

## JAPAN'S FUTURE BEGAN TO MOVE HERE.

150 years ago,

a group of young dreamers imagined a new future for Japan.

What began as an idea soon became a bold challenge—  
one that would change the course of the nation's history.

Building the country's first railway was never going to be easy.

But they refused to give up.

Western engineering met Japanese ingenuity.

Stone by stone, rail by rail,

they built the first railway toward the future—

a line stretching nearly 29 km Shimbashi to Yokohama.

And across the sea, they laid the tracks upon Takanawa Embankment—  
a daring idea, and a symbol of innovation.

It reflects a spirit that still defines Japan:

the power to turn the impossible into the possible.

No matter how difficult the road may seem,

the future opens when someone dares to imagine it

and someone takes the first step.

This project carries forward the spirit of that first step—

and shares it

with everyone who dares to shape the future.

THE FIRST RAILWAY PROJECT.

All aboard.

## ABOUT THIS PROJECT

About 150 years ago, a railway symbolizing Japan's modernization opened, connecting Shimbashi and Yokohama over approximately 29 km. This project began as an effort to pass on its history and memories to future generations. Through a variety of initiatives, including exhibitions, we share the spirit of innovation that made the opening of the railway possible.



## THE MEANING BEHIND THE LOGO

This logo symbolizes the "Starting Point of Innovation," where Japan's first railway began. The tracks connecting Shimbashi and Yokohama represent a path leading to the future. The semicircle overlaid on the tracks embodies the rising sun and light for the future. The gold color symbolizes the light that illuminates the way forward. This logo not only celebrates the journey of the past but also expresses a spirit of continuing to move forward into the future through ongoing challenges.

For more information

<https://www.takanawagateway-city.com/thefirstrailway/>



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## Japan's First Railway Ran Over the Sea

In 1869 (Meiji 2), during the period of modernization, the Japanese government decided to build a railway. This was Japan's first railway line, connecting Shimbashi and Yokohama. However, difficulties arose, including problems acquiring land around the Takanawa coast. This challenge inspired the bold, innovative idea of "laying tracks over the sea." Thus, in 1872 (Meiji 5), stones were stacked in what was then Tokyo Bay, and the Takanawa Embankment was constructed. This railway running over the sea was a major step toward Japan's modernization.



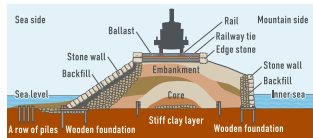
Provided by the Railway Museum

## The Spirit of Innovation Connecting Shimbashi and Yokohama

Japan's first railway stretched approximately 29 km from Shimbashi to Yokohama. Of this, the 2.7 km section from Motoshiba to Shinagawa Station ran along the Takanawa Embankment. Construction proceeded under the guidance of British engineer Edmund Morel, blending traditional Japanese techniques with Western railway technology. British-made rails were laid atop an embankment constructed using traditional stone wall techniques from the Edo period. This event, which combined two technologies to create something new, symbolizes a spirit of innovation.

## Takanawa Embankment: Rediscovered Through Urban Development

As the railway expanded, coastal reclamation progressed, and the Takanawa Embankment was gradually buried beneath the ground. Since the Taisho era, this site served as a rail yard, and its existence gradually faded from public memory. However, in 2019 (Reiwa 1), during urban development around Shinagawa Station, the stone walls were discovered. Further investigation revealed embankments, piles, and railway ties emerging one after another. These were remnants preserving the appearance of the railway's earliest days. In 2021 (Reiwa 3), the Takanawa Embankment site was added to the National Historic Site "Former Shimbashi Station Site." Public access to two locations is planned for spring 2028 (Reiwa 10). Plans also include relocating and displaying the base of a railway signal.



## Takanawa Link Line: Where the Railway Ran in Its Opening Days

Part of the former railway route has been developed into a plaza, the Takanawa Link Line. Rails are embedded at the original positions from the railway's early days. The rail gauge matches that of current conventional lines, including the Yamanote Line. The hoarding art lining the path shows the changes railways brought to people's lives, from the past through the present and into the future. Using AR technology, visitors can encounter a steam locomotive running along the Takanawa Embankment.



## Pine Piles that Supported the Embankment

Countless pine piles driven into the seabed stabilized the foundation of the Takanawa Embankment. They prevented the stone walls from collapsing. Excavated pine piles have been repurposed, reborn in new forms, now utilized as flooring in THE LINKPILLAR 2's GALLERY and as benches throughout the town. What once supported the railway now blends into the townscape, carrying memories of its early days.

## Stones that Formed the Embankment

The stones excavated during the preservation survey of the Takanawa Embankment remain part of the town today. Back then, stones were stacked vertically on the landward side of the tracks, while the seaward side featured stones laid at a gentle angle to soften the force of the waves. These two distinct stacking methods have been faithfully recreated around the plantings of the Takanawa Link Line. The very stones that made the railway's opening possible now quietly tell their history beneath the feet of visitors to the town.

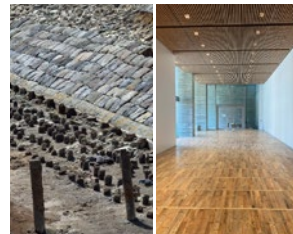


Photo : Naoya Hatakeyama

Interior of the GALLERY



Stonework along Takanawa Link Line

## THE FIRST RAILWAY Exhibition - The Beginning of the Railway -

THE LINK PILLAR 2 GALLERY is located directly in front of the remains of the "Bridge No.7 abutments" that once spanned the Takanawa Embankment. Here, THE FIRST RAILWAY Exhibition -The Beginning of the Railway - is presented. Through exhibits on the history of the opening of the railway, introductions to the excavation of Takanawa Embankment, and interview videos about efforts to balance cultural heritage preservation with urban development, visitors can learn about the journey from the railway's opening to the preservation and public display of the Takanawa Embankment. Preparations are underway to open the abutments to the public.

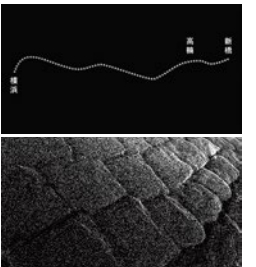


Photo : Naoya Hatakeyama

Venue: THE LINKPILLAR 2 | 1F GALLERY (C on the map below)  
 Opening Hours: 10:00 AM - 7:00 PM (Last admission 6:45 PM)  
 Closed on the same days as THE LINKPILLAR 2  
 Admission: Free  
 \*Please check the TAKANAWA GATEWAY CITY official website for the latest information.

## Takanawa Embankment Exhibition at MoN Takanawa

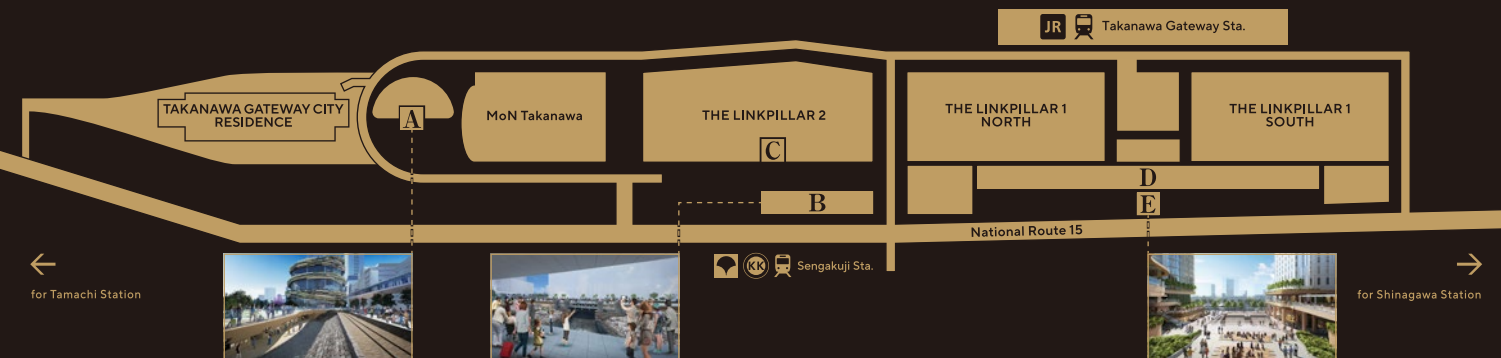
MoN Takanawa: The Museum of Narratives presents a film depicting the Takanawa Embankment. Created using 3D data from excavated remains, the film beautifully portrays the railway that once ran here continuing its journey into the future. In addition, "MoN Library" on the basement floor features a small reading corner dedicated to books about the history of the Takanawa Embankment and railways. It's a place where visitors can encounter the story through the film and deepen your knowledge through books.



The projected images use point cloud data (3D survey data) of the remains obtained during excavation.

Venue: MoN Takanawa: The Museum of Narratives B1F Box1000 foyer and surrounding areas  
 Opening Hours: 10:00 AM - 9:00 PM  
 Closed: Second Tuesday of every month  
 Admission: Free

\*Hours and closure dates may change depending on events held in the facility. \*Access to the Box1000 foyer may vary depending on events held in Box1000. Please check the MoN Takanawa official website for details. \*A special exhibition is planned at MoN Takanawa in fiscal year 2026. <https://montakanawajp/>



- A** Takanawa Embankment (Park section): Scheduled to open in spring 2028
- B** Takanawa Embankment Site (Bridge No.7 abutments section): Scheduled to open in spring 2028
- C** GALLERY
- D** Takanawa Link Line
- E** Takanawa Embankment Site (Signal base section): Opening Planned