

## **Mitakidera Temple: Peace-related Monuments**

Mitakidera Temple's wooden buildings suffered significant structural damage in the August 6, 1945, atomic bombing, as they were located approximately 3.2 kilometers from the hypocenter of the explosion. The roof of the main hall collapsed, but because the building did not catch fire, the sacred objects inside survived. The building has since been completely rebuilt, but damage from the bombing is visible at the nearby shrine dedicated to ogre-like divine beings known as oni. The sturdy wooden pillars supporting the roof buckled, but did not break, leaving the shrine largely intact.

The temple has long been a common place to pray for the dead, and since the war it has taken an active role in memorializing victims and advocating for global peace. The brilliant vermilion tahoto pagoda at the temple entrance was brought from a shrine in Wakayama Prefecture in 1951 as part of a memorial service for those who died in the bombing. Pure mountain water from the temple's four streams has been used as an offering at the annual remembrance ceremony at Hiroshima Peace Park.

Small shrines and monuments scattered throughout the temple grounds mark victims of other tragedies and conflicts. There is a stone memorial with a dedication in English and Japanese for those who died at the Auschwitz concentration camp. On a wire above the memorial is a rusted metal container that was used to bring some of the remains of the victims to Hiroshima.

The temple's tea room sits beside a soothing waterfall and is open to the public for just one week each year, usually the third week of November. It is a popular spot with local residents and advocates for world peace—the Dalai Lama once stayed at the tea room during a visit to Japan.