

12 PANORAMA CAR

<パノラマカー>



A : There are a lot of trains painted red over there.

B : Yes. They are the trains run by Meitetsu, a private railroad company in this area. Soon a streamlined car will be coming in sight.

A : Really? Oh, that's it, isn't it?

B : Yes, it is. It is called a Panorama Car.

A : Very cool! But where is the driver? I can't see him or her.

B : The driver is in the upper cab.

A : Oh! I see. That's interesting. So can passengers have a front window seat?

B : Yes, they can. Sitting in the front the passengers can enjoy the approaching view from ahead.

A : Wow! We can feel as if we were the driver of the train.



Meitetsu Guide



The Meitetsu Line (Nagoya Railway Company) is one of the biggest railway companies in Japan. The lines span the wide area in Aichi Prefecture. What has made the company famous is a streamlined train called the Panorama Car.

The car was manufactured in 1961. In those days, sixteen years after World War II, Japan revived its economy and industry. Railway companies began to make more stylish, faster and more comfortable trains. The Panorama Car was one of those new trains.

The main line of Meitetsu (from Gifu to Toyohashi) had a rival: Japan National Railroad (JNR: now JR). The two companies competed over which train was faster and more comfortable. JNR had firm tracks so they had the advantage of driving fast trains. Meitetsu could not overcome their speed. They decided to develop more comfortable trains to compete with JNR.

The project began shortly after. It was a very tough job to make an epoch-making train. Suddenly they hit upon a good idea. They would create driver's view seating. At that time there were no train cars on which passengers could enjoy the driver's view. The engineers planned to put the driver's cabin above the roof so that the passengers could enjoy a panoramic view. However, because it was the first of its kind in Japan, they had a lot of difficulties in competing the car.





They encountered another problem. One problem was safety. If the train had an accident and collided with something, the passengers sitting in the front of the train would get injured or be killed. So they installed bumpers in the nose of the train in order to protect passengers. In addition, tempered glass was used on the front and two more headlights were put in the noses. What was revolutionary was the three kinds of horns they produced; an ordinary horn, an electric horn and a music horn. The music horn attracted more attention, so it was expected to reduce the number of accidents at railroad crossings.

At last the new car was introduced to the public. The president of the company was very moved to see the bright red train running like an arrow. The Panorama Car became popular in Japan, and in 1962 the Blue Ribbon Prize was given to Meitetsu by one of the biggest railway fan clubs in Japan.

The car had been used as a limited express until recently. It had been a star of the Nagoya Railway Company for many years. In total, one hundred sixteen cars were made by 1975. But it has become outdated. In 1988 the Panorama Super, a new type of Panorama Car came out and took over the place of the "old" Panorama Car. The old-timer retired from the task of the limited express lines, and are now used as local trains.

Now, though some of them have been put out of service, you can see and ride them and enjoy a wide view in front of the car. You can also see a lot of railway fans take photos of its elegant shape!



EXERCISES

1 COMPREHENSION CHECK

文の内容に即して，以下の設問に英語で答えなさい。

- (1) When was the Panorama Car created?
- (2) Why did JNR have the advantage of faster trains than Meitetsu's?
- (3) How did the engineers solve the problem of safety?
- (4) What are the "old" Panorama Cars currently being used for?

2 USEFUL EXPRESSIONS

文中の表現を参考にして，次の日本語を英語にしなさい。

- (1) その画期的な製品はその会社を有名にした。(make を用いて)
- (2) 私はいい考えを思いついた。(hit を用いて)
- (3) 私は彼が道路を歩いて渡っているのを見た。
- (4) 聞こえるようにもっと大きな声で話してください。(so that を用いて)
- (5) 私はその賞をとるために彼女と競わねばならなかった。(compete を用いて)
- (6) 私はその映画を見て感動した。(move を用いて)



路線図は平成17年1月29日現在のものです 提供：http://www.meitetsu.jp/t_b/train/rosenzu/main.html