

An Expanding City

Over time, the city of Himeji expanded outward from the boundaries of the original castle town. Many modern neighborhoods retain their descriptive names from the Edo period (1603–1867), such as Shio-machi (“salt town”), Shirogane-machi (“silver town”), Uo-machi (“fish town”), and Konya-machi (“cloth-dyer town”).

At the end of the nineteenth century, the castle posed a challenge to modern transportation planners. Building a train station in the middle of the city was impossible, so Himeji Station was erected along the southernmost wall of the old fortified town, and Kyoguchi Station was built in the east. The tracks had to go around the castle: the Bantan Line was built east of the outer moat, and the Sanyo Main Line was built to the south.

Sometimes, the old fortifications were modified and used for other purposes. The north-south Sanyo Electric Railway makes a sharp bend eastward just before Sanyo-Himeji Station, following the path of the moat and earthen embankment over which the line and station building were constructed. Another section of moat, south of the main castle, was filled in to build Route 2, a major road that links Osaka with Shimonoseki located on the southern end of the main island of Honshū.