

## Shichishu Castle Site

The hill now occupied by the Toyota Municipal Museum of Art is the site of the former Koromo Castle, an eighteenth-century fortress also known as Shichishu Castle. It was the stronghold of the daimyo lord of the Koromo domain (part of present-day eastern Aichi Prefecture) until the abolition of warrior rule following the Meiji Restoration of 1868.

Throughout the first half of the Edo period (1603–1867), the Koromo domain was ruled by relatively low-ranking daimyo who did not have the right to a castle. However, in 1749, a lord from a branch of the relatively prestigious Naito family was assigned to Koromo, and the shogunate financed the building of a proper fortress for him. That castle was to have been located in what is now central Toyota, but construction was thwarted by flooding. The Naito stronghold was finally completed in 1785 when the Shichishu Castle was established on the Dojiyama hill. The castle gets its name because it was once possible to look out over seven nearby provinces (*shichishu*) from that hill.

As the late eighteenth century was a time of peace, Shichishu Castle had relatively few fortifications and did not have a main keep. The walled compound had only a two-story guard tower (*sumiyagura*) at its southwestern edge and a central gate. The central gate was high enough for six-meter floats to be rolled through it during the annual Koromo Festival. The castle was dismantled in 1871, but the stone foundations of the tower were left intact and now support a concrete reconstruction of the *sumiyagura*, built in 1977.