

## **Lords of Himeji Castle: The Ikeda clan (1600–1617)**

### **Ikeda Terumasa's Himeji**

Ikeda Terumasa (1565–1613) fought alongside his father-in-law Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543–1616) at the pivotal Battle of Sekigahara (1600). His victory led to the creation of the Tokugawa shogunate in 1603, which ruled Japan until 1868. Afterward, Terumasa was made lord of Himeji and its surrounding province, with a generous income of 520,000 koku of rice—roughly 78 million kilograms, or enough to feed 520,000 people for a year. His sons were appointed lords of the neighboring provinces of Bizen and Awaji Island, vaulting the Ikeda clan to the top rank of feudal clans. With a joint income of about one million koku of rice, father and sons effectively controlled all of western Japan. Ikeda Terumasa became known as *saigoku shōgun*, “Shogun of the West.”

Himeji Castle as we see it today was built by Terumasa. The magnificent white keep with five stories, seven internal floors, and three adjoining towers remained a potent symbol of political power in western Japan throughout the Edo period (1603–1867).

### **Hidden Himeji: Five Stories and Seven Floors**

Count the roofs on the outside of Himeji's keep and the number of floors inside, and you'll notice something: they don't add up. From the outside, the keep appears to have five stories, but inside there are seven floors, including the basement located within the stone foundation walls.

### **Multi-structure Keep**

Himeji's keep is actually a complex of four towers: a main keep connected by roofed passages to three smaller keeps. The unusual design provided an additional layer of defense and is a defining characteristic of the castle.

East side cross-section

Inui small keep

East small keep

West small keep

Main keep

Ikeda clan domains (final years of Terumasa)