

## **Komamiya Shrine: “Reproductive Rock” and “Coin Stones”**

The cliffside behind the main sanctuary of Komamiya Shrine is believed to have been an object of worship since ancient times. With a little imagination, a part of its uneven surface can be seen to resemble male and female genitals, facing each other. In Japan, rocks that look like this have long been considered auspicious for childbirth, fertility, and a happy marriage. Excavation of the ground in front of this rock in 2018 turned up a large number of small stones shaped to resemble coins. These stones are thought to have been left behind centuries ago by devotees who came to pray for divine assistance in matters related to children, and offered “coins” to the deities to increase the chance of their wishes being heard. The 2018 find inspired Komamiya Shrine to create replicas of the stones, which visitors can now purchase and leave in front of the “reproductive rock.”