

Third June Hitchhike Adventure to Hirosaki



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



On a bridge in Tsuruoka. Mt. Chokai can be seen in the background.

It's now my 4rd trip to Hirosaki this month! The first one was with a friend who drove all the way, the rest by hitchhiking. I still have one more trip on the 29th of the month!

Today was supposed to rain but it turned out sunny. The train to Majima was 25 minutes late which meant I started hitchhiking at 8 a.m. Rather than walk up Route 7 as I did in the past, I opted to stay stationary. After a 25 minute wait, a 70 year former seaman who sailed the world took me a distance of about 5 minutes drive.

About 15 minutes later a man I apparently met when hitchhiking the same route last winter stopped for me! The man works at Hajima Kensetsu Co, a very talkative man who told me many things of the area. Rather than the main route of Route 7, the man took the coastal route which went more directly to his destination. I wound up in the center of Tsuruoka city. It's not a big town and I knew Route 7 had to be within walking distance. It was: A good hour hike!

Though it took me nearly 60 minutes to get to another place I could hitchhike, after arriving at the point the next ride came only 5 minutes later, Mr. Shirase whose hobby is mountain climbing. He once found on the side of Mt. Chokai the body of a man who had died within the hour. The man apparently fell. The police officials he notified said the area was not their territory and told him to contact other officials. This ticked off Mr. Shirase! He scolded them. "I'm supporting you people through my taxes, and you mean to say you won't go a bit out of your way to perform your duties?"

Mr. Shirase took me to Nikaho in Akita Prefecture. I told him that the traffic light in Niikaho City would be fine, but he insisted to take me further to a place he thought would be better for me. Often drivers make suggestions to drop me off at places that I know from experience will not be good for me. I'll suggestion an alternative but when they still insist, I will yield because I don't want to cause them any trouble. He did say, however, that if I didn't the area he would take me back to the city and its traffic signal.



Mr. Murata playing the Shakuhachi

Mr. Shirase's suggested dropping point turned out to be not agreeable for me to hitchhike, but because it was close to the expressway entrance, I opted to get off there anyway. I'm so glad I did because after only a few minutes wait, 2 cars simultaneously stopped for me! The first car was a lady. When she saw the second car stop just a few meters from her, she asked the passengers if they were willing to take me. They did, Mr. and Mrs. Murata, a very friendly couple who invited me to their home to drink tea! Mr. Murata's hobby in making and playing a unique Japanese musical instrument called the Shakuhachi. You can see the video I took of them in the previous post. Mrs. Murata plays the Koto, a stringed instrument.

After spending about an hour with the Murata family, they took me to the Kotooka Highway rest area on Route 7, a good distance the way to the next city of Noshiro. It's now 3:50 p.m. Rather than wait at the rest area, I walked along Route 7, often walking backways and holding out my sign to on coming traffic. The shoulder of the road was getting narrower and I had to stop walking at a point. A few minutes after 4 p.m. An older couple who were on their way home to Noshiro city stopped for me. The man said he would take me to Fatatsui after dropping his wife off at their home.

After only a few minutes wait at Futatsui, a young man playing a Simon and Garfunkel song stopped. He was only going a few kilometers up the road.

I waited a considerable amount of time, at least 30 minutes at an intersection in Fatsui. It began to rain. Everybody was ignoring my sign paper that said "Odate", the next city about 40 kilometers further. After perhaps a 40 minute wait a young man who took pity on me stopped. He lives in Fatatsui and wasn't on his way in the direction I needed to go, but nevertheless out of the kindness of his heart he took me to Takanosu, about 2/3 of the way to Odate!

When we arrived at Takanosu, it had stopped raining. I walked a few meters further up the road and only a minute or so later a young man on his way to Odate stopped for me. He took me exactly where I wanted to go, a place on the opposite side of Odate on the way to Hirosaki.

The time is now 6:30 and only half an hour before sunset. I walked a couple kilometers further up the road. A man in a Mercedes Benz costing 20,000,000

yen (about \$250,000 US) stopped. His name is Mr. S (name withheld), a second generation Koran man who was born in Japan. He once had many businesses and income to the point he could afford to hire a personal chauffeur. He said he lost much of it, millions of dollars due to the sub-prime loan crises. Mr. S saw my Aomori sign and because he was on his way to Aomori City, he stopped for me. But I told him I only needed to go as far as Hirosaki, 40 kilometers before Aomori City. Mr. S took extra time to take me not only to Hirosaki, but to the very hotel I would be staying that evening! I suspected the reason Mr. S. Was so wealthy was because he had something to do with the Yakuza. He knew all the businesses in Hirosaki and even their former owners!