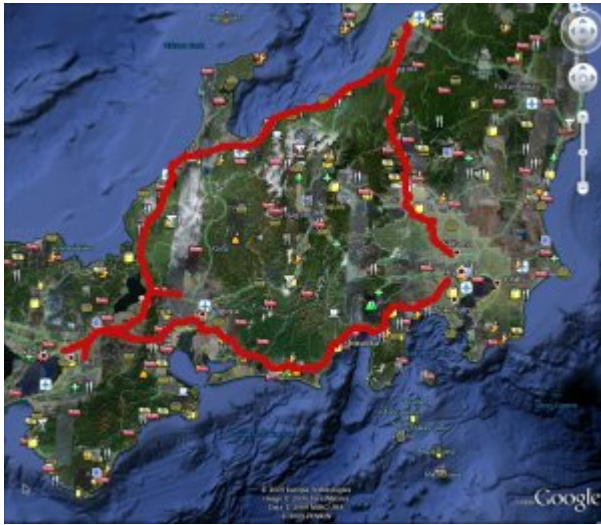


December 2009 hitchhike adventure in central Japan



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.