

Ogimachi Castle Site

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, hundreds of years before the first gassho-style house was built in Ogimachi, the village and its surroundings were controlled by the family of the warlord Uchigashima. The Uchigashima established their stronghold at Kaerigumo Castle south of Ogimachi and built a series of hilltop forts along the Sho River to protect their domains from incursions by rival families. One of these fortresses was Ogimachi Castle, which is thought to have consisted mainly of stone walls, dry moats, and embankments constructed along the ridge of the hill where the Ogimachi Castle Site Scenic Lookout is now located. The outpost's garrison was commanded by an Uchigashima general named Yamashita Ujikatsu (1568–1653). In 1585, an earthquake seems to have destroyed Kaerigumo Castle, dealing a fatal blow to the Uchigashima family. Yamashita Ujikatsu abandoned Ogimachi, choosing to serve a different master, and his fortress fell into disuse. Only isolated parts of its fortifications remain today.