

# Adventure to Kyoto



Rinko and Tamako. Parents took me to Ozumi PA on the Hokuriku Expressway

**July 25:** Today is the start of a 3 week hitchhike adventure from Niigata in Northern Honshu to the southern island of Kyushu. I won't go directly to Kyushu from Niigata because others in the Honshu area are asking me to visit them first. This turned out to be good for my schedule because Kyushu today was drenched with torrential rain! Heavy rainfalls are frequent this time of year in Southern Japan and often cause landslides and a loss of life. At the time of this post, 8 people have died the past couple days.

]I left home at 8:20 AM and made it to Kyoto in 7 cars by 6:30PM. It was indeed a good trip considering the distance of 600 some kilometers. Only once I had to wait nearly an hour for a ride.



Hiroaki Suzuki, newly married only 3 months ago. Took me to Sanjo Interchange.

Two of the drivers spoke English well enough to converse in it. One driver was a doctor, a surgeon. One was a husband and wife with their two small daughters in the back seat. Only one driver expressed some doubt as to what kind of person I am. He said, "Don't do anything to distract my driving!" I asked him what exactly he meant and he replied, "Like try to strangle me!"

Mr. and Mrs. Iinosan from Wakayama Prefecture who took me from Niigata to Toyama were on the way to Takayama city in Gifu Prefecture. They both spoke fairly good English. He is a farmer who grows all the vegetables his family needs for food! His wife has a job and earns enough money to buy their other

needs. Only a few minutes after they dropped me off at the Arisoumi Service Area in Toyama I caught another ride from a man going all the way to Shiga Prefecture! This man was waiting in line at the gas station just in front of Mr. and Mrs. Iinosan's car. When they saw the man offer me a ride, they rejoiced!

The man, Mr. Shinzawa, took me all the way to Shiga which means we passed completely through the next two prefectures of Ishikawa and Fukui. Normally I hitchhike in at least one of these prefectures to make it to the Kyoto / Osaka area. He is now retired and formerly worked as a researcher in semiconductors. Mr. Shinzawa was on his way to a fishing trip to Oki Island which is just off Tottori Prefecture in the Sea of Japan.