

Another hitchhike adventure up north on a rainy day



Carrying an umbrella in one hand while riding my bicycle through heavy rain, I road 15 minutes to the local train station to catch a train just after 6 a.m. It was imperative for me to travel to the city of Aomori, 470 kilometers to the north, and I intended to take trains all the way. But upon arrival at the train station, I learned the trains were not running past Murakami City, only 60 kilometers!

I was glad that just the day before I checked the map for a new route. Hirakida station is the closest to the Arakawa-OKi expressway interchange and appeared to be close enough to walk to. When I arrived at 7'10 a.m. the rain had stopped.

It took me 50 minutes to walk to the expressway interchange but it bore fruit. Only a few minutes wait and I got a ride. Four vehicles later I got as far as the southern border of Akita Prefecture, 200 kilometers from home. By then the rain was so hard I asked the driver to take me to a train station. Happily the trains were running from that point and I made it to Aomori by 7 p.m.

Record time hitchhiking back from Aomori



This trip I hitchhiked 951 kilometers from Niigata Prefecture to Aomori Prefecture and back in 16 cars. Again the first person to pick me up in Murakami city near Majima station was Mrs. Fujiwara, a lady who buys and sells fish. It was the third time to meet her! It's highly likely we will meet again.

The return trip from Hiroshima to Niigata was via the Tohoku Expressway through Fukushima in 5 cars. A man took me directly to the train station where I park my bicycle. Fifteen minutes later I was back home at 3 p.m.! This is the best time ever. The previous record was 4 p.m. The distance traveled was 560 kilometers.



Steep hill close to Nezugasaki near the border of Niigata and Yamagata



Mr. Saito who took me to Atsumi Onsen in Yamagata. He looks a bit like the current Japanese Prime minister Abe.



This car was so small I had to hold my luggage on my lap!



Lady who took me from Kisarazu to Honjo City in Akita Prefecture. She's a dance teacher. Her husband passed away 2 years ago from cancer

leaving her and two daughters, 1 and 5 years old.



Two men who took me to Higashi Noshiro from Akita City. The older man says he always stops for hitchhikers!



On June 9th on the way back to Niigata, a minivan of two men and 5 ladies took me from Hirosaki in Aomori Ken to Iwate. The fifth lady took the photo. Mt. Iwate is in the background.



A high school gymnastics teacher and his friend. They took me all the way from Iwate Prefecture to Kunimi Service are in Fukushima Prefecture.

[May 2013 Adventure to Aomori](#)





Mr. Yasutake Natsukasa from
Fukuyama City HIroshima Prefecture.
Atsumi Onsen to Tsuruoka. He's
retired and travels around Japan
living in his car.

From May 10 to 12 I traveled 870 kilometers from Niigata Murakami City to
Aomori City and back in 22 vehicles.

The first driver, a lady, took me from Majima station to Nezegaseki near the
Yamagata border line. She was on her way to help oversee a group of
elementary children (which including her son) climb Mt. Nihonkoku, a small
mountain of 300 meters high. From there a van took me to Atsumi Onsen, just 5
kilometers further.

At Atsumi Onsen a man on foot approached me asking if I can speak English.
His name is Yasutaka Nakatsukasa, a retired businessman from Fukuyama City in
Hiroshima Prefecture. He was living in his car touring the Tohoku area for a
month. Yasutaka's hobby is water painting. He showed me drawings of the local
scenery. He took me to Tsuruoka City which is where he had just come from
that day.



View from Sakata of Mt. Chokai

From Tsuuoka a lady who attends Hawaiian dance classes took me to me to the
next city of Sakata. She said she has been a widow from 17 years ago. Her
husband was a policeman investigating an accident and was hit by a driver who
wasn't watching where he was going! Her husband died immediately. "Was the
driver arrested and put in prison? I asked. "No," the lady replied, "But he
was an irresponsible man with bad eyesight who never should have had a
driver's license in the first place. "



Single couple who took me from
Sakata to Omagari to Konoura

The lady dropped me off in the middle of Sataka city. I would rather have
been further down the road closer to the edge of the city from where there
would be less city traffic, and so I walked. After about 10 minutes I got to
a bridge. It's not likely that anyone would stop for me in the middle of a
bridge but a car suddenly stopped in the lane it was it. Usually a driver
will pull over to the side and so I thought it rather odd.. But because there
was no traffic behind the car the driver was blocking anybody. It was a young
single couple, Shunta and Mizuki, both 20 years old, high school dropouts on

their way to Magari in Akita Prefecture, their home. They were debating with each other whether to pick me up or not. After questioning me and being satisfied with my answers, they took me to Konoura Interchange of the Akita Expressway. There are no tolls for the first 40 kilometers of that expressway which made it a good place to hitchhike to catch traffic going some distance. Expressway tolls in Japan are probably the highest in the world. It costs 7000 yen to travel 300 kilometers.

A car transport lorry took me to Honjo City from Konoura. From Honjo another 20 year old man, Mr. Suzuki, took me as far as Akita Station, some 40 kilometers further. He's a seaman who works on a fishing vessel 10 months out of the year. Mr. Suzuki said he has to work 18 hour days for weeks on end. The only days off are when they aren't fishing. The boat goes as far as Peru in S.A. He was on his way to see his girlfriend. The pay, he said, is good, earning enough to easily save to buy a house.

I got to Akita Station just in time to catch a train going to Noshiro City, but took it only a distance of 240 yen to Oiwake Station from where I again hitchhiked. A mother and her daughter who were going to their home in Noshiro went a few kilometers out of their way for me to take me to Futsui, the end of the expressway.

It was hot and I was thirsty. Though it was fine weather in Futatui, unlike previous times standing in Futatsu, I waited a relatively long time for a ride. I decided to walk further up the road. After walking nearly a kilometer, I came close to a tunnel and knew I wouldn't be able to walk through it safely. Just then a car pulled over. It was truck driver on his way home in a regular car. He not only took me a good distance up the road to Takanosu, but he even found the next ride for me a man going all the way to Aomori city, my destination!

Photos from Aomori back to Niigata



Newly wed couple to Hirosaki from
Aomori Chuo

Toru who took me from Odate City to Takanosuke in Akita Prefecture

Road sign in Takanosu.

Miss Yoshimi who took me to Yurihonjo City from Noshiro City in Akita Prefecture. She was very interested in the Biblical account of Creation and said she wants to believe and accept God's Son Jesus into her life.

A family who took me to Nezugasaki in Niigata Prefecture from Atsumi Onsen in Yamagata Prefecture

□□□□□□□□□□□□ A single couple who took me to a train station near home where I had my bicycle parked.

Why I stopped listening to Alex Jones



I'm very concerned about the attitudes and mindsets of some of my friends who regularly listen to radio talk show host Alex Jones. I used to like Alex Jones, and once greatly admired his courage for crashing the [Bohemian Grove](#) during one of its annual get-togethers of the elite. I thought he was great for filming the "Cremation of Care" ceremony. Now I think it all have may been a set-up. He could have been justifiably shot for trespassing at any time! Why was he not afraid of that? I believe he had **promises beforehand** that he wouldn't be attacked. I never heard of any litigation brought against him for it. Was there any? Well, that's my little "conspiracy theory" if you will, but the following is not theory; it's history and verifiable facts:

Alex Jones falsely proclaimed to the world that Y2K was destroying a town:

Twenty to 40,000 civilians trapped in the city ... tanks are being blown to bits, massive broad unguided rocket attacks are being launched massively from the city indiscriminately right now, air and artillery bombardments as well. It is absolutely out of control. It is pandemic ladies and gentlemen. ..." – Quoted from Jones' radio broadcast.

The American patriot and one of my heroes, William Cooper, didn't like Alex Jones and exposed his Y2K fear mongering tactics on one of his [shortwave radio broadcasts](#). I believe William Cooper was a sincere truth teller who paid the price for his faithful broadcasting of truth with martyrdom. How many times has Alex Jones been persecuted and beat up to the point of being hospitalized? William Cooper was.

Bill Cooper Says Alex Jones Is a NWO Shill

Alex Jones *exposes himself* as a shill

The Youtube clip below shows Alex Jones rudely disrupting a peaceful rally led by an American patriot proclaiming the same message Jones himself claims to hold!

“The alter ego of Alex Jones got the better of him today in Austin. Two minutes into an organized rally at the steps of the Austin Police Department, Alex shows up and immediately starts bullhorning over the speech of local patriot, John Bush.” (From <http://wideeyecinema.com/?p=7334>)

Alex Jones betrayed a Christian patriot family in Texas

Please see <http://www.christianmediaresearch.com/jones.html> for details.

Some of my friends who listen to Alex Jones, and who knew political reality from decades ago, seem to actually believe that Ron Paul, if elected U.S. President, could turn around the negative foreign and domestic policies America has had since close to the beginning of the 20th century and improve the well being of the American people. With all the true information they had 30 years ago, I do think they should know better! No one man can turn around that country, not even with the help of all his friends. The enemy has infiltrated far too deeply. If Paul even came close to winning in a presidential campaign, I would smell a rat. Paul would need massive support of the Mass Media and Elite to be a viable contender for the presidency. And if he won, would he actually fulfill his present vision for the country? If he tried, he would suffer the same fate as JFK did in no time.

An excellent resource I found is [Who is Alex Jones?](#)

One of the comments on that page says:

AJ's duty is to serve his masters by conducting occult magick, in order to create the illusion of truth. By what seems to be endless amounts of bones to uncover, the people have been thrust into a frenzied mentality of let's see what AJ has for us tonight. As if they are dope feigns looking for their next hit and at the end of the day, what difference has it really meant in the grand scheme of things. They often end right back at ground zero, only to repeat the routine over and over like a rat running on a treadmill.

Alex Jones talks about Al-queda as a creation of the CIA as if it is an actual network of terrorists. It is not. Al-qaeda is a creation of the CIA, but created only as a fantasy *only in the minds of the public!* Al-queda doesn't exist!

The best way to control the opposition is to lead it ourselves.—Lenin

I think Mr. Jones\$ may have ulterior interest\$. I suppose there is a lot of ca\$h to be got by \$preading di\$information.

Am I a pessimist in my overall worldview? I am very optimistic of the future, but only [when the King returns](#).

More information about who Alex Jones really is:

www.truthin7minutes.com/alex-jones-is-patriot-truth-leader-mr-jones-a-fake

January 22, 2013 update:



Alex Jones

People like Alex Jones and Ron Paul, while claiming to offer an alternative to American corruption, are strangely silent when it comes to the agency that is historically most [culpable](#). While ostensibly defending our Constitution; they say nothing of the organization that has [opposed](#) it the [longest](#). "None of these self-styled 'freedom fighting' conspiracy theorists expose the real power behind all the conspiracies at work," writes Seventh-day Adventist layworker, Roland Temple.

"Alex Jones is hiding the biggest part of the NWO. He's hiding all this and it's not by accident," says (non-Adventist) Christian activist, [Thomas Richards](#). "A lot of the things he covers have a direct connection with The Vatican, but he never mentions it." That's suspicious, say some, because the Commander of InfoWars.com seems very well informed about everything else that's going on behind the scenes, almost as if he's got a back-stage pass.

[Helping friends migrate from Windows to Linux](#)

- [Linux for Beginners](#)
- [Why I switched from Windows to Linux](#)
- [Linux compared to Windows](#)

- [Is Linux for you?](#)
- [Can Linux get infected by viruses?](#)
- [Things I like about Linux](#)
- [Command line work in Linux](#)

On January 5th and the 16th, I transformed 2 messed up Windows XP PCs into fast and stable Linux machines. On the first one, I installed Fedora 16, and the second, the latest Linus Mint 14 "Nadia." In both cases I backed up the friend's documents to another media, installed Linux, and restored all the documents and Desktop files to the newly created home user partition.



My Fedora 18 KDE desktop screen with cool widgets: An analog clock , a weather widget, slideshow of photos in my Pictures album, world time display, and a calculator.

A local friend's Windows XP PC became unstable to the point it would not boot up anymore. The Windows XP Logo would appear but a few seconds later the boot process halted with a black screen. Is the problem system file corruption? Or is it hardware failure?

To test for hardware failure, I took a Fedora Linux Live CD, put it in the CD Rom drive, and booted up my friend's machine with it. It booted fine. I showed my friend there was nothing wrong with the hardware of his PC. Mozilla Firefox worked well. He was able to log into his Facebook account and browse through it without the PC hanging up as it did before. We saw that the Linux file manager was able to read all his documents on the Windows NTFS partition.

I told him, "You have two choices: You can buy a new PC with Windows and I'll restore your documents to it. Or you can let me install Linux on your PC and I'll teach you how to use it to view and edit your documents. As you already see, you have no problem in accessing the Internet in Linux. Mozilla Firefox in Linux looks and works just the same as it does in Windows. There may be some of your favorite Windows applications we can run using Wine, and I can show you good and easy to use Linux applications to replace those Windows applications that do not run well well in Wine."

My friend was desperate to use his PC again because he wanted to use it to print out his New Year cards. "Let's go for installing Linux for now," he replied, "If I can't use it to do all I need to do, I'll buy a new PC."

To make a long story short, he is happy with his new Linux system. He can do all he did in Windows, even make business cards using Glabels. He can use the Internet without fear of getting zapped by viruses or accidentally installing malware. His PC is now faster without the need of an antivirus program to slow it down, and he has the option to choose from 30,000 plus applications, including educational teaching aids.

The same is true with the second friend who lives in Kyushu – too far for me to visit at this time. He sent me his broken Window XP PC with all the CDs that came with it including the Windows XP installation CD. But because his son scratched off the Windows Product Key label from the side of the PC case, I could not do a repair of his Windows XP installation. I told him that a reformat of his hard disk and installing Linux in it was the only way to fix it.

It worked! He's happy with his new Linux Mint 14 system and can do everything he did before so far except using Itunes. Over the phone and sending him files via email, we were able to even install his Canon printer driver! It's a first for me to help a person convert over to using Linux without my physical presence with the person.

November 2012 Adventure to Aomori



Today was cloudy when I started out on my journey to Aomori city, 470 kilometers from home. I wore for the first time this season a warm overcoat. I heard it had been snowing in Aomori, the northernmost prefecture of Honshu.



Mr. Toki who previously picked me up twice.

At 8:05 a.m. after walking 25 minutes on Route 345 from Majime station, the first car of the day stopped for me. It was again Mr. Toki, a cook who picked me up twice previously!. This time I remembered to take his photo. I'll very likely see him again because he drives to work daily on that road usually the same time in the morning when I hitchhike to Aomori Prefecture.



Lady who took me to Atsumi Onsen

The next car was a lady who had picked me once before this year! That's twice in a row meeting people who had previously picked me up. She's a fish merchant who makes daily trips to Murakami City. It's highly likely to meet her again as well. She took me to Route 7 which is the main road going to Aomori Prefecture.

After that I walked about an hour passing through 3 tunnels further up Route 7 to seek a better spot to hitchhike. At Iwasaki a lady stopped for me. She saw my sign that says, "Atsumi Onsen" and was going there. I thought she was in her 20s but she told me she has a 14 year old daughter!



Coast of Iwasaki, Niigata Prefecture on the Sea of Japan. Notice the hole in the rock which was created by erosion from the ocean.



Truck that took me to Odate City,
Akita Prefecture

Atsumi Onsen has a large "*michi no eki*" which in English means "road station", a place where cars and trucks stop to rest. I've stood there many times. Usually from Atsumi Onsen the next vehicle will take me to Tsuruoka City, about 30 kilometers further up Route 7, but this time a truck driver from Maizuru City in Kyoto Prefecture took me all the way to Odate city in AKita! He was going to Aomori Prefecture, but a different area, Mutsu City in the Shimokita peninsula, and therefore wouldn't be passing Aomori city. Though it was only 4:45 p.m. when arriving Odate city, it was already dark. And because it was also raining, I took a train the rest of the way to Aomori City.



Rainbow Bridge in Aomori City.

[Autumn Adventure to Saitama](#)



Mother with 2 year old daughter who took me from Echigo Kawaguchi in Niigata to to AkagiKogen in Gunma

It was fine weather when I started out from Niigata City at 10 a.m. My destination was Sayama City in Saitama Prefecture which is just to the north of Tokyo. The distance from home is about 280 kilometers, only half of the 560 kilometers to Osaka which I hitchhiked the previous week. I thought it would be piece of cake not only because the distance to travel was much less, but because it was a Saturday. Weekends are always easier to hitchhike. People are often traveling either to or from their home towns which means they are going further than they would be on a workday. Normally it gets easier and easier to catch rides the closer I get to my destination. Today was different!

The first driver was an architect who designs homes and buildings. I asked him if he thought that the collapse at near free fall of the World Trade Center buildings was caused by burning jet fuel melting the steel girders. "No way!" he replied. "It was done by an explosive called Termite." I said, "Do you mean Super Termite or Nano-Termite?" The man was surprised I knew of those words. He said that termite is unknowingly being used in building construction. He said Termite's chemical reaction with a combination of steel and aluminum is powerful.

The second driver was a lady, a young mother with her two young daughters, Chika (6) and Mei (3). It's so uncommon for me to be picked up with little kids in the car without the father or an adult man present. Out of 2550 vehicles since keeping records from August of 2003, the total number so far is 45 cars which is 1.67% of the total, a number higher than I thought it would be. I wanted to take their photos but she said no when I said I wanted to post it on the Internet!

The third driver, a man by the name of Hidetoshi, said he just came from Fukushima only 25 kilometers away from the damaged nuclear powerplant. His job is to restore a fossil fuel power plant not far from the damaged nuclear plant. Hedetoshi said he likes America and its freedoms. I told him my

experience of getting thrown in jail for 3 hours for passing out Gospel literature on the street at a western suburb of Chicago.

The 4th car was another mother with her child! It is possibly a first ever experience to be picked up by two mothers with little children in a single day! Ladies who pick me up are 15% of the drivers. Drivers with little children in the car are about 6% of the total number of vehicles but the father is usually present. Mothers with little children without their husbands present are possibly less than 0.01% of the total number of cars. The mother in the photo on this post has an older daughter who is 20 years old, just married and is herself about to have a baby! This is a gap of 18 years between bearing children. I asked the mother if she purposely wanted to have a 2nd child after raising one to adulthood, and she said yes! God bless her.

Her home in Fukushima near the border of Ibaragi was destroyed by the March 11, 2011 earthquake which forced her to move. She took me to Akagikogen in Gunman.

After waiting some 30 minutes at the Akagikogen service area, a highway patrol car pulled up and 4 men got out and questioned me. These guys are no police but have the power to ask me to leave. They are often followed up by police.

This time I was able to talk my way out of getting kicked out of the expressway service area! The last time I was stopped like this, they called the cops and I was escorted to a town from where I was told to catch a bus. But today I asked them if I could stand near the restroom area and ask drivers directly for a ride. After about 10 minutes of waiting and further negotiation, they got the OK from their boss. They made me promise not to step out into the street, a promise I kept.

After another 30 minutes a man offered to take me to the Takasaka service area in Saitama Prefecture. This is just short of where I wanted to get off the Kan'estsu expressway in Kawagoe! His highschool son was in the car and I spoke to him in English, something the father appreciated.

It was after 5 p.m. and dark when I arrived in Takasaka. The service area was crowded with people and cars, but everybody seemed to be in a busy mood. From experience I knew I was in a bad situation. When the service area is too crowded, nobody seems to care about the lone hitchhiker. And because it was dark, it made the situation even worse. I knew there had to be a train line within walking distance from the service area. After 20 minutes of vain efforts asking drivers for rides, I opted to leave the service area out the back way and walked the regular road toward the distant lights of a town toward the east. I knew the train line was in that direction. This paid off and in 30 minutes I arrived at the Kita Sakado train station! From there it was only 570 yen to get to Sayama city.

God is good.

Third June Hitchhike Adventure to Hirosaki



On a bridge in Tsuruoka. Mt. Chokai can be seen in the background.

It's now my 4rd trip to Hirosaki this month! The first one was with a friend who drove all the way, the rest by hitchhiking. I still have one more trip on the 29th of the month!

Today was supposed to rain but it turned out sunny. The train to Majima was 25 minutes late which meant I started hitchhiking at 8 a.m. Rather than walk up Route 7 as I did in the past, I opted to stay stationary. After a 25 minute wait, a 70 year former seaman who sailed the world took me a distance of about 5 minutes drive.

About 15 minutes later a man I apparently met when hitchhiking the same route last winter stopped for me! The man works at Hajima Kensetsu Co, a very talkative man who told me many things of the area. Rather than the main route of Route 7, the man took the coastal route which went more directly to his destination. I wound up in the center of Tsuruoka city. It's not a big town and I knew Route 7 had to be within walking distance. It was: A good hour hike!

Though it took me nearly 60 minutes to get to another place I could hitchhike, after arriving at the point the next ride came only 5 minutes later, Mr. Shirase whose hobby is mountain climbing. He once found on the side of Mt. Chokai the body of a man who had died within the hour. The man apparently fell. The police officials he notified said the area was not their territory and told him to contact other officials. This ticked off Mr. Shirase! He scolded them. "I'm supporting you people through my taxes, and you mean to say you won't go a bit out of your way to perform your duties?"

Mr. Shirase took me to Nikaho in Akita Prefecture. I told him that the traffic light in Niikaho City would be fine, but he insisted to take me further to a place he thought would be better for me. Often drivers make suggestions to drop me off at places that I know from experience will not be good for me. I'll suggest an alternative but when they still insist, I will yield because I don't want to cause them any trouble. He did say, however, that if I didn't the area he would take me back to the city and its traffic signal.



Mr. Murata playing the Shakuhachi

Mr. Shirase's suggested dropping point turned out to be not agreeable for me to hitchhike, but because it was close to the expressway entrance, I opted to get off there anyway. I'm so glad I did because after only a few minutes wait, 2 cars simultaneously stopped for me! The first car was a lady. When she saw the second car stop just a few meters from her, she asked the passengers if they were willing to take me. They did, Mr. and Mrs. Murata, a very friendly couple who invited me to their home to drink tea! Mr. Murata's hobby is making and playing a unique Japanese musical instrument called the Shakuhachi. You can see the video I took of them in the previous post. Mrs. Murata plays the Koto, a stringed instrument.

After spending about an hour with the Murata family, they took me to the Kotooka Highway rest area on Route 7, a good distance the way to the next city of Noshiro. It's now 3:50 p.m. Rather than wait at the rest area, I walked along Route 7, often walking backwards and holding out my sign to oncoming traffic. The shoulder of the road was getting narrower and I had to stop walking at a point. A few minutes after 4 p.m. An older couple who were on their way home to Noshiro city stopped for me. The man said he would take me to Futatsui after dropping his wife off at their home.

After only a few minutes wait at Futatsui, a young man playing a Simon and Garfunkel song stopped. He was only going a few kilometers up the road.

I waited a considerable amount of time, at least 30 minutes at an intersection in Futatsui. It began to rain. Everybody was ignoring my sign paper that said "Odate", the next city about 40 kilometers further. After perhaps a 40 minute wait a young man who took pity on me stopped. He lives in Futatsui and wasn't on his way in the direction I needed to go, but nevertheless out of the kindness of his heart he took me to Takanosu, about 2/3 of the way to Odate!

When we arrived at Takanosu, it had stopped raining. I walked a few meters further up the road and only a minute or so later a young man on his way to Odate stopped for me. He took me exactly where I wanted to go, a place on the opposite side of Odate on the way to Hirosaki.

The time is now 6:30 and only half an hour before sunset. I walked a couple kilometers further up the road. A man in a Mercedes Benz costing 20,000,000

yen (about \$250,000 US) stopped. His name is Mr. S (name withheld), a second generation Koran man who was born in Japan. He once had many businesses and income to the point he could afford to hire a personal chauffeur. He said he lost much of it, millions of dollars due to the sub-prime loan crises. Mr. S saw my Aomori sign and because he was on his way to Aomori City, he stopped for me. But I told him I only needed to go as far as Hirosaki, 40 kilometers before Aomori City. Mr. S took extra time to take me not only to Hirosaki, but to the very hotel I would be staying that evening! I suspected the reason Mr. S. Was so wealthy was because he had something to do with the Yakuza. He knew all the businesses in Hirosaki and even their former owners!

[June 16th Adventure from Hirosaki back Home](#)



Mari and Kurumi who took me to Odate City

I began my journey home later than usual, first a train from Hirosaki station at 11:25 a.m to Nagamine, 3 stops out of town, arriving 10 minutes later. This puts me right on Route 7, a good place to hitchhike.

After a relatively short wait of 19 minutes, a car with two 18 year old girls stopped and offered to take me to Odate City. Their names are Mari, and Kurumi, the driver. They attend a local junior college studying to become kindergarten teachers. Kurumi received her driver's license only 3 months previous in last March.

I waited for the next car at the Route 7 Odate by-pass entrance. Twenty seven minutes later around 1 p.m. a driver pulled up and offered to take me to Omagari, now called Daizen City which is a bit south of Akita City. Daizen City is somewhat out of my way and far from Route 7, but because it is a

distance of 200 kilometers or about half of the way back to Niigata, I considered it a "bird in the hand" type of situation. I knew there was a road that went from Daizen city to Route 7. Last year a Vietnamese truck driver took me to Daizen, which was *very much* out of my way at the time. But in this case considering where I was standing, I didn't think it was all that much out of the way home. However, what happened later convinced me never to accept a ride from a driver going that route again!

The road the man took was Route 105. For him it was the shortest way to Daizen City. Route 105 passes through the mountains. There were few traffic lights and the scenery was picturesque. But it became narrow and winding at a point. The guard rail on the right hand side of the road bordering the edge of the mountain was all banged up from cars that hit it! This probably happens mostly in the winter when the road is icy. There was hardly any length of that guard rail that was not dented up! Some sections of the rail were in very bad shape indicating a vehicle had hit it going at a considerable speed.

We arrived at Daizen City at 4 p.m. three hours later. I knew no matter what at least I wouldn't be passing through Akita City from that point. Akita City is often difficult to cross.

It began to rain lightly. I took out my folding umbrella and held it while pulling my luggage with wheels behind me.

After walking some 30 minutes up the road, a lady pulled over and asked where I wanted to go. I told her Route 7. She looked at me as if I was talking about some place on the other side of the country! The preponderance of the traffic was *not* going to Route 7 at all. Most drivers were on their way to Yokote City, further out of my way. Though I was walking in the right direction toward Route 7, I found later there was a major junction further up the road, and most of the traffic turned toward the left going east to Yokote, not the western direction toward the Sea of Japan that I needed to go.

I didn't have a paper said "Honjo" so I sat down, pulled out a blank A4 sheet of paper, and wrote □□ and tried to make the lines of the characters as thick as I could to make it easily visible to drivers. After waling some 70 minutes and passing the junction that goes to Yokote, a car that had just passed me turned around and came back for me, two young men. They were friendly but listening to some awful heavy metal music, a Japanese band that imitated KISS. It sounded like souls screaming in torment in hell! In fact, the word Hell was the name of one of the numbers. I sat in the back seat with my fingers in my ears trying to block out the noise.

Honjo was much further away then I remembered, a good hour drive from Daizen. No wonder the lady who stopped earlier didn't want to take me there. In the future I will not consider the "via Daizen route" a viable option.

The two men took me to Ugo Honjo Sation from where I took a train the rest of the way home. It was getting dark and still raining, and I was in time for the very last possible train. I arrived home 30 minutes past midnight.

June 10 Adventure Hitchhiking from Hirosaki to Niigata



Mr. and Mrs. Sakura in their living room

Sunday, June 10, 2012: I hitchhiked 404 kilometers (253 miles) from Aomori Prefecture to Niigata City in 9 cars. They consisted of 4 married couples, two small children, 4 single men, 2 ladies and one single couple. A highlight of this trip was visiting Mr. and Mrs. Sakurada's home in Noshiro. They picked me up when hitchhiking exactly one month before on May 6 during my previous trip back to Niigata. I also made 3 new Facebook friends.

I left the capsule hotel in Hirosaki bright and early to catch the 6:51 a.m train, the first one going to Akita Prefecture. The fare to Nagamine, 24 minutes and 3 stations down the line, was only 320 yen. Nagamine is next to Route 7, the highway toward home.

The sky was overcast and there was a light precipitation. I opened the small folding umbrella I often carry with me. Traffic on the road was sparse. Around 7:35 a.m. a middle aged couple stopped for me. They saw my Odate sign and turned around. Their destination was Odate but decided take me all the way to Higashi Noshiro, an extra distance of 80 kilometers round trip out of their way!

I sent a SMS text message to Mr. Sakurada just before I arrived, and he replied he would be waiting for me at the convenience store near the Higashi Noshiro exit of the expressway. I arrived a few minutes before him.



One of the riceburgers I had for lunch.

Mr. and Mrs. Sakuada were great hosts. They gave me a good breakfast of fish and rice balls with salad, and a lunch bag for my trip: Two rice-burgers! In

the 34 some years I've lived in Japan, today was a first time ever for me to even see a rice-burger! They were delicious!

I spent about an hour at the Sakurada home. During that time a lady friend of theirs visited, a true Bible believing and Bible reading Christian who attends a small church in Noshiro. The population of Japan is said to be 1% Christian, but I would say Bible readers are probably much less, only two or three out of a thousand. Her name is Mikiko and she became my Facebook friend!



Mikiko

Mr. & Mrs Sakurada offered to take me to Akita City, 50 kilometers from Noshiro, just as they did before when I first met them. But because they had no business in Akita City that day, I didn't want to be a burden to them. I told them that the expressway entrance of Higashi Noshiro which is only a few minutes drive from their home would be fine. The time was now about 10:30 a.m.

At 11:05 a.m. a young man named Yusuke stopped for me and took me to Akita City. Yusuke is a software developer. He wanted to drop me off at the train station, but because it was a good hour drive from Noshiro and because the train would be leaving an hour later at 12:10, there wasn't quite enough time to catch it. If I had caught that train, I would have taken it 3 stops down the line to get out of town and back to Route 7. The next train was 2 hours later, too long to wait. Yusuke therefore took me to Route 7 at the point it leaves Akita City going toward Yamagata, the way to Niigata.

Though it was *not supposed* to rain in Akita that day, it did, a constant but light precipitation. I wasn't in a very good location to hitchhike. The traffic was heavy but going quite fast. I walked up the road for at least an hour in the rain holding my umbrella and pulling my luggage behind me (it has wheels). I hoped to find an intersection with a good traffic light, but there was none. I was now in a desolate area in country.

A middle age lady took pity on me and stopped. She told me she would take me to a nearby train station. I declined her offer because she wasn't going very far. Twenty or so more minutes later it began to rain harder and I still hadn't caught a ride. I regretted not accepting the lady's offer. After walking further up the road to what I thought was an intersection, I saw it was actually an overpass going over a crossroad. The shoulder of the road became narrower which made it even harder for drivers to stop. I turned around and walked back the way I had just come to where the shoulder was wider. I stopped walking and started praying while holding out my thumb, smiling and facing traffic.



Route 7 in Akita close to the Yamagata border. Mt. Chokai is in the background.

The rain continued. About 10 minutes later another lady stopped. She was going as far as Michikawa station, about 20 kilometers up the road. Progress! When we arrived at Michikawa, the rain had stopped. There was a traffic light with a push button to turn the signal red for pedestrians to cross the road. I pushed the button every time a group of cars approached me to stop the traffic. This way I get a good look at the drivers faces and see if anyone will make eye contact with me. The first person who does usually offers me a ride. It also gives the drivers more time to check me out and decide whether they want to pick me up.



Another view of Route 7 close to Yamagata

After a few minutes a middle age married couple stopped and took me to Sakata city. The husband said his ancestors are samurai. Samurai families often have records of their family tree of hundreds of years. He knew some interesting facts of history of the area, things you won't find in a school history textbook.

The stretch of Route 7 from Kisagata to Sakata passes by Mt. Chokai which sits on the boarder between Akita Prefecture and Yamagata Prefecture. The Daimyo (feudal lords who were vassals of the Shogun) of Akita and the Daimyo of Tsuruoka quarreled over which prefecture would lay claim to Mt. Chokai's summit. They took their dispute to the Tokugawa government in Tokyo. Because the Tsuruoka Daimyo was richer than the Akita Daimyo, the Tokugawa government awarded the summit to the Tsuruoka Daimyo. He was lord over the Shonai area of Yamagata Prefecture. One of the officials of the Akita Daimyo took responsibility for the failure to gain Mt. Chokai's summit for Akita, and committed seppuku, also known as hara-kiri.



Keita, my new Facebook friend.

The couple took me to the other side of Sakata from where there would be more traffic to Tsuruoka, the next big town about 30 kilometers away. Three young men averaging 26 years old saw my sign and stopped for me. They are in a network marketing business called Amway. One of them became my Facebook friend!



Mr. and Mrs. Hayasaka with their

son Ryodai

The three young men dropped me off at an intersection on the Route 7 bypass. The city traffic was heavy with few cars going very far. I walked further up the road hoping to get to a better intersection. After a few minutes, Mr. And Mrs. Hayasaka with their young son, Ryodai, stopped for me. They took me to the very edge of Tsuruoka proper, a few kilometers further up the road. The husband asked me when I hoped to returned home. "Of course, sometime this evening!" I replied. He gave me an incredulous look indicating he didn't think I would make it. It surprised me thought so considering the distance I had already come that day, 250 kilometers with only around 150 kilometers remaining. With 2 hours of summer sunlight remaining I considered it a piece of cake!



One of the tunnels of the Nihonkai Tohoku Expressway. The purpose of the blue lighting on the ceiling may be an attempt to keep the driver alert.

I walked further up the road. After only a few minutes a lady stopped and offered me a ride as far as Sanze, half way to Atsumi Onsen. She took the brand new stretch of the Nihonkai Tohoku, a section of the expressway that is still toll free.



The single couple who took me to Sanze

From Sanze on Route 7 I had to wait at least 30 minutes for the next ride. It was a young single couple who saw my Atsumi Onsen sign. The car was a station wagon with two seats in the front but none in the back. I sat down on the floor next to the back door.



Atsumi Onsen

The couple didn't go quite as far as I had hoped they would go. The end of the Nihonkai Tohoku expressway was yet a couple kilometers up the road, walking distance. I knew there would be more traffic from that point going further. It was now around 6 pm, an hour before dusk. The sky was blue with fleecy clouds, and the low sun illuminated the scenery in golden hues. I walked about 20 minutes.



Atsumi Onsen

Just before arriving to the access point of the Nihonkai Tohoku expressway, a car coming from the way I just walked stopped about half a football field distance up the road. It was a young married couple with their 5 year old daughter. They were headed home to Toyota City in Aichi Prefecture, not far from Nagoya. This was the final ride for me that day. Their route would pass directly through Niigata City! Toyota City is 580 kilometers from the point the family picked me up. It would take them 7 more hours to get home arriving round 2 a.m.!

The husband is from Tsuruoka and was visiting his parents. It was now about 6:30 p.m. He offered to take me to Niigata station from where I could catch a short train ride home, but rather than have them get off the expressway which would delay their journey by at least a half hour, I asked them to let me off at the Toyosaka Service area just inside Niigata city. Another stretch of the yet unfinished Nihonkai Tohoku expressway began at Murakami, about 70 kilometers from Niigata city. I knew the expressway ran close to and parallel with the Shinhaku train line. I wasn't sure what the closest train station was, but knew it had to be in walking distance from Toyosaka SA.

It was close to 8 p.m when we arrived Toyosaka SA. The sun had completely set. My eyesight has weakened the past year, and it's especially harder for me to see in low light conditions. The Toyosaka service area was more like a small parking area with no concession stands and only a restroom. I knew there had to be an access road to it leading to a city street, but the exit to the access road was not apparent. I walked in one direction and then another only to see the expressway on one side and dense forage on the other. I went to a lighted area in the restroom and studied the highway map, The map didn't give me enough detail to determine a direction. I then used the map / position locator feature of my cell phone. It helped me several times before when I wound up in an unknown area. Sure enough, the cell phone map showed roads leading to the service area! With renewed confidence, I walked a new direction, one toward a lighted area and saw the exit of the service area. It lead to a city road. But because it was dark, I still didn't have my bearings and was unsure of the direction to the train station. Again I pulled out the cell phone, determined my location, and walked a hundred meters in the direction I thought might be correct. I stopped and again checked my location. The map clearly showed me I had walked away from the station. I turned around and within 15 minutes found the train station. From there it was only a few hundred yen fare to home. I arrived around 9:30 p.m.

That evening I accessed my Facebook account and wrote to my 3 new Facebook friends that I had returned home safely. Mr. Hayasaka replied: "Wow, you really made it back Sunday evening as you said you would. Congratulations!" I've been in far worst situations than today and still was able to arrive to my destination thanks to the help of my "Higher Power." His name is Yeshua Hamashiach, AKA Jesus of Nazareth.

Summer Adventure Hitchhiking to Aomori City



Route 345 from Majima with my luggage in the foreground.

On June 8, 2012: I hitchhiked 402 kilometers from Majima Station in Murakami, Niigata Prefecture, to Aomori City. The drivers consisted of one elderly couple, two recently married young men, a man about my age driving a large truck carrying tons of rice, a car with 3 ladies and a man, and finally, a middle age lady who took me to the very door of my destination.

Hitchhiking from Niigata to Aomori in the summer is much easier than in the winter. I'm always in a race with the sun to catch the last ride before dark. In the summer I have 2 extra hours to work with. In the winter I often can only hitchhike as far as Odate city in Akita, 100 kilometers short of the goal.

I began hitchhiking on Route 345 which runs along the coast of the Sea of Japan. It's a rather desolate area with not much traffic. However the drivers are usually going at least 20 or more kilometers.



The first driver who picked me up. The background is Nezumigaseki in northern Niigata on the coast of the Sea of Japan.

After only a few minutes the first car stopped, an elderly couple. They took

me as far as Nesumigasaki, an area with many scenic views. I thought to walk from there to a large parking area at Atsumi Onsen, a popular spa visited by many tourists. But after seeing a road sign that said Atsumi Onsen is 10 kilometers further up the road, I quit walking. I had already walked about 3 kilometers.



Motomu who took me to Akita City.

After only a few minutes after I stopped walking, a young man named Motomu who works at Kanshiwazaki Nuclear Power plant picked me up and took me all the way to Akita City, 170 kilometers further or 42% of the way toward my goal! Motomu was on his way back to his home town to visit his parents. Soon his company will transfer him to an oil rig on a small island near Australia. I asked him if his job was dangerous, "Yes," he replied. But at least he'll be able to take his wife with him.

Motomu dropped me off at Route 7 in the center of Akita city. The traffic there was very heavy. Holding out a paper sign showing the town of my destination is ineffective in such a situation. I found it's best just to hold out a thumb and hope for a curious driver to stop and ask me where I want to go. I'm happy just to get a ride to the edge of town from where drivers will be going longer distances.



Two of the ladies in the car that took me to Oiwake just north of Akita City.

In only a few minutes a car with 4 elderly people pulled up, 3 ladies and a man. They found it strange to see a foreigner hitchhiking. It was their first time ever to pick up a hitchhiker. They took me to the Oiwake, outside of Akita city.

From Oiwake, a newly wed young man took me to Odate City, about 90 kilometers further. It was only 2:45 p.m. when we arrived!



The truck driver and his rig that took me to Aomori City.

I stood close to a Lawson's convenience store on Route 7 and held out a sign that says, "Aomori." To my surprise, a large truck stopped! It's quite rare for such a big rig to pull over to the side of the road for me. The driver said he would take me to Hirosaki city, but ended up going further than I

expected and went to the Aomori city Route 7 bypass! It was now 5 p.m.

I continued to walk further up Route 7. I was now in actual walking distance to my goal! But it was still pretty far and would have taken me 3 more hours had I walked it. The final driver was a lady who went out of her way a few kilometers to take me to the very door of my friend's house.

May 6, 2012 Hitchhike Adventure: Hirosaki to Akita City



Miss Tomoko. She took
from from Nagamine to
Igarigaseki

Hirosaki was under a clear blue sky when I boarded the first train out of town at 6:54 a.m. My destination was home to Niigata and I was hoping to hitchhike all the way back from Nagamine station, just 3 train stations from Hirosaki and right on Route 7, a straight shot to Niigata. It turned out I was able to hitchhike in 5 rides only as far as Akita City. It started to rain just before car #5 and was raining heavily when I arrived in Akita City, still 270 kilometers from home. Heavy rain means the train the rest of the journey.

Car #1: A young single lady who works at Furutobe Spa. She took me as far as Igarigaseki, about half way to Odate City.

Car #2: A middle age man to Odate.

Car #3: A truck driver to Takenosu, part way to Noshiro City. I was surprised he stopped. The truck carries Home Center supplies. It's not very often for truck drivers to stop for me.



Lady who took me to
Noshiro City

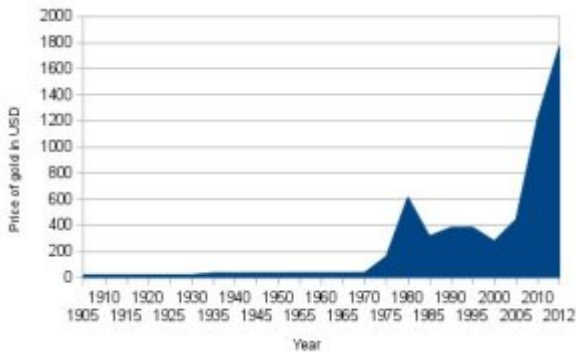
Car #4: A middle age lady driving a van to Higashi Noshiro. She past me by, turned around and offered me a ride. It's not uncommon for drivers to turn around after considering for a few moments whether to pick me up. I explained to the lady some principles of my faith from the Book of Genesis. Favorite words in the Japanese language are "nature" and expressions of appreciation such as "thank you". I told her that if Genesis 1:1 is true, and we are created beings by God, shouldn't it be a part of our nature to say, "thank you" to our Creator for life and all things He created? She agreed and understood that point quite well!



Mrs. and Mr. Sakurada of Noshiro City

Car #5: Mr. And Mrs. Sakurada of Noshiro City who took me to Akita station. Mr. Sakurada loves history and he was completely turned on when I explained to him the real reason the Japanese Tokugawa government of the 16th century began to persecute Christians in Nagasaki. It was not the true Gospel of Christ that the Tokugawa government feared, it was the influence of ROME, the Roman Catholic church, the Pope and the Jesuits!! The Japanese government knew the power of Rome and what the Pope did to Europe. The Nagasaki Christians they persecuted were all Roman Catholics, people who would have their ultimate allegiance to the Pope, not to the Japanese government. Tokugawa Iemitsu feared revolt. He feared Japan would become a colony of Rome. He therefore closed Japan to foreigners, but *ESPECIALLY* to Roman Catholic countries like Portugal. He had no problem with the English or Dutch because he knew they broke off from Rome after the Protestant reformation. I told that to the driver and it was like turning on a light in his head. He immediately put together the dots and was totally amazed!

[Price of gold from 1900 to 2012 with gold's purchasing power of bread comparison](#)



Gold is a good investment against inflation. One ounce of gold can buy the same amount of food today as it did a thousand years ago. Think about that.

Traumatic trip to Aomori city



Went the wrong way! The blue line from Nikaho City to Akita City was my intended route. The orange line going to Daizen city is the detour route the truck driver took me, 38 kilometers out of my way costing nearly an hour extra time! The end of the orange line points to Route 13 where the driver intended to drop me off. The dark green line is the Akita expressway which took me from Daizen City to Hachiryu Station. It made up for the lost time of the detour.

September 19: Today was warm, bright and sunny, a very good day to travel by hitchhiking. I was on my way to Aomori city, about 480 kilometers from my home in Niigata city. It was imperative that I reach Aomori by evening

because I had to travel further the next day to Misawa city, 70 kilometers from Aomori, and be there by 10PAM to do a job assignment.

My motivation to hitchhike is not just to save money, but to make new friends. The very first driver who picked me up was a talkative lady, Miss Tsuneko, who took me to Tainai city on Route 7, about 60 kilometers from home, a very good distance for the first ride. Tsuneko is not a Christian but she is interested in helping her Christian friend find a Christian husband.

From Route 7 I walked 4 kilometers to get to the Arakawa-Tainai interchange of the Nihonkai-Tohoku Expressway. I hoped catching a ride on the expressway would speed my journey by getting a vehicle going at least as far as somewhere in Yamagata Prefecture and thereby bypassing Murakami City entirely. Expressway drivers tend to go longer distances. Moreover, traffic on Route 7 past Murakami is minimal. In times past I had to wait more than an hour in Murakami to catch a ride going any significant distance.

The 40 minute hike to the expressway bore fruit – I got an immediate ride to Atsumi Onsen in Yamagata! From Atsumi Onsen I caught 3 more cars and got as far as Nikaho City in Akita Prefecture. It was about 3PM. I hoped to catch a ride from Nikaho to Akita city. There was just enough time for me to catch the 4:30 train from Akita station which would arrive in Aomori at 8PM.

After just a few minutes wait in Nikaho, a truck stopped and the driver said he would take me to Route 13 in Akita. I assumed he meant the intersection of Route 13 and Route 7 in Akita City, but I was terribly wrong! The driver was a foreigner, a man from Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam. He's lived in Japan for 18 years and spoke good Japanese, the only common language between us. The driver got off Route 7 to take a free expressway heading toward Akita City, but partway he got off the expressway at Ohuchi and took Route 105 toward Daizen city. I didn't know it at the time, but Daizen city is the new name for Omagari city. Had he said he was going to Omagari, I would have immediately asked him to let me off at Ohuchi for I knew that Omagari was way out of my way! But the name "Daizen" confused me. The driver was so positive and tried to be encouraging. "Don't worry! This road runs through the rice fields with very few stop lights and little traffic! I'll take you to Route 13 and from there you can catch a ride to Akita city which is next to Daizen! But looking at the map, I realized I made an awful mistake!

Why did I heed the driver's advice and go with him further? It could be because he is Vietnamese, and I don't ever remember meeting anyone from Vietnam before. It's always interesting to meet people from difference countries and cultures. On September 9th two young men from Nepal took me to Akita city. They corrected me when I said the founder of Buddhism was from India. "You're twice our age and know many things, and yet you didn't know that Buddha was born in our country, in Nepal!" ☐

There was now no way I could arrive Akita city in time to catch the 4:35PM train. After that there was only one more train left, the one leaving Akita station at 6:46PM which would get me to Aomori city at 10:40PM. If I missed that one too, I would be in bad trouble indeed. It would mean hitchhiking in the dark. I have hitchhiked after sunset occasionally, but it's not nearly as

easy as hitchhiking during daylight hours. It's harder for drivers to see me and more dangerous at night.

I began to realize I had to stop listening to the driver and start to follow what I knew from experience to be best. Letting him take me to Route 13 was no guarantee I would make the 6:46PM train. From the map I saw the Omagari Interchange of the Akita expressway a few kilometers before Route 13. It was right on Route 105. I asked the driver to let me off at the expressway entrance, and he did so but expressed doubts I would catch a car going on it. I didn't listen to him this time, I knew catching a ride on the expressway had the potential to make up for the time I lost on the detour.

The decision to take the Akita Expressway paid off! After only a couple minutes wait, a driver stopped and took me to the Nishisenboku Service Area. I got off there because the driver was going to Akita Airport. From Nishisenboku an elderly couple took me to the train station at Hachiryu, about 30 kilometers past Akita city. Because of the speed of the expressway, I actually caught up with and past the 4:35PM train from Akita city and caught it at Hachiryu with 5 minutes to spare! It was a happy ending to an otherwise traumatic trip. God is good. ☐

[Forced to hitchhike due to heavy rain](#)



Miss Maiko who went out of her way to take me to Higashi Noshiro station.

July 29: I needed to go this day to Aomori city, 470 kilometers from my home in Niigata. It was raining hard. I attempted to take the very first train out at 6:16AM but after arriving at the station was told that all trains were stopped on that particular train line. When a rainfall reaches a certain

level, the railroad company cancels all trains to make time to check the tracks. Landslides due to heavy rain are not uncommon in Japan.

To make any progress at all, I need to take a different line using going a slightly different direction but which would take to me the main station of Niigata city where another train line going to Murakami city would take me further. But due to heavy rains, that train had to stop at Nakajo, about 2/3s of the way to Murakami.

I'm now in a do or die situation. It was imperative that I be in Aomori city that evening. My only recourse was to hitchhike. It continued to rain hard for the first 30 minutes after arriving to Nakajo, but then the rain subsided to the point I could walk outside with an umbrella.



Terata Kouki who took
me to Iwawa Sakura
Station in Akita
Prefecture

The day turned out to be another miracle day of hitchhiking! Six drivers took me as far as Noshiro city in Akita Prefecture. It was 5:30PM by the time I got to Noshiro, just in time to take a train the rest of the way arriving in Aomori at 8PM. Five of the six drivers went out of their way for me! One man went as far as 1 hour or about 60 kilometers to take me to Yamagata Prefecture. The last two drivers, a young man and young lady want to see me again, and they will therefore be meeting each other for the first time when they do when I pass through Akita city again next month.

[Picked up by young mother with two little boys](#)





Mrs. Takahashi with 5 year old son Raima and 3 year old son Shuga who took me 478 kilometers toward my destination.

Monday, July 18: From Aomori city in northern Tohoku I needed to go in one day to Noda city, Chiba Prefecture, a distance of around 700 kilometers. It took me one hour to walk from my friend's house in Aomori to Aomori Chuo Interchange, the beginning of the Tohoku expressway, and it took yet another hour of waiting to catch the first ride. It was worth all the effort considering the very first car took me 70% of the 677 kilometer length of the Tohoku expressway! The driver was a mother, 30 some years old, Mrs. Takahashi with her two sons, Raima (5) and Shuga (3).

When I first saw Mrs. Takahashi waiting for the traffic signal just before the expressway entrance to turn green, I thought, "No chance with her! She has two little kids in the back seat!" And so I was therefore surprised when she turned into the gas station by the expressway entrance where I was standing and waved to me to come.

The front passenger seat was filled with belongings. Mrs. Takahashi had to arrange things a bit to make room for me and my suitcase. I greeted the boys and they were both very friendly. The older of the two, Raima, was quite talkative throughout much of the trip.

Mrs. Tahahashi said, "Let's have a good trip!" I was so happy to know she was going all the way to Nasu City in Tochigi Prefecture. This would take me past the big city of Sendai which is sometimes hard to cross.

It was the second time Mrs. Takahashi picked up a hitchhiker. The first time was with her husband. She took a young Japanese man toward his destination. I was glad too to be of some service to her in helping her keep her two boys from fussing with each other too much and making too much of a racket. Every time I turned around to talk to them, they would calm down.

Mrs. Takahashi seemed to be in a hurry to go home and often approached a speed of 140 kilometers per hour! "Don't worry," she said. "The car won't go any faster than this!"

I had a receptive audience of 4 hours to share with what the Holy Scriptures have to say about God, creation of the universe, the history of Adam and Eve in the Garden, why people became what they have become, why evil exists, why we are all criminals in the sight of our Creator, and why we need to be saved. Mrs. Takahashi was impressed to know that Adam put the blame on his wife for eating the "apple." Most people in the West have heard all these things in church much of their lives, and they have either accepted them as fact, or rejected it all to the point they don't care to listen anymore. It was the very **first time** for Mrs. Takahashi to hear it, and because she seemed interested I was glad to keep sharing more. I've *hardly ever* been turned down by a Japanese person an offer to share with them stories from the Bible. I

can only think of a handful of times out of 10s of thousands of people I've talked to in the 34 years I've lived in Japan.

We stopped for a restroom break and Raima held out his hand toward mine for me to hold hands with him to walk with him and his mother toward the parking area facilities. He then followed his mother into the restroom.

The next day at the Miyoshi Service area on the Kanetsu Expressway heading home, I met another young mother with her son. They were from the USA and are now living near Yokota AFB. There were many American service personnel with their dependents around who were on their way back to the Air Force base after a field trip. I told the lady I'm about to hitchhike to Niigata. She didn't believe me at first. I showed her the picture of Mrs. Takahashi and sons that I took with my cell phone. "It wouldn't happen in America" the lady replied. I tend to think that Japan is now, "the land of the free and the home of the brave", more than the USA is, don't you? America *used to be so* back in the 19th century.