

Restoring the Castle Keeps

In 2017, Kumamoto mayor Onishi Kazufumi made restoring the castle's two main keeps a priority, declaring they would serve as symbols of the city's recovery from the 2016 earthquake. Starting the restoration project with the *honmaru* inner compound made practical sense, since work on the outer walls and turret gates could hinder access for heavy equipment. Work began in April 2017 with the construction of two access slopes for heavy machinery and a protective structure to shield the towers from rain during roof repairs. By April 2018, the roof restoration of the larger Dai-Tenshu keep was complete, and work began on rebuilding the stone bases of both towers in July 2018. The exterior of the Dai-Tenshu has been fully restored, and work to reinforce the interiors of both keeps against earthquakes was completed in spring 2021.