Two Great Fires

In Yamagata, many fires occur in April and May. This is attributed to the fact that it is the driest period of the year, accompanied with low rainfall and frequent strong winds.

During the Meiji period, the city area of Yamagata was struck by two major fires: the Southern Great Fire in 1894 and the Northern Great Fire in 1911. These fires destroyed much of the central urban area of Yamagata.

On May 26, 1894, shortly after 1 p.m., a fire broke out due to arson at an empty house in Rosoku-cho. This is known as the Southern Great Fire. The fire spread due to strong winds and dry conditions, burning for over 10 hours. One front of the fire spread from Rosoku-cho to: Tokamachi, Futsukamachi, Yokamachi, Teppomachi, Mikkamachi, and Zaimokumachi. Another front of the fire spread to: Ginmachi, Nurishimachi, Koshomachi, Okemachi, Suwamachi, Jizomachi, Yokomachi, Nanokamachi, and Kasumicho. The Southern Great Fire destroyed more than 2900 buildings—including houses, storehouses, and sheds.

This area included many merchant districts along the Ushu route in the former castle town of Yamagata, and the damage was enormous.

Some buildings were rebuilt after being destroyed, including the Beni no Kura storehouse and Myozenji temple.