

Nakayama Shichiri Valley

Rugged mountains, curiously shaped rocks, and seasonal sights such as cherry blossoms, azalea blooms, and autumn leaves draw visitors to the Nakayama Shichiri valley in Hida Kisogawa Quasi-National Park. The valley stretches 28 kilometers between the districts of Sanbara and Kanayama, south of the Gero Onsen hot spring district.

The National Route 41 highway and JR Takayama Main Line both follow the contours of Nakayama Shichiri. Its name literally means “seven *ri* in the mountains” (a *ri* is equivalent to 4 kilometers). It refers to the creation of a passage of 7 *ri* through the difficult mountain terrain to improve transportation between what is now Gero and Kanayama by military commander Kanamori Nagachika (1524–1608). In 1586, Kanamori utilized the latest mining technology to execute this project at the behest of ascendant hegemon Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537–1598).

Near the confluence of the Hida and Kuno Rivers is a scenic rock called the Rakan-iwa, so named because it resembles a *rakan* or arhat, a Buddhist who has attained nirvana. Farther south is the Kiba-iwa (“fang rock”) area, with a tusk-shaped boulder set against an expanse of smooth white rocks.

Nakayama Shichiri is accessible from the train stations of Hida-Kanayama, Yakeishi, and Gero. The valley is part of the Gero Yumeguri Kaido, a series of trails that run through the township of Gero, connecting Mt. Ontake in the north and Kanayama in the south.