

### **Keshō (Ornamental) Tower: Princess Sen's Private Apartments**

Money to finish this elegantly appointed tower is said to have come from the dowry of Princess Sen (1597–1666), the daughter of the second Tokugawa shogun and wife of Honda Tadatoki (1596–1626). Princess Sen used the tower as a dressing room and place to rest when she offered prayers to the Shinto god Tenjin, the deity enshrined in the nearby Tenmangū Shrine. The shrine is located on a hill across from the castle and is visible from the West Bailey gallery.

The tower's upper floor has three tatami rooms and a cedar ceiling, and the interior walls are decorated with paper-covered ornamental frames. It is a style of residential decor developed in the Azuchi-Momoyama period (1568–1603), a brilliant period of Japanese artistic development.

The Keshō Tower offers valuable hints about what Himeji Castle's other residential areas might have looked like. Except for the Keshō Tower and the West Bailey gallery, Himeji's other surviving buildings are purely military structures; the mansions where the ruling lords spent most of their time have been lost.