**Legends of Matsumoto Castle**

Many legends, anecdotes, and folktales have developed over Matsumoto Castle’s centuries of history. Some stories, like “The Carpenter Who Stretched the Castle Beam,” center around aspects of the castle’s architecture, builders, or materials. Others, like “A Parting at Sodetome Bridge,” involve the various castle lords who have come and gone, or the exploits of historical figures who are connected to the castle in some way.

Many of these legends interweave historical fact with popular fancy. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the innermost castle complex was off-limits to all but the highest-ranking samurai families; most commoners could only stare over the moats at the soaring castle and imagine what happened there. Tales such as “The Leaning Castle” and “The Tragedy of Princess Matsu” have preserved the sentiments these commoners held toward the rich samurai elite.

Whether you believe these tales or not, each reveals some small facet of the castle, its history, and its cultural legacy in Matsumoto.