

Riderz and readerz,

After gassing up, the fog started to lift. Gramps and I headed south towards Kuji still following the coast as close as possible when we hit this nice twisted road (268) that narrowed down to a single lane for a bit, a sign of things to come. We headed west out of Kuji on 281, which has moved to the top of my list of roads to ride. It's a wide road that has the prerequisite twists and turns and the traffic is not very heavy and moves at a good pace but the view is breathtaking. It would be a great ride to go screaming up but there's so much to see you don't want to. Very similar to the valley ride leading to Anman Falls but the river is smaller, with lots of small waterfalls and fisherman every 100 yards or so, and the walls of the cliffs rise nearly straight up on either side. If you've ever rode Estes park in Colorado it's very similar. We pulled over in one particularly nice spot to check the maps and I shot the canyon with the bikes in the foreground and a fisherman in the background.

Now I know not everyone is a big fan of the twisties but this is the primary reason I ride and when we accidentally kept going straight when we should have made a turn we found Nirvana. Heading south Shimo-Kawai we went up a narrow (1½ to 1 lane) road that both of us were expecting to turn into dirt at any time. It was the kind of road a convict in an electric chair would draw when the juice is turned on. I stayed behind Gramps to keep myself in check and nearly became Gnat splat when a car showed up in the middle of a 180 degree uphill turn going downhill. There was literally only enough room for our bikes to squeeze by the car. As best as I can tell we ended up coming out on 29 headed west over the Hiraniwa pass then getting back onto 281. We were looking for a road marked 30 on our maps which showed the roads didn't quite connect but we were going to find out. It didn't. So we headed north and took 15, another fast fun road breathtaking road where I stretched my legs a bit. I hit an intersection and waited for Gramps to catch up. The road to the right was marked 271 and with those famous words "wanna check it out?" we were off.

This road was even better than the first one. I couldn't hold back any longer, and had an absolute ball running this road, literally giggling inside my helmet. Of course with heaven there are the seeds of hell and they came in the form of dirt that had washed onto the road at the summit of Mt. Tsukushimori, there were also patches of pine needles in some of the corners that raised the pucker factor a bit. There were only two cars going in the opposite direction and I met both of them as I was exiting the corner and had little trouble getting by them, Gramps said his encounter was a little more interesting but no paint was traded. I can't express clearly in words how much fun these two roads were.

We came out onto 340 and headed north into Kunohe where Gramps got a wild hair and decided to check out the Kunohe castle remains. It was about 14:15 when we pulled in and at this point I had clearly decided that this was the best motorcycle ride I have been on. However, things change... There was a gentleman there that wanted to give us a tour and we learned lots of interesting history. If any of you decide to go bring an interpreter. There were some kids playing baseball in the park and I talked them into taking a picture of Gramps, our tour guide, the other kids and me. When I went to show the kids the picture I discovered to my dismay and huge disappointment that I had pulled a Stumpy! I even remember telling myself the night before to put the flash card back into the camera, yet it was still in the card reader at home. AAARGH! We continued our tour with ominous dark clouds moving in and thunder (which I don't remember hearing too much in Japan) booming in the distance. We finished the tour just as it started to rain, so we went into the "museum" to give it a few minutes to pass.

More to come,  
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