

## Second Trip of Golden Week 2013

### Hitchhiking Adventures



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

Toward the end of Golden Week, I again went to Aomori Prefecture and back. Six vehicles took me 431 kilometers to Aomori City, and 5 cars took me 632 kilometers back to Niigata via the Tohoku and Banetsu Expressways. Though I expected sunny weather, there again was slight precipitation from time to time.

Three of the drivers offered to treat me to coffee but I politely declined. I've been reading [Caffeine Blues](#) by Stephen Cherniske, M.S. and have finally woken up to the hidden dangers of the world's #1 drug! An older man who took me 300 kilometers to Fukushima handed me a can of coffee which he bought for me without asking me. I accepted it but didn't drink it. I gave it to the next driver, a lady who took me toward Aizuwakamatsu. I explained why I don't drink any caffeine containing beverages anymore, and told her that coffee is especially bad for women. "Better not drink it!" I told her. I had mixed feelings about offering her the coffee, but she told me she loves the stuff. Hopefully it'll be her last fix.



Mr. & Mrs. Kobayashi from Amagasaki City. They took me from Murakami City in Niigata to Sakata City in Yamagata.



Lady who took me to Katagami City just past Akita City. She went a bit out of her way from me.



Satoh Maki from Toyosaki in Niigata Prefecture. She and her parents took me from Katagami City to a point close to Odate City. They were on their way to Lake Towada.



Kazumasa Hikita who took me to Hirosaki.



Family who took me to my destination in Aomori City. They went a bit out of their way for me.

## **May 4: Hirosaki to Aomori City**

Two couples on their way to Hachinohe went a bit out of their way to take me to my destination. They work for a pharmaceutical company. I told them I stay away from all drugs, including caffeine. Drugs only treat symptoms, not the basic causes of illness. Only lifestyle changes can correct the causes. One man agreed with me but said that most people find it difficult to change their lifestyle. "We sometimes need a coach", I told him. A coach could be a loved one, a church pastor, or a professional therapist. If you ever seek professional help for personal problems such as an addiction, it's best to consult with a person who has had the same problem you have, and have overcome it.



Setting sun over Mt. Iwaki. Cherry tree in foreground.



Mr. & Mrs. Manabe and their friends who took me back to Aomori city from Hirosaki.

## May 5: Aomori City to Niigata City

Today was *supposed* to be sunny according to the weather forecast, but again there was a slight rain. I waited over 2 hours at the Aomori Chuo interchange! Though there was much traffic and a long line of cars, nearly everyone of the drivers avoided making eye contact with me. The few who offered me a ride were going only a short distance. I was hoping for the first ride to get me at least as far as Morioka City in Iwate.

Finally, a lady who spoke English said she would be going to Fukushima that evening, but she would stop at Goshogawara first to see her elderly mother. Goshogawara is a good hour out of my way. It would take at least two and a half hours for her to get back on the expressway going the direction I needed to go. Normally I would not have accepted a ride in such circumstances. But because the lady was quite fluent in English, and because I wanted to move on, I went with her. But after considering the matter further, I decided not to go with her all the way but to get off only 10 minutes later when she would arrive at Route 7 between Aomori City and Hirosaki. The point is rather desolate with little traffic.

I didn't consider myself in a good situation but within a few minutes a car stopped for me. It was a man with his Chinese wife. At first I thought the Chinese wife was deaf because she was moving her hands when trying to communicate with her husband as if she was using sign language. But I realized later she cannot speak Japanese, and he doesn't speak Chinese! Sometimes she would write down words in Chinese characters, the ones Japanese can understand. They took me to Hirosaki. I still had an opportunity to get back on the Tohoku Expressway from that point. Another option was to take Route 7 back all the way if I could catch a car going far enough.

An older couple with Tokyo license plates stopped for me. I rejoiced because I knew they would be going at least as far as Fukushima. But the driver said he may go only up to Sendai which is still a good distance. I accepted. The Golden Week traffic was heavy and there were traffic jams at the beginning of slopes and before tunnels where many drivers unconsciously slow down. The couple decided not to spend the night in Sendai after all and therefore took me to Adatara in Fukushima. I arrived around 6:30 p.m. just before dark. From there it was a relatively short wait for the next two cars that took me home.



Ohtake Chio, daughter Noe and son  
Satoi. They took me from Adatara SA  
of the Tohoku Expressway to  
Bandaisan SA on the Banetsu  
Expressway



Mr. & Mrs. Kasiwagi and their son.  
Sosuke. who were on their way to  
Ehime Prefecture in Shikoku. They  
took me to Niigata City.