

### **【History of Arato Castle】**

This castle stands as part of the legacy of Uesugi Kenshin (1530–1578), the samurai lord of Echigo province (now Niigata prefecture) and one of the most powerful daimyo of the sixteenth century. Born to a retainer of the Uesugi family, he was later officially adopted by the Uesugi family and awarded the highly prestigious position as deputy shogun. As an adult, Kenshin was a successful military leader and administrator who came to be known as the “Tiger of Echigo.” This castle was built after his death during an inheritance struggle between his two male heirs.

In 1569, Kenshin formed an alliance with the powerful Hōjō clan to the south. In order to strengthen this alliance, Kenshin took in one of the Hōjō sons, naming him Kagetora (1554–1579). Kenshin also adopted his own nephew, whom he gave the name Kagekatsu (1556–1623). In March 1578, Kenshin died suddenly without naming an heir, leaving his two sons as rivals for succession to the Uesugi family.

Kagetora had the backing of the Hōjō clan and could easily seize power with an overwhelming attack, and Kagekatsu needed to act quickly. The Hōjō clan threatened to attack Kagekatsu from the west, so in June of the same year, Kagekatsu ordered the rapid construction of Arato Castle to guard the Mikuni Road. The castle was completed in just three months, but Kagetora attacked with an overwhelmingly large force. Kagekatsu escaped, and the area fell under Hōjō control. The following February, Kagekatsu counterattacked at Otate Castle, where Kagetora had established a stronghold, and captured the castle in a single day. Kagetora fled, but later committed suicide in response to Kagekatsu’s decisive victory. Kagekatsu became head of the Uesugi and the daimyo of Echigo.

Kagekatsu abandoned Arato Castle in 1598 when he left to assume control of the Aizu Domain (located in what is now Fukushima Prefecture). The castle ruins were rediscovered by a local woodcutter in the 1950s and designated a Niigata Cultural Property in 1976.