

## Adventure to Akita station



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

I needed to travel from Niigata to Aomori city for important business the following day. If I hitchhike, I like to give myself two days to be on the safe side to be on time for such matters. Aomori city is 470 kilometers from home and mostly by regular highway. I often can only get as far as Akita city – a little over half way – where I spend the night at a friend's house. But this time I couldn't spare an extra day. That meant a long ride by the slow, non-express train to save money.

There was an hour and a half wait time between changing trains in Akita. Rather than take the train to Akita station, I opted to get off at Kamihama station which is close to Route 7 and half way between Sakata city and Akita city. The train station man was surprised I got off at Kamihama. He said, "There is nothing here!" I told him, "I'll find something to do!"

After only a few minutes wait at the traffic signal just in front of the station, a man in a recycle truck carrying what he referred to as "sleeping resources" (a junk motorcycle and some metal trash) picked me up and said he could take me just before Akita city, about 80 kilometers! I knew I could still easily make the train connection at Akita station if I couldn't hitchhike further past Akita.

The man, Mr. Shindo (63) is a metal recycle dealer. His business card says, "Metal recycle with a smile". Mr. Shindo's philosophy of life is similar to mine. "Life is a journey" he says. It began to rain and so he decided after a while to take me all the way to Akita station. On the way Mr. Shindo bought me a nice lunch of fried noddles and introduced me to his lady friend at the noodle shop. By hitchhiking, I made two new friends, got a free lunch, and saved 1000 yen of train fare. Life is indeed a journey.