

Shigemajo Ward

This ward had a rear gate that provided access along the steep adjoining slope to the Shigema River below, from which water was raised to provide for most of the castle's needs. The remains of four buildings built on flat terraces were found during excavations in 1981. A large quantity of broken Ming-dynasty ceramics was uncovered, suggesting that many fine pieces were used for common everyday purposes. In fact, so much fine imported pottery has been found on the Nakijin site that it may have been considered almost disposable, attesting to the economic strength of the kingdom and the prosperity of its trade with China at the time. Arrowheads and other parts of weapons were found near buildings in Shigemajo Ward, which suggests that they were warrior residences. Because of its strategic location protecting the rear gate, and its proximity and direct access to the important Main Ward, it is believed that Shigemajo Ward was where the king's most trusted warriors lived. Nevertheless, legend has it that when the castle fell in 1416, it was because the enemy was given access through this gate.