

Itsukushima Shrine: Section of the Great Torii

This sizeable slice of wood was removed from the base of one of the two main pillars of the Great Torii (*O-torii*) of Miyajima in 1951 when the gate underwent comprehensive repairs. A torii gate has stood guard over the entrance to the island since 1168, although it has been replaced seven times and repaired even more frequently over the centuries.

The main pillars were fashioned from more than 500-year-old camphor trees, a species noted for its natural resistance to rot and insects, yet this section is nonetheless dotted with small holes and creases, incurred over the more than 70 years it stood in the sea. Most of the holes were caused by a type of gribble, which has been a nuisance to the wooden foundations of Itsukushima Shrine ever since the crustacean was first encountered in Japan in the 1800s.