

Walking Trails - Kamishikimi Kumanoimasu Shrine

The third hiking trail from the Minami Aso Visitor Center leads to the Kamishikimi Kumanoimasu Shrine. The shrine is hidden among the forests surrounding Takamori, a small town in this Aso region of Kumamoto Prefecture. The Kamishikimi Kumanoimasu Shrine is known locally for its profoundly spiritual atmosphere. There is a large rock with a cave in the shrine precincts. Myth has it that this rock, called Ugedo, was struck by the demon Kihachi while being chased by Takeiwatatsu no Mikoto, the mythical founder of Aso.

The route takes walkers through wonderful forest scenery. On the way, there is an ancient stone staircase, with moss-covered rocks, stone lanterns, and large *torii* (sacred gates) leading to the shrine itself. This shrine is dedicated to three deities: Izanagi and Izanami, the creators of the Japanese islands and progenitors of myriad deities, and Takeiwatatsu no Mikoto.