

## **Komamiya Shrine: The Halberd Cave**

In ancient Japan, rocks, trees, and other natural features were often worshiped as abodes of the divine, and the idea of enshrining deities in buildings was popularized only later. At Komamiya Shrine, the cliffs behind the main sanctuary are thought to have been the original object of worship. These cliffs were by the coast in prehistoric times and still show signs of wave erosion, although they are now partially obscured by soil. A few meters beneath this spot is a cave, carved into the rock by waves and wind, which is thought to have served for rituals. According to local lore, this cave was where Jimmu, the mythical first emperor of Japan, left his favorite halberd before embarking on his quest to unify the country. A metal reproduction of the legendary weapon now marks the place of the cave.