

Adventure hitchhiking to Okabe station in Saitama



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

Nov. 6, 2010: Today my destination was Konosu city in Saitama Prefecture, some 250 kilometers from home. I got to Okabe station on the Takasaki line in 4 cars. The third vehicle was Mr. Mrs. Noda, dentists who live in Kamo City in Niigata Prefecture. Every time I meet a dentist, I always show them my teeth and they exclaim how nice they are. I inherited exceptionally strong teeth from my mother who had all of hers up to when she turned 80. I'm 60 years old and never had a cavity.

The Nodas took me to the Yorii parking area on the Kan'etsu expressway which is not far from Hanazono interchange. I hoped to catch a ride exiting the expressway at Hanazono that was going in the direction of Kumagaya city, the big city not far from Konosu. But after waiting over 30 minutes with no success, I opted to leave the parking area out the back parking area workers' gate and try to catch a ride on the regular road. I never got off the Kan'etsu expressway at Yorii before and was unfamiliar with the area. I soon learned it is an especially remote place, far from a large city, and there was no traffic along the country road I was walking on! I only had the setting sun to my back to know I was going in the right direction. I've joked sometimes that because Japan is so small with so many trains, if you walk in any direction for any length of time, you are bound to arrive at a train station that goes somewhere. This is true but that "length of time" could be very long indeed if you are deep in the country like I was. It would have taken me well over an hour to walk it, and I was hauling a rather heavy piece of luggage.

Finally a car approached me. The nice thing about being deep in the country is that usually the very first car will stop, and so was the case today. The driver was glad to give me a lift to the closest station for he was going that way. I would have walked further than I needed to without him not knowing the roads.