**Himeji Castle History**

1333—With the outbreak of the fighting that would bring down the Kamakura shogunate (1185–1333), Akamatsu Norimura (1277–1350) builds a temporary fort on the hill that would eventually become Himeji Castle.

1346—Norimura’s son Sadanori (1306–1374) builds a larger, more permanent fortress on the site.

1545—The Kuroda clan takes over Himeji Castle.

1546— Kuroda Kanbei (1546–1604) is born in Himeji Castle. He will later become an important aide to Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537–1598), the warlord known as the “unifier of Japan.”

1580—Hideyoshi takes control of Himeji, which becomes his base as he brings western Japan under his control.

1581—Hideyoshi orders construction of a three-story keep.

1583—Hideyoshi moves his base to Osaka and turns control of Himeji over to his brother Hidenaga (1540–1591).

1585—Hideyoshi’s brother-in-law Kinoshita Iesada (1543–1608) assumes control of Himeji.

1600—Following Hideyoshi’s death, Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543–1616) becomes his de facto successor by winning the Battle of Sekigahara (1600). Tokugawa Ieyasu appoints his son-in-law and close lieutenant Ikeda Terumasa (1565–1613) as lord of Himeji.

1601— Ikeda Terumasa begins construction of the current Himeji Castle.

1609—The main keep and its three subsidiary keeps are completed.

1617—The Honda clan takes over the castle after the death of Ikeda Toshitaka (1584–1616), son of Ikeda Terumasa.

1618—Honda Tadamasa (1575–1631) begins construction of the West Bailey.

1639—The Matsudaira clan become the new lords of the castle.

1649—The Sakakibara clan take over from the Matsudaira. Control shifts between the two clans for most of the next century.

1749—Sakai Tadazumi (1710–1772) becomes lord of Himeji. The Sakai control the castle until the start of the Meiji era in the nineteenth century.

1868—The Meiji Restoration ends the Tokugawa shogunate (1603–1868), and in 1871 the Himeji feudal domain is formally abolished.

1873—With the feudal era over, many Japanese castles are ordered demolished, but Himeji is one of fifty-six castles designated for preservation.

1910—Limited repair work is conducted on the castle.

1931—The main keep of the castle is designated a National Treasure.

1934—The first full-scale restoration in the castle’s history begins (Shōwa-era Restoration).

1945—The city of Himeji is largely destroyed by American air raids, but the castle survives mostly unscathed.

1950—Restoration work, suspended during the war, resumes.

1956—Complete dismantling of the main keep for repairs is begun. The process lasts nine years.

1993—Himeji Castle is designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

2009—Major restoration work begins (Heisei-era Restoration).

2015—The Heisei-era Restoration is completed.