

18 Kumano Streets



5 This is said to be the place where the above-mentioned Izanami gave birth to her children. From ancient times, religious ceremonies have been held here to pray for safe birth and child-raising.



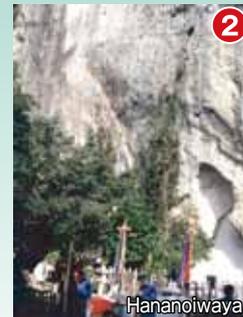
Onigajo

Onigajo has been designated as a National Natural Treasure for its scenic beauty. This tuff, formed from hardened volcanic ash was raised up by earthquakes and then eroded by the sea and wind to form this magnificent rock formation that stretches for 1km. Legend has it that a general was sent here to drive out the demon pirates that held up here, and that he shot an arrow from an island just off the coast to slay their leader. This is registered as part of the Unesco World Heritage of the Kii mountain range.



Shishi Iwa - The Lion Rock

This huge 25m high rock called "Shishi Iwa" is a designated National Natural Treasure for its scenic beauty and is registered as part of the Unesco World Heritage of the Kii mountain range. They say that this, along with another rock are the guardians of Kumano's Oma Shrine up in the mountains.



Hananoiwaya

One of Japan's first written records of myth tells of the goddess Izanami, who with her husband gave birth to the many Shinto deities. She burned to death when giving birth to Kagutsuchi, the fire god, and he also soon died. They are said to be laid to rest here. The 45 meter high rock is Izanami's grave stone, while the one opposite hers is the graves stone of Kagutsuchi. Because this predates Shinto, back to the days of Nature Worship, there is no shrine building. This is also registered as part of the Unesco World Heritage of the Kii mountain range.



Kinan Tour Design Center

Built about 130 years ago by one of Kumano's timber tycoons, Kisaburo Okugawa for his private residence, it now serves as a culture center and a place to take a break and enjoy the chance to get an inside, close-up look at a traditional Japanese house.