**Omotenashi Squad**

Characters dressed in traditional armor and clothing can often be seen walking the castle grounds. These performers are part of Matsumoto Castle’s Omotenashi Squad. The word *omotenashi* means “hospitality,” and each of these historical figures is here to welcome you and enliven your visit to the castle.

**Ishikawa Kazumasa**

Ishikawa Kazumasa (d. 1592) was the first lord of Matsumoto Castle. He spearheaded the construction of its three oldest structures: the Great Keep, the Inui Keep, and the Roofed Passage.

Ishikawa was one of many warlords active during the decades of civil war called the Warring States period (1467–1600). He was a longtime ally of Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543–1616), the warlord who would eventually go on to establish the Tokugawa shogunate. However, in 1585 Ishikawa suddenly joined with Ieyasu’s rival, Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537–1598). Hideyoshi gave Ishikawa control of Matsumoto Castle in 1590, but Ishikawa died just a few years later, during one of Hideyoshi’s invasions of the Korean Peninsula.

**Ogasawara Hidemasa and Tokuhime**

Ogasawara Hidemasa (1569–1615) was the first of two members of the Ogasawara family who ruled Matsumoto Castle between 1613 and 1617.

The Ogasawara family was given control of the castle by Tokugawa Ieyasu, the first of the Tokugawa shoguns. Ieyasu removed Ishikawa Yasunaga from Matsumoto Castle for his treachery (see above) and gave the domain to Hidemasa.

Tokuhime (1576–1607) was Hidemasa’s wife. Her story is an example of how warlords often used marriages to form alliances or strengthen their loyalties to one another. Tokuhime’s father was the eldest son of Ieyasu, and her mother was the eldest daughter of Oda Nobunaga (1534–1582), another powerful warlord of the sixteenth century. Her marriage to Hidemasa was arranged by Toyotomi Hideyoshi, demonstrating how three of the most powerful warlords of the time—Nobunaga, Hideyoshi, and Ieyasu—were involved in marriage politics.

**Matsudaira Naomasa**

Matsudaira Naomasa (1601–1666) was the only member of the Matsudaira family to rule Matsumoto Castle. He expanded the castle by adding two additional sections: the Southeast Wing and the Moon-Viewing Tower.

Under the rule of the Tokugawa shogunate (1603–1868), lords were not allowed to expand their castles, and any repairs had to be approved by the government. Matsudaira Naomasa, as a grandson of Tokugawa Ieyasu, was likely given special permission to expand Matsumoto Castle. In 1638, he was reassigned to Matsue Castle, in what is now Shimane Prefecture.

**Akutagawa Kurōzaemon**

You may spot a ninja named Akutagawa Kurōzaemon sneaking around the castle. “Kurōzaemon” was not the name of a single individual but rather a hereditary name passed down through generations of the Akutagawa family, one of the most notable families in the Kōka-ryū school of ninjutsu.

The Akutagawa family served the Toda family, who ruled Matsumoto Castle between 1617 and 1633 and again from 1726 to 1869. The fifth person to use the name was Akutagawa Yoshinori (1732–1810), who was said to be especially skilled. According to legend, while Yoshinori was chopping firewood one evening, an assassin sneaked into his home. When the assassin ambushed Yoshinori, Yoshinori calmly severed his attacker’s arm and then returned to chopping wood.