

Adventure from Aomori to Niigata via Misawa and Fukushima



Yoko Kosaka

Sept. 22, 2009: This is a continuation of my previous post. The return to Niigata from Aomori took me via Misawa city, the location of a large USAF base close to where I visited a friend to help him with his Windows Vista PC problems. Yoko Kosaka took me on the first leg of my journey.

The next day it only took 4 cars to take me the 550 kilometers back home. I had to wait for just a little over two hours at the Adataro Service area on the Tohoku Expressway to catch the last ride. One of the reasons I had to wait so long at Adataro was because the preponderance of the traffic, over 95% of it, was heading toward Tokyo. I nearly accepted a ride from a young couple going to Tokyo, but the thought of aborting the last leg of only two hours traveling to hitchhike yet another 300 kilometers or a possible 6 more hours the next day was just so tiring, and I was tired enough already. Though it was already dark after 7 PM, I knew I was looking at only a couple more hours travel by catching a car going toward Niigata and it would be only a matter of time before I caught that ride. There were at least couple dozen cars with Niigata license plates that drove past me, but the drivers either ignored me or shook their heads no.

This season in Japan is during a special 5-day holiday which runs from Saturday to Wednesday. It was Tuesday evening and there was much traffic, so much that even the Ban'etsu expressway was jammed at certain points! A little after 7 PM an elderly couple with their 8-year-old grandson saw my Niigata sign and stopped for me. They were going exactly toward my town, and took me to a point only 5 minutes walk from the house!