

Rainy Autumn day trip to Aomori City and Back



October 25, 2013: My destination was Aomori City, 470 kilometers from home. I hitchhiked from Murakami City as far as Sakata City in Yamagata Prefecture, a distance about 90 kilometers. After that I had to abort due to rain.

It was worth the effort! Mrs. Fujiwara picked me up for the 6th time and she seemed happier than ever to do so. After her a young doctor who works as an anesthesiologist took me nearly all the way to Sakata. He left me near a highway viaduct. I stood under it while hitchhiking to be protected from the rain. Cars trucks were whizzing past at high speed! Often I had to draw back from the road to keep from getting splashed with water. It was an undesirable situation to say the least, but I had plenty of time to spare. After 20 minutes Mr. and Mrs Mikuni picked me up and took me to Sakata Station from where I caught a train.

The Return Trip:



Yuzo Yamada and his friend. They took me nearly half the distance home by taking from from Hirosaki to the Chojahara service area which is not far from Sendai.

A bus of people, all 65 years old, who went to the same elementary school in Ofunato city, took me to Kunimi service area in Fukushima Prefecture. It's pretty rare for the bus driver to offer me a free ride! He did because the passengers liked me. Ofunato city is one of the towns that was devastated by the tsunami of March 11, 2011. One lady told me she was trapped on the second floor of a building. The tsunami washed out the stairway! About an hour later the fire department rescued her.□



The bus and some of the people who took me to Fukushima Prefecture.

After a few minutes wait at Kunimi, a couple offered me a ride as far as the Fukushima Matsukawa parking area which is just past Fukushima City. But after talking with me a few minutes, they decided to take me as far as the Adatara Service Area which is much larger and just before the Banetsu expressway junction. It is an idea place to catch cars going on the Banetsu expressway toward Aizuwakamatsu and Niigata.



Mr. Negishi who went over 60 miles out of his way for me to take me home! He also bought me lunch.

A man named Mr. Negishi stopped for me. Though he was on his way to Tokyo, he said he would take me to Aizu on the Banetsu expressway. After getting on the Banetsu, he said he would take me all the way home! I replied, "But going to Tokyo via Niigata is way out of your way!" He replied, "I don't have to be home till evening and so I don't mind. Later I calculated the extra distance to be exactly **245 kilometers or 153 miles** out of his way! It turned out that Mr. Negishi is a kindred spirit because he himself used to hitchhike when he was young. "I was very poor then," he said.

Autumn Hitchhike Adventure to Shizuoka, Osaka and Toyama



From October 4th to 6th over three days I traveled in 15 cars 1358 kilometers or 849 miles passing through Tokyo to Hamamatsu City in Shizuoka Prefecture, and then to Osaka, and then back home to Niigata. Total transportation costs was 590 yen, about \$6.00. The trip was one of the most fun ever! You can be the judge of that by seeing the photos.

The hardest part of the trip to Hamamatsu City from Niigata is crossing the Tokyo area to get from the Kanetsu Expressway to the Tomei Expressway. I did it in a single car from Echigo Kawaguchi in Niigata Prefecture! The driver was on his way to visit his daughter who lives near Ebina service area on the Tomei. I was now certain I would get to Hamamatsu before dark.



The green sign shows day 1 of my journey, the hardest part going around Tokyo. The red line is day 2 to Osaka, and the blue line shows my return along the Sea of Japan.



Mrs. Tamami who took me from Ebina SA in Kanagawa to Ashigara SA in Shizuoka.



Yorika and friends who took me to Hamamatsu from Ashigara

I arrived at Mikatahara Parking Area at 3:40 p.m. My final destination that day is still 15 some kilometers, too far to walk. A driver saw me looking confused and asked me where I wanted to go. He took me to Kamijima station about 2.5 kilometers away. From there I took two trains to my friend's house.



Mr. Kohara who took me to Nagoya on the way to Osaka.



The "Kansha Box" that Mr. Kohara gave me. Kansha is the Japanese word for thankfulness. Shinto priests pour rice wine in it and give it to the bride and groom on their wedding day..

On my way to Osaka, Takayuki Kohara took me to a parking area near Nagoya. He asked a stranger to take this photo, and then when we found out the man was going to Osaka, Mr. Kohara asked him if he would let me ride with him. He did! Mr. Kohara is newly married only one month ago. He gave me a gift of the

wooden box. In Japanese weddings the bride and groom and relatives drink rice wine out of it.



A man driving a Porsche took me 200 plus kilometers from Otsu SA near Kyoto to Kanazawa City in Ishikawa Prefecture. This is half way home to Niigata. He said supernatural events happened that convinced him he and his family are being protected by a power from on High.

His mother was in Hiroshima when the atomic bomb fell and only 3000 some feet away from ground zero while waiting for a train at Hiroshima Station! Her hair burned away and suffered burns on her skin, but she survived though most of the people around her died. And she had 3 normal children and now normal grandchildren and is still going strong!

His older sister and her son was saved from the fatal Jumbo 747 crash that killed 500 people in Gunma Prefecture in 1985. Her son got a fever just before the flight and so she decided not to take it.

He says there were yet more miracles of protection.

The last driver to take me was Koichi Takagi, 25, who is studying to be a doctor. We met at Oyabegawa Service area in Toyama Prefecture. Koichi asked me if I wouldn't mind him stopping for an hour or so at the Toyama Coast off Uozu City so he could do some spearfishing. He told me he would take me all the way home, and so I readily agreed. I had no idea he would actually be diving in the water and disappearing for a whole hour! Below are the photos:

