

# Adventure Returning Home to Niigata City



Mr. and Mrs. Ii who went out of their way to take me to Niigata City

**March 22, 2010:** It was unusually windy with a few snow flurries, and the temperature was just one degree above freezing when I left my friend's house in Aomori city at 7:30 AM to walk to the National Highway route 7. I've hitchhiked on this highway before, but this morning people seemed unusually hard and unconcerned. Nearly everybody was ignoring me and the others who didn't would shake their heads or cross their arms meaning "no!" After an hour and a half and walking several kilometers I got desperate and send an email text message to my mate for her to pray for me.

Within only a matter of **seconds** after sending that text message requesting prayer, I noticed a car stopped about 100 meters up the road and started walking toward it. Not every stopped car necessarily means the driver is offering me a ride, but after walking a bit closer, a man got out of the car and waved me to come! It was a father with his teenage son. They took me to the Aomori Chuo Interchange which is an entrance to the Tohoku Expressway. It was only 3 kilometers further up the road, but they saved me at least another 30 minutes walking.

I had originally intended to take Route 7 back home which is the same route that I came on, but it was already 9AM and I figured perhaps the Tohoku Expressway would be faster even though I may have longer waits. The wind was strong and I began to feel cold. It was good to be wearing a heavy winter coat and woolen hat this trip.

After about an hour a man stopped and offered me a ride to Omagari City in Akita Prefecture. I rejoiced because this would take me to the Shiwa service area past Morioka which is about 200 kilometers further or over 1/3 of the way back home!

After arriving in Shiwa, I remembered that I had quite a long wait there last year during a previous trip. But this time after only 10 minutes a couple with a young son offered me a ride. They were going all the way to Chiba which meant I could go with them as far as the Adatara Service area just before the junction of the Ban'etsu expressway! This is as good as it gets, for we arrived at Adatara at 3:30PM or two hours before sunset. I needed only one more good ride!

The driver was an engineer working with lasers and fiber optic cable production. I commented to him that such technology must be extremely complex, and yet it doesn't compare with the complexity of the human cell. He smiled when he realized the conversation was leading to [creation by intelligent design](#).

The engineer was also interested in what I had to say about the fall of the American government in 1913 when [Woodrow Wilson sold the American economy to a private investor corporation](#).

At Adatara after only a 15-minute wait, a young couple, Mr. and Mrs. Ii from Toyama, took me the final 120 some kilometers back to Niigata. May God bless them greatly for their kindness! They had to get off the expressway to drop me off which meant it cost them another 1000 yen in toll to get back on.

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## [Germs cause cancer!](#)



✖ "The idea that bacteria cause cancer is considered preposterous by most physicians. However, despite the antagonistic view of the American Cancer Society and medical science, there is ample evidence in the published peer-reviewed literature that strongly suggests that 'cancer microbes' cause cancer." – Alan Cantwell, MD. [Read the rest of this article.](#)

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## Back on the road! – Adventure to Aomori, March 2010



A couple soon to be married who took me from Murakami city toward Yamagata

Princess, the Shih Tsu dog that I have been caring for since December is now with new owners. I'm now free to continue to travel Japan, meet people, share my [faith](#), and visit [Family International](#) Homes throughout the country.



Mt. Chokai as seen from  
Sakata City in Yamagata  
Prefecture

On February 19th I left home and arrived in Aomori city the next day. It was beautiful weather the first day. The view of Mount Chokai from Sakata City in Yamagata prefecture was outstanding! It was completely hidden by clouds the last time I passed it last November. Nine drivers, all very pleasant people, took me 270 kilometers to Akita city where I stayed overnight. There was very little waiting time between rides, and I arrived before sundown.

I expected continued fair weather but the next day was cloudy with light rain. A small fold-up umbrella I always carry with me was sufficient protection. A truck driver took me as far as Odate city which is just before Aomori. I considered this nothing short of fantastic because only 7% of the vehicles I ride in are trucks, and a truck going a good distance was just what I needed on a rainy day.

The last driver, Mr. Tooru, took me to the very door of my destination.

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## A look at Ubuntu 10.4



Fedora Firewall GUI. The services checked in this picture do not represent my personal configuration.

I downloaded the latest version of Ubuntu Linux, version 10.4, and installed it as a [virtual machine](#) with [VMWare](#) on my [Fedora 12](#) pc. I also ran it as a live CD from boot. I'm still not convinced that Ubuntu is better than Fedora for me. Ubuntu is missing two GUIs (software with a graphic user interface) I use all the time in Fedora. There is

- no firewall GUI
- no services GUI

The basic configuration screen of the Fedora firewall GUI is clear to understand and easy to use to open the IP ports the user needs to use, and to block the ones not needed. This makes for better security, and it makes it easier to set up other features such as networking with the other PCs on the property.

The services GUI makes it easy to turn off services I don't really need which conserves resources. I remember that previous versions of Ubuntu had a services GUI, but it wasn't as comprehensive as Fedora's.

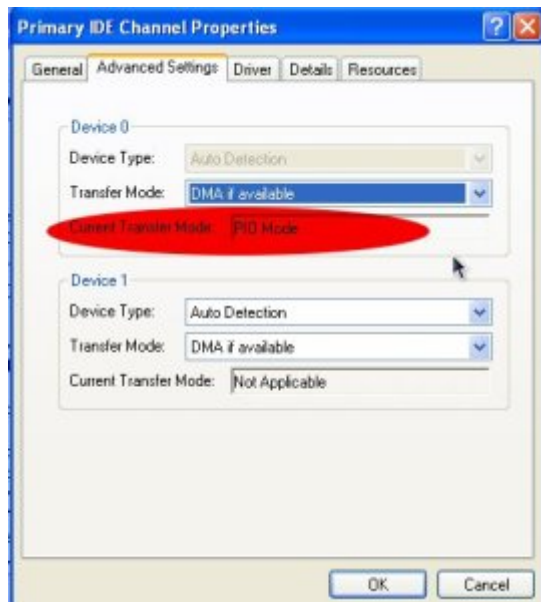
There are firewall GUIs for Ubuntu you can download and install, like Firestarter, but none are as easy to use as the Fedora firewall GUI. Firestarter requires a basic knowledge of TCP/IP protocols and ports, but the Fedora firewall GUI does not.

I really think that Fedora is not only a more mature Linux distro than Ubuntu, but it's also *easier* to tweak to do what one needs to do.

Another problem with Ubuntu 10.4 is I couldn't install Flashplayer on my 64 bit system. I had no problem with this in Fedora.

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# Dramatically restoring the performance of an exceedingly slow Windows XP machine



Last night a young lady asked me to look at her Windows XP laptop. It was running much slower than it did when she first got it. Usually, I first consider that the system is probably infected with malware or spyware, and I installed and ran [SuperAntiSpyware](#) to scan the C drive of her PC. But later I realized that she, being the type of girl she is, would not be going to dangerous websites from where she would be infected. SuperAntiSpyware reported no malware present. I then remembered that the primary IDE channel of a Windows XP system sometimes reverts from DMA to PIO. The graphic on the right shows what the current transfer mode should **not** be!

IDE stands for Integrated Drive Electronics. It refers to the electronics of either your hard disk or DVD drive. In this case, the hard disk is in question.

DMA stands for Direct Memory Access, a technique for transferring data from the main memory to a device (like your hard disk) without passing it through the CPU (central processing unit, the computer's brain).

PIO stands for Programmed Input/Output, a method of transferring data between two devices that *uses* the computer's CPU.

PIO is the older and slower method of data transfer. DMA is at least 10 times faster than PIO from my personal observation. This means that if the IDE primary channel is set for PIO, this will slow down the read and write speed of your hard disk by at least 10 times which dramatically slows down the entire system! Windows XP will automatically revert from DMA to PIO if there are too many DMA errors. In such a case, it may be a sign your hard disk is beginning to fail.

You can check the if the transfer mode of your hard disk is DMA or not with the procedure below.

1. Click Start
2. Click Control Panel
3. Click Switch to Classic View (if you are not there already)
4. Double-click the System applet to open it.
5. Click on the Hardware tab to open it
6. Click on Device Manager to open it
7. Click on the plus sign of IDE ATA/ATAPI controllers to expand it
8. Right click on Primary IDE Channel
9. Left click on Properties
10. Click on the Advanced Settings tab
11. Look at the current transfer mode of Device 0. It should say Ultra DMA Mode with a number after it as shown in the picture. If it says PIO Mode, this is the reason for your slow PC.



Ultra DMA mode

If you see that the current transfer mode of the primary IDE channel on your PC is PIO, you may be able to reset it back to ultra DMA mode by [downloading and running this script](#). Just right click the and left click "save link as" to save the file. Windows may save it as a text file by adding a .txt after the real extension of .vbs If so, you would need to rename the file before you can run it by deleting the .txt, and to do that you may have to change the Windows default setting to show registered file extensions.

After you run the script, reboot and check the primary IDE channel settings again. If it is restored back to ultra DMA mode, congratulations! If not, the only fix would be to change the hard disk altogether to a new one or buy a new PC.

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## [Aspartame, Brain Cancer & the FDA](#)



Beware of consuming any so called sweet sugarless products containing [aspartame](#)!

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## Using Gnome Shell



Screenshot of Gnome 2.8 desktop

I installed a beta version of the new [Gnome Shell desktop environment](#) on my Fedora Linux PC, and it seems to be very cool indeed! And it's free, not only free in the meaning of "freedom" but even free as in "free lunch."

[Gnome](#) is the standard desktop graphical environment for many [Linux distributions](#), including [Fedora](#), the Linux distribution I've been using on my PC since February 2005. Another popular Linux desktop environment is [KDE](#). Some people like it better than Gnome, because it looks a bit more like Windows®, but I found KDE buggy and unstable, at least it was 5 years ago, and stuck with Gnome. There are even more desktop environments besides these two.

The first screenshot shows my normal Gnome desktop using a top bar to show open applications, and a bottom toolbar showing the standard Gnome toolbar. The wallpaper contains a not so subliminal message.

By default the Gnome toolbars are on the opposite sides, but like to change them because it's more what I was used to when I worked in Windows®. Click any of the pictures to see an enlargement.

This screenshot is of the Gnome Shell after first running it. Notice the Gnome applets are now missing with the bottom toolbar gone. Maybe later I'll figure out how to add them again. Or possibly that feature is still not



available in this beta version of Gnome Shell.



Gnome Shell after startup

Here's how it looks like after clicking on "Activities" in the top left corner!!



Gnome Shell after clicking on Activities

All open applications are in the right side of the screen. Just clicking on one of the icons show the application to a full screen! The area on the left shows all the folders I have for easily finding files.

When I click on the time display on the top bar, a calendar drops down and stays down until I click on the time display a second time. Cool! Click on the graphic below to see it more clearly.



Gnome Shell with dropdown calendar

Eat your hearts out, Windows® lovers!

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## Nattou – fermented soy beans





Nattou in the styrofoam package it comes in

Recently I've been eating a traditional Japanese food called [nattou](#) nearly every day for lunch. Nattou is also known as "sticky beans." Click the photo to see why! Normally people eat it on top of rice, but I often eat it right out of the package with chopsticks after sprinkling on the soy sauce that comes with it. Nattou is very nutritious and good for health.

When I first ate nattou shortly after coming to Japan, I didn't like it very much then, but I've grown fond of it over the years. It's an [acquired taste](#). I often ate nattou on the road in the early days because it's the cheapest protein available.

Not all Japanese eat nattou. The people in the Kansai area (Kobe / Osaka / Kyoto) don't eat nattou as much as the Kanto (Tokyo and surrounding area) people do because they don't like the smell.

Did you know there is a major difference in health benefits between fermented and unfermented soy? Fermented soy like nattou and [Miso](#) are good for you, unfermented soy like tofu and soy protein power are not.

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## [Second hitchhike adventure 2010](#)



Hitomi (27) who took me back home

Princess the little Shih Tsu dog I am temporally taking care of was taken to be shampooed, and this set me free from caring for her to do other things. It's a beautiful sunny day in normally cloudy Niigata and so I just had to grab the opportunity to get out again, hitchhike and meet people.

The first driver was a man who appeared to be in his upper 60s, maybe lower 70s. He drove at least 10 kilometers out of his way to take me to a convenient location from where to continue my trip. I left him with an Activated Magazine.

Usually, older Japanese people who pick me up have traveled abroad, or have had something to do with foreigners, but the man said he has never been out of Japan. Later he said that his daughter lived in England for 6 months as an exchange student and was hosted by a British family. Ah ha! Japanese have a deep sense of obligation when helped by others, or even if any member of their family was helped, and this man's motivation was probably to return the favor. It doesn't matter to the Japanese if the foreigner in question had nothing to do with helping his daughter, any Caucasian-looking foreigner will do. □

A single lady by the name of Hitomi took me back to the area where I left my bicycle not far from home. I gave her an Activated Magazine, one that had an article exposing [Darwin's delusion](#). The Japanese, as you may know, are not very religious people. In spite of that, their culture reflects very much in many ways the teachings of Jesus such as being kind to strangers, helping those in need, etc. They hate falsehood. When I explain that Evolution is one of the falsehoods they have been fed since childhood, most of them receive it.

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## [Snowy winter in Japan](#)



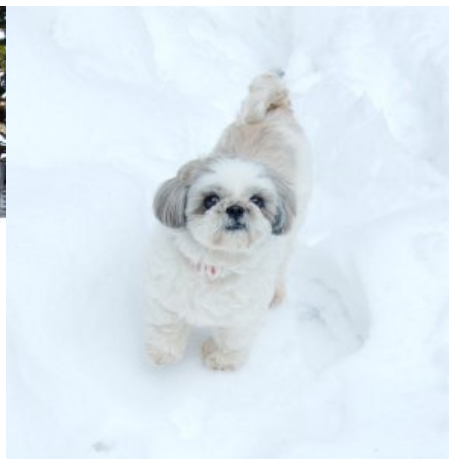
The photos below shows bamboo trees bent over with the tops stuck in the snow! The snow causes the trees to bend over till the top of the tree touches the snow on the ground. Further snow buries the top branches tying the top of the tree to the ground, and it will stay like that until enough snow on the ground melts, even though the original snow that bent the tree in the first place melts first like it did shown in the photos.



Bamboo bowed over  
with snow



Princess in snow



Princess

This winter of 2010 has the most snow I've seen in the Niigata area of Japan since moving here in January 2002. A couple days ago it snowed again, and the trees were covered with snow, but it melts in the daytime. Only at night the temperature will drop before freezing. In spite of the snow, I consider the winters in Niigata to be pretty mild compared to that Siberian like city in America where I grew up – Chicago. And to think that a few newspapers in the United Kingdom ten years ago ran a story that snow would be a thing of the past by the year 2010. Ha!

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## [WordPress power](#)



I realized today it's been a little more than a year since I started to use [WordPress blogging software](#). My first post was on January 7, 2009. I've grown used to it and think it's probably better overall and easier for me than the HTML / CSS hand coding coding method I used to use. Not that it's not good to learn HTML and CSS. Because I know these technologies, I can do things with WordPress that others cannot who do who do not know them.

WordPress blogs are easy for me to keep up with. Since my friend in Taiwan started to use WordPress for his [Paradise Post](#) blog, I can now keep up with him much better than when he used his former method of making web pages. What that was I do not know, but my Firefox browser didn't seem to like it. It would freeze up on his older web site – on my Linux PC with near state of the art technology, a CPU not even a year old, (AMD Phenom II) and 4 gigs of DDR 3 RAM!

I consider the Weaver II theme to be the best theme for WordPress ever! The free version is much more powerful and tweakable than most of the paid version's I've seen, and it even has a pro version to boot! So far I haven't seen the need to upgrade to the pro version.

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## PC security issues



I noticed the performance of a certain Windows XP PC was down again, even though I cleaned it from malware only a few months ago. I installed and ran [Super Anti Spyware](#) and it found over **1500 security issues!!** The browser was hijacked and a **fake anti-virus** program called [Antivirus 2008](#) was installed. [SuperAntiSpyware](#) cleaned it up and it's running fine again.

The particular user of that machine is a young adult who uses a peer to peer file sharing application known as [Bearshare](#). I'm sure she affected her PC again as a result of poor Internet browsing habits. I certainly do not recommend file sharing networks and software such as Bearshare but recommend [Bittorrent](#) instead for downloading large files. My favorite Bittorrent client is [Deluge](#). It's better security, and especially so in Linux, Mac, or a Windows PC when the user is logged in with limited privileges, and not as the Administrator.

Did you know that the [German government has warned web users to find an alternative browser to Internet Explorer](#) to protect security? I highly recommend [Firefox](#). It's much better security, open source, and heavily supported by software developers from around the world, and not just by a single cooperation like Microsoft whose bottom line is always money. I believe they have often put the priority on user convenience, and to do that, they sacrificed the user's security. Not requiring the user to always log in with limited access (as in Mac / Unix / Linux) is one example of this.

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## First hitchhike adventure of 2010



Kevin and Yuriko

**Jan. 10:** I had to make an emergency trip to Oyama city in Tochigi prefecture to fix a PC. Oyama city is a good 270 kilometers from home. It was snowing this morning, not a particularly good day to hitchhike! In order to save time and avoid hitchhiking during the snowfall, I took a train to a station about 30 kilometers away from where I hoped to walk to the Sakae parking area on the Hokuriku Expressway. Later I found it was way too far to walk to Sakae parking, but a kind man who was going to Kashiwazaki took me to Ozumi Parking which was even better for me.



Snow piled up 3  
meters next to a  
service station in  
Yuzawa

This winter Niigata has had 3 major snowfalls so far, about twice as much snow as was last year. The traffic moved slowly at points on Kan'etsu



expressway due to the snow and following the snowplows at only 40 kilometers an hour. It promises to be a good season for the ski resorts. The mountain of snow in the photo on the left is way over my head or about 3 meters (9 ft.)

Kevin from America and his Japanese wife Yuriko took me to Komayose parking area which is just before the junction of the Kita Kanto expressway that goes east toward Oyama.

The last driver was Mohammad from Pakistan. Most Pakistanis who live in Japan are in the used car sales business, and Mohammad is no exception. He was quite surprised that I would hitchhike, and asked me why I didn't come by train. I usually tell people it's more fun to hitchhike. Mohammad was interested to hear my views of the world, and especially about American foreign policy. I told him that it's easier for me to better understand politics and policy living outside of the U.S.A., but there are Americans living in America, albeit a small percentage (5~10%?) who have not succumbed to [mass media mind manipulation](#).

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## Hitchhiking stats compared



The year is almost over and I probably won't be going on the road again this month. Last night I added up the distances hitchhiked this year and they totaled to 19,530 kilometers. This is nearly 1000 more kilometers traveled compared to my previous record of 18,537 kilometers hitchhiked in 2005!



One of my goals for 2010 is to surpass the 20,000 kilometer mark.

I don't travel by hitchhiking merely for the sake of traveling. Every time I go out it's for some purpose, and often to visit friends and contacts to cure their Microsoft Windows ills. Thanks to the [inherent security holes in Windows](#) that lets in viruses, malware, and trojans, I'll never lack for a way to support myself. □ Of course, poor practices of the end user have a big part of the blame too. That's a big reason why I favor Linux. It's

practically idiot proof. The user cannot hurt the system, even maliciously, without root access, and no user of my Linux machine will ever have root access, only me, the administrator.

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## New Home Member



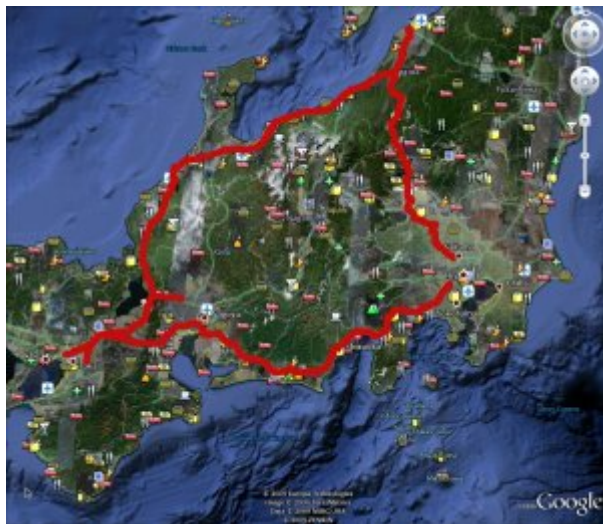
Princess with her toy

I took an overnight bus from Tokyo to Aomori City and met up with Judy who gave me her Shih Tsu dog, Princess. Judy and her family can no longer give 6 year old Princess the care she needs after moving to a new house where dogs are not allowed inside. I offered to take care of Princess. She now stays clean and warm and spends most of her time in my bedroom. ☐

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## December 2009 hitchhike adventure in central Japan





The red line shows my trip.

From November 30th to December 5th, I circled central Japan and reached my year-end goal of 90,000 kilometers distance hitchhiked from August 2003. In 16 vehicles I covered 1420 kilometers passing through Tokyo, Nagoya, Kyoto and Osaka. This trip also broke my previous record of 2005 of kilometers traveled in one year.

An interesting person I met on the way to Tokyo was a man who lived in Iraq for 5 years during Saddam Hussein's administration and 6 months in Iran during the Shah's reign. He is a soil specialist. He was driving a dirty truck and didn't look like the scientist and specialist he turned out to be. He also surprised me with his good English. I asked him if he enjoyed his time in Iraq and he replied that he thought he would die several times! He often had to work in the desert suffering both heat and cold. He said that the mental attitude in that part of the world holds those who are robbed more evil than the robber!



Mother with daughter who  
caught the H1N1 flu virus

The first car was a lady with her 12 year old daughter. I asked why they were wearing face masks and the mother replied that her daughter just caught the swine flu! At that point, I wanted to get out of the car, and especially so when she said she would take me to a train station which was a bit out of my way. But when I asked the lady to take me only up to the next major intersection, she replied that she would take me to route 8, a major highway going to the Sanjo interchange. I decided to accept her offer.

A truck driver leaning way back in the driver's seat picked me up and took me to the interchange.

In Kawasaki city I pioneered a new way to get to the Tomei Expressway: Take the Denentoshi line to Fujigaoka and walk to the Kouhoku Parking area which

is only about 1.5 kilometers distance from that station.

On the way to Kouhoku, it started to rain. At first, it was only a fine drizzle and I hoped it wouldn't get worse because I had no umbrella. I walked into a shop to ask for directions and the shop lady, seeing I had no umbrella, offered me one. I was so thankful to have that umbrella later because it really started to pour when hitchhiking at Kouhoku.



Laid back trucker

Dr. Sato, a professor of medicine in Niigata University took me back home. It's always interesting for me to meet highly educated men. We always have deep conversations about life, health, relationships, politics, science, the economy, etc., etc. No matter how erudite they are, or think they are, I keep up my side of any conversation with them despite the fact I barely graduated from high school. God gave me a marvelous education as a missionary in Japan.