

Yataki Castle Site

Yataki Castle was one of the two mountain forts established in the sixteenth century to guard the road between the Iwami Ginzan silver mine and the port of Yunotsu, the mine's main source of supplies. The castle was built in 1528 on a high hill above the south side of the road by the warlord Ouchi Yoshioki (1477–1529), who controlled the area at the time. It occupied the entire elongated summit, 634 meters above sea level, and fortifications such as stone walls and dry moats were constructed around it. The castle's round keep, built on the north end of the summit, had an unobstructed view over the road and toward Yahazu Castle on the opposite side.

Control of the fort changed hands several times throughout the 1500s, as local warlords fought over the mine during a period of constantly shifting alliances and rivalries among warrior families, but the fort lost its significance after Iwami Ginzan was taken over by the Tokugawa shogunate (central government) in the early 1600s. The long period of peace that followed gradually made Yataki and other medieval castles like it obsolete. Little of the castle remains today, in part because the flattened area on the summit was expanded after World War II to make room for a US military radar base, which was later replaced by a broadcast transmission facility. A trail leads up to the peak; the climb takes less than an hour.