

Adventure from Kobe to Fukuoka City



Megumi and Kohei. They went out of their way to take me to Hiroshima from Okayama

August 2: Today I needed to travel as far as Fukuoka City in Kyushu – a long distance of over 600 kilometers and unfamiliar territory passing through Hiroshima city which is the halfway point of this trip. Though I got off to a very slow start of less than 10 kilometers the first hour, I knew from experience my pace would get faster and faster the closer and closer I get to my destination. I started at 9:30 AM and didn't get to Hiroshima until 4:00PM which meant I averaged only 46 kilometers per hour. But the next 300 kilometers only took me 4 hours averaging 75 kilometers per hour! One driver, a young man of 26 years old, was speeding up to 150 kilometers per hour.

After waiting with no success for 40 minutes at the expressway entrance ramp in the middle of Kobe, I decided to walk further down the road to a traffic light to catch the cars when drivers wait for the light to change. I had no guarantee the driver would be going on the expressway, but because the road was heading in the direction I was going, I would have been glad to catch practically anybody.

In just a couple minutes I was offered a ride and he went on the expressway! The man, Mamoru Watanabe is a Coast Guard officer who spoke some English. I thanked him for protecting Japan from the nasty North Koreans. He took me to Kyobashi parking area in the middle of Kobe. At least now I was on an expressway, but I still had to transfer to the Sanyo expressway which would take me to the end of Honshu.

At Kibi two young men, one with a video camera approached me and asked my destination. I saw one of them was holding a large paper binder with one page saying "Hiroshima" in Japanese and realized they were also hitchhiking! They said they are working on a scientific research paper on hitchhiking. I invited them to check out this blog.

From Kibi a man who is a sales representative for a petroleum company took me to Kudamatsu Service area in Yamaguchi Prefecture. From Kudamatsu a 26 year old truck driver took me all the way to the Oji parking area just before Shimonoseki which is the end of Honshu. He said he had to get off the expressway at Tokuyama to change to another car. We made good time because he was speeding up to 150 kilometers per hour. If caught going that fast, the driver would be looking at a fine of 70,000 yen or so.