

Hira Turret and Akazu Gate

Prior to the 2016 earthquake, the Hira (one-story) Turret stood on top of 18-meter-high walls in the northeastern corner of the castle, beside the two main keeps. The earthquake caused the walls beneath it to buckle, leaving the building listing badly. The structure was dismantled for conservation. Beyond the Hira Turret to the left was the Akazu Gate, the only surviving original turret gate (*yagura-mon*) from the Edo period (1603–1867). According to legend, this gate was kept closed to keep out evil spirits thought to come from the northeast, and was opened only to transport unclean things, such as corpses, out of the castle. The upper floor of the gate, which was traditionally used as a storeroom, collapsed in the earthquake, so the building has been dismantled pending restoration.