

Fun hitchhike back home from Saitama



Tuesday, August 10, 2010: Today I had another relatively hard experience hitchhiking. The root of the word "hitchhike" comes from "hitch" (to ride) and "hike" (to walk) and today I did a whole lot of walking, more than yesterday.



Children of the
mother who took me
to Hanazono

In the beginning it went very well. A lady going to Nagano said she will take me to the Kamisato service area, but as we approached Hanazono, we faced a big traffic jam that was caused by a car accident. The electronic sign said it would take 70 minutes to travel the next 20 kilometers! So she decided to get off at the Hanazono interchange and take the low road. This meant that I had to get off at Hanazono.



Traffic jam due to
accident. The sign
says "70 minutes
to go 12
kilometers"

As soon as I started to hitchhike at the Hanazono IC, a policeman saw me and ordered me to leave the area! I was too close to the toll booth which is part of the expressway.

I walked to the normal road and tried to catch cars going on the expressway, but they were going too fast to stop. Then looking at the map, I saw that Yorii Parking area may be close enough to walk to. It appeared to be about 5

kilometers and I thought maybe I could walk there in an hour. But after walking 45 minutes I saw a sign that Yorii was yet 3 kilometers further up the road! In all it took me an hour and 20 minutes to walk it. The total distance is 8.4 kilometers or 5.25 miles. I walked at a rate of 6.3 kilometers an hour or about 4 miles an hour. My shirt and undershirt was drenched with perspiration when I arrived in Yorii and so I changed to another shirt at the parking area restroom.



Dr. Suzuki who
took me to
Kamisato just
before Gunma. We
have a mutual
friend.

But the effort to get to Yorii paid off. After a relatively short wait, a man, Dr. Suzuki, picked me up and took me to Kamisato. He is a medical doctor. And it turned out we have a mutual friend, James Rudow of Sayama city!



A chemical
engineer from
Yokohama who took
me to Niigata

After another relatively short wait in Kamisato, a man from Yokohama took me to Sanjo city which is the next town to Niigata. From there a lady took me to a train station only 3 stations away from mine and I caught a train the rest of the way. Total transportation cost from Sayama: 190 yen.