

## Discussion With a Nuclear Physicist on the way to Kanazawa



A mother and daughter who went out of the way to take me to my destination.

**Oct. 3, 2009:** It rained hard during the evening and early morning, but by 9 AM the rain subsided. I needed to go to Kanazawa city in Ishikawa Prefecture for business the next day and opted to hitchhike rather than taking the bus in spite of the possibility of more rain later. I'm sure glad I did because the weather cleared up completely by noon and I met 6 interesting people whom I would not have met otherwise.

Perhaps the most interesting person to talk to was a nuclear physicist who said he worked in a laboratory in New York for two years. He was traveling with his wife to Nagano which meant I rode with them for a good 30 minutes as far as the Yoneyama service area on the Hokuriku expressway. Our conversation for the first few minutes was all in Japanese, but he started speaking English when I pointed out how Darwinian teaching has influenced at least two main branches of science, namely Geology and Biology which claims Evolution as its cornerstone.

I pointed out to the scientist how geology is based on false assumptions of the age of the earth and uses circular reasoning. The geologist says his rock is so many millions of years old because the paleontologist says the fossil found in the rock is so many millions of years old, and the paleontologist says his fossil is so many millions of years old because the geologist says the rock the fossil was taken from is so many millions of years old! This is **not science!** If an honest thinking person ponders the matter, he or she will see that evolution is based on certain assumptions, such as the old of the earth forming millions of years ago. The scientist only laughed when I told him according to the Bible the earth was created a mere 6000 years ago. I told him I'm not surprised he would laugh because he was raised under the false paradigm of Darwinism. Darwin himself didn't dream up all his teachings but borrowed much of them from others such as [Jean-Baptiste Lamarck](#) (1744-1829), [Charles Lyell](#) (1797-1875), and [Alfred Russel Wallace](#) (1823-1913).



Two young ladies on the way to a live concert. They took me to Toyama city from Kanazawa.

I've been reading an excellent book by Ian T. Taylor entitled, "[In the minds of men – Darwin and the New World Order.](#)" I gained so much valuable knowledge from this book that exposes Darwinism, and I highly encourage everybody to read it.

From Yoneyama, a man going to [Obama City](#) took me all the way to a bus stop near Kanazawa, a good two hours further up the road. I asked him if the economy of his city is better since Barack Obama became President. He said, "Not much." The man's accent was so thick I could only understand about half of what he said. Later I learned the language of Obama city is heavily influenced by Kyoto which is near proximity. The man was friendly and bought me lunch.

The last people to pick me up were two ladies, Mrs. Tokuda and her daughter. They saw me hitchhiking in front of Nonoichi train station and offered to take me to the exact destination I needed to go (about 6 more kilometers) if only I would come with them to the doctor's office and wait while they had a check-up. I agreed because I wasn't in a hurry and I knew this would give me an opportunity to share the Message of Jesus Christ with them. The mother said her parents sent her to a Christian kindergarten and so has some knowledge of the Bible.

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## [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 Adatarara Service area on the Tohoku Expressway to catch the last ride. One of the reasons I had to wait so long at Adatarara 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!

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# Adventure from Niigata to Aomori via Fukushima



The Tohoku area of Northern Honshu, Japan. The red light shows my usual route to Aomori City, and the blue line shows the route I took on this trip.

The good Lord blessed my vision and faith by providing a sweet couple who took me all the way to Aizuwakamatsu in Fukushima the very first ride! They didn't want to take the Ban'etsu Expressway but rather took route 49 instead. It's a beautifully scenic route that runs through a pass in the mountains along the Agano river, one of the longest and cleanest rivers in Japan. I was so thankful to get this ride because I knew I would be arriving at Aizuwakatsu around 11 AM, which means I would be making good time.

After only a couple of minutes wait at the expressway entrance in Aizuwakamatsu, a man took me to a parking area on the Tohoku expressway that was just before Sendai, the largest city in the Tohoku region of Japan.



Mr. and Mrs. Abe who took me to Aomori City from just before Morioka

The last car was Mr. and Mrs. Abe with their lovely Border Collie named Hokuto. The Abes were on their way to Hokkaido, the north island, and would be spending the night in Aomori city. They took me to Aomori station from where I took a train two stations further. The total transportation cost of the 500-kilometer trip was 190 yen or about US \$2.10. I arrived at my destination around 6:30 PM. □

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## Picked up by an 85 year old driver



An 85 year old man who picked me up.

**Sept. 4, 2009:** After waiting about 15 minutes for a ride to get to a friend's house on the other side of town, an elderly gentleman offered me a ride. I didn't want to ask him his age for he looked quite up in years. Instead, I asked what he does. The man said he has been retired for 30 years from working as a railroad engine repairman from age 55. This makes him 85 years old! I think to date this is the most elderly person to offer me a ride. The man seemed very healthy, drove his small car very well, and had a sharp mind. He wasn't going to any particular destination and so offered to take me to the very door of my friend's house. I asked him what the secret of his good health is and he replied, "Don't sit at home! Get out and get into some active work involved in helping others!" This was such an encouragement to me because now that I'm 59, I've often wondered how long I can continue my adventures throughout Japan by hitchhiking. Could it be that *through* the exercise I get by hitchhiking I will prolong my years on earth? □

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## Hitchhike adventure to Noda city, Chiba Prefecture



Natsuki (22) who took me to Echigo Kawaguchi

**August 18:** On a hot summer day I traveled in four vehicles 330 kilometers to Chiba city located east of Tokyo. The last driver went out of his way to take me right to the very door of my destination!

The first vehicle was a truck carrying long steel bars. The driver, a young man, said he needed to drop the bars off at Sanjo city first and then he would take me to route 8. Eventually he took me a bit out of his way to Sakae parking area which was just perfect for me! The driver asked me since I've been hitchhiking, and I told him since I was 13. □

After a bit of waiting at Sakae parking area, 22 year old Natsuki picked me up. She said she was a bit scared at first because it was the first time to pick up a hitchhiker. I told her, \*congratulations!\* Natsuki was on her way home to Tokamachi – deep snow country in the winter. She took me to Echigo Kawaguchi which was just perfect for me.

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## [The return home from Osaka](#)



Mr. and Mrs. Itou

August 11: Today is the last day of my road trip since last July 25th. It took only 4 vehicles from the Suita Service area in Osaka to get home. Two of the drivers went way out of their way to help me!

During the 8 days I hitchhiked in this trip, I traveled 3036 kilometers in 33 vehicles. One of them was a motorcycle! (See the [August 4 post](#))

In the first car were two men from a paint company. The driver was really interested in me as a foreigner and asked many questions. I told him I painted a house once and he remarked that he heard many Americans like to do their own handyman work without hiring a contractor. They took me to a service area just before Kyoto city.

The second driver took me to Otsu Service area just past Kyoto. The third car was Mr. and Mrs. Itou, a newly married couple who run a Raman shop in Itami City in Hyogo. Mr. Itou at first said that he could take me only as far as Ryuo in Shiga Prefecture, but later changed his mind and took me to Taga just before the junction of the Hokuriku Expressway that runs along the Sea of Japan – the route home to Niigata. Mrs. Itou gave me her cell phone email address and we have been exchanging short emails.

After waiting only a few minutes in Taga, a man with Niigata license plates pulls up and offers me a ride! At first he said he would take me as far as Kashiwazaki, but later changed his mind and offered to take me all the way home – 60 kilometers further. I didn't want to trouble him and said he could drop me off at Yoneyama service area just before Kashiwazaki but the driver was insistent. I then offered a compromise and asked him to take me to a train station in Sanjo from where I would take a short train ride the rest of the way. The driver agreed to that.

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## [Hitchhike adventure from Oita City to Mount Rokkō, Kobe](#)



**August 8:** It was fine weather, a Saturday and close to the beginning of the

Obon Festival when family travel long distances to their home towns. My destination is [Mount Rokkō](#) in Kobe, a distance of over 600 kilometers. I never hitchhiked to the Kansai area in a single day from Oita, but because of the 3 positive factors in my favor, I decided to go for the gold and try it. It turned out to be as good as it gets in the life of a professional hitchhiker! It only took 4 cars with the third driver taking me to Hiroshima to meet a friend and change cars. They took me 95% of the way of the distance of this day's journey to my exact destination – the **very same** destination they themselves were going to!

The first driver was a mother with her 15 year old son, Izumi and Asuka who took me to Beppuwan Service area. They were going to Oita Airport to pick up a relative. Izumi was very pleasant and spoke some English. She encouraged her son to speak to me in English as well.

The second driver was a third generation ethnic South Korean man who took me to Nakatsu City on route 10. I asked him all sorts of questions about Japanese prejudice toward his ethnicity. Though both his parents were born in Japanese, they faced segregation when they grew up. The third generation was treated better, and the man said he even married an ethnic Japanese woman!

The man told me that in 1958 North Korea was portrayed in Japan as heaven on earth. Many ethnic North Koreans who resided in Japan decided to move to North Korea in the hopes of having a better life. Two thirds of them died within only the first 3 years, many from starvation!



Okawa Shigeo, a retired highschool principal.

After waiting only a few minutes at an intersection in Nakatsu on route 10, a retired high school principle, Mr. Okawa picked me up. At first I told him I was going to Kitakyushu, but when he told me he was going to Kobe, I rejoiced and asked if I could ride with him to Kobe. As it turned out, his ultimate destination was Mount Rokkō!

Mr. Okawa was on his way to the reunion of his college graduating class in Kobe. He said he would get off the expressway at Miyajima in Hiroshima Prefecture, meet a friend, Mr. Mizushima, and then Mr. Mizushima would take us the rest of the way in his car.

Later Mr. Okawa learned that the reunion wasn't to be held till the next day, on Sunday. He repeated over and over that it must have been God's planning to cause him to make a mistake of the date, for had he not, he never would have met me or taken me to Mount Rokkō!

After getting off the expressway in Hiroshima, because we had an hour and a half wait before Mr. Mizushima would be ready to travel, Mr. Okawa took me on a guided tour of the island of Miyajima, a 10 minute ferry ride from the mainland. Miyajima is famous for its large Shinto shrine and domesticated deer

walking the streets among the public. The deer, unlike the deer at Nara park in Nara, do not beg food from the public and will let a person touch and pet them.

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## [Adventure from Kita-Kyushu to Oita City](#)



Youji and Miki

**August 5:** I hitchhiked to Oita City down route 10, a distance of over 60 kilometers in only 3 cars!

The first driver, Mr. Kihara saw me standing outside a hospital hitchhiking and wondered if I was a disabled man who needed help! He turned around and asked me what I was doing. I told him I was hitchhiking to Oita city and he offered to take me just out of the city limits to catch cars going out of town.

Mr. Kihara is a financial adviser. I asked him what advice he has now that the economy is down. He replied, "Know your dream!"

The next driver, Mr. Sumitomo took me as far as Yukuhashi City. Mr. Sumitomo is a company owner and speaks some English. He lived in South Carolina.

The next car took me all the way to Oita station! They were 20 year old Miki and her 15 year old brother Youji. They said they are Christians and were raised in a Christian family. It's very uncommon to meet such people. Miki is a college student and was on the way to her university in Beppu which is just before Oita City. She went out of her way to take me to my destination.

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## Adventure from Fukuoka City to Kitakyushu



New friend Shizu with Mannah, daughter of Caleb and Tabita

The third driver was a lady, Mrs. Kuwahara. She has been married for 6 years but has no children. It turns out she has a problem with her husband. It's not uncommon for drivers to pour out their heart and personal problems to me. With women especially I try to listen without offering advice. I learned that women often feel better just to talk about their problems whereas a man would rather either fix the problem himself or seek advice on how to fix it from somebody he can trust.

Mrs. Kuwahara said that though she is not a Christian, she finds it interesting that anytime she is in despair, she runs into either a Catholic or a Protestant minister!

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## 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.

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# Adventure from Hamamatsu to Otsu City



Mr. Sawaguchi

**July 30:** After a short wait at Hamamatsu Nishi IC, Mr. Sawaguchi took me to the Miai parking area near Okazaki. He said that he picked up a Christian pastor before from Niigata!

The hardest part of this trip was to get past Nagoya. I waited two hours at the Moriyama parking area. A dozen people offered me a ride but they were only going as far as Komaki or Kasugai and I needed to get as far as the Owari-Ichinomiya service area on the Meishi Expressway. Finally one man, Mr. Saito, said that though his destination is Komaki, he would go a bit out of his way to take me to Owari-Ichinomiya!



Mr. Saito who went out of his way to take me to Owari-Ichinomiya

From there Mr. Ikari took me to Kusatsu service area which is only 10 minutes away from my destination of Otsu! Mr. Ikari spoke very good English. He works for a company that fast freezes food without chemicals.

After arriving at Kusatsu, within a minute I made eye contact with a man and said I wanted to go to Otsu. He immediately offered to take me!

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# Adventure from Osaka to Hamamatsu City



Miss Mai

**July 28:** Today is low atmospheric pressure throughout Japan with intermittent and sometimes very heavy rain. My destination is Hamamatsu City in Shizuoka Prefecture, the [city I visited on May 26th](#) this year. I'm travelling from Osaka and the distance is only a fraction of my previous trip from Niigata. Nevertheless the trip wasn't as easy as I had hoped. I had to take refuge from the rain from time to time, and I had to wait over an hour for a ride at two different parking areas on the Meishin Expressway which runs from Osaka to Nagoya.

The first vehicle was a car carrier truck. The driver took me from Suita Service Area in Osaka to Taga Service Area just before the junction that goes off to Fukui on the Sea of Japan. I was very glad to get a ride this far because it took me way past Kyoto. Normally when standing at Taga, I'm looking for rides going toward the Sea of Japan as this is the closest route on the way home to Niigata. However today I need to go in the direction of Nagoya. I figured it would be easy but it wasn't. The first hour a dozen drivers offered me a ride, but they were either going only a short distance or the wrong direction away from Nagoya.

After an hour a car stopped with two ladies who said they were travelling to Nagano! Their destination would take me to the Chuo expressway past Nagoya which heads off away from my destination. Nevertheless because I knew of the Owari-Ichinomiya Service area which just before the junction to the Chuo expressway, I asked them for a ride.

The driver's name is Eri and her passenger was her 17 year old daughter Mai. They both were glad to meet a foreigner to practice their English. Eri spoke better English than her daughter because she travelled extensively in the USA and Canada.



Man who took me from Owari-  
Ichinomiya to Moriyama

I had to wait yet another hour just to get a ride to a parking area on the Tomei Expressway which runs past Nagoya and goes to Shizuoka. Now my chances are better with more traffic heading in the direction of Hamamatsu. A man from an advertising company took me to the Moriyama parking area. Now I was sure to make it to my destination in spite of the rain!

After waiting a relatively short time, a young man, an off duty policeman named Mr. Itou took me to the Togo parking area near Toyota city. I enjoy meeting professional people and usually ask them many questions about their work.

From there a 34 year old single man named Mr. Suganuma took me to Toyokawa train station from where I took a short train ride the rest of the way. He works in the automobile manufacturing business which is now in a major slump. Mr. Suganuma asked me to buy a car, but I told him I prefer catching rides with others. □

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## Adventure to Kyoto



Rinko and Tamako. Parents took me  
to Ozumi PA on the Hokuriku  
Expressway

**July 25:** Today is the start of a 3 week hitchhike adventure from Niigata in Northern Honshu to the southern island of Kyushu. I won't go directly to Kyushu from Niigata because others in the Honshu area are asking me to visit

them first. This turned out to be good for my schedule because Kyushu today was drenched with torrential rain! Heavy rainfalls are frequent this time of year in Southern Japan and often cause landslides and a loss of life. At the time of this post, 8 people have died the past couple days.

]I left home at 8:20 AM and made it to Kyoto in 7 cars by 6:30PM. It was indeed a good trip considering the distance of 600 some kilometers. Only once I had to wait nearly an hour for a ride.



Hiroaki Suzuki, newly married only  
3 months ago. Took me to Sanjo  
Interchange.

Two of the drivers spoke English well enough to converse in it. One driver was a doctor, a surgeon. One was a husband and wife with their two small daughters in the back seat. Only one driver expressed some doubt as to what kind of person I am. He said, "Don't do anything to distract my driving!" I asked him what exactly he meant and he replied, "Like try to strangle me!"

Mr. and Mrs. Iinosan from Wakayama Prefecture who took me from Niigata to Toyama were on the way to Takayama city in Gifu Prefecture. They both spoke fairly good English. He is a farmer who grows all the vegetables his family needs for food! His wife has a job and earns enough money to buy their other needs. Only a few minutes after they dropped me off at the Arisoumi Service Area in Toyama I caught another ride from a man going all the way to Shiga Prefecture! This man was waiting in line at the gas station just in front of Mr. and Mrs. Iinosan's car. When they saw the man offer me a ride, they rejoiced!

The man, Mr. Shinzawa, took me all the way to Shiga which means we passed completely through the next two prefectures of Ishikawa and Fukui. Normally I hitchhike in at least one of these prefectures to make it to the Kyoto / Osaka area. He is now retired and formerly worked as a researcher in semiconductors. Mr. Shinzawa was on his way to a fishing trip to Oki Island which is just off Tottori Prefecture in the Sea of Japan.

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**[Adventure from Nagano to Niigata on a rainy day](#)**



The trip from Shiojiri City in Nagano to Niigata.

**July 19:** This is actually the continuation of my previous post of my adventure to Kita-karuizawa. Word Press apparently doesn't like long posts!

Today I'm on my way back home from Shiojiri City in Nagano Prefecture. There was a low pressure area all over Japan, but except for a few drizzles of rain in the early morning in Shiojiri, it still looked OK to hitchhike.

The first driver was a single lady in her 30s named Mayumi who took me 20 kilometers to the Azusagawa Service area from where I got on the Nagano Expressway. Mayumi said that she was ill though she looked well. I inquired further and she said she hears voices in her head!! I immediately said that I am a Christian missionary and understand spiritual problems. I told Mayumi that her problem is spiritual, and not curable by drugs or medical treatment. I asked her if I may lay my hands on her head and pray for her after we get to Azusagawa. She agreed. And I told her about Jesus and we held hands while she prayed to receive Him! After that I laid my hands on her head and rebuked the evil spirit telling it to depart.



Mr and Mrs. Ishibashi from Mie Prefecture

The next car was a husband and wife, Mr. and Mrs. Ishibashi from Mie Prefecture who were on their way to Myoko Kogen, an area famous for skiing. I told them there was no more snow, and they said they were going to escape the heat down south. Mr. Ishibashi is the president of a pharmaceutical company. I told them about meeting Mayumi and her spiritual problem. Though he runs a drug company, he agreed that drugs will not cure her!

Mr. and Mrs. Ishibashi took me to the Obuse parking area. From there a young man going to Iiyama picked me up. Iiyama is off the expressway but is on

route 117 which is the shortest road back home. I knew I could get back on an expressway from Echigo Kawaguchi, and I had hoped to escape the rain because the weather was looking bad and I knew it was probably raining hard along coast of the Sea of Japan which is the route I would have taken had I stayed on the expressway.

I asked the young man to take me to a traffic light but instead he took me to a Seven Eleven convenience store where he said I could buy an umbrella. It had started to rain, not too hard, but hard enough to not want to stand waiting in it.

I went to the Seven Eleven but there were no umbrellas for sale. I then waited about 10 minutes under the covering of the store until the rain let up and started to hitchhike. A lady picked me up saying she was going only about 15 minutes up the road. I asked her to take me to a traffic light, but instead she eventually turned left at an intersection with no traffic light. It was raining hard and so I asked her to take me to a train station.

The train station is on the Iiyama line, and the next train was exactly 2 hours later! It was raining too hard to go anywhere. The train station was tiny and unmanned, but it offered shelter from the rain.

Across the street from the station was a typical Japanese shop. After waiting about 20 minutes the rain let up to the point that I could walk to the shop where I hoped would have an umbrella for sale. The shop owner didn't look too pleased to see me and said she didn't sell umbrellas. I saw several umbrellas that previous customers left in the umbrella holder outside the store and asked if I couldn't take one. She said it was fine! Now I had some protection from the rain and walked back to the main highway.

Hitchhiking on a lonely country road in the midst of the mountains of Nagano on a rainy day is not a desirable situation. I was glad at least it wasn't cold. The cars whizzed past me splashing water as they went. The drivers seemed to care less about my plight. But I knew it was only a matter of time. After about half an hour, a family going to Tokamachi picked me up. Tokamachi is still 100 kilometers from home, but I took a train the rest of the way back. It continued to rain hard intermittently.

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## [Adventure to Kita-Karuizawa](#)



Route from Niigata to Kita-Karuizawa

**July 17:** The purpose of this trip is to visit new friends, Brian from the UK and his Japanese wife Mieko. They spend their summers in Kita-Karuizawa near Mt. Asama in Gunma Prefecture, which is about 370 kilometers or 230 miles from my home. They first contacted me because of their interest in this blog. I had never met them face to face before. Though Kita-Karuizawa is in Gunma, I saw from the map that the surest way to get to it is to take a round about way through Nagano. I had never been to that area before. This trip took me over the 80,000 kilometer mark since keeping [records from August of 2003](#).



Mt. Asama

Hitchhiking 370 kilometers to Kita-Karuizawa in only 4 rides with very little waiting time was as good as it gets! I left home at 10:30AM and arrived at the very door of my destination a few minutes after 4PM.

The first driver was a Yamazaki Bread man. He went out of his way to take me to the expressway entrance at Sanjo.

The second driver, Mr. Tsukioka, took me to Echigo Kawaguchi which was the epicenter of the Niigata Chuetsu earthquake of October 23, 2004. This was the second time to meet Mr. Tsukioka when hitchhiking! He remembered picking me up last year at Tokamachi City.



Tokyo man who took  
me to Kamisato  
from Echigo  
Kawaguchi



Brian and Mieko

Because Brian gave me the exact latitude and longitude to his house, I felt that Mr. Kubo may have turned down the wrong road and gone past it. He turned around and went back to the last intersection. I saw a man who appeared to be a foreigner walking in front of the house at the corner of the intersection and called out, "Brian!" He turned and said, "James, you made it!"

**July 18:** The next day at noon, Brian and Mieko took me to the Saku interchange of the Joushin'estu expressway. I called Mr. Kobayashi who lives in Nagano city and has a company in Chikuma city which is 54 kilometers from Saku. Mr. Kobayashi has been a good friend whom I met many times since we first met back in 2001. I was hitchhiking in Nagano and he picked me up. Mr. Kobayashi invited me to lunch and encouraged me to come as quickly as possible to Chikuma. At first he offered to pay for a train, but then realized I could arrive even quicker if I hitchhiked. I told him I would call again after getting picked up.



Young man who took me to Shiojiri  
City from Midoriko

After a 10 minutes wait at the interchange, a lady who appeared to be in her 30s, Sachie, offered me a ride as far as the Yunomaru Service area about 14 kilometers toward my destination. Sachie carries blood samples from doctor clinics to hospitals. She says she washes her hands frequently to avoid getting infected. It's possible some of the samples may even contain HIV!

A few minutes into our journey, Sachie offered to take me all the way to Chikuma after a brief stop at a hospital in Yunomaru to drop off her blood samples. Chikuma was still 39 kilometers away and it cost her another 950 yen and 40 minutes of her time to take me there! Mr. Kobayashi waited for us at the Koshoku interchange exit. He was delighted that a lady picked me up and offered to take her out to lunch with me. However Sachie declined the offer saying that she still had more work that day.

Mr. Kobayashi took me back to his office where we met an associate of his, Mr. Sano. Mr. Sano was wearing a fine gold ring. When I inquired about it, he said it is a special ring that helps blood circulation and improves health. One ring costs 1,800,000 yen or about \$19,000 US. I asked Mr. Kobayashi if he bought one and he said no.

Mr. Kobayashi knew that Mr. Sano was heading in the same direction I wanted to go, and he asked him if he would take me. Mr. Sano was glad to and said that he would take me to Akashina train station, about 80% of the way to my destination. Mr. Kobayashi then said I would not want to take the train but rather hitchhike the rest of the way. I expected that he would tell Mr. Sano

how much I love to hitchhike and meet people, but instead he said I hitchhike because I have no money! I told them that's not entirely true! I had plenty of cash with me, a little over 4000 yen or about 10 times what that train fare would be. Of course I do love to save money as well as meet people.

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## Hitchhiking to town



Kazuko

**June, 21, 2009:** Today is my 59th birthday. I went to one of my favorite traffic lights to hitchhike to downtown Niigata City to meet a friend to do some street evangelism. The first day of summer was a hot one, about 31 C. Though there was a lot of traffic waiting at the red light, everybody was ignoring me.

After about 10 minutes I heard a voice calling from a distance behind me. A lady turned the corner and drove to an adjacent road about 10 meters parallel to the road I was on. She was offering me a ride!

The lady's name is Kazuko, 31 years old. We established an immediate rapport when she told me she went to a Christian high school in the area, Keiwa Gakuin, the same school that one of my friends sent his children. We talked about the deep things of life, love, unselfishness, giving, sharing, the [paradox of hedonism](#) etc.

Kazuko's hobby is photography. She took my photo with an old Nikon F1 35 mm film camera.