

Hitchhike stats for 2010



Happy new year to all!

Yesterday, December 30th, I returned home after a very fruitful 12 day trip to the Kanto and Kansai areas of Japan. Kanto includes Tokyo and Kansai is all of the area of Kyoto, Osaka, Kobe and surrounding towns and cities. The total distance hitchhiked in Japan this year was 15800 kilometers.

The graph below shows a comparison of the distance I hitchhiked this year compared to 4 previous years. As you can see, it was a bit less than last year's total of 19530 kilometers.



Graph of distances hitchhiked in Japan through the years

Hitchhike from Tokyo to Osaka less than 6 hours



Today in only two cars and a short 260 yen train ride, I made it from Tokyo to Osaka, right to the location of my destination, in only 5 hours and 45 minutes! This is very good time considering the distance of 500 some kilometers. Normally when going to Osaka I'll arrive after 8PM, but today 4:15PM. If traveling from Niigata it would take me normally from 10 to 12 hours. Once I did it in 8 hours, also a record.

The first driver took me from Kohoku PA on the Tomei expressway to Ebina service area. He is a 7/11 employee.

After waiting approximately 30 minutes at Ebina, a tanker truck that carries some dangerous liquid chemical took me the rest of the way, an older man 66 years old, and the owner of the company. He said his load of liquid was delivered and he is returning empty.

The man had only 4 hours sleep the previous night and was both tired and sleepy at times. I kept up a conversation with him to keep him awake. It worked and we arrived to Osaka without incident.

Adventure hitchhiking to Saitama city



Today is the first day of another extended road trip. I hope to use this Christmas season to tell the Japanese people about Christ, and the best way I know how to do that is by hitchhiking when traveling and talking to the drivers individually.

I hitchhiked nearly 300 kilometers in three cars to the Kanto area which includes Tokyo and vicinity. My destination was Noda city in Chiba prefecture.

Two of the drivers went out of their way for me, the second driver, Mr. Tokaji very much so because it meant at least one hour extra of his time. He took me to Omiya station in Saitama City from where I took a train the rest of the way. There is a direct train from Omiya to Noda.

Mr. Tokaji said that he is a religious person. It is uncommon for me to hear such statements from Japanese people. Most say they're not interested in any matters related to faith.

Mr. Tokaji asked many questions about the Bible. He was impressed when I told him that both Christianity and Judaism helped mold Japanese culture from as early as the first century A.D. and that the chant "washoi washoi" that the Japanese say when carrying the *Omikoshi* is a Hebrew word meaning "carry". Only a tiny percentage of the Japanese know of their Jewish/Christian roots.

Total cost for transportation today: 400 Japanese yen.

Creating multilingual WordPress sites



I made a three language web site for my friend in Vietnam (<http://activeandlovingit.com/>) using a WordPress plugin called [WPML](#). The site uses English as the basic language with Vietnamese and Japanese as the translated languages. Previously I used a plugin called qTranslate but I found WPML to be superior to it in that it makes a separate URL for each language. This means better SEO with search engines, for they will index that URL. qTranslate only makes one URL for all the languages and separates them by using code in the body of the URL.

Another point, qTranslate did not display the language properly from time to time when using caching software such as [W3 Total Cache](#). WPML does.

Unfortunately WPML seems to slow down a site with hundreds of posts like this one. I recommend using it only on site not too big. The [Active and Loving it site](#) has only 100 posts and pages.