

Hitchhike adventure to Hirosaki



With another man also hitchhiking! His partner with him took the photo



Couple who took me from Adatara to
Bandaian SA on the Banetsu
Expressway

March 2, 2012: It's been nearly two months since my last trip. Sometimes I wonder if getting older will discourage folks from picking me up, but this adventure proves to me otherwise. It was one of the least expensive considering the distance traveled. The round trip was 906 kilometers in 11 vehicles.

At 7:35 a.m. I began hitchhiking along route 345 from Majima station, just past Murakami. This road runs parallel to the Sea of Japan and very close to it. The day was sunny and views of the coast lovely. Only 10 minutes later a lady picked me up and took me as far as Sanboku, about 20 kilometers up the road and just before the connection to route 7, the main highway going north.

From Samboku I walked about 3.5 kilometers in 55 minutes to Fuya. There were several tunnels along the way. One was about 600 meters long, too long and dangerous to walk through seeing it had no sidewalk for pedestrians, and the traffic was medium. Adjacent to that tunnel closer to the coast was another tunnel that ran parallel to it. It was shorter and for some reason closed to traffic. I could see the end of the tunnel and hoped that there would be a road going further. I walked through it and found yet more short tunnels, all closed to traffic, and walked through them. All the way I saw no one but apparently some do walk through them because I saw footprints and bicycle tracks entering the tunnels. Finally I came back to the main highway, route 7, close to Fuya station. I walked to an intersection with a traffic signal and began hitchhiking again.

From Fuya an older man took me to Atsumi Onsen, a tourist area with a large "Michi no Eki" or parking area with shops and restaurants.

From Atsumi Onsen a mother and son took me to Tsuruoka city, about 140 kilometers from home. Often I get stuck for a while at this point, but shortly afterward a truck driver took me to Sakata city, 20 kilometers further.

I've been stuck for a while at Sakata as well. The next large city is Akita, a good 80 kilometers away. But today a man coming all the way from Osaka picked me up when seeing my Akita sign, and it turned out he was traveling all the way to a town in Aomori right next to my destination! His name is Mr. Kajiwara, and we had a great conversation the entire trip, about 4 hours. He bought me lunch and took me to Hirosaki station, actual walking distance to the hotel where I stayed that night.