**The History of Matsumoto Castle**

**Before the Construction of Matsumoto Castle**

**(1) Various Mountain Castles**

Even before Matsumoto Castle was built in the late sixteenth century, the surrounding mountains were dotted with castles. During the many regional conflicts of the Warring States period (1467–1600), warlords called “daimyos” built networks of wooden or stone castles to defend their territories. These are a few representative examples of the fortifications that stood in the mountains surrounding the Matsumoto basin.

**1. Hayashi Castle (Ōjō and Kojō)**

Hayashi Castle was built by the Ogasawara family, who governed Shinano Province (now Nagano Prefecture), of which Matsumoto domain was a part. Hayashi Castle stood in what is now the Yamabe District of Matsumoto. It comprised two separate structures called “Ōjō” and “Kojō” that were located on opposite ends of a horseshoe-shaped mountain ridge. In 1550, the powerful daimyo Takeda Shingen (1521–1573) attacked the area, and the Ogasawara abandoned Hayashi Castle. Portions of the stone wall that surrounded the central bailey at Kojō still remain today.

**2. Kirihara Castle and Yamabe (Nakairi) Castle**

These two castles were located deep in the mountains beyond Hayashi Castle. Kirihara Castle belonged to the Kirihara family and was positioned on a strategic mountain pass. Yamabe Castle, also called Nakairi Castle, belonged to the Yamabe family. Its 2.5-meter-high stone walls are still visible at the site today.

**3. Haibara Castle**

Haibara Castle was a large castle located in what is now the Nakayama District of Matsumoto. It is not known which warlord built this castle.

**4. Shinagura Castle**

Located in what is now the Okada District of Matsumoto, Shinagura Castle was controlled by the Gochō family.

**5. Kokūzōsan Castle**

Kokūzōsan Castle originally belonged to the Aida family and stood in what is now the Aida District of Matsumoto. Following the defeat of the Ogasawara family by the armies of Takeda Shingen in 1550, Kokūzōsan Castle occupied a frontline in the fighting between Takeda and his longtime rival, Uesugi Kenshin (1530–1578). Uesugi was based in Echigo Province (now Niigata Prefecture), to the north of Matsumoto.

**6. Hirase Castle**

Located in what is now the Shimauchi District of Matsumoto, Hirase Castle was controlled by the Hirase family. The Ogasawara family took refuge at Hirase Castle after being forced to flee Hayashi Castle in 1550. It was from Hirase Castle that the Ogasawara family planned their counterattack.

**7. Inukai Castle**

The Jōyama District of Matsumoto once belonged to the Inukai family, and they built a fort at this site in the 1400s. Today, the area is a popular place to view cherry blossoms in spring.

**8. Igawa Castle**

Unlike other castles in this region, Igawa Castle was built on the plains rather than in the mountains. It was the original base of the Ogasawara family until the construction of Hayashi Castle.

**9. Shimizu Castle**

It is thought that Shimizu Castle was controlled by the Shimadachi family, who were retainers of the Ogasawara family. The castle occupied what is now the Shimadachi District of Matsumoto. Although little remains at the site today, Shimizu Castle is another example of a castle built on the plains, like Igawa Castle.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 稲倉城 | Shinagura Castle |
| 伊深城 | Ibuka Castle |
| 平瀬城 | Hirase Castle |
| 早落城 | Hayaochi Castle |
| 横屋入城 | Yokoyairi Castle |
| 犬甘城 | Inukai Castle (Jōyama) |
| 桐原城 | Kirihara Castle |
| 深志城 | Fukashi Castle |
| 清水城 | Shimizu Castle |
| 林城 | Hayashi Castle |
| 中入城 | Nakairi Castle |
| 井川城 | Igawa Castle |
| 埴原城 | Haibara Castle |
| 小屋城 | Koya Castle |
| 赤木城 | Akagi Castle |
| 八間長者城 | Hakken-chōja Castle |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 『わたしたちの松本城』P.58から | Source: *Watashitachi no Matsumoto-jō* (Our castle, Matsumoto castle), p. 58. |
| 井川城 | Igawa Castle |
| 若宮八幡跡 | Former Site of Wakamiya Hachiman Shrine |

**(2) Fukashi Castle**

It is thought that prior to the construction of Matsumoto Castle, the site was occupied by a smaller fortification called Fukashi Castle. However, little is definitively known about this earlier structure or how its layout might have influenced the subsequent layout of Matsumoto Castle.

During the early Muromachi period (1336–1573), the small township of Fukashi-gō was ruled by the Sakanishi family, and it is thought they had some form of fortified manor there. It was only later, in 1504, that a retainer of the Ogasawara family named Shimadachi Sadanaga (d. 1517) built Fukashi Castle.

The Ogasawara family controlled the area around Matsumoto for many years, but in 1550 a neighboring daimyo named Takeda Shingen (1521–1573) attacked Hayashi Castle and drove Ogasawara Nagatoki (1514–1583) to the north. Shingen then established his regional headquarters at Fukashi Castle, and it is likely that he made repairs and expanded the fortifications.

Shingen’s descendants controlled Fukashi Castle until 1582, when the Takeda family was wiped out by Oda Nobunaga (1534–1582). The area then came under the control of the warlord Uesugi Kenshin (1530–1578), who placed Fukashi Castle in the hands of one of his retainers. Ogasawara Nagatoki’s son Ogasawara Sadayoshi (1546–1595) later took back control of Fukashi Castle, and to mark the return of the Ogasawara family to the area, he gave the region a new name: “Matsumoto.”

Despite their victory, the Ogasawara family did not remain in Matsumoto for long. In 1590, only eight years after their long-awaited return, they were relocated to eastern Japan. This relocation was ordered by Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537–1598), the most powerful daimyo at the time, who granted control of Matsumoto to his ally Ishikawa Kazumasa (d. 1592).