

Two Adventures through Northeast Japan



The red lines shows my route to Aomori, and the blue back the route back to Niigata

On August 4 and again on August 10, I hitchhiked nearly a complete loop twice around the Hohoku region of Northeastern Japan.

The total distance hitchhiked for the two trips was 1940 kilometers in 27 vehicles. This averages out to approximately 72 kilometers traveled per vehicle. However the average distance per vehicle on the returned trips 113 kilometers compared to only 47 per vehicle on the way to Aomori. This is because I took the Hokuohoku Expressway back home, the route that passes Sendai and goes through Fukushima prefecture. Drivers are going much further distances along that route.



Three university students who took me to Akita Station on Aug. 4, 2012

Though the Tohoku expressway route is 100 kilometers further, it's actually faster than Route 7 along the Sea of Japan, and it's definitely cheaper, usually no money for transportation all all. Why? From experience hitchhiking on Route 7, I cannot always catch the last ride before dark. Rather than hitchhike at night, I opt to catch a train the rest of the way home. But taking by the Tohoku Expressway, I have no such recourse. There are no trains I can catch in time. This means stretching my faith a bit more and relying wholly on my Creator to bless me with kind Japanese people to pick me up.

You may wonder why I don't take the Tohoku Expressway through Fukushima on the way up to Aomori as well. I don't because few cars are going that direction from Niigata. Traffic is greater from Fukushima toward Niigata

because many drivers are going further than Niigata, destinations as far as Kyoto and Osaka.

Highlights of the two trips:



Eriko with her
daughter

- Of the 8 cars I traveled in the first trip to Aomori, half of them were ladies. The average percentage of lady drivers in the past 2901 cars since keeping record from August 2003 is only 15%.
- I met again by chance a lady from Hirosaki who picked me up on Nov. 22, 2009, Ms. Eriko.
- Two people confessed that they suffered from depression. Both were women. Both take mood altering medication. I told them that spiritual problems can only be effectively dealt with by using spiritual methods.
- Got bit in the arm by a driver's little dog which put a whole in my white dress shirt! The driver bought me a brand new shirt to replace it. Though there was a mark on my arm that day, by the next day it totally disappeared.
- A Christian lady who is a teacher at the prestigious Keio University took me all the way from Hirosaki to Fukushima, a distance of 430 kilometers. She has quite a few friends in high places!