

The Human Story of the Eruption of Mt. Bandai

The eruption of Mt. Bandai on July 21, 1888 led to the deaths of 477 people and the displacement of many others. The eruption was a phreatic (steam-blast) explosion, which caused one of the volcano's four peaks to collapse and triggered a devastating landslide. Eleven communities were buried in the landslide and an enormous amount of debris was cast throughout the Urabandai area. Some of the debris dammed up the Nagase River, a major waterway in the area, and caused widespread flooding. More than 300 lakes and ponds formed in the debris behind the dammed river.

A torii gate is submerged in Lake Hibara, part of Oyamazumi Shrine. When water levels are low, you can sometimes see the upper part of the gate above the surface.

After the devastation, a concerted effort was led by the national government to replant the forests and help the area recover. Significant progress was made, and in the 1950s, the area became popular for sightseeing and was formally named Bandai-Asahi National Park. The park attracts visitors for its cool weather, beautiful ponds and abundance of hiking trails, campsites, and activities.