

Shirakami Shrine and the Atomic Bomb

The wooden buildings of Shirakami Shrine were completely destroyed in the August 6, 1945, atomic bombing, as they were a mere 500 meters from the hypocenter. Just a few months later, a new shrine was hastily constructed to serve as a temporary place of worship. A more permanent structure was rebuilt in concrete in 1989, but the grounds still bear the scars of the blast.

In front of the shrine's main torii gate is a small pillar, the only part of the original gate left standing. The shrine's stone komainu guardian statues survived, and although they have been partially repaired, the damage done by the explosion is still clearly visible. Next to the shrine building is a sturdy camphor tree that also weathered the bombing. In front of this tree is a large stone lantern. However, unlike the lantern beside it, this one is missing its original hibukuro (the box where a fire would be lit), as it was destroyed in the bombing.

Unlike Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park or the nearby Peace Boulevard, Shirakami Shrine has a history that reaches back much further than 1945, but the shrine still stands as a silent witness to the bombing.