

Hitchhiking during Golden Week, 2009



Hirosaki Castle the beginning of
May

I had a fantastic 10 day trip traveling 1460 kilometers in 28 vehicles during the Japanese holiday season from April 29 to May 5th known as "[Golden Week](#)".

April 30th: It took me over two hours and 6 vehicles just to get out of Niigata City! A lady took me as far as Toyosaka on the edge of Niigata City. She said her 29 year old daughter lived one year in Montana. After that a Russian man took me as far as East Port in Niigata and after that a lady with her mother took a me a few kilometers further up route 113 to the middle of nowhere somewhere between Niigata city and Murakami city. It was a less than desirable spot to catch a ride with few cars passing through a forested area, but I had a scenic view of the Sea of Japan on my left that kept me inspired. After a long wait a young man who works in a travel agency who says he is a Christian and whose father is from Nagasaki took me to route 7 in Murakami. In all it took 16 cars in all to get to Akita City 270 kilometers down route 7 arriving at 7:30PM, but the last driver took me to the very area where I spent the night with friends.



Chieharu and Jun

May 1st: It took two hours just to get out of Akita city. After waiting at least 30 minutes on route 13, a lady who works in a kindergarten took me about 10 kilometers to a point close to route 7. From there an elderly man took me a short ways to a gasoline station on route 7 but from there I had to walk a long distance of nearly an hour to get to a good traffic light. The third person was a truck driver who took me all the way to Odate in Akita Prefecture. The 4th car was a young couple, Jun and Chieharu who took me all

the way to the very door of my destination in Aomori City! They actually went a hundred kilometers out of their way to take me because their destination was Hirosaki city, about 50 kilometers before Aomori City. They were on their way to Hirosaki Castle Park to see the cherry blossoms. I had a lot of time to share my faith in Jesus with Jun and Chieharu. They happily prayed with me to [receive Christ as their Savior](#).



Koinobori

May 5th: This is the last day of the Golden Week holiday which is called “*Kodomo no hi*” which means “Children’s Day”. Everywhere there are waving flags in the shape of Carp that are called “[Koinobori](#)” meaning “Carp banner”. I left Aomori to go to Chiba in the Tokyo area, nearly 700 kilometers due south. Previous experiences in trying to catch a ride from a driver entering the Tohoku the expressway from Aomori have been difficult with long waits of over an hour, but today I caught the first ride within a minute! The driver was a policeman who flashed his badge at me after riding with him for a few minutes. I was glad to meet a friendly officer of the law, for I told him on April 15 I had been [stopped by two policemen for hitchhiking](#) and was detained for 10 minutes in their patrol car. He smiled sympathetically. I asked him if hitchhiking is illegal in Japan or not, and he replied that it is not. The officer took me up to Hanawa Service Area in Akita Prefecture. The area was crowded with parked cars and people.

After waiting only a few minutes at Hanawa, a couple, Mr. and Mrs Nagata with Kawasaki license plates stopped to pick me up. I rejoiced because I knew they would take me over 95% of the rest of the way to my destination of Noda City in Chiba! This must be the longest I’ve ever went in a single vehicle for it was at least 600 kilometers.



Takaaki, Atsumi, Minori
and Ryota

Mr. and Mrs. Nagata have been married for 16 years but have no children. Mrs. Nagata told me that they would like to adopt a child, but Japanese law makes it difficult to adopt unless you already have at least one child! She would need to be a registered kindergarten teacher to qualify.

The travel time from Niigata City to Aomori city of 480 kilometers was 17 hours averaging 29 kilometers per hour in 20 vehicles. By comparison, the trip from Aomori to the Tokyo area only took 3 cars and 8 hours to go 670 some kilometers, and this was in spite of traffic pileups on the expressway during the last day of Golden Week. It was 3 times faster to travel on the expressway than the regular road.

May 9th: The sweetest people who picked me up on the way back home were four young people on the way to Numazu in Gunma Prefecture, Ryota, Minori, Takaaki and Atsumi. Their average age was 25 years old. One of the girls, Minori, often touched my arm showing affection. They all visited the USA for a month a few years ago and spoke some English. One of the young men, Ryota, gave me his pen that he said he used in his university.

From Akagi Kougen Service area, Mr. Katou took me as far as Koide, a small town between Kawaguchi and Muika Machi. He travelled all the way from Shizuoka to visit his mother for mother's day which was the next day.



Truck driver who took me to Koide in Niigata.

From Koide I opted to take the low road to Ojiya knowing that few cars would be entering the expressway from that point. A Suntory Juice truck picked me up. The driver said that he had never picked up a hitchhiker before. I told him, "congratulations!"

A sweet middle aged couple took me the rest of the way back to Niigata. They were on their way to Nakajo to see their son.

[Hitchhike Adventure to Osaka](#)



I always consider it a miracle to hitchhike from Niigata to Osaka in a single day. The distance is over 600 kilometers or about twice what I usually travel. This time it only took 5 cars to get to my destination, and the last driver went out of his way to take me to the very residence I needed to go! I left home just after 9AM and arrived at my friends house in Osaka about 7:30PM after dark. It could have been a bit quicker if there had not been a traffic jam between Kyoto and Osaka. The cause of the jam was a traffic accident.



Route to Osaka from Niigata. Click on map to see an enlargement

The final driver was Mr. Inoue, a company owner. He was driving a brand new Mercedes costing 15 million yen or about \$150,000 US. He pulled up to a parking spot near me at the Shizugatake Service area on the Hokuriku Expressway. Just before he got out of the car, he looked at me and smiled. Usually when I make eye contact with a driver, it's almost certain that they will offer me a ride. I looked away and continued to hitchhike. When I looked back at the car, the man was gone, but a few minutes later as he walked back to his car he approached me asking my destination. I saw from his licence plate that he too would going to Osaka. Mr. Inoue was glad to take me and even went out of his way to drive me right up to my friend's apartment building.

[Hitch-hike back to Niigata from Saitama](#)



After waiting only a minute at the entrance of the Kan'etsu Expressway in Kawagoe, Mr. Aikawa picked me up and took me to the Takasaka Service area. This was excellent because it is in the direction toward home in Niigata. Often I get picked up by drivers going in the opposite direction, southbound toward Tokyo. I'll go with them as far as Miyoshi Service Area and then walk 20 minutes to get to the northbound area. I was making good time and knew I might be able to even stop for an hour in Tokamachi to see more friends on the way back.



Nobu



Nobu's camping car

From Takasaka, a retired man named Nobu driving a camping car took me as far as Akagi Kogen in Gunma. This was excellent because it is past Takasaki and Maebashi. Often I have to get off at Kamisato, a service area just before these two cities. Many of the drivers will go only as far as Takasaki or Maebashi. I normally reject offers from them to go only that far because I learned from experience it is difficult from those points to get back on the expressway.

Nobu lived 8 years in the USA and spoke good English. His hobby is snowboarding. He said he would travel all the way to Hokkaido in that camping car to go snowboarding. He knew of my friend in Aomori, Simon Bernard (www.hakkodapowder.com), who helped save the lives of skiers caught in an avalanche on Mt. Hakoda in 2008.



Young people heading toward a ski resort

After waiting around 30 minutes at scenic Akagi Kogen, two cars of young people passed me by but then stopped a few feet away. The driver of the second car drove back toward me in reverse and asked my destination. They were going snowboarding to a mountain resort in Shiozawa just past Yuzawa. Both cars were full of both people and luggage. The driver of the second car had to persuade the driver of the first car to take me and part of my luggage which was two cases. After a bit of negotiation he agreed.

I was glad to get to Shiozawa, but it wasn't exactly an ideal location to hitchhike from. There was too few cars in the parking area. I decided to leave the expressway parking area and walk to the regular highway, route 17. From there I knew it would be fairly easy to hitchhike further. But though route 17 was fairly close within eye shot only about half a kilometer away, I didn't see a road leading to it. I was separated by a snow covered rice field. In the summer it may be possible to walk across the banks of the rice field, but not when it is covered with a meter of snow! I had to walk a long circuitous path just to leave the expressway and then walk along a road that went somewhat parallel to route 17 hoping to get to an intersection. But there was none in sight! There was hardly any traffic along that road and the drivers of handful of cars that passed by ignored me. But God sent another angel to rescue me, a lady who at first said she wasn't going exactly the way I wanted to go but decided to take me to the highway later. I probably would have been walking close to an hour in all if she hadn't come.



People in front of a castle from

from snow!

From Shiozawa man heading to Nagaoka took me as far as Muika Machi. From there a family took me to Tokamachi. This city is famous for its deep snowfalls in the winter and it's snow festivals. I saw many well crafted snow sculptures throughout the city. The only other city in Japan where I have seen such snow sculptures is Sapporo in Hokkaido.



Mr. Saito

In Tokamachi I spent an hour with my friends Keiji and Miyoko, and then hitchhiked the remaining 100 kilometers back home – in a single car! The driver, Mr. Saito, was heading to a town right next to mine and dropped me off at a point only a few minutes walk to my house! This is nothing short of miraculous considering the distance involved and the numerous other places a person may be heading to from that point. I walked in the door at 5:15PM, in plenty time for our Sunday evening weekly Christian fellowship meeting.

Adventure from Kobe to Kanto



Mr. Notsu from
Matsui

February 7, 2009: I needed to be in Tokyo the very next day and so I hitchhiked to Noda City in Chiba and stayed with friends. It's a long trip of over 600 kilometers but it only took me 3 cars. The longest ride was from Mr. Notsu who teaches mentally handicapped children. He's from Matsui in Shimane

Prefecture but lives in Hiratsuka in Kanagawa Prefecture, over 1000 kilometers from where he was raised.



Mr. Fuji from Ashigara Service Area
on the Tomei Expressway

Just a few minutes after they left, a good English speaker, Carl, picked me up took me as far as the Kamisato expressway near Gunma. Carl works as general manager of automotive lighting sales for General Electric.

From Kamisato I got a ride to Shibukawa Parking area which is just past Maebashi city. An older couple, Mr and Mrs. Tomaru, took me. The Mrs. Tomaru was looking at me constantly and always smiling as we talked.

After waiting a relatively short time in Shibukawa Parking area, a man driving a fine car took me as far as Akagi Kogen. He is a owner of a golf club. I asked him how much he pays in taxes every year. He replied their are three separate taxes of 20 million yen each from an average yearly income of 200 million yen.



Mr. and Mrs.
Tomaru

From Akagi Kogen a man took me as far as Echigo Yuzawa. I knew from experience most of the cars from that point would be going back toward Tokyo, and so I decided to hitch-hike on the low road to Muika Machi, about an hour further, and get back on the expressway from there. From before I wanted to visit Muika Machi to check out a job offer. A young man who said he is a road building took me to the company where I left my contact information. After that I walked the rest of the way to the Muika Machi Interchange, a good half hour hike!

From the Muika Machi Interchange a 29 year old man who works in a tool company took me as far as Sanjo. From there it was only a short train ride back home.

The total approximate distance hitch-hiked in this trip was 1917 kilometers or about 1200 miles. The total cost for the short bus and train rides was \$65, and I spent about \$40 for food during the 12 days. I brought back home \$470 made from gifts for my computer work. If didn't hitch-hike but took regular transportation, I surely would have run out of money along the way. Transportation alone would have cost an approximate \$780!

About the webmaster



James Arendt

My name is James Arendt but some people also know me as “James Japan.” I’m also the webmaster of [Deep Truths](#). I lived a total of 40 years in Japan, more than half my life. I loved to hitchhike throughout Japan because it was the main way I got to meet people, make new Japanese friends, and share with them my faith in Jesus Christ.

I’m a Christian who reads the King James Version of the Bible and holds to the values of the *early* Protestant reformers. Before I came to know Jesus Christ, I lived the first 20 years of my life in the darkness of Romanism. I believe all the major Protestant denominations today have been infiltrated by witches and Jesuit agents who have undermined the Protestant Reformation to bring the Protestants back under the wing of the Pope. I think they did a bang-up job of deceiving the world, don’t you? So far only about half of my close friends have been open to receiving this truth.

I was born in 1950 in Hammond, Indiana, USA, and raised in the Chicago southeast side neighborhood of [Hegewisch](#). When a teenager, I didn’t much like Hegewisch, but now think it was probably one of the best and safest of all of Chicago’s neighborhoods. It has a small-town atmosphere. My mother, now deceased, was a very devoted churchgoer and took me to church regularly. Though I believed in God, I didn’t especially enjoy or look forward to the church experience.

When I became a teenager I got into smoking at age 13, alcohol abuse when 15, and smoking cannabis weed from 16 years of age. Though I did fairly well in grammar school, my grades in high school were very low. My friends would warn me that if I continued in my ways, I was headed for “skid row” at the most or a very bleak future at the least. I began to realize I was wasting my life.

After graduating high school I got a nighttime job at a steel factory in the neighboring town, Hammond Indiana. Working nights kept me out of trouble for a while.

In 1969 during the Vietnam War, those selected to be drafted were chosen by

the lottery system. Birthdays were picked out of a box at random. My birthday, June 21, was number 60 out of a possible 365. Only those with a number of more than 250 would be exempt from the draft, so I knew the Army would soon send me a draft notification. I opted to legally avoid the Army by enlisting in the U.S. Air Force. I was accepted and went to Texas for basic training on Feb. 10, 1970.

After two months I was transferred to Kessler AFB in Biloxi Mississippi to be trained to be a "telecommunications control center specialist." I like any field related to physics and science, especially electricity and electronics, so I studied hard and had top grades. Military life did me some good as I learned to discipline myself to do the things I needed to do. However, in my free moments, those 9 months in Mississippi were the loneliest of my life. The pain was extreme. All my friends knew it and tried to help me. I felt like the character "Neo" in the recent popular film "The Matrix", and that there was something wrong somewhere.

In December 1970 I was transferred by the Air Force to McClellan AFB in Sacramento California. It was there that I found the answer to my chronic loneliness!

I met a group of young men, my peers at the time, who called themselves Christians. One of them, a boy by the name of David Weeks, invited me to go mountain climbing with them. It wasn't too difficult for him to persuade me to come along. There are no mountains to climb anywhere near my hometown.

Another boy, one of David's friends, talked to me about having a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ. No one I considered a peer ever talked to me of this before. I knew that though I believed in God, He seemed far from me. The thought of having a daily personal friendship with Him was a totally new concept!

That night they invited me to a meeting where a famous entertainer, [Tony Fontane](#), gave a testimony of his near-death experience, deliverance from alcoholism and conversion to Christ. I felt God speaking to me. I knew that this could be my opportunity to start my life on the right course depending on the decision I made. I decided that night to receive Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior.

The next morning when I woke, I felt something inside me had changed. There was a new spiritual nature born inside me; something I didn't have before! I turned on the radio and surprisingly it was a Christian broadcast. I listened with unusual interest. For the first time, I could understand what the preacher on the radio was saying!

Through the months that followed, I met my new Christian friends often. They taught me many things from the Bible. I developed a Bible-reading habit myself. I felt I could hear the very Voice of God speaking to me through the pages of His Book!

I learned through the following months that God is not merely the angry judge I had perceived Him to be, but He is more the loving Father. The Bible in

Jeremiah chapter 31 verse 3 says. "The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee."

I learned that not only does God love me and sent His own Son Jesus to save me, but that He wants me to love Him too by spending time talking to Him, and by listening to His Voice speak to me in my heart. When I do so, He gives me the power to face and overcome any and all obstacles in life.

I learned what real faith is: Simply believing and accepting the Word of God. Romans chapter 10 verse 17 says. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." In other words, through an act of my own will in choosing to read and believe the Word of God in the Bible and His prophets and prophetesses, I can increase my faith in God and His power in my life.

I learned to accept myself as God made me – a man with both weaknesses and strengths. I had the bad habit of comparing myself negatively with others, feeling inferior in physical abilities (especially sports), my appearance, and lacking eloquence in public speaking. I learned the Lord has endowed me with specific gifts that can be of service to others, i.e. teaching and writing, computer skills, faith to live frugally with little income, faith to travel, meeting new people, and talking to strangers. Some of these I had previously considered areas I was weak in, but they turned into strengths! It may surprise you to know that I was extremely shy and introverted before receiving the Lord.

God even helped me overcome my fear of public speaking! It's still something I don't especially relish, but I'm not scared to death doing so anymore.

For the first time in my life, I felt I could now contribute something to society. I could share with others the happiness and inner peace I had found in Christ!

You can have an exciting and fulfilling life too! Just invite Jesus Christ into your life and talk to Him as your buddy and constant Companion! If he can save me He can save you too from all your problems, especially chronic ones!

Here are Scriptures from John chapter 1 of the New Testament that show what a person needs to do to become a child of God. Some people say that all humans are God's creation and therefore God's children. The Bible indicates that we need to **become** His children by receiving the Son of God first.

10 He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew him *not*.

11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

12 But **as many as received Him**, to them gave he **power** to become the **sons of**

God, even to them that believe on his name:

13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Here's a good prayer to pray if you don't know Christ yet. You need to pray this particular prayer only once.

Dear Jesus, please come into my heart and life as my Savior. I acknowledge you to be the Son of God. Please forgive my sins, cleanse my heart from bitterness, grudges, hatred, everything I know is bad, and give me a new spirit of love. Amen!

After you receive God's gift of salvation in Jesus, you should continue to get to know Him better by reading His Word in the Bible. If you are a native English speaker, the old King James version is the best.

My beliefs in a nutshell:

- The Bible is the written Word of God and the KJV is the most accurate English translation of it.
- Evolution and Big Bang are pseudoscience and Dark Matter and Dark Energy are fudge factors to support the pseudoscience.
- Jesus Christ is the Creator, the Word that became flesh, and Who died on a cross made of wood and resurrected 3 days later to become the Savior of all who believe on Him.
- The Papacy is the Antichrist.
- The Beast of Revelation 13 is the world's political, military and commercial system.
- The Great Whore of Revelation 17 who rides on the Beast is the Roman Catholic Church.

The reason you may not have known or may not agree with the last three points is because the Jesuit Order of the Roman Catholic Church and its counter-reformation derailed the Protestant Reformation in the 19th century with a false interpretation of Daniel 9:27. It was *Jesus* who confirmed the covenant (God's covenant of grace with Abraham) with many (Jews) for one week (7 years, 3.5 years of His preaching and 3.5 years of the Apostles preaching up to the stoning of Stephen the Martyr), *not* a future Antichrist. All the early Protestant leaders and Bible teachers held that view. I do not stand alone. For more information, please check out the [articles on this website](#).