



Dialogue between Taiwan and Japan, the Bereaved Families of the Accident across the Ocean



Mr. Asano Yasakazu looks at the Taiwan Railway *Taroko Express* accident vehicle.
Photo: Matsumoto Hajimu

Matsumoto Hajimu, nonfiction writer

Taiwan Railway is under pressure to reform due to a series of accidents

Taipei Main Station is Taiwan's largest terminal station, served by conventional lines, Taiwan High Speed Rail (bullet train), Taipei Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) (Metro Taipei), and used by 450,000 people a day. The current 4th generation station building has 6 floors above ground and 4 floors underground.

It boasts a palace-like grandeur, with a large crimson roof modeled after the traditional architecture of Southern Fujian Province, China, known as the "Minnan (Southern Fujian) region." The center of the ground floor is a vast open space, surrounded by a food court and various shops. The third floor and above are used as offices for the Headquarters of the Taiwan Railways Administration (TRA) and other offices, and are not open to the general public. (TRA, commonly known as *Tai tie* [Taiwan Railway], is the national railway operator in Taiwan responsible for conventional passenger and freight lines.)

It was the afternoon of August 30, 2023, when four Japanese people, including myself, were invited to a large conference room on the fifth floor and met Taiwan Railway executives for the first time.

Asano Yasakazu is a bereaved family member who lost his wife and sister in the Derailment Accident on the Fukuchiyama Line (Amagasaki derailment) that occurred in Amagasaki City, Hyogo Prefecture in 2005. He has continued to demand that the responsible company, JR West, investigate the cause and implement safety reforms. Abe Seiji, Professor Emeritus of Kansai University, supports the bereaved families from the standpoint of a researcher who pursues the safety of railways and other public utilities, and provides various suggestions and points to JR West. Sano Yoshiki belongs to the company's victim response headquarters and has been in charge of Asano for a long time. I was accompanying them in my capacity as the author of *Kido: Fukuchiyamasen Dassen Jiko JR Nishinohon wo Kaeta Tatakai* (Derailment Accident on the Fukuchiyama Line: The battle that changed JR West), which chronicled the Asano struggle.

The circumstances that led to this six-day visit to Taiwan will be discussed later, but this second-day meeting was marked as “Taiwan Railways Administration Workshop 1” on the itinerary prepared by the Ministry of Transportation and Communications, Executive Yuan, Taiwan. (The ministry corresponds to Japan's former Ministry of Transportation and Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications, and has jurisdiction over Taiwan Railway.) The content is a report on the examination of the 2021 Hualien train derailment, which occurred in Hualien County in the eastern part of the country in April 2021 and resulted in the deaths of 49 people, and reforms after the accident.

The outline of Hualien train derailment is as follows.

The site is a line that runs along the cliffs of the eastern coast. A truck from a private contractor contracted by Taiwan Railway to perform slope reinforcement work on the mountain side of the railroad tracks fell onto the tracks due to a worker's error. A train traveling at 126 km/h collided with the train, causing all eight cars to derail. The six cars in front crashed into the tunnel, with the lead car being gouged by the wall and severely damaged, and the following four cars also being crushed and deformed. It was the first day of the long weekend of the Qingming Festival on the other side of Taiwan, and there were many families visiting graves, and the crowd of about 500 people exceeded the number of seats, causing widespread damage.

Two and a half years earlier, in October 2018, Taiwan Railway was also responsible for the 2018 Yilan train derailment (18 deaths) in Yilan County in the east. This caused a series of serious accidents, some of the worst in the history of Taiwanese railways, and drew strong criticism from both the public and the government, making it urgent to ensure safety. When President Tsai Ing-wen declared that “Taiwan Railway reform will definitely be carried out,” the debate over privatization, which had been smoldering for more than 20 years, was reignited. Overcoming strong opposition from labor unions, the company will be corporatized starting in January 2024—it will become a state-owned company with all shares owned by the government, and employees hired from then on will no longer be civil servants. It has been decided that the status of currently employed employees will remain as civil servants.

The purpose of the meeting was for Taiwan Railway, which is working to improve safety in the wake of the accident, to explain its current situation to Asano and Abe and hear their opinions. Starting with the Amagasaki derailment, the two have spent many years moving JR West toward accident verification and safety reform, and are still taking a hard look at the company. Asano, in particular, has suppressed any feelings of blame or resentment, even though he is in the position of the bereaved family, and has worked hard to conduct an unprecedented joint investigation by discussing things on an equal footing with JR West. How the bereaved families and victims can be involved in building safety for railway operators has become an important issue with strong interest from the Taiwanese side.

The actual situation of Taiwan Railway as revealed by poorly understood “accident analysis”

The four of us and members of the Hualien train derailment bereaved family association “Tears in Taroko” sat on one side of the table, and on the other side were the Director of TRA Du Wei and several dozen other employees. Director Du, who is equivalent to the former president of Japanese National Railways in Japan, is an employee of Taiwan Railway who has been with the company for 35 years, and was promoted to director in a personnel shakeup following the accident. Due to his thorough knowledge of the field, he is a symbolic figure for Taiwan Railway reform, and is certain to assume the top management position even after the company’s corporatization in 2024.

On the wall they had their backs to, a new slogan was posted: “Work together and have the courage to reform.” It is said that this slogan was adopted after the Hualien train derailment, and it was written in the Taiwan Railway-related facilities we visited this time and in all the handouts. However, soon after the report began, it became clear that the phrase “have the courage to reform” was nothing more than a rallying cry.

Executive officials read out the outline of the accident and countermeasures based on the materials, and an interpreter translated them into Japanese one by one. Although the presentation was neat, the explanations were monotonous and administrative, and seemed to be someone else’s business, which spoke volumes about the culture of the bureaucratic organization.

For example, the following items were listed on the cause analysis page (excerpt/summary from the Japanese version of the material).

The construction contractor entered the construction site in violation of the regulations (not to work during consecutive holidays) / The construction contractor did not have clear emergency call procedures / Safety barricades were not installed on the construction road / Similar accidents involving construction vehicles had occurred twice in the past, but the problem remained unresolved and went unnoticed

“Six strategies and 34 programs” are listed as improvement measures. Selecting an excellent construction contractor and implementing safety training, installing warning systems for falling rocks and external intrusion, updating vehicles and equipment, and installing a safety management system (SMS).

Forty-five minutes into the session, when the endless explanation was about to move on to the railway safety inspection system, Abe interrupted.

He told them, “That’s a different subject, so let me first ask you a few questions about the Hualien train derailment,” and then asked.

After the accident, the Taiwan Transportation Safety Board (TTSB) must have recommended improvements, but what is the status of implementation? One of the causes is a deviation from the rules, but what is the reason why the regulations were not followed? If there were no rules or procedures, does that mean there is no mechanism to learn from similar cases in the past?

“From my point of view,” said Abe, “the descriptions on this page, such as human factors, do not seem to be a cause analysis, but a mere list of phenomena that have occurred. The problem lies in the deeper analysis behind the phenomenon and why it happened. I feel like you’re not doing that enough.”

Although his words and demeanor are gentle, he is a frank critic of poor “analysis.” Agreeing with Abe’s view, Asano said the following.

“Safety must be addressed by the entire organization. And it has to be explained using science and logic. The failure to instruct subcontractors and the lack of clear communication was not the cause, but the result of organizational management. It’s important to have the courage to take a stab at your own organization and find out why it didn’t work. It’s the same with JR West, they don’t have the courage to do that.

“Analysis of the causes of accidents is the foundation of safety. It is impossible for the perpetrators alone to do this. Please discuss this with family members and researchers. The bereaved family may be an amateur. If an expert can’t answer a layman’s questions, that’s no good.”

Asano had in mind two joint verification meetings that he had proposed and lasted a total of three years and three months with JR West.

I had wanted to have fruitful discussions and proposals, rather than ending this occasion with a ritualistic preordained harmony. I want Taiwan Railway to take a step toward building a true safety culture. As the bereaved family and as an engineer, he has been aiming to “socialize accidents” [Asano] and believed that this would lead to specifically extracting the causes and lessons and sharing them widely with society.

Numerous remains and belongings found in the accident vehicle

There were other issues that made me question Taiwan Railway’s reform stance, or even before that, its recognition of the facts of the accident and its sense of ownership. For example, the voices raised by the bereaved families of Tears in Taroko.

At the first meeting with Taiwan Railway, the family’s lawyer pointed out that the number of injured listed in the documents was incorrect. It says 213 people, but this is the number immediately after the accident. The number has now increased to 309. This has been pointed out before, but it hasn’t been fixed yet. “This shows that Taiwan Railway does not care about the safety of passengers at all,” the lawyer strongly stated.

Tears in Taroko representative Chen Pengnian lost his daughter and younger sister and was seriously injured himself. He pointed out that “Taiwan Railway should have revised the figures and already reported them to the Ministry of Health and Welfare.” He then argued, “The fact that old numbers are still being used is a sign of a lack of coordination between departments within Taiwan Railway.”

When two people pointed out the issue, the director acknowledged the error and apologized, saying, “I looked over the materials beforehand, but I didn’t notice.”

Why is there a difference of nearly 100 people in the number of injured? When I checked with Taiwan Railway again, they said that the figures were revised in the year after the accident after re-aggregating reports from local medical institutions. However, the company explained that it had quoted data from the TTSB (accident investigation body), which did not reflect the corrections in this document.

The following day, August 31st, something even more unbelievable happened when I toured the Fugang Vehicle Depot where the *Taroko Express* accident vehicle was stored. Part of a skull believed to be that of the victim was found. The discoverer was the director of an NPO that supports Tears in Taroko. She came along with the bereaved family to view the vehicle during our inspection. The left half of the lead vehicle was scraped off by the wall at the tunnel entrance, and remnants of wiring and parts were scattered about. Inside, she saw a piece of cloth that looked like clothing, and when she turned it over, a fragment of a skull came out. The size is 7cm x 7cm. It looked like an adult bone. It was widely reported that human remains were found in a vehicle more than two years after the accident, and it shocked society. When the

Hualien District Prosecutor's Office re-searched all eight vehicles, a total of 44 pieces of what appeared to be human remains were found, and DNA tests determined that 37 of them belonged to the 10 victims. The newly recovered items totaled 170 items, including watches, shoes, and clothing. That's an amazing number.

Why does such a careless thing happen? Is this a common thing in Taiwan? I asked multiple people involved, but everyone shook their heads. The chairman of the NPO that discovered the skull said, "Until now, the accident vehicles have not been preserved and have been disposed of. As the *Taroko Express* was preserved at the request of the bereaved family, this is the first time we have learned the reality of the search and preservation process."

The accident vehicle was first searched and rescued by the railway police, followed by an investigation involving the district attorney's office, and then the TTSB conducted an accident investigation, before being handed over to Taiwan Railway. It cannot be said that Taiwan Railway is solely responsible. However, in order to promote safety reform, isn't it essential to understand and identify damage as accurately as possible?

On September 1st, the day after the remains were discovered, Abe concluded his speech at the Ministry of Transportation and Communications (MOTC) with a complaint and orders for Taiwan Railway.

"For the bereaved families, the remains and belongings are irreplaceable. The TRA must take this very seriously, and has to work to analyze the cause of the accident and find out why this happened. I don't think we can move forward in terms of safety unless we thoroughly investigate."

The errors in the number of injured people and the unrecovered remains and belongings were discovered because the bereaved families had an eye for it. Considering this, we can understand the importance of the bereaved family's involvement in Taiwan Railway reform, as Asano stated.

How have they moved on since the accident?

Encounter between Taiwan and Japan, the bereaved families of the accident

There are 44 families left behind by the Hualien train derailment, and nine of these families are participating in Tears in Taroko. The majority are in their 30s and 40s. Many of the victims and bereaved families of this accident are young. This was because many passengers went out with their families to visit graves or return home on the morning of the first day of the holiday. When the group was formed three months after the accident, its main purpose was to negotiate compensation, but once a certain resolution was reached, the bereaved families' attention gradually shifted to safety reform at Taiwan Railway.

Mr. Chen, the representative, was 38 years old at the time of the accident. He went to Taitung County with his parents, sister and two children to visit the grave. They boarded the third car of the train and met with the accident. Eventually, his 4-year-old daughter and 36-year-old sister died, and he also broke his shoulder and leg. Passengers were trapped in a crumpled vehicle inside a dark tunnel. Mr. Chen can't get the hellish scene that left his family between life and death out of his head. Mr. Chen is prepared to bear this pain for the rest of his life, and has called for reform of Taiwan Railway so that no one else will have to face the same thing again.

"My son, who was riding with me and survived, is still young, and I was given a new life last year. They will definitely take the Taiwan Railway in the future. Therefore, the pursuit of safety is not someone else's problem. For the sake of the next generation, we must never allow such an accident to happen again. I think all the other bereaved families feel the same way."

On the day we toured Fugang Vehicle Depot, Mr. Chen was walking alongside his wife, supporting her. His wife, who was at work on the day of the accident and was unable to accompany her family, said it was the first time she saw the damaged vehicle that day. She didn't say anything, she just kept crying silently.



Mr. Asano Yasakazu (far left) and Mr. Chen Pengnian (far right)
Photo: Matsumoto Hajimu

“Some bereaved families are still unable to accept the reality and are unable to come here. I have come several times to pay my respects, but it is difficult to come if you are not mentally prepared.”

Mr. Chen said as if he was caring for his wife by his side.

Among the bereaved families was a woman who lost her friend in the Yilan train derailment and her brother in the Hualien train derailment. There was also a woman who lost her husband and two children and was the only survivor. Everyone is watching the fate of Taiwan Railway closely, with unbearable pain. I hope that they will seriously reflect on the accident, learn from it, and change.

Cheng Lihan, who lost her sister at the age of 31, said she was impressed by Asano's words and attitude, and has learned a lot from him.

“Even though we are angry, we want to learn from Mr. Asano's attitude of trying to calmly discuss things from a scientific perspective without letting our emotions get the better of us. Simply venting your anger will cause the other party to close the door and will not solve the problem. Keep the dialogue open by asking questions and making suggestions. I was very encouraged by his advice that we just need to take it one step at a time.”

During the several meals and meetings he had with the bereaved families during his stay, Asano repeatedly emphasized his “one step at a time” approach. “When I proposed joint verification to JR West,

I wasn't thinking about compiling this discussion into a booklet or taking the next step. As we discussed this, I realized that it would be a waste not to record this. That's what the bereaved family movement is all about. Take a step forward, pause for a moment, and move on again. As you persevere, your influence will spread to unexpected places. Just like we came to Taiwan this time."

In fact, we met with Mr. and Mrs. Chen and some members of Tears in Taroko in Osaka in April 2023.

Apparently it all started with my book *Kido*. The book was translated and published in Taiwan in fall 2020 after the Yilan train derailment. The process in which the overspeeding train derailed after failing to negotiate a curve with a radius of approximately 300 meters was similar to that of the Amagasaki derailment.

Six months later, the Hualien train derailment occurred. The bereaved families read the book and became interested in Asano's decades-long struggle, especially the joint investigation and recommendations that forced JR West to reform its safety. Therefore, they approached MOTC and Taiwan Railway and made their visit to Japan a reality. It was at that meeting that we were asked to visit Taiwan for the first time.

Minister talks about the meaning of "corporatization" of Taiwan Railway

Many believe that the reason for Taiwan Railway's frequent accidents and lack of progress in safety reforms is ultimately the organizational structure.

Closedness due to exclusive use of specialized business and technology. A lack of diversity in human resources and opinions, and a rigidity that prevents them from adapting to new situations. Inefficiency in refusing to change, following precedent, and clinging to one's own interests.

"They advocate reform and list countermeasures, but their words and deeds are inconsistent," and "employees are more interested in the treatment and rights they will receive after becoming a corporation, and they do not have a high level of awareness of safety," I hear from Japanese and Taiwanese railway officials. One person said, "It's as bad as the last days of Japan's National Railways, or even worse." They certainly overlap.

For example, the current cumulative deficit is 160 billion yuan [TWD] (5,176 billion US dollars). The biggest reason is that Legislative Yuan does not allow fare revisions and has not raised prices for 28 years. The influence of labor unions is also strong. They always claim that there is a "lack of manpower," but compared to JR Kyushu, which covers almost the same area, the total distance traveled and the number of stations is less than half, but the number of employees is more than twice (Taiwan Railway has 15,000 people, JR Kyushu 7,300 people). Meanwhile, 108 large and small derailment accidents have occurred in the 10 years up to 2021.

Minister of Transportation and Communications Wang Kwo-tsai, who was appointed immediately after the Hualien train derailment, considers this organizational reform to be the most important issue. In May 2022, the Taiwan Railway union held a large-scale strike to oppose corporatization starting in January 2024, but they remained undaunted and made this happen. What is the aim of reform?

"Current Taiwan Railway is an administrative agency, and all decisions must be reported to upper management such as MOTC and Executive Yuan. Personnel, budget, repairs (of rolling stock and equipment), land development, and cooperation with outside parties. Even on matters that should be moved forward immediately, an agreement may not be reached for two years or more. Therefore, we would like to increase the flexibility of the organization by turning it into a company and having management and a board of directors manage it."

In other words, it is about improving management efficiency. He says that corporatization will allow the government to take over debt, to amend laws such as easing restrictions on land development, and to make hiring more flexible. This means that they can secure human resources with a wealth of specialized knowledge and experience without having to go through the civil service exam.

So, how does corporatization lead to improved safety?

“Current Taiwan Railway is a centralized organization, with local operations, civil engineering, rolling stock, and electrical departments also controlled by the central government. However, after corporatization, the plan is to delegate authority to local governments. We have four sales centers in each region to manage the local area. This takes into account the Hualien train derailment, where local construction sites were poorly managed.”

Minister Wang continues, “While promoting decentralization, it is also possible to strengthen the safety department by placing it under direct control of the president. There is also the advantage of being able to hire safety technology experts and people who can scientifically analyze accidents.”

Just by looking at Japan’s JR, we can see that corporatization does not completely change the bureaucratic organizational culture [privatization took place in 1987], and there are also negative aspects of corporatization. The background to the Amagasaki derailment was that JR West pursued excessive profits and lacked a balance with safety. When I pointed this out, Minister Wang said:

“We understand that it takes time to develop an organizational culture. However, we should start with organizational management, which includes establishing effective internal controls and auditing systems, and providing oversight at the local level. Regarding the pursuit of profit, there is a possibility that we will do so in the future. However, since it is a 100% state-owned company rather than a complete privatization, even if it is said that the regulations will be relaxed, the regulations will remain. The government and Legislative Yuan can take control and stop the rampage.”

Taiwan Railway’s entire organization has become stagnant, and its employees have lost their sense of pride. Minister Wang says that in order to bring in fresh air, structural reforms are first needed. In other words, it is [the reform of] Executive Yuan’s way of thinking.

External oversight committee made up of bereaved families and researchers

What does Minister Wang think about the role that bereaved families play in improving railway safety? What was the intention behind inviting Asano and his friends in response to Tears in Taroko’s request?

“We are aware of the safety reforms after the Amagasaki derailment. I believe it was an extremely valuable experience for the 4.25 Network of bereaved families (of which Asano is one of the organizers) to actively engage in dialogue with JR West and urge reform. Mr. Asano lost two dear relatives in the accident. This is very similar to Chen Pengnian’s situation in the Hualien train derailment. He is trying to turn his grief into strength to push for safety reform.

“As I got to know them and had a lot of communication with them, they wanted to establish an external oversight structure, which is now being established as well. This approach is exactly like Mr. Asano’s: turning pain into power to change railways and society, and I have great respect for it.”

What surprised me during this visit was how Minister Wang and Taiwan Railway Director Du were surrounded by the bereaved family members, listening directly to their complaints, answering them in their own words, and having long discussions with them. I have encountered such a situation several times. Even if they had no choice but to respond because they were the perpetrators, it would be highly unlikely that a current Japanese minister or JR president would ever be seen talking to the bereaved family in public.

According to Minister Wang, relations were quite hostile and tense in the first meetings. However, after meeting and talking many times, they were able to agree on the common goal of “Taiwan Railway reform,” and a relationship of understanding and cooperation was built. Asano once said that the key to negotiations is to “never close the channel of dialogue, no matter how conflicting our opinions may be,” and this seems to be a similar stance.

The “external supervision system” that Minister Wang said Chen wanted refers to the “External Supervision Taiwan Railway Safety Reform Committee” that was established in July 2023. It is made up of 13 people, including 7 family members of the Hualien train derailment and 6 former ministers and railway researchers. It meets once a month to monitor and make recommendations regarding Taiwan Railway’s safety measures and management system.

Continuously monitor the safety reforms of the perpetrator’s business from the perspective of the bereaved family. Because experts provide support and MOTC executives also attend, the findings and recommendations have a certain degree of effectiveness. Abe highly praises the project, calling it an “unprecedented attempt anywhere in the world,” but also expresses concerns.

“Since the committee has no legal basis, it has no enforcement power against Taiwan Railway. If the reformist Minister Wang is replaced, there is a risk that the situation will disappear. Whether we can carry out effective activities will depend on the future.”

One of the committee members, Professor Yung-Cheng Lai of the Railway Technology Research Center, National Taiwan University, points out:

“We have a strong membership and I think we should be able to have enough influence. We also hope that what we discussed will become part of Taiwan Railway’s long-term safety improvement plan.

“For the committee to be effective, what is most important is the mindset of the Taiwan Railway management team; that is, whether they truly have the will to reform. Without that, the recommendations of not only this committee but also regulators, government agencies and the TTSB would be ignored and would have no effect.”

Submit a questionnaire summarizing the questions of the bereaved family

“I’ve been thinking about this for a few days since I came to Taiwan. I wondered if there was a way for the bereaved family to investigate the cause on their own. I found the idea this morning. I would like to consult with you all.”

Shortly after 10 p.m. on September 1st, seven of the bereaved families of Tears in Taroko were gathered in a hotel lobby, and Asano began the discussion. On this day, a large symposium was held in the MOTC hall from the morning, and we also gave lectures and had discussions. Immediately after finishing, I had dinner with Minister Wang, Taiwan Railway executives, and the bereaved families. After returning to the hotel, we immediately had a meeting, and Asano, 81, seemed more lively than anyone else. There was even a sense of elation.

“This is a joint collaboration between Japan’s 4.25 Network and Tears in Taroko, and we would like to gather opinions on the cause of the accident. The day before yesterday, we received an explanation of the accident from the Taiwan Railway Bureau, but there was no explanation as to why the truck slid down the slope. There are four explanations in the document (personnel, organization, equipment, and environment), but the cause is not written. So, I would like you to write down any questions you may have. It doesn’t have to be difficult to write. You can use your own words.”

He was referring to “that” document that Abe and Asano criticized at the workshop with Taiwan Railway mentioned at the beginning, saying it “does not analyze the causes” and “does not get into the organizational issues.”

Each bereaved family compiles a booklet summarizing their questions and submits it as a written questionnaire to Taiwan Railway. Asano adds a note about the importance of investigating the cause and the significance of the bereaved family doing so themselves. Taiwan Railway is requested to respond in writing or at a briefing session, specifying a deadline.

That was the proposal. The bereaved families, who had been listening to him with serious expressions, soon began to soften their expressions. Asano repeatedly asks, “Can you do it?” “Do you understand what I’m saying?” “Are you OK?” Then, each person responds with words or fingers.

Asano has repeatedly submitted letters of inquiry and applications to JR West in the name of 4.25 Network and individuals. However, as far as I know, there is no such thing as “each person writing in his or her own words” or “all documents bound together in one volume.” This seems like a proposal that embodies the words Asano said after coming to Taiwan: “It’s okay to ask amateur questions” and “it’s okay to take things step by step.” Or perhaps he was influenced by the youth and seriousness of the members of Tears in Taroko, and their positive attitude towards acting in solidarity.

After the meeting, I asked the bereaved families their thoughts on Asano’s proposal. They replied, “This is an activity I’ve never done before. I received a really good idea,” and “I’m happy because I have so many things I want to say, but I didn’t know how to express them.”

Of course, I don’t know how Taiwan Railway will respond. Organizational culture does not change overnight. A few months from now, even when the signboard of the state-owned corporation “Taiwan Railway Corporation” has been replaced, “have the courage to reform” may still be its slogan.

However, for the bereaved families, this questionnaire is a new step for the movement. The questions they posed in their own words will resonate with society and may increase public opinion urging Taiwan Railway to reform. When that happens, Asano’s goal of “socializing accidents” will begin across the ocean.

Translated from “Taiwan to Nihon, Umi wo koeta Jikoizoku no taiwa (Dialogue between Taiwan and Japan, the bereaved families of the accident across the ocean),” Sekai, November 2023, pp. 32-41. (Courtesy of Iwanami Shoten, Publishers) [November 2023]

MATSUMOTO Hajimu

Nonfiction writer

Born in Osaka in 1970. He assumed his current position after working as a reporter for the *Kobe shimbun* newspaper. His publications include *Kido: Fukuchiyamasen Dassen Jiko, JR Nishinohon wo kaeta tatakai* (Derailment Accident on the Fukuchiyama Line: The battle that changed JR West) (Toyo Keizai Inc., later published by Shincho Bunko), and *Darega “Hashimoto Toru” wo tsukutta ka—Osaka Tokoso to media no meiso* (Who Created “Hashimoto Toru”? Osaka Metropolitan Plan and the Media’s Mistake) (140 B), *Chiho media no gyakushu* (Counterattack of the Local Media) (Chikuma Shinsho).

