

# Motorbike Pilgrimage

I was always taught to be kind to pilgrims, and have found them grateful and responsible persons.

"Why do people come to Shikoku for a pilgrimage? Why are locals so generous to pilgrims?" I started wondering about this when I first took a job in tourism.

I decided then to try the pilgrimage, and set myself two rules. Firstly, I would visit all 88 temples in sequence from the first, and secondly, I would travel only by motorbike.

I soon began the pilgrimage, travelling during weekends and holidays. At first, it seemed like normal motorbike touring. However, it gradually became harder. Some days it rained, or shivering cold. On other days I suffered sunburn, the bike broke down, and the coastal roads seemed endless, the hills very steep – but I carried on.

It is not a holiday, but an ascetic training to banish one's everyday worldly frustrations.

Yet, such difficulties encountered are eased at each temple, where one is surrounded by a calm atmosphere. I bow once at the main temple gate on arrival and again at departure. Each time I bow my mind becomes clearer and I feel closer to nature. Perhaps the history, culture, and untouched scenery of Shikoku all contribute to make me feel in this way. I have currently reached the 64th temple in my pilgrimage. My book for temple stamps is already quite full, and there are only a few blank pages left. This stamp book is the proof of pilgrimage - some keep it with them till their passing. I'm giving mine to my mother as a gift when completed. I chose a red booklet, rather than blue or black, because she likes the color red.

Despite today's world of information technology and developed transportation systems, those on the Shikoku pilgrimage often encounter inconvenience and difficulties, and require a lot of patience. However, this is exactly why going on this pilgrimage allows one to fully appreciate the generosity of others – the local people who greet and give small gifts to help the pilgrims. It is not an easy pilgrimage, but the reward is to truly appreciate the generosity of others. I would like many more people to experience the Shikoku pilgrimage.

*Kenji Taniguchi*



WHY DO PEOPLE  
COME TO SHIKOKU  
FOR A PILGRIMAGE?



COLD!



THIS STAMP BOOK  
IS THE PROOF OF  
PILGRIMAGE.