

First hitchhike adventure of 2010



Kevin and Yuriko

Jan. 10: I had to make an emergency trip to Oyama city in Tochigi prefecture to fix a PC. Oyama city is a good 270 kilometers from home. It was snowing this morning, not a particularly good day to hitchhike! In order to save time and avoid hitchhiking during the snowfall, I took a train to a station about 30 kilometers away from where I hoped to walk to the Sakae parking area on the Hokuriku Expressway. Later I found it was way too far to walk to Sakae parking, but a kind man who was going to Kashiwazaki took me to Ozumi Parking which was even better for me.



Snow piled up 3
meters next to a
service station in
Yuzawa

This winter Niigata has had 3 major snowfalls so far, about twice as much snow as was last year. The traffic moved slowly at points on Kan'etsu expressway due to the snow and following the snowplows at only 40 kilometers an hour. It promises to be a good season for the ski resorts. The mountain of snow in the photo on the left is way over my head or about 3 meters (9 ft.)

Kevin from America and his Japanese wife Yuriko took me to Komayose parking area which is just before the junction of the Kita Kanto expressway that goes east toward Oyama.

The last driver was Mohammad from Pakistan. Most Pakistanis who live in Japan are in the used car sales business, and Mohammad is no exception. He was quite surprised that I would hitchhike, and asked me why I didn't come by train. I usually tell people it's more fun to hitchhike. Mohammad was interested to hear my views of the world, and especially about American

foreign policy. I told him that it's easier for me to better understand politics and policy living outside of the U.S.A., but there are Americans living in America, albeit a small percentage (5~10%?) who have not succumbed to [mass media mind manipulation](#).