

## Return trip from Saitama



**Oct. 3, 2010:** Today I hitchhiked from Sayama City just north of Tokyo back home to Niigata in 6 cars. At first, I had to walk about 45 minutes to get to the highway that goes to the Kan'etsu expressway. After that, a driver in a sports car took me to Kawagoe Interchange. He said his dream was to become an F-10 jet fighter pilot but couldn't because he would have had to become an American as well. I told him that once I met a fighter pilot in the Japanese self-defense force. He said it's no fun having your body daily subjected to tremendous g-forces in sharp turns during training exercises.

The next car took me to the Miyoshi Service area. Though Miyoshi is actually in the opposite direction, the direction going to Tokyo instead of Niigata, because it is only a few minutes up the road I usually accept rides there because I know how to walk around to the other side of the service area. There is an access road that goes under the expressway. It's about a 10-minute walk.

From Miyoshi two cars took me to Kamisato just before Gunma. After a relatively short wait, 4 men picked me up and took me the majority of the way back home, about 200 kilometers further. But I still had about 15 kilometers left. Though I could have taken a train the rest of the way, because it was still early and good weather, and the men left me off on a road that is relatively a straight shot back home, I hitchhiked and caught a ride with the Saito family. There were 3 small children in the car, the oldest being 11. Mrs. Saito was so amazed to hear of my hitchhiking adventures over the years, and how far I have traveled and met so many people.