

# Adventure hitchhiking home from Ajigasawa



Route of trip from Ajigasawa to Niigata

I was invited to do some work for a hotel in the city of Ajigasawa on the northern coast of the Sea of Japan in Aomori Prefecture. The hotel people treated me like a king and served me a dinner of what the Japanese would consider to be a gourmet specialty – half of which was [biblically unclean seafood](#) which I couldn't eat! But the breakfast was fantastic, a smorgasbord type of setting from which I could choose what I liked. The hotel paid the 10,000 yen (\$90) train fare to get me there, but as usual I always opt to hitchhike as much as possible to save money getting back home. I couldn't leave Ajigasawa until 11:30AM the next day to begin my race with the sun to try to catch the last ride before dark. In the summer I have two extra hours to hitchhike, but I knew it would still be pretty tough considering the distance of 450 plus kilometers to Niigata, and most of it on a regular road.

This trip brought me one ride over the 2000th mark of the number of rides I caught hitchhiking since keeping records from Aug. 2, 2003. Since then, I've traveled 97.900 kilometers.



Scene from route  
101 in Aomori  
Prefecture



Couple who took me

from Ajigasawa to  
Noshiro city in  
Akita



Lady with her  
Terrier dog who  
took me just past  
Akita city

After waiting over 40 minutes for the first ride, a couple picked me up and took me as far as Noshiro City in Akita Prefecture, a good distance of 100 kilometers! They even bought me lunch, a bowl of Ramen noodles.



Makoto Hasegawa

After that a lady took me about 40 kilometers toward Akita city. After her, a second lady with a cute little Terrier dog took me just past Akita city. This lady was very talkative. And it turns out that she knows a person who picked me up in 2006, Makoto Hasegawa, the captain of a professional basketball team in Niigata! She says that Mr. Hasegawa comes to visit her house from time to time because his native town is Akita and she has something to do with promoting basketball in Japan. This sport is not nearly as popular in Japan as it is in America. The average player works for a salary no better than an office worker in a regular company.

The 4th driver works for the income tax bureau. He was friendly, but not too talkative, and not very responsive to my questions about his work. But he took me with 10 minutes to spare to Sakata station from where I caught a train the rest of the way home. It was 7:30PM, already dark (no daylight savings time in Japan) and the train from Sakata City was the last one that day I could catch to avoid hitchhiking in the dark the rest of the way. I saved 2/3rds of the train fare I would have paid had I taken a train all the way.

---

## [Adventure Hitchhiking During Golden](#)

## Week



children of a couple who took me to a parking area on the Hokuriku Expressway.

### **Trip 1: From Niigata to Osaka**

Japan enjoys a string of holidays from April 29 to May 5th known as [Golden Week](#). I took advantage of this time to travel.

On May 2, 2010, I hitchhiked to Osaka from Niigata, a distance of 585 kilometers in 10 cars. Five of the cars were married couples and three of them had small children in the back seat. During holidays like Golden Week and [Obon](#) in August, I often get picked up by families visiting their hometowns. Sometimes they have the family dog with them. In the back seat of the seventh car was a beautiful three-year-old Golden Retriever named Mary.



The children's  
parents

At the Amagozen parking area in Ishikawa Prefecture after waiting for an hour for a car, **I was asked to leave** by one of the parking attendants! He told me I couldn't hitchhike there. It is extremely rare for me to be asked to leave an expressway parking area, and I have no choice but to comply. It was still only a little over halfway to my destination and didn't have enough money to take a bus or train the rest of the way to Osaka.

The parking attendant told me where I could catch a bus from within the parking area. I walked halfway toward it, saw a man, and making eye contact with him, I told him I wanted to go to Osaka. He asked where in Osaka. Anywhere I said. It turned out the man was going exactly to the very parking area in Osaka I wanted to get off at, the Sakae Parking area! He is a rather well-to-do man, a company president owning 3 companies, and his wife was in the back seat. I consider it a real miracle to run into him just when I needed a ride most desperately! We had a most pleasant conversation with him and his wife who happens to be Chinese from Taiwan! This was the second time today to ride with a foreigner. The wife of the driver in the previous vehicle is from the Philippines.

## Trip 2: From Osaka to Hamamatsu City in Shizuoka



Couple with two  
year old daughter  
who took me from  
Osaka to Kyoto

On May 5th I traveled in 4 cars 273 kilometers from Osaka to the city of Hamamatsu in the Tokkai area of Japan. [Tokkai is famous for its earthquakes](#) and occasional tsunami. It also happens to be one of the most popular areas to live in Japan due to its warm and sunny weather throughout the year. Only this year I found it *unusually cold* during my previous trip last April. Where's "[global warming](#)" when you need it? I remember the Tokkai area being warmer in mid-winter than it was last April, and that was 25 years ago!

Three of the 4 cars were families, and two had young children in the car. The first car took me to the Katsugawa Service area just before Kyoto. Sometimes I have to wait a relatively long time just to get to the other side of a large city like Kyoto, but today I caught the second ride in a matter of minutes. An older couple took me to a parking area close to Nagoya.

The last driver was a father of 3 children and a minister of the [Tenrikyo faith](#), a religion that began in the city of Tenri Japan in 1838. Tenrikyo is unusual for Japan because it is neither Buddhist nor Shinto and is a monotheistic religion, a belief in only one God. It seems to have had a lot of influence from Christian missionaries to Japan.

[More about Tenrikyo.](#)

## Trip 3: Hamamatsu to Tokyo



Three young men who took me to  
Fujikawa near Mt. Fuji

The next day on May 6th I needed to go to Noda city in Chiba on the eastern side of Tokyo. I also had an appointment at 7 PM to meet a man in Otemachi, the heart of Tokyo, a man from the U.K. who wrote me during this trip and expressed interest in my website!

From Hamamatsu, it only took 3 cars to go to Tokyo. The first car was going the opposite direction toward Nagoya, but I grabbed it because the Hamanako Service area is only 8 kilometers from where I was at the Hamamatsu Nishi interchange, and it is very easy to walk to the side of this particular service area to catch traffic going the opposite way.



Mt. Fuji as seen from the Fujikawa  
Service Area in Shizuoka

Three young men, all younger than my own two sons took me to the Fujikawa Service area. The view of Mt. Fuji today was better than I expected it to be. Normally the best time to see it is mid-winter when the sky is clearest with fewer clouds surrounding it.

The last car was elderly two ladies, one 75 years old, who took me to Yoga in Tokyo. I got to Tokyo by 4PM, and decided to use the extra time before the 7PM appointment to meet with my friends Steven and Teiko. and helped Teiko set up her own [WordPress blog](#). (Japanese only)



Mt. Fuji as seen  
from Susuno  
snapped from a  
moving car.

#### **Trip 4: The return home**

May 7, 2010: Japan enjoyed good weather throughout the Golden Week holiday, but today was Friday, a regular work day, and the weather turned cloudy and raining. But the rain in the Kanto area of Tokyo was light and intermittent, and I had a fold-up umbrella that I usually carry. I decided to go home today to have a couple of days of rest before work on Monday at my new job. I'm so glad I did because it took me two days to recover from this trip! When I travel I usually feel great, but upon returning home it's as if God pulled out the plug and I'm exhausted.

The first vehicle from the Miyoshi Service area near Tokyo was a truck which is unusual on the expressway. Trucks don't usually pick me up, but perhaps this one did because I asked the rider in the parking area and he asked the driver. They took me as far as Kamisato in Saitama which is next to the border of Gunma and just before the junction of the Joshi'etsu expressway that goes to Nagano. Not many cars are going to Niigata from Kamisato. Most go only as far as Takasaki or Maebashi in Gunma, and many take the Joshin'etsu toward Karuizawa and Nagano city. I could catch a ride going that way, but it's a longer roundabout way to Niigata and would get me home later. I opted to go for the road and wait for the direct route.

After about an hour a man saw my Niigata sign and offered to take me as far as Sanjo city. This was great because Niigata city is only 40 kilometers further and I could take a train from that point. The man's name was Mr. Sato and he was talkative throughout the remaining 200 kilometers of the trip.

---

## Monday adventure from Aomori to Niigata



Mr. Kato who took  
me to Kuroishi on  
the Tohoku  
Expressway

**April 19, 2010:** I had intended to hitchhike back home on Sunday morning but stayed in Aomori city in northern Honshu an extra day to deal with a friend's PC problem. Hitchhiking on a weekend or a holiday is always easier. There are more cars on the road with families traveling longer distances. Weekdays, and especially a **Monday** mean people traveling for business reasons, and they are usually not in a happy mood.

But this morning I had help to get started. Rather than walk to the highway and try to hitchhike 5 kilometers to the Aomori Chuo entrance of the Tohoku expressway, the friend with whom I stayed with offered to drive me there. This gave me a 30 minute head start. My home in Niigata is 580 kilometers distance via the Tohoku and Ban'etsu expressways and I hoped to return the same day.



The Kitayama  
brothers who took  
me to Hirosaki  
Owani interchange.

The first driver, Mr. Kato, said he would only go as far as Kuroishi, about

20 kilometers down the road. The traffic at Kuroshi was only a tiny fraction of Aomori Chuo, and I wondered if I made a mistake taking the ride from Mr. Kato. I knew the next expressway entrance at Hirosaki Owani would be much better for me, and headed that direction on foot. I knew it was too far to walk all the way, but nevertheless I continued walking down the road until I caught the next ride nearly an hour later. Twin brothers with the family name of Kitayama picked me up! They are highly skilled carpenters who make Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines. One of them said when he was young just after graduating from university, he traveled in Europe for 3 months hitchhiking from place to place. Japanese who have traveled overseas, and the ones who themselves have experienced hitchhiking will usually stop for me.



Former Sumo  
wrestler, Yoshi

The most interesting person to pick me up today was Yoshi, a former Sumo wrestler. He said he lived in a Sumo world from 8 years old till 20, and all he wanted to be in life was a professional sumo. But that dream suddenly ended with an injury to his knee. The doctor told him he couldn't wrestle anymore. In despair he left Japan and moved to San Diego to start a new life. There he grew fond of the local Mexican people, and learned to speak Spanish. He also met a Japanese girl in San Diego with whom he fell in love with and expressed that love. She told him, "Yoshi, you know nothing about real love! Come to church with me tonight and learn about love." So he went with her to a Spanish speaking church in San Diego, heard the Gospel of Jesus for the first time in his life, and was so moved with [the Message](#) he wept with emotion! God came into his life that night and by and by, he felt called to become a missionary to Peru! Yoshi described to me in detail life in Peru, the poverty and the lack of morals. And I thought Japan is tough! The Japanese are hard to sell but they do have a strong sense of morals in their culture. Though they don't know the teachings of the New Testament, many Japanese live by its principles better than Westerners who do know the Bible.

Yoshi took me to the Adatara parking area just before the junction of the Ban'estu expressway that goes to Niigata. It was 4:30PM and I still had an hour and a half of sunlight left. The previous time standing at Adatara I caught a ride in only 20 minutes, but 3 hours later by 7:30 I still hadn't caught a ride and was standing in the dark unable to even read the license plates until the car was about to pass me. Over 95% of the traffic was heading toward Tokyo, not toward Niigata. I realized rather than wait for cars to come to me, I would have to walk up to drivers in the parking area, the ones that have Niigata license plates. Normally I don't do this because drivers who do give me rides this way are usually not friendly or talkative, but I was in a desperate situation! The first driver I asked did give me a ride, and I was so grateful to know I would be home in two hours and not have to try to figure out how to sleep at Adatara that night. □



---

## Adventure returning home from Tokyo



Keiko and Tsutomu Uchiya

**April 6, 2010:** Today is the 11th and last day of my trip. The highlight was to meet Tsutomu and Keiko who took me from Gunma prefecture to the Miyoko parking area in Niigata. They are a married couple in their mid 40s who live in Chiba and work as hair stylists. The interchange Tsutomu and Keiko intended to exit the expressway was a convenient one for me to continue my journey from, and they opted to go a bit out of their way to take me to one that was better for me. But what ended up to be the best solution, when we stopped at Miyoko parking area, Tsutomu asked a young man with Niigata license plates if he would take me the rest of the way home, and the young man, Mr. Koike, agreed to do so! This saved both them and me time and effort.

---

## Adventure hitchhiking from Osaka to Tokyo





Muslims praying just after sunset at Fujikawa Service area on the Tomei expressway in Shizuoka prefecture. The cherry blossoms over their heads are in full bloom.

**April 3, 2010:** Osaka was still cold but sunny when I arrived at the Suita Service area on the Meishin expressway at 10:30 AM. The Meishin expressway runs from Nagoya to Kobe. The first driver took me to Gozaisho on the Shin (new) meishin expressway which is just before Nagoya. He said he is 50 years old and married. Both him and his wife are afflicted with some type of mental illness and cannot hold a job. The man was friendly but his driving caused me some alarm at times because it was a bit erratic.

At Gozaisho a van with four ladies and an elderly man took me to Hamanoko Service area just before Hamamatsu. Hamanako SA is a good place to hitchhike because it is on the Tomei expressway, a direct road to Tokyo. One of the ladies is studying English and spoke it fairly well though she has never been abroad. She studies on her own only with the aid of NHK radio English classes.

After an unusually long wait of about an hour at Hamanako, a young single couple named Dai and Marika took me to the Enshutoyota parking area just past Hamamatsu, only 20 some kilometers further up the road. He would have taken me a bit further to a larger service area, but I didn't want them to go out of their way and there seemed to be enough vehicles at the parking area to easily catch a ride. But after a few minutes at the parking area, I realized most of the traffic was local and wondered if I made a mistake getting off there. I had yet another long wait for the next ride. However, I've learned from experience that the times I waited the longest often ended with the best results. God would send somebody special that would make it worth the wait.

At Enshutoyota a saw a group of young men wearing what appeared be an Islamic type of garb. Some had beards. An hour later a van with the same men drove past me but stopped about 20 meters down the parking lot. I picked up my luggage and approached them. There were 7 in all averaging 22 years old, all

university students on a scholarship. Most were from Pakistan but at least one was from Bangladesh. I saw their van had Aomori plates and knew they would pass through Tokyo! All spoke English but would also speak either in Japanese or their own mother tongue to each other. All were friendly and seemed glad to offer me a ride.

Their names are Mustafiz, the man from Bangladesh who I sat next to, Mahatir who sat on the other side of Mustafiz, Arif the driver and another Arif, the front passenger next to him. Behind me sat Shazree, next to him Pika, and Izzul on the far window side. Mustafiz, 24, had the longest beard.

After two hours we arrived at the Fujikawa Service area. Mustafiz said they needed to stop and pray. It was 6 PM and the sun was about to set. They said I could wait in the car while they prayed, but I thought it would be wonderful to witness them praying, and asked if I could be with them. No problem they said. There was a beautiful view of Mt. Fuji and I hoped to take their photo in front of it. After prayer, they said, but by that time it was already too dark.

I was greatly impressed at the young Muslims' dedication, faithfulness and devotion to God. I asked them many questions about their life and religion. We exchanged different views and doctrines about faith, but there was no debating or arguing. I told them I never ever believed that Islamic fundamentalists had anything to do with [911](#).

---

## [Adventure to Kansai](#)



**March 27, 2010:** Today is the first day of an extended hitchhiking adventure to southern Japan.

I left home at 7:30AM. The weather was unusually fair for normally-cloudy Niigata. The first stop was Kariwa, a village next to Kashiwazaki city and home to the [largest nuclear power plant in the world](#). Since a major earthquake just off shore Kariwa in the Sea of Japan, two of the 9 nuclear reactors are again producing electricity.



Nobuo and Miwako  
at their wedding  
party

After arriving Kariwa a little before 10AM, I spent the next two and a half hours with Nobuo and Miwako, friends who I came to know when hitchhiking four years ago.

By 12:30 the beautiful weather turned cold and cloudy with intermittent snow. I had hoped to hitchhike all the way to Otsu City just before Kyoto this day, but when a man offered me a ride to Matsumoto in Nagano Prefecture instead, I grabbed the offer. I knew that Nagano would be better weather, and my appointment to meet a friend in Otsu was not till the next day on Sunday.

(To be continued!)

---

## [Adventure Returning Home to Niigata City](#)



Mr. and Mrs. Ii who went out of their way to take me to Niigata City

**March 22, 2010:** It was unusually windy with a few snow flurries, and the temperature was just one degree above freezing when I left my friend's house in Aomori city at 7:30 AM to walk to the National Highway route 7. I've hitchhiked on this highway before, but this morning people seemed unusually hard and unconcerned. Nearly everybody was ignoring me and the others who didn't would shake their heads or cross their arms meaning "no!" After an hour and a half and walking several kilometers I got desperate and send an

email text message to my mate for her to pray for me.

Within only a matter of **seconds** after sending that text message requesting prayer, I noticed a car stopped about 100 meters up the road and started walking toward it. Not every stopped car necessarily means the driver is offering me a ride, but after walking a bit closer, a man got out of the car and waved me to come! It was a father with his teenage son. They took me to the Aomori Chuo Interchange which is an entrance to the Tohoku Expressway. It was only 3 kilometers further up the road, but they saved me at least another 30 minutes walking.

I had originally intended to take Route 7 back home which is the same route that I came on, but it was already 9AM and I figured perhaps the Tohoku Expressway would be faster even though I may have longer waits. The wind was strong and I began to feel cold. It was good to be wearing a heavy winter coat and woolen hat this trip.

After about an hour a man stopped and offered me a ride to Omagari City in Akita Prefecture. I rejoiced because this would take me to the Shiwa service area past Morioka which is about 200 kilometers further or over 1/3 of the way back home!

After arriving in Shiwa, I remembered that I had quite a long wait there last year during a previous trip. But this time after only 10 minutes a couple with a young son offered me a ride. They were going all the way to Chiba which meant I could go with them as far as the Adatara Service area just before the junction of the Ban'etsu expressway! This is as good as it gets, for we arrived at Adatara at 3:30PM or two hours before sunset. I needed only one more good ride!

The driver was an engineer working with lasers and fiber optic cable production. I commented to him that such technology must be extremely complex, and yet it doesn't compare with the complexity of the human cell. He smiled when he realized the conversation was leading to [creation by intelligent design](#).

The engineer was also interested in what I had to say about the fall of the American government in 1913 when [Woodrow Wilson sold the American economy to a private investor corporation](#).

At Adatara after only a 15-minute wait, a young couple, Mr. and Mrs. Ii from Toyama, took me the final 120 some kilometers back to Niigata. May God bless them greatly for their kindness! They had to get off the expressway to drop me off which meant it cost them another 1000 yen in toll to get back on.

---

## Back on the road! – Adventure to Aomori, March 2010



A couple soon to be married who took me from Murakami city toward Yamagata

Princess, the Shih Tsu dog that I have been caring for since December is now with new owners. I'm now free to continue to travel Japan, meet people, share my [faith](#), and visit [Family International](#) Homes throughout the country.



Mt. Chokai as seen from  
Sakata City in Yamagata  
Prefecture

On February 19th I left home and arrived in Aomori city the next day. It was beautiful weather the first day. The view of Mount Chokai from Sakata City in Yamagata prefecture was outstanding! It was completely hidden by clouds the last time I passed it last November. Nine drivers, all very pleasant people, took me 270 kilometers to Akita city where I stayed overnight. There was very little waiting time between rides, and I arrived before sundown.

I expected continued fair weather but the next day was cloudy with light rain. A small fold-up umbrella I always carry with me was sufficient protection. A truck driver took me as far as Odate city which is just before Aomori. I considered this nothing short of fantastic because only 7% of the vehicles I ride in are trucks, and a truck going a good distance was just what I needed on a rainy day.

The last driver, Mr. Tooru, took me to the very door of my destination.



---

## Second hitchhike adventure 2010



Hitomi (27) who took me back home

Princess the little Shih Tsu dog I am temporally taking care of was taken to be shampooed, and this set me free from caring for her to do other things. It's a beautiful sunny day in normally cloudy Niigata and so I just had to grab the opportunity to get out again, hitchhike and meet people.

The first driver was a man who appeared to be in his upper 60s, maybe lower 70s. He drove at least 10 kilometers out of his way to take me to a convenient location from where to continue my trip. I left him with an Activated Magazine.

Usually, older Japanese people who pick me up have traveled abroad, or have had something to do with foreigners, but the man said he has never been out of Japan. Later he said that his daughter lived in England for 6 months as an exchange student and was hosted by a British family. Ah ha! Japanese have a deep sense of obligation when helped by others, or even if any member of their family was helped, and this man's motivation was probably to return the favor. It doesn't matter to the Japanese if the foreigner in question had nothing to do with helping his daughter, any Caucasian-looking foreigner will do. □

A single lady by the name of Hitomi took me back to the area where I left my bicycle not far from home. I gave her an Activated Magazine, one that had an article exposing [Darwin's delusion](#). The Japanese, as you may know, are not very religious people. In spite of that, their culture reflects very much in many ways the teachings of Jesus such as being kind to strangers, helping those in need, etc. They hate falsehood. When I explain that Evolution is one of the falsehoods they have been fed since childhood, most of them receive it.

---

## 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](#).

---

## Hitchhiking stats compared



The year is almost over and I probably won't be going on the road again this month. Last night I added up the distances hitchhiked this year and they totaled to 19,530 kilometers. This is nearly 1000 more kilometers traveled compared to my previous record of 18,537 kilometers hitchhiked in 2005!

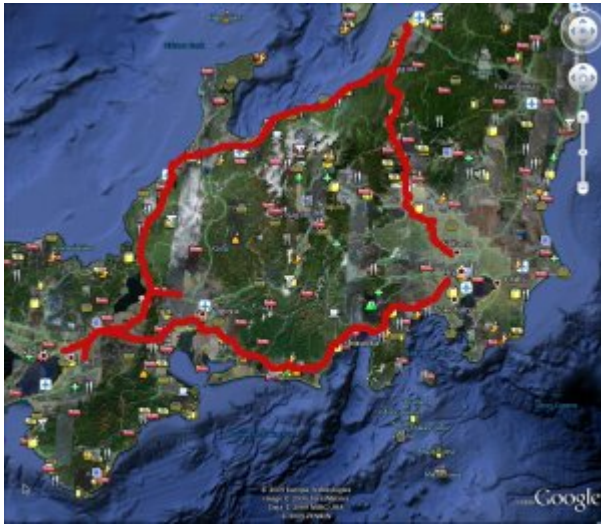


One of my goals for 2010 is to surpass the 20,000 kilometer mark.

I don't travel by hitchhiking merely for the sake of traveling. Every time I go out it's for some purpose, and often to visit friends and contacts to cure their Microsoft Windows ills. Thanks to the [inherent security holes in Windows](#) that lets in viruses, malware, and trojans, I'll never lack for a way to support myself. □ Of course, poor practices of the end user have a big part of the blame too. That's a big reason why I favor Linux. It's practically idiot proof. The user cannot hurt the system, even maliciously, without root access, and no user of my Linux machine will ever have root access, only me, the administrator.

---

# December 2009 hitchhike adventure in central Japan



The red line shows my trip.

From November 30th to December 5th, I circled central Japan and reached my year-end goal of 90,000 kilometers distance hitchhiked from August 2003. In 16 vehicles I covered 1420 kilometers passing through Tokyo, Nagoya, Kyoto and Osaka. This trip also broke my previous record of 2005 of kilometers traveled in one year.

An interesting person I met on the way to Tokyo was a man who lived in Iraq for 5 years during Saddam Hussein's administration and 6 months in Iran during the Shah's reign. He is a soil specialist. He was driving a dirty truck and didn't look like the scientist and specialist he turned out to be. He also surprised me with his good English. I asked him if he enjoyed his time in Iraq and he replied that he thought he would die several times! He often had to work in the desert suffering both heat and cold. He said that the mental attitude in that part of the world holds those who are robbed more evil than the robber!



Mother with daughter who  
caught the H1N1 flu virus

The first car was a lady with her 12 year old daughter. I asked why they were wearing face masks and the mother replied that her daughter just caught the swine flu! At that point, I wanted to get out of the car, and especially so when she said she would take me to a train station which was a bit out of my way. But when I asked the lady to take me only up to the next major intersection, she replied that she would take me to route 8, a major highway going to the Sanjo interchange. I decided to accept her offer.

A truck driver leaning way back in the driver's seat picked me up and took me to the interchange.

In Kawasaki city I pioneered a new way to get to the Tomei Expressway: Take the Denentoshi line to Fujigaoka and walk to the Kouhoku Parking area which is only about 1.5 kilometers distance from that station.

On the way to Kouhoku, it started to rain. At first, it was only a fine drizzle and I hoped it wouldn't get worse because I had no umbrella. I walked into a shop to ask for directions and the shop lady, seeing I had no umbrella, offered me one. I was so thankful to have that umbrella later because it really started to pour when hitchhiking at Kouhoku.



Laid back trucker

Dr. Sato, a professor of medicine in Niigata University took me back home. It's always interesting for me to meet highly educated men. We always have deep conversations about life, health, relationships, politics, science, the economy, etc., etc. No matter how erudite they are, or think they are, I keep up my side of any conversation with them despite the fact I barely graduated from high school. God gave me a marvelous education as a missionary in Japan.

---

## November Hitchhike Adventure to Aomori



University professor Dr. A. Kusumi who took me to Niigata from Hirosaki city in Aomori Prefecture

Again I went to Aomori city and back, 1060 kilometers, this time in 12

vehicles which includes two trucks. The highlight of the trip was to meet A. Kusumi, a professor who teaches environmental research at a university in Nagoya. I met him at the entrance of the Tohoku Expressway near Hirosaki. His car was packed with his belongings and at first he told me there was no room for me to sit. But after rearranging his gear I was able to squeeze my feet into a small space on the floor and sit in the front passenger seat. Dr. Kusumi was on his way home to Nagoya and said he would take the expressway all the way. I rejoiced knowing this would take me all the way home because the route passes through Niigata!

Dr. Kusumi became very tired after passing Sendai and stopped frequently at parking areas to rest. My home is about half way to his destination and I suggested that he spend the night as my guest. He accepted, took me home and met the rest of my family. I was so glad to return a favor to this kind man for taking me 550 kilometers back home for free and even buying me dinner along the way. Dr. Kusumi lived in Israel and studied at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem for 3 years. (Click on his photo to have a closer look at his sweatshirt.) You can bet we had quite a few interesting discussions. ☐

This trip took me over the 89,000 kilometer mark since I've been keeping stats from August 2003. I think I can surpass the 90,000 kilometer mark before the end of the year by making another trip. I'm planning one that will take me to Tokyo, Shizuoka and the Kyoto / Osaka / Kobe area, and this will bring me well over 90,000 kilometers.

---

## Picked up by two Nichiren ladies



**November 29, 2009:** While hitchhiking to town I noticed a lady walking toward me from a distance with what appeared to be her car parked by the side of the road behind her. I correctly assumed she was going to offer me a ride. She had another lady friend with her who was the driver. They seemed a bit overly impressed to meet me which caused me to become suspicious.

I asked them, "Do you want to sell me something?"

“No!”

“Are you folks into some kind of religion?”

“No!”

They asked me if I had eaten lunch yet and invited me to a restaurant to talk. I accepted the invitation because I wasn't in any hurry and knew it would give me an opportunity to share my faith with them.

In the restaurant I offered to give them two Activated magazines. As soon as I pulled them out of my briefcase, they turned them down. The only kind of Japanese who refuses to accept literature from me are people into some type of religion, and sure enough, these two ladies turned out to be [Nichiren Buddhist](#) people, and their intent was to try to convert me!

Most Buddhists are very tolerant of other religions, and they have no problem toward Christians in general. The Nichiren sect is the **notifiable exception**. They will flatly tell you to forsake Jesus Christ and pray to their idol using their chant instead. Every time they chanted that horrible chant to me, I started to pray the “Our Father” prayer and told them that prayer works for me. To their credit, they did listen when I told them why Jesus died on the cross, and for what reason, to save all of mankind from sin.

Normally when a Japanese person invites me to a restaurant or coffee bar, they will pick up my tab. I fully expected this to happen but to my embarrassment I walked halfway out of the restaurant and was told I hadn't paid my bill yet! Next time I'll be more wary when a person seems overly interested in talking to me even though we just met. Either they want to convert you or sell you on some network marketing type of product. □

---

## October Adventure to Aomori



A man who took me to Murakami City in Niigata Prefecture

**October 30, 2009:** I needed to be in Odate City in Akita Prefecture on November 1st for an appointment at 9:00 AM. Odate is the birthplace of [Hachiko, the faithful dog](#) that would come to meet his master at Shibuya Station in Tokyo when he arrived returning from work. Hachiko continued to do this every evening – even after his master died – for a period of 10 years!



Rather than stay in a hotel in Odate, I opted to stay in Aomori city with friends. Taking the 7:10 train from Aomori would get me in time for my appointment.

The first ride was a truck driver carrying a power shovel. I think this is the very first time I rode in a truck with such a heavy load. In the photo just in front of the truck you can see the two pieces of language I was carrying.



Hosaka Takayuki

I made it as far as Akita City that day in 4 vehicles.



Sachiyo who took me to Akita City

The next morning Hosaka Takayuki took me to just outside of Akita City from where I caught a ride with Sachiyo, (22) whose car was loaded with luggage. She said that she was moving from Akita back to her home town in Aomori. She saw the Akita sign that I was holding, past me once, and then turned around and offered me a ride. This kind lady even went 60 kilometers out of her way to take me to my specific destination in Akita!

Sachiyo was my audience for the next three hours while I shared stories from the Bible with her. Most Japanese know about Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, and they know about the great worldwide flood and Noah's ark, but they don't understand the significance of these historical events. It's always a joy for me to share God's good Word with the dear Japanese people. In Sachiyo's case she was already inclined to believe in the existence of the Great Creator and so she readily prayed with me to accept Jesus Christ as her Savior after we reached our destination.

---

**[A driver's mistake helps me to get home](#)**



Asari Toru who drove me a distance of 200 kilometers

**October 25:** I'm in Aomori city and on the way back home to Niigata. Rather than go back the way I came along National Route #7, I decided to try the Tohoku expressway that runs through Sendai.

The first driver was on his way back home to Akita City after attending a Rugby match in Aomori. He offered to take me to Route 7 in Akita city. Because he would be taking the expressway a major part of the way, I knew I would make good time, but I also knew getting to Akita even as early as 1 PM would still leave me hitchhiking in the dark by the time I got to Tsuruoka in Yamagata with 150 kilometers left to go. I hoped rather that I would be able to continue on the Tohoku expressway, but I knew that the Hanawa Service Area where I needed to get off at was past the driver's exit. Amazingly the driver missed his exit and ended up taking me to the Hanawa Service area anyway!

It was a 3-hour wait at Hanawa before I caught the second ride. It's not easy on me physically to stand for three hours waiting for rides, but I knew if I could catch a good one, it would be worth the wait. A 30-year-old man, Toru, took me all the way to Miyagi Prefecture just before Sendai. He drove at a good clip which gained me some time. Toru listened intently while I shared with him the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. I told him if he even only knows, understands and believes in the first 6 chapters of the book of Genesis, he'll be smarter than most of the professors of Tokyo University, the top school in Japan! And I'm not kidding when I say that.

After that, a sweet older couple from Morioka who were on the way to Yokohama took me to Adatara which is just before the Ban'etsu expressway junction that leads home. Morioka is a conservative town deep in the country, but because their daughter married a man from the U.K. and is living there now, they both felt an affinity toward foreigners.

Though I still ended up hitchhiking in the dark at the Adatara Service area, going the remaining 150 kilometers home meant just one good ride rather than several on Route 7. A chiropractor from Fukushima picked me up after a 40-minute wait and took me all the way home.



---

## Adventure hitchhiking to Aomori city on Route 7



The red line shows route 7

The good Lord blessed my efforts and a man driving a truck, Mr. Kawamoto, picked me up after only a few minutes and took me all the way to the door of my destination! At first Mr. Kawamoto said he would take me to Hirosaki, about 3/4 of the way to Aomori City, but then he said if I wasn't in a hurry, he would take me to Aomori city after a brief stop over for some business in Hirosaki. I agreed to that.

Mr. Kawamoto is a very talkative man. He asked me many questions about America, where I traveled in Japan, and how I learned to speak Japanese. I gave him an [Activated Magazine](#).



Mr. Kawamoto who took me 200 kilometers from Akita City to Aomori City.

---

## Adventure to Sendai



Route 49 by Lake Inawashiro, Fukushima Prefecture

**October 14, 2009:** Today I went to Sendai via the same route I took on my adventure to [Aomori via Fukushima on Sept. 17, 2009](#). I thought it would be a piece of cake considering that Sendai is only 290 kilometers or a bit less than half the distance to Aomori. This time, however, I got stuck at Aizuwakamatsu City in Fukushima for nearly a couple of hours both going to Sendai and on the way back home. In spite of that, the wonderful people I met along the way made it all worthwhile.

After walking 30 minutes from home to the main road, a young man, Hiroshi Tazawa picked me up and took me to the next town 10 kilometers further. Hiroshi encouraged me to take a bus or train, but I told him I only had about 3500 yen in my pocket (about \$40 US), not nearly enough for even a one-way trip! He responded, "Isn't it a bit reckless to travel with so little money?"

"No, not at all" I answered. "I'm a professional hitchhiker. I have more than enough money for this trip." Nevertheless, Hiroshi felt sorry for me and gave me 1000 yen out of his pocket.

I left home at noon but only made it as far as Lake Inawashiro by 6 PM. This is only 90 kilometers from home, not even half the distance to Sendai. It was already dark. After 45 minutes wait in the parking area, two businessmen pulled up and asked what I was doing. I gave the driver my business card and explained I was going to Sendai. They took me as far as Sendai station and from there I took a short train the rest of the way.

One of the men said he would never have picked me up had he been alone for security reasons. I told him that **over half** of the rides I get are from men traveling alone, **15% of the rides are from women**, and some of them are young mothers with **small children** in the back seat! The man was absolutely dumbfounded to hear that! Ironically on the return trip, 3 different women picked me up, and one was a mother with two young children in the back!



Eiji Tsukita who took me to Sendai  
on Sept. 17 and back to Fukushima  
on Oct. 16.

The most exciting part of this trip was meeting again Mr. Eiji Tsukita, the same man who took me to Sendai on Sept. 17! I was waiting for a ride at Sendai Minami interchange when he came. The first time he took me from Aizuwakamatsu to the Sugo parking area just before Sendai, and this time we met at Sendai Minami on the way back! Eiji rejoiced to see me because he said that only 4 hours after he dropped me off at Sugo, he got a job offer and is now employed again! Eiji's father said that good fortune blessed him because he was kind to me. I immediately gave the credit to God and said it was because of Jesus. Eiji told me he never picked up a hitchhiker before but when he first saw me on Sept. 17th, he went past me and then turned around feeling something in his heart that he needed to help me. I told him this was no accident, it was God speaking to him.

Eiji said over and over it was a miracle to meet up with me again. I agreed for I told him I left the area briefly to ask someone how far away the Sugo parking area is. I thought to walk there if no more than 3 kilometers distance, but when a taxi driver told me Sugo was 10 kilometers away, I turned back and waited again at the expressway entrance. Just a couple of minutes later Eiji pulled up. He took me to Koriyama city from where I hitchhiked the rest of the way home on route 49. Eiji said that he would even take me all the way home if he had time. He read the [Activated Magazine](#) I gave him the first time. I gave him my extra copy of a Japanese New Testament after I signed and dated it.



Mother with her two children who went out of her way to take me home.

---

## [Race against the clock to Hirosaki city](#)



## Northern Honshu, Japan

**October 11, 2009:** I was in Mutsu City in the Shimokita peninsula in Aomori prefecture of northern Japan. As you can see on the map, the top of the red line was my starting point and the end of the line is Noheji city which was my destination. I started out 11:30AM and had to be at Noheji city by 2PM in order to catch a train to Hirosaki City in order to be there by 4:30 at the latest so I could catch a ride with a friend back to Niigata. My friend said he couldn't wait for me very long, and I certainly didn't want to inconvenience him. There is a train line running from Mutsu City but it didn't leave till after 2PM which meant I would miss the train from Noheji if I took it. My only recourse was to hitchhike along the country road that runs along the eastern coast of the Rikuoka Bay.

After walking a good 20 minutes to get to a traffic light going in the right direction, I waited about 20 more minutes for my first ride. Mr. Takatsuka took me 6 kilometers to the main road that runs to Noheji. After that a married couple took me 3 more kilometers down to the next train station. From there a young man driving a pickup truck with a fancy padded interior said he was going to Yokohama. I rejoiced thinking he meant the Yokohama near Tokyo, but it was a different Yokohama, only halfway to Noheji which is about 30 minutes further. The time was 12:45 PM. If I could catch the next ride within 10 minutes after getting off at Yokohama, I would make it.

I caught the ride only a couple of minutes after leaving the young man. They were two young ladies with a 5-year-old boy. The driver was the mother of the boy and the passenger is the driver's friend. They were going to Misawa city and would pass through Noheji. I asked them what they thought about US President Obama winning the Nobel Peace Prize but they had no strong opinion. Somehow our conversation got into the deeper things of life. We talked about the stories of the Book of Genesis, why they are true and easier to believe than the [delusions of Darwin](#), and eventually talked about the condition of Mankind and why we need a spiritual savior, [Jesus Christ](#).

---

## Discussion With a Nuclear Physicist on the way to Kanazawa



A mother and daughter who went out of the way to take me to my destination.

**Oct. 3, 2009:** It rained hard during the evening and early morning, but by 9 AM the rain subsided. I needed to go to Kanazawa city in Ishikawa Prefecture for business the next day and opted to hitchhike rather than taking the bus in spite of the possibility of more rain later. I'm sure glad I did because the weather cleared up completely by noon and I met 6 interesting people whom I would not have met otherwise.

Perhaps the most interesting person to talk to was a nuclear physicist who said he worked in a laboratory in New York for two years. He was traveling with his wife to Nagano which meant I rode with them for a good 30 minutes as far as the Yoneyama service area on the Hokuriku expressway. Our conversation for the first few minutes was all in Japanese, but he started speaking English when I pointed out how Darwinian teaching has influenced at least two main branches of science, namely Geology and Biology which claims Evolution as its cornerstone.

I pointed out to the scientist how geology is based on false assumptions of the age of the earth and uses circular reasoning. The geologist says his rock is so many millions of years old because the paleontologist says the fossil found in the rock is so many millions of years old, and the paleontologist says his fossil is so many millions of years old because the geologist says the rock the fossil was taken from is so many millions of years old! This is **not science**! If an honest thinking person ponders the matter, he or she will see that evolution is based on certain assumptions, such as the old of the earth forming millions of years ago. The scientist only laughed when I told him according to the Bible the earth was created a mere 6000 years ago. I told him I'm not surprised he would laugh because he was raised under the false paradigm of Darwinism. Darwin himself didn't dream up all his teachings but borrowed much of them from others such as [Jean-Baptiste Lamarck](#) (1744-1829), [Charles Lyell](#) (1797-1875), and [Alfred Russel Wallace](#)

(1823-1913).



Two young ladies on the way to a live concert. They took me to Toyama city from Kanazawa.

I've been reading an excellent book by Ian T. Taylor entitled, "[In the minds of men – Darwin and the New World Order.](#)" I gained so much valuable knowledge from this book that exposes Darwinism, and I highly encourage everybody to read it.

From Yoneyama, a man going to [Obama City](#) took me all the way to a bus stop near Kanazawa, a good two hours further up the road. I asked him if the economy of his city is better since Barack Obama became President. He said, "Not much." The man's accent was so thick I could only understand about half of what he said. Later I learned the language of Obama city is heavily influenced by Kyoto which is near proximity. The man was friendly and bought me lunch.

The last people to pick me up were two ladies, Mrs. Tokuda and her daughter. They saw me hitchhiking in front of Nonoichi train station and offered to take me to the exact destination I needed to go (about 6 more kilometers) if only I would come with them to the doctor's office and wait while they had a check-up. I agreed because I wasn't in a hurry and I knew this would give me an opportunity to share the Message of Jesus Christ with them. The mother said her parents sent her to a Christian kindergarten and so has some knowledge of the Bible.