

# Mid Winter Hitchhike Adventure to Aomori



Route 345 near Majima station, Murakami City, Niigata Prefecture

**February 15, 2014** According to yesterday's weather forecast, I expected it to snow all day and was prepared to take a train from Niigata City to Hirosaki in Aomori Prefecture. But at 7:30 a.m. because the weather was fair, I decided to get off the train at Majima station and hitchhike.

The traffic was sparse. After 30 minutes waiting at the spot on the road which you see in the photo, I decided to walk. This way I would stay warmer. I hoped drivers would take pity on me seeing me in a more isolated spot away from the town. Today was the longest walk I had up Route 345 – a full hour. A man in a fine car offered to take me 10 kilometers further. Later he decided to take me as far as Route 7 which was much better for me. Route 7 is the main highway going to Hirosaki.



Couple who took me 190 kilometers to Akita Station

After a relatively short wait near the intersection of Route 7 and Route 345, a couple on their way to Akita City pulled up and offered me a ride. Going all the way to Akita city in a single ride is outstanding! It has taken me as many as 6 cars to get that distance! The ride was a good 3 hours. They were interested in why I hitchhike and all the various experiences I've had hitchhiking.

From Akita station I took a train to Ikawa Sakura station, 400 yen distance, and hitchhiked again. Three vehicles with two drivers who were ladies took me to Odate Station from where I got a train the rest of the way. It started to

snow and was getting dark by the time I got to Odate.



Route 7 Nagamine, Akita Prefecture. Home is 400 kilometers ahead.

After my business the next day, I took a train to Nagamine Station and hitchhiked on the road you see in the photo above. The driver, a young man, took me to the desolate area you see in the photo which was about 15 kilometers further up the road.



Part way from Nagamine to Odate.

I didn't exactly relish getting off there because I knew traffic would be sparse, but the first driver who saw me stopped! It was a light truck. The driver was on his way to Odate City. He took me to the entrance of the bypass which would take me to the other side of Odate.



Miss Ako who took me to Akita Station from Odate, about 100 kilometers distance.

My last experience at that location was a long wait of over an hour. I decided to now show my sign showing the destination of Akita City and held out my thumb instead. I learned there is a time to use a sign, and not to use one. It bore fruit and I got a ride to the other side of Odate from an older gentleman only a few minutes later. He took me to a convenience store and advised me to wait for cars from customers who stop at the store. He also advised me to show drivers my Akita sign. I heeded his advice. Only a few minutes a young lady pulled up, smiled and offered me a ride!

Her name is Ako Yoshida, 36, single and works as a personnel director at a shopping center in Odate. It was very pleasant to talk to her the next hour. I hope to see her again.