

Honmaru Goten Site

Black tiles on the lawn in front of the castle mark where the Honmaru Goten once stood. The Honmaru Goten served as the lord's residence and an administrative center for Matsumoto domain. The structure occupied roughly 2,730 square meters of the main bailey. Two separate, auxiliary structures (the Ninomaru Goten and the Kōsanji Goten) were located in the second bailey.

The diagram to the right shows the layout of the Honmaru Goten. It comprised five wings and contained over 60 rooms. A fence surrounded the building, separating it from the castle to the west and a row of stables to the north.

The Honmaru Goten burned down in 1727. Despite its importance, the building was never rebuilt. A new lord, Toda Mitsuchika (1712–1732), had just been granted control of Matsumoto Castle the previous year, and he decided to reestablish his residence and the administrative offices in the Ninomaru Goten.

The southern part of the Honmaru Goten had many rooms for receiving guests. There was a stage for holding performances of Noh plays and various reception halls for holding audiences, ceremonies, or other formal gatherings. The rooms in the center of the structure were the offices of the highest-ranking officials.

The northern part of the Honmaru Goten was the private quarters of the castle lord. The farthest northern edge of the structure contained additional storage space and rooms for servants. A large kitchen was located to the east of this area. It is said that one of the gardens contained a building with a Japanese-style clock, which marked the official time that was announced using the drum at the Taikomon Gate.

Ninomaru Goten Site

It is thought that both the Honmaru Goten and the Ninomaru Goten were built around 1594, along with the three oldest structures of the castle: the Great Keep, the Northwest Tower, and the Roofed Passage. However, some historical documents indicate the Ninomaru Goten may have been built later, around 1633, when Matsumoto Castle was ruled by Matsudaira Naomasa (1601–1666).

Covering 1,980 square meters and containing around 50 rooms, the Ninomaru Goten was smaller than the Honmaru Goten. Until the latter burned down in 1727, the Ninomaru Goten functioned as a secondary administrative hub for the castle. After the fire that destroyed the Honmaru Goten, the lord's residence and most of the offices were moved to the Ninomaru Goten. To account for the building's smaller size, some of the offices had to be relocated to the surrounding town.

The main entrance to the Ninomaru Goten was at its southern end, and there was another, less formal entrance at the middle of the eastern side. Entering from the south, visitors first arrived in a large hall that led to various smaller reception rooms. This layout was identical to that of the Honmaru Goten, but at two-thirds the scale. However,

in the Ninomaru Goten, the lord's residential quarters were located past the reception rooms, and the offices for high-ranking officials were located at the northern end of the structure. This portion of the layout is the opposite of what had existed in the Honmaru Goten. The Ninomaru Goten also had a kitchen that spanned the building's northeast side.

Following the Meiji Restoration in 1868, the Ninomaru Goten served as the Chikuma Prefectural Office until it burned down in 1876. A series of archaeological excavations was carried out at the site beginning in 1979, which uncovered a variety of artifacts that provide a glimpse of daily life at Matsumoto Castle. Markings on the ground recreate the basic plan of the structure and give a sense of the layout.