

Hitsujisaru Turret

In old Japan, the points of the compass were sometimes expressed using the 12 animals of the Chinese zodiac. The Chinese characters for ram (*hitsuji*) and monkey (*saru*) indicate the southwest—the direction this turret (*yagura*) stands in relation to the castle-keep area, hence the name. The original turret was dismantled in the late nineteenth century. The present one is a 2003 replica based on drawings from the Edo period (1603–1867) and photographs from the Meiji era (1868–1912). From the outside, the turret appears to have two floors, but there are actually three. These turrets were generally used for storage in peacetime, but were used for defense in times of war. Samurai would fire through the loopholes and the stone-drop windows. In the enclosure immediately behind the Hitsujisaru Turret was the magistrate's office (*bugyomaru*).