

Sonohara Monument

Much-Loved Local Scholar

This is a monument to Sonohara Furutomi (1703–1776), a noted local scholar. Born into the priestly family who ran the Higashiyama Shrine in Midono, Sonohara studied theology under Yoshida Kaneyuki in Kyoto. After returning here to assume his duties at the shrine, Sonohara wrote a number of books about theology and the history of the Kiso region, attracting a dedicated group of followers.

His followers erected this stone to his memory in 1781, five years after his death. The inscription praises Sonohara in effusive and flowery language, and also includes plentiful quotations from the Chinese classics.

The imposing old tree just to one side of the monument is a ginkgo. Sonohara's house, which stands to the left, is thought to date from the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century. It is a rare example of a Shinto priest's residence (*shinkan-yashiki*) from the period. Notice how low to the ground the roof of the house is. Sonohara's descendants have continued to live there to this day.