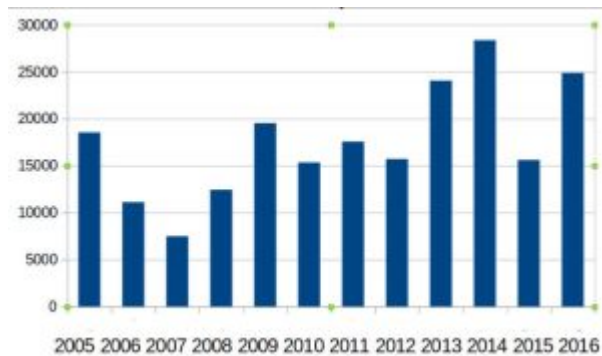


Distances Hitchhiked Since year 2005 / Sharing Christ with the Japanese



As you can see from the graph, I hitchhiked in 2016 much more than in 2015! It was my second best year since keeping records from August 2, 2004.

If you think in miles, just divide the distance in kilometers by 1.6.

Including what I kept track of in 2004, the total distance I traveled to date which includes my 1000-kilometer trip to Osaka in January is 233, 415 kilometers. This took 1010 days of hitchhiking, but not all of them were entire days. Sometimes I hitchhike to town from my countryside home which is only 30 minutes by car.

Of all the rides I got, only 5% were from trucks. The rest were regular cars, and a few were even buses! I also got a few rides in sports cars, classic old cars, and luxury cars such as a Mercedes.

Most of the people who picked me up were Japanese with only 1.7 non-Japanese. This includes Chinese, Koreans (not including those born in Japan) Russians, Americans, British, French, Brazilian, Peruvian, one Iranian, a few Bangladesh, and many Pakistanis. There have been even young mothers with their little children in the car, around 65 far so far! Can you imagine a lady with little kids picking up strange men in any other part of the world? I can't.

Most of the time the purpose of my travels is to earn money in locations that offer me part-time jobs. Other times it is simply to see friends such as my next trip to the Tokyo area. I love to meet new people this way because I love to share my faith in Jesus Christ with the Japanese who do not know Him, which is most of them. Chances they will hear the Gospel for the first time in their life from me, and they may never hear it again.

Just think of what a missionary faces in Japan: First, you have to learn how to communicate in a difficult language. Japanese is not especially difficult to pronounce, but because most words have two roots which are pronounced differently, one from Chinese and the other Japanese, it is not easy to add new vocabulary. The best way is to also learn how to read the Chinese (Kanji) characters, and this takes time, at least a couple of years of daily study. Secondly, even though you can speak Japanese fluently and base your message

of the Gospel solely on Bible Scriptures, they *still* will not understand you! The core doctrine of mankind being born into sin is alien to the Japanese. One reason is there is no specific word for "sin" in the Japanese language. The word they use for sin is the same word meaning "crime". Therefore to say we are sinners is to call ourselves criminals in the Japanese mind, and because Japanese culture teaches people to be law-abiding citizens, the idea of being a criminal is loathsome to them! I have to spell out exactly what I mean about sin – breaking God's moral laws which are stricter than man's legal laws. Also, the concept that Jesus' Blood cleanses us from sin is totally foreign to the Japanese. I have to explain the Jewish former practice of animal sacrifices for them to understand. And the evolution verses creation debate is almost unheard of in Japan. It's interesting that though they have been brainwashed with evolution in school and on television, most Japanese don't think deeply about it and have no strong opinions either for or against evolution.

To sum up, it takes much longer to win a soul in Japan than in Western nations, even those where Roman Catholicism is the primary religion. One good thing about the Catholics is they all know they are sinners! Most of them anyway. I sure did. My mother told me so. ☐