

## Last week of June adventure to Hirosaki and back



With another man also hitchhiking! His partner with him took the photo



Mr. and Mrs. Kikuchi who took me to  
Tsuruoka City from Kisagata, Akita  
Prefecture

**June 29 – July 1, 2012:** This weekend I went to Hirosaki and back in only 12 cars traveling 768 kilometers.

The trip to Hirosaki was the fastest ever! It took only 4 cars with an average waiting time of only 9 minutes wait between cars. I arrived at 3:00pm.

On the return trip, a man took me from Noshiro city to Honjo. Rather than take me to Route 7, he said my chances of getting a ride on the expressway going further south might be better. I agreed with him, but after waiting some 30 minutes at the expressway entrance with cars whizzing past me with no place to stop, I began to think Route 7 was better after all. But it was too far to walk to.



Father with his 13 year old  
daughter who took me to Nikaho  
City, Akita Prefecture

A man with his 13 year old daughter saw me and pulled up in a parking lot next to the expressway entrance. He offered to take me to Route 7. He also didn't think my chances to get a car going on the expressway were very good. The man likes to study English and showed me he knows the difference between an R and an L sound. This is quite a feat for most Japanese! They cannot

tell the difference between words like “pray” and “play” or “glass” and “grass.” This man could. He encouraged his daughter to speak English with me but she said no. She was too shy as many young Japanese people are. Fear of embarrassment may be the main reason why the Japanese are not so good at learning a second language. I did get her to say a few words, however.

The man and his daughter went out of their way for me and took me much further than they first promised, all the way to Nikaho which is the end of the free expressway in Akita Prefecture. He said it was no problem because they would take the expressway back to Honjo.

It turned out my waiting for a ride at Honjo IC was not in vain. A man who saw me standing at the Honjo expressway entrance saw me again at Nikaho! He knew somebody must have picked me up so he decided to do so as well and took me to Kizarazu. And at Kizarazu, a young newly couple, Mr. and Mrs. Kikuchi, who also saw me standing at Honjo IC stopped for me! They took me all the way to Tsuruoka, the city on the other side of Sakata! Mrs. Kikuchi seemed so happy. She was always smiling. They had been married only 2 months.