grand Migration' of the PNR rolling stock that we just discussed.

Nierva Vic

Let's keep in touch! I also have a history-oriented organization that might be interested in your findings.

Slot 7

Chien Daniel

I would like to thank Mr. Tim Doling for his insightful presentation on the development of Vietnam's railways. It gives me much to look forward to regarding a potential visit to Vietnam's railway sites next year.

I have a question for Tim. Is the dual gauge (meter gauge mixed with 1435mm)

track still visible today? Also, aside from the main meter gauge lines, are there any narrower industrial railways (smaller than 1,000mm, such as 762mm or 610mm) still in existence?

Doling Tim

The dual gauge lines are still there today and still being used
No all of the narrower gauge lines have now been replaced by 1m or 1.435m

Heimo

Tim, thanks for a very comprehensive presentation.

Doling Tim

You may be interested in my Flickr collection of historical images and maps on the railways of Indochina
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/189316830@N03/albums/>

Chien Daniel

By the way, are there any railway museums you would recommend visiting? And of course, <https://www.historicvietnam.com/> is still the most amazing website.

Doling Tim

Sadly no railway museums here yet

But you may have heard of Mike Gebbie's planned "Revolution Express" steam-hauled tourist train service from [Hải Phòng](#) to [Huế](#)

I'm not directly involved, but I am helping Mike with railway history material for his forthcoming launch.

I understand that the anticipated opening date for this service is now mid 2026. Various new decrees covering steam driver licenses, registration of steam etc have already been agreed by the government to permit the steam locomotives back onto the main line and final drafts are now in [Hải Phòng](#) for stamping.

Publicity for the project will commence in the New Year.

The line's two locos are Chinese-built [Tá»± lá»±c/ZLè±ªâŠ](#) 57-tonne 2-8-2 (141) "Mikados" No 141-190 and No 141-165. They were recently relocated from [Đã© An Works](#) (Saigon) to Mike's new steam maintenance building in [Kim Liã²n](#) ([Hải Phòng](#)), ready for the opening.

Mike Gebbie also owns a third [Tá»± lá»±c](#) "Mikado," No 141-159, which has not yet been restored and is still in store.

A foreign expert will arrive in January 2026 to oversee the company's locomotive testing and maintenance programme.

Jin Yu

Thank you for the amazing presentation! How many railway workers are still at service today in Vietnam?

Doling Tim

I know I should know that but unfortunately I have no idea what size the VNR workforce is :)

Jin Yu

Well, are the youths [21-35 years old](#) interested in railway or steam train related jobs now?

Doling Tim

Yes definitely, especially with so many new urban and high speed railway projects coming to fruition at last

Someone asked recently about the 1m gauge (3 foot, [3â€ inch](#)) rail track gauge selected for Indochina. It imposed limitations on tonnage and speed, it promised significant economies in both construction and operation, by limiting the width of land which had to be cleared for track laying, permitting sharper curves to circumnavigate obstacles rather than tunnelling through them and utilising lighter rails and rolling stock

Chien Daniel

Thank you so much for this incredible update! While it's a pity there aren't

formal railway museums, the news about the 'Revolution Express' and the return of the Mikados (No. 141-190 and 141-165) to the main line is even more exciting. Since the service is scheduled to launch in mid-2026, would it be possible for a researcher/photographer to visit the maintenance facility in Kim Li^an (Ä Ä Nă^oung) to see the locomotives before the launch? I would love to document these historic engines even if they are not running yet.

Doling Tim

Mike is planning to open a small museum at Lang Co Station

He's currently on the lookout for artefacts and displays

You could contact Mike's Brand Manager Candy Nguyá»...n

i will get her email hold on

candynguyen12nov@gmail.com

I would like to thank Mr Kyoichi Oda for the kind invitation to give this presentation.

Thank you very much and best wishes to everyone for the season!

Jin Yu

Thank you for sharing, Mr. Tim Doling

Slot 8

Chien Daniel

I would like to express my special gratitude to Chairman Oda for making this trip possible with his excellent coordination, and to Dr. Hsu for this detailed report.

It was also an absolute pleasure to travel with such wonderful companions: Heimo and his wife, Martin, Tim, Kayden, and all our friends from Taiwan. The journey wouldn't have been the same without you all!

Naiyi

I enjoyed it too

Jin Yu

What an impressive journey!

Naiyi

I would like to thank the staffs of HPCO. And also SRT.

JY , hope you can join us next time.

Jin Yu

Thank you for the kindly inviting. I HOPE so.

Naiyi

I did not go to Manila and other place of Phillippines this time. Hope we can visit the Railway Museum in come next time.

Chien Daniel

I must also express my gratitude to Mr. Wanwit Niampan for his excellent English guidance and Thai translation on Dec 3rd and 4th.

And a fun fact for Oda-san: Right after we flew back home from Bangkok, Mr.

Wanwit immediately traveled to Kagoshima, Japan!