

Site of the Matsudaira Estate

Matsudaira Toshogu Shrine occupies the site of the former Matsudaira estate, the ancestral home of the Matsudaira samurai family. The main line of the family is thought to have resided there from the days of Chikauji (d. 1394?), founder of the family, until the fifteenth century. At that time, the Matsudaira advanced to the west and south, conquering the nearby plains. Their native lands eventually came to be watched over by a branch of the family known as Tarozaemon. Descendants of the Tarozaemon family made the estate their home until the 1920s, when they moved to Tokyo. The Toshogu Shrine was established on the site in its present form in 1931.

What the Matsudaira estate looked like in the time of Chikauji is not known. However, documents and maps from the 1600s onward depict a walled compound protected by a moat on three sides and by the steep mountainside to the north. The eastern section of the moat was filled in sometime in the 1800s, but the L-shaped segment to the south and west remains, as does the stone wall that lines the moat and the earthen bridge over it. Part of the compound wall on the western side extends into the moat. This is a defensive feature that enabled archers to shoot directly at invaders seeking to advance along the moat's edge.

The site of the Matsudaira estate is now the central feature of the Matsudaira National Historic Site. The site also includes Kogetsuin Temple, some 250 meters to the east, and two nearby sites of medieval forts built by the Matsudaira.