



# The Great Seto Bridge, ocean winds blowing on the road to Kagawa. Three days of attractions and fun.

"Hi Shikoku, we're back!" I think that for us and the majority of the other participants, the trip to this year's VIBES meeting represented an "heartwarming return" after the disaster of the '00 meeting (The campsite for the '00 meeting was situated in a riverbed and despite having received permission from the appropriate government agencies, some ignorant officials opened the sluice gates of a dam

upstream and we had to evacuate the site in the middle of the night!). On the weekend of October 8-10, '05, bikers from all over the country headed for an open field in Bannosu in Sakaide, Kagawa Prefecture for the first Shikoku run in five years. Immediately after crossing the Seto Bridge, we came to the Bannosu junction, then taking a right turn we came to the gate at the

southern tip of a vast campsite that spread approximately north to south. We slowed down, then after passing through a series of bends we came to a T-junction and turned right. We could see an area of vendors' booths on the left as we continued down a long straight to the entrance. At the entrance, in addition to the usual patch, list of rules, and wristband, people were also provided with a fan bearing the

"VIBES" and "Wind's Wheel" logos, a map of the local noodle shops, a shopping map of Sakaide City, and a tourist guide for Yoshima, an island halfway across the bridge. There may have been people who were a bit disappointed by all this commercialism, but it demonstrated a remarkable degree of cooperation from the local community. In fact at the official opening we were visited by eight VIPs from national and local government (who looked rather out of place), and we should be grateful for their interest. After the gate, we turned right and headed

towards the parking area then crossed the road to the campsite beyond. The space between these two areas, on the northern edge of the site, spreading down to the shops in the center was where everything happened. To the south was a stage where local bands played from the first day. The fact that the stage show lasted for two days, a first for a VIBES Meeting, shows how eager VIBES were to make up for the disaster five years ago. The camping area became rather muddy due to the rain that fell from the first day to the middle of the second, but it was very large, spreading down towards the Setonakaisho seashore, so there was no fear of a shortage of space. The most popular place in the vendor's area was a shop selling the noodles. They limited their sales to two hundred meals a day so there were long lines of people waiting to try this local specialty. A remarkable number of people arrived for the first day; of a total of six thousand five hundred participants, almost half arrived on the first day, although this was probably due to the ferry schedules. The event was given a big mention on the evening news of the first day and perhaps as a result of this, a lot of locals came to watch and several times the visitor's car park became full. The local staff consisted of bikers from all over the Shikoku Island who very eager to make it a success, splitting into different groups, according to club affiliations or area,

and working hard at their various jobs. Apart from the VIBES staff from the Akita region being suddenly called out to help, everything went well with no major trouble. All kinds of people took part, there were those who had attended the disastrous run in '00 and those who had not, there were veteran bikers who have been riding since before VIBES magazine first came out and others who had only just passed their driving license, there were those who stayed for the whole event and those who could only manage to attend for a few hours; all kinds of people met together in the wind under the mammoth Seto Bridge to enjoy the 13th VIBES Meeting. It was not one single group, but people from all walks of life joined together to enjoy three days of brotherhood. It can only be said that this fact alone would have been enough to make the event a great success. We were all issued with a green patch, same color as the one from the legendary "Freezing Gifu Meeting" that was imbued with the memories of the six thousand five hundred people who took part, (the patches given to the participants of the VIBES Meetings used to be a different color every year, but after ten years, we ran out of colors and had to start again from the beginning, meaning that the patch for the 13th Meeting was the same color as the one for the 3rd). Whenever anyone mentions the noodles or the bridge, my mind immediately goes back to the time I spent there. (Rock'n Roll! Mino)

