

# A Method to Retrieve Data From a Failing Hard Disk



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One of the hard disks on my Desktop PC failed (probably due to heat), the one with all my data which was the Linux /home partition. To make matters worse, after buying a new HDD and installing Fedora Linux, by mistake during the installation process I deleted the main backup of that data which was on the second hard disk!! I could only do a partial retrieval of files from the failed hard disk. The file transfer would begin well but would stop though only 10% finished. I noticed the HDD got very hot in the process.

Because my most important files are also backed up on a laptop PC, I transferred them to my Desktop PC and had enough data to be able to continue my work. I lost about 150 gigabytes of non-essential files, 15 years of photos, hundreds of music MP3 files which totaled 3 gigabytes, my entire Documents folder of 17 years of documents, and other folders and files. None of the data was vitally important for me, but nevertheless I felt bad to suffer such a loss.



The next day just after waking up in the morning, I realized a way to keep the failed hard disk cool by putting it on a plastic bottle of cold water with a wet towel between the bottle and the hard disk to help transfer heat. Glory to God, it worked! I retrieved 100% of my photos and music!!

I bought a 120 gigabyte SSD to use as the root partition for my Linux OS, and used the healthy second HDD for my new /home partition. The boot time of my PC now is less than half what it was before. □

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# Misogi – a Shinto Purification Ritual of Standing Under a Waterfall in Winter



Spectators standing before Shiratama waterfall

On January 13, 2011, I attended a traditional local ceremony at Shiratama waterfall in Niigata Prefecture. I've been to this waterfall several times in the summer to escape the heat, but this is the first time to see it in the snowy mid winter, and the very first time to see people stand under it! It's actually a religious ceremony called *misogi*.



Six men and two women standing under the Shiratama Waterfall in mid winter.

Misogi ( misogi ) is a Japanese mountain ascetic practice of ritual purification. This may be undertaken through exhaustive activities such as extended periods without sleep, breath training, standing under waterfalls, or other methods. Water-misogi may be likened to dousing practices.

(Taken from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Misogi>)

Any of the photos will enlarge when clicked upon.



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## [Cherry Blossoms in Niigata City](#)



I took these photos in 2008. They were on my old website which is no longer

on line, and so I'm re-posting them.





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## Adventure to Teriberka – A Village in the Russian Arctic



On July 31 1996, Yanek from Belarus, Angela from St. Petersburg and I traveled overland by bus from Murmansk to the remote village of Teriberka. We went to visit our friend Marina who was a student we met in Murmansk. These two areas are circled in red on the map below. The distance is a bit more than 100 KM or 60 miles, but it took **5 hours by bus on dirt roads!** Though it was summer, we could still see patches of snow on the ground! Most of the area in between these two places is tundra. There is nothing growing higher than an inch or so from the ground due to the permafrost just beneath the soil.



In the year 2000 a Russian submarine sank not far from where I lived. The city next to Murmansk called Severomorsk is a Russian Navy base. Only Russian military and the local town's people have permission to enter this city. And believe it or not, even the tiny village of Teriberka is part of a military restricted zone. I didn't know that before arrival. On the 3rd day border guards came to Marina's apartment and told me I had until the next morning to leave or be incarcerated!

A map showing the relationship of this area to the rest of the world. You're probably thinking, "What's so special about that village anyway?" It's

special to me because it probably is the most remote area I've ever been in the world – a place only missionaries and National Geographic people would want to visit!



A view of Teriberka from Marina's apartment! It was the most miserable looking place I have ever been to in the world!



Belarussian Yanek in front of a typical Teriberka dwelling. The blue sign above the door says, "Welcome".



Yakek, Angela and Teriberka resident Marina near her apartment.



Marina's daughter (right) with a friend on a hill overlooking the Barents Sea (part of the Arctic Ocean). It's August 1st but only 13 degrees Celsius (55F) and windy.

There was nobody else on that beach except for the people with me! It was clean with no litter whatsoever which is unlike most Japanese beaches. Parts of it are rocky with very smooth large stones. Even in the summer the water is too cold to swim in without a wet suit.



Me with Yanek and Angela toward the left on that same hill, August 1, 1996.



Yanek, friend Marina and Angela.



Next day August 2! It warmed up to around 18C (70F)!



Yanek on the same day, same area.



Yanek with Marina. There is not a paved road in the entire village.



In Marina's apartment. Notice the rug hung on the wall? This is very typical of Russian homes. I think the photo was taken with a timer on the camera.

On the third day, two men who said they were government officials came to Marina's apartment when I was there and asked me if I obtained permission to visit their area. I told them I didn't know I needed permission. Marina told them I am an invited guest. The men said I was in a military area restricted to foreigners (especially Americans!) and that I needed permission. I didn't see a single sign of any military activity at all! They told me to leave at the earliest opportunity and that I may be fined later. But there was no fine and nothing more came of it.

[More photos of Teriberka.](#)

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## [Adventures in St. Petersburg, Russia](#)



I lived in St. Petersburg, Russia, from August of 1994 to October of 1997. It was known as Leningrad during the time of the Soviet Union. Many people who don't live in St. Petersburg still call it Leningrad! At least they did during my stay in Russia. But I don't remember a resident of St. Petersburg refer to it by the Soviet name. They are proud of their pre-Soviet history when Peter the Great founded the city on the tributary of the Neva river –

actually a wetland. The mosquitoes in the summertime are terrible!



Gostiny Dvor on Nevsky Prospect.

The photo is *Gostini Dvor* on the main street, Nevsky Prospect. In 1997 I spent over 2 whole hours looking for a weather thermometer but could not find one. The salespeople kept telling me to go to a pharmacy. I replied, "I'm not looking for a body thermometer! I want a weather thermometer." They replied, "Yes, but they also sell those at the pharmacy." Well, can you guess what happened when I posed the same question to the pharmacy people back then? They looked at me like I was nuts! "This is a drugstore, not a household appliance store!" "I know I know! But the main department store in town **TOLD me** to come to you!" And so I was bounced back and forth about 3 times before I finally gave up. A few weeks later I went back to my old neighborhood in Chicago and found what I was looking for in a Dollar Shop in a matter of minutes.



Nostalgic communist lady

The lady on the right is a nostalgic communist who is campaigning for the return of communism. Behind her are photos of Stalin, Lenin, and a contemporary politician named Zugannof. If you guessed by the sour look on her face that she doesn't like me, you're correct. She knows that I am a foreigner and a Christian missionary. I just smiled back at her and walked on.



A beggar in St.  
Petersburg

St. Petersburg is situated on a tributary, and so it is divided into several small islands that are linked by bridges and tunnels. Here is a typical beggar in Petrogradskaya Ostrov (Petersburg Island). It is hard to tell which beggars are really in need and who is faking. Some are professional beggars who actually pay the Mafia to beg on their turf. After a day's work of soliciting donations, they can relax in a fine restaurant eating a good meal. This is something I could not afford to do when I was there!



James and Helen



There was real poverty in St.Peterburg when I was there. I often visited a poor lady named Helen. Here I am with her in 1997. But though she was old and needy, she never begged. She taught English and got paid in groceries. Sometimes I would bring her food and gifts. Read [more about Helen](#), a former interpreter who helped in an interview with the famous Yuri Gagarin, the first man to be shot into space into orbit!



Giving a talk about the meaning of Easter in a school in St.Petersburg

Here is a picture of me and my friends in a school in St. Petersburg. It is close to Easter and I am giving a talk to the pupils on the meaning of Easter – the resurrection of Jesus Christ. I had the total support of the school teachers and principal to do so. Do you think I could get away with this in a public school in my homeland, the USA? Only deep somewhere in a rural area in the State of Indiana where the Amish live perhaps.



With Natasha Blond

Here I am with Natasha Blond in a park in front of a horse. Isn't she pretty? The horse was kinda pretty too. Her family name is not "Blond" but I named her that because of her real 100% natural blond hair, smooth as silk! You can tell that I really liked Natasha Blond! But alas, she was way too young for me.



Selling audio-visuals at an exhibition in St. Petersburg

In the photo is Russian Stephanie, American Nat, and me at the main exhibition hall in town. We are offering audio-visual teaching material for children. This is partly how we supported ourselves. The rest of the support came from donations from the headquarters of The Family and monthly donations from my faithful friends in Japan to whom I wrote monthly newsletters of my missionary activities in Russia.



Lydia with a women from Georgia

In the picture on the right is Lydia (right) talking to a lady from the former Soviet republic of Georgia. I don't know why in English we say

“Georgia” because the correct pronunciation doesn’t sound anything like the US state of Georgia. It sounds more like Gruzia. Lydia was a friend of the head of security at the main exhibition hall of St. Petersburg. He would let us inside for free when everyone else had to pay \$1.00. A dollar doesn’t sound like much now but it sure did then! That was 5000 RUBLES!! It was nice to walk around with the head of security. This way the other guards would get to know us and leave us alone while we offered our teaching materials to the guests.



Lydia by a vendor of flowers

Here’s Lydia again on a street by a vendor of flowers. Lydia is from Kiev, Ukraine. People often remarked that she spoke with an accent, unlike a Ukrainian. This is due to her learning English and being with missionaries from America. She married and has a one-year-old daughter named Diane.

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## Night View of Cherry Blossoms



I went by bicycle to a park an hour from home and took the photos below with a Nikon D50 camera (not mine) and a tripod (mine) with slow shutter speeds as slow as 5 seconds.



Cherry blossoms at night



Cherry blossoms at



Cherry blossoms at

night

night



Cherry blossoms at night



Cherry blossoms at night



Cherry blossoms at night



Cherry blossoms at night



Cherry blossoms at night



Cherry blossoms at night



Cherry blossoms at night



Cherry blossoms at night



Cherry blossoms at night



Cherry blossoms at night



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Cherry blossoms at night



Cherry blossoms at night



Cherry blossoms at night



Cherry blossoms at night



Cherry blossoms at night



Cherry blossoms at night



Cherry blossoms at night



Cherry blossoms at night

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## 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.

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## [Yahiko Shrine's Chrysanthemum Festival](#)



During my cycling trip to the summit of Mt. Yahiko in Niigata Prefecture, I stopped at the Yahiko Shrine which was on the way. I didn't know it before hand, but it was the time of the annual chrysanthemum festival. There were lots of visitors, probably more than usual.



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# Cycling adventure to the summit of Mt. Yahiko



**November 19, 2012:** It was a bright sunny day and I didn't want to spend it indoors in front of a PC screen. Instead I rode my bicycle to a village at the foothills of Mt. Yahiko, about 33 kilometers from home, and walked to the top, the very summit of Yahiko Mountain which is 634 meters above sea level.

It took me 2 hours to ride to Yahiko Village where I spent about a half hour visiting Yahiko Shrine and taking some photographs. After that it took a little over an hour to ride and push my bicycle to the parking lot area near the top. After that I walked 30 minutes further to get to the summit to photograph the view showing the Sea of Japan.



My transportation to Mt. Yahiko



View of Mt. Yahiko an hour bicycle ride from home.



View of Mt. Yahiko approaching Iwamuro Village. The arrow down is pointing to the highest peak and my destination. The peak in the center looks higher only because it's closer.



View about 3/4 of the way up Mt. Yahiko



Sign says, Mt. Yahiko, elevation 634 meters





## Signs on Mt. Yahiko



View of Yahiko Mura, Tsubama and Sanjo cites from near the summit



Visitor at the summit of Mt. Yahiko



Visitor at the summit of Mt. Yahiko



Visitor at the summit of Mt. Yahiko overlooking the Sea of Japan.



Tori Gate at the summit of Mt. Yahiko



Japanese ladies who asked me to take their photo. I first met them only a minute before.



Tori Gate in Tsubame city near Mt. Yahiko. Twenty years ago it was the largest Tori Gate in Japan.



The same Tori Gate facing Mt. Yahiko.

At 3:30 p.m. I left the summit and cycled down the mountain 30 minutes later. It only took me 20 minutes to get to the village below! But home was still 33 kilometers away and now at 4 p.m. it was getting dark. By 4.45 p.m. I got to Tsubame city and photographed the Tori Gate in the photos above. At 6:30 it

started to rain but I had an umbrella. I didn't get home till 8 p.m. with my pants soaked from the rain and thoroughly exhausted. I might have made it back earlier but because I took what I hoped was a shortcut, I got lost. After seeing the Shinkansen train tracks twice after 30 minutes, I realized I rode my bicycle in a circle!

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## [Visit to Hirosaki Park during Cherry Blossom Time](#)



Visit Hirosaki Park in Aomori Japan to see beautiful cherry blossoms.

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## [Lily Arendt](#)



This is a photo I took of my little girl, Lily, then 4 years old, when we

lived in Kamakura city Kanagawa prefecture. The photo is on the Shonan coast, near Inamuragasaki. I was taken with black and white film, and developed and printed personally by me. Back in those days I did a lot of B/W photography with my 35 MM Minolta SLR, and had the availability of a darkroom.



Lily Arendt, 4 years old, Kamakura city Kanagawa prefecture, Shonan coast, near Inamuragasaki, 1989.

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## [100 Kilometer Cycling Adventure](#)



Mt. Yahiko and Mt. Kakuda from a distance of 20 kilometers.

I enjoy taking long bicycle trips from time to time. I thought it would be a good day's challenge to circle two famous mountains of Niigata, Mt. Kakuda and Mt. Yahiko, and return home before nightfall. Mt. Kakuda and Mt. Yahiko are not famous for their height. Mt. Yahiko is only 600 some meters high. They are famous for being the only mountains smack dab on the coast of the Sea of Japan in the midst of the flat rice fields that Niigata is famous for. Click the photo to see an enlargement.

Niigata has some of the flattest areas in all of Japan. One reason it's so flat is that much of Niigata (Japanese meaning "new lagoon") was reclaimed from the ocean. All of the rice growing area between the Shinano and Agano rivers, meaning the area you see in the photo below, used to be underwater.

It took me a little over two hours to cycle 30 kilometers to Kakudahama which is the northern base of Mt. Kakuda. I didn't know the roads but followed what I thought was the closest route by line of sight. It turned out that I probably zigzagged back and forth on the roads between the rice fields a lot more than I needed to.

From Kakudahama I took the only road that runs along the coast of the Sea of Japan, a road over rolling hills and through several tunnels. The traffic was light and therefore a bit safer for a cyclist than on a normal highway. I

needed to ride as far as the lowest point past Mt. Yahiko. I knew I reached it when I arrived at the mouth of Bunsui, a river that is a tributary of the Shinano river, the longest river in Japan. There is a road running parallel to it going in the direction I needed to go, and I knew it would be therefore flat.

I could add photos to this post. If you want to see them, please say so in a comment.

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## [Snowy winter in Japan](#)



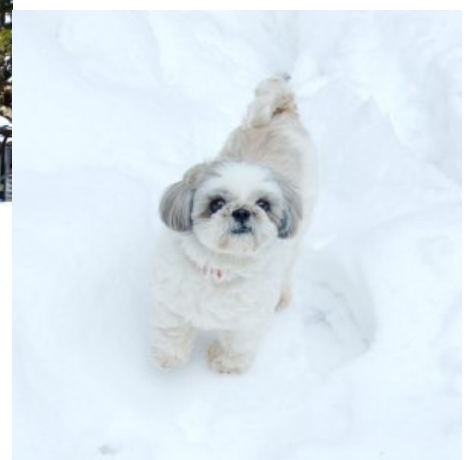
The photos below shows bamboo trees bent over with the tops stuck in the snow! The snow causes the trees to bend over till the top of the tree touches the snow on the ground. Further snow buries the top branches tying the top of the tree to the ground, and it will stay like that until enough snow on 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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## [Photo of Gary Sinise](#)



My friend Daniel sent me this photo of him with [Gary Sinise](#), the actor who played Lt. Dan in the film "Forest Gump"! He seems to be a really nice guy to pose for a photo with one of his fans. I learned that Gary was born in Blue Island Illinois which is only 9 kilometers (5.6 miles) from where I was raised in Hegewisch, a neighborhood of Chicago.



Gary Sinise with my friend Daniel