

# 2013 Golden Week Hitchhike Adventure to Aomori



Mr. and Mrs. Kamimoto who took me from Iwate to Fukushima



The Tohoku area of Northern Honshu, Japan. The red light shows my usual route to Aomori City, and the blue line shows the route I took back via the Tohoku and Banestsu Expressways. It is 130 kilometers longer than the Sea of Japan route, but potentially faster.

From April 27th to April 29th I hitchhiked 986 kilometers in 12 vehicles From Niigata to Aomori Prefecture and back. (See map) This time is the beginning of what is called “Golden Week” in Japan, a string of holidays which includes Emperor Showa’s birthday.

It rained hard the night before I left but by morning, the rain had stopped in Niigata. I caught an immediate ride at my starting point on Route 345 near Majima station, the first car that came! The driver took me to Tsuruoka City in Yamagata Prefecture, a good 1.5 hour distance of about 100 kilometers. It was raining heavily when I arrived and so I sought for shelter at a store for some 30 minutes. The rain subsided by then but there were strong gusts of wind. My umbrella strained against it but survived.

The second car also came very quickly, a man who took me to Sakata City about 20 kilometers up the road. He offered me a can of coffee to drink but I politely declined. I explained to him that I quit all caffeine intake only 4 days before. I shared with him the physiological and psychological harm caffeine does to my body, things I read from “Caffeine Blues.”

The final car that day was a mother and her one and a half year old daughter.



Mr. and Mrs. Kamimoto who took me from Iwate to Fukushima

The longest ride on the way back was from Iwatesan Service Area in Iwate Prefecture just before Morioka City to Adatara in Fukushima, 310 kilometers. The driver, Mr. Kamimoto and his wife were one of the sweetest couples as well. They treated me to lunch at Kunimi Service Area in Fukushima Prefecture. It turns out Mr. Kamimoto served some 34 years in the Japanese Self Defense Force! I knew from my own military experience as an Airman in the USAF that he must have rose fairly high in rank to be in the military so long, and I learned he retired as a Lt. General! I think Mr. Kamimoto must be the highest ranking officer who ever befriended me. I've only known colonels before.

The Kamimotos took me to Adatara SA which is just before the Banetsu Expressway junction. From experience I know this is the hardest point to catch a ride toward my destination of Niigata. Nearly all of the traffic is heading south toward Tokyo. However today, I got an immediate ride! A high school science teacher and his elderly mother saw my sign and stopped for me. I asked him if he believes in evolution. "Of course!", the teacher replied. I explained why I reject it as false science. They took me to Bandaisan Service Area. At that point a good percentage of the traffic is going to Niigata.



Mr. and Mrs. Satoh who took me to Niigata City

The final ride to Niigata City was a couple from the Unification Church, Mr. and Mrs. Satoh. He's also a nuclear power plant engineer at the power plant at Kashiwazaki-Kariwa, the largest nuclear power plant in the world. We talked about his job for a while, and then he switched to biblical doctrinal matters. For some reason, these dear people do not think that Jesus' death on the Cross of Calvary was necessary or good! They think that Jesus failed! I told them Jesus offered Himself as a sacrifice for our sins, and His blood shed on the cross cleans us from all sin.

Colossians 1:20 And, having made peace through the blood of his

cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.