

# PHOTOGRAPHING THE SHINKANSEN: KAKEGAWA

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During the course of my research about the shinkansen I have had the opportunity to take photographs from a number of locations. In the first of a series of articles, I will look at how to get to good locations to take photographs of the shinkansen – whether they be popular locations, such as the one featured in this article, or ones that I have come across over the years.

While the view of the shinkansen passing Mount Fuji is probably the most well known and well used image of the shinkansen (and how to get that shot will feature in another article), shots of the shinkansen passing the tea fields in Shizuoka prefecture are just as popular amongst the Japanese railway enthusiast community. With being less dependent on the weather than the Fuji shot, it is also considerably more predictable in fitting into one's itinerary!

There are actually three locations near Kakegawa that regularly feature in photographic collections of the Tokaido Shinkansen. It is possible to do all three in one morning (and morning is best, though you can still get good shots in the afternoon) and then go on to another location such as Lake Hamana (also featured in another article). All three spots in Kakegawa are within walking location of each other. However, as they are not near shops, and by the end of a couple of hours photographing one can become tired, there are various tips that I would suggest:

- Although walking is certainly possible, if you continue on to the third spot, I would strongly suggest that you budget to catch a passing taxi (assuming you can find one – or make a note of the number of a taxi company when at Kakegawa station so you can call one out to you).
- If going in the morning, have breakfast on the shinkansen down to Kakegawa. There is nothing to eat at or near the photo spots. So take snacks with you too! If you plan to have lunch there, then remember to buy it at Kakegawa station (or even better one of the convenience stores outside the North side of the station).
- There is not a great variation in rolling stock along the Tokaido Shinkansen. Things will improve by 33% (ignoring Doctor Yellow) with the arrival of the N700 series in due course – so make a note of when the 500-series is likely to pass – you don't want to be in between photo spots when is shots by.
- Finally, remember there is no seating at the shots and there tend to be ants around, so I suggest you take a seat (3-legged is best) with you.

To get to the first photo point (A on the map), you need to first take a local train from Kakegawa to Kikugawa. From there you exit the station on the South side and walk back towards Kakegawa. Cross over the line at the first opportunity and then turn right. Follow this road round to the left and up a gradual slope. You will then come to a relatively large road. Turn right and continue down the slope (large factory on your right). Take the next left as you reach near the end of the slope. Follow this road for about another kilometre as it winds its way around fields. You will probably hear the shinkansen before you see the line. Almost directly in front of the line you will find a tea factory and a track on the shinkansen-side of it (see photograph in article by Hood & Fossett on Views from the Tokaido Shinkansen in *Bulletin* in July-September 2005). Go up this and then climb the grassy knoll at the point where the track bends right. You will see that there are fairly well worn tracks (it is also probable on most days that you will not be alone!)



Once you have finished at this spot (remember to experiment with taking shots from different angles up and down the slope – but don't get too close to the line (JR Tokai send out people to remind you of this from time to time)), you can move on to the next one (B on the map), which is above the tunnel which you have been keeping your eyes on for the tell-tale signs reflection of on-coming shinkansen headlights for the past 30 minutes or more. To get to this spot, go back down the track past the factory and under the line. Take the first track on the left and continue up the slope. After that you will need to try to find a way up the bank. There are paths, but when I

went they were largely overgrown (so don't go in smart clothing!) and it is a very steep bank (so try not to take too much with you to carry).



Having finished here, you have a choice. If you have had enough you can head back to Kakegawa by retracing the steps above. However, if you are going on to the next spot, then your best bet is to go back down the hill to the road that comes up from under the shinkansen line. Instead of turning right to go back to Kikugawa, turn left. Follow this road until you get to the next major road and then turn left again. Follow this road until you get to another major road (near a old people's home) and turn left again. You will now pass back under the Tokaido Shinkansen. After about another 200 metres, there is a small turning on the right (not a proper road). This will take you past a small (apparently not used much) shrine. Follow this track up a slope. The photo spot (C on the map), looking towards Tokyo, is just before the track bends left next to a tiny field (which is next to a bridge across the shinkansen).



When you have finished here I would suggest not crossing the afore-mentioned bridge (and then turning left) and following this road back to Kakegawa – at least not unless it is a lot cooler than the day I did this with Hiroshi Naito and Dave Fossett. Your best bet (assuming you are not very fit or are prepared to take a gamble on getting a taxi) is to go back down the slope and then turn right (to head back to the local station) or to get a taxi from this road (the old people's home may be a good point to find one).

Happy photographing!



Map taken from <http://www.its-mo.com/z.htm?m=E138.4.51.278N34.45.58.144&l=8>

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