

## Day 5 after the Japan earthquake: Hitchhiked back home



The red line shows the route I took back to Niigata. The right arrow points to one of the nuclear powerplants in trouble.

**March 16, 2011:** While in Kobe I joined a NPO project and worked nearly all my waking hours for two days to setup a new web site, Help Japan 2011, to help raise aid for the earthquake victims. The next day I traveled back to my home in Niigata partly by train but mainly by hitchhiking. I started off at Kanda parking area on the Hokuriku expressway in Shiga prefecture. It was surprisingly cold and snowing the front license plates of the cars were covered with wet snow and unreadable. I brushed off the snow from several license plates to determine how far the driver may be going.

Parts of the Hokuriku expressway run very close to the Sea of Japan. There was no threat of tsunami danger as they rarely occur on this side of Japan. However, on 26 May 1983, [104 people were killed in close to the Sea of Japan in Akita](#) by a tsunami after an earthquake.

You can see from the map that I traveled back to an area closer to possible danger. But I do not believe Niigata will be affected much even if the situation in Fukushima worsens.

God was good to me and I saved thousands of yen getting lifts as far as Uozu city in Toyama Prefecture in 5 cars. It was past dark by that time and so I took trains the rest of the way. To save money, I took local trains. However at Joetsu the trains were stopped due to a plastic sheet that had wrapped itself around a power-line of the train. In order to get home that day, I was forced to take an express train from there for which I was charged an extra 1150 yen express ticket to Nagaoka city. For some reason I wasn't charged for an express ticket the rest of the way.

The first driver was a young man who listened intently to the Bible stories I shared with him. The second was a father and son who run a Buddhist Temple. The son was dressed in a Buddhist monk's clothing and had a shaved head. They asked me to explain who Jesus Christ is and what He means to the world, and of course I was more than glad to do so.

You may wonder why I would talk of matters of faith at such a time of crisis as Japan is in now. Most Japanese are very apathetic to matters of religion, but now they are seeking comfort, and are open to hearing answers from the Bible about their problems. One man even told me to pray for the earthquake victims!

One of the drivers was a young single lady, Kana Chan, who lived in Australia for two years. Thank you Kana Chan for the ride!