

Roofed Passage (*Watari Yagura*)

The two-story Roofed Passage that connects the Great Keep to the Northwest Tower was built during the first phase of castle construction, between 1593 and 1594. The castle's main entrance is on the first floor of the Roofed Passage.

Oddly, the floor of the Great Keep does not align with that of the Northwest Tower. The first and second floors of the Roofed Passage and Northwest Tower are the same height, but those of the Great Keep are higher. Due to this difference, a person entering the castle on the first floor of the Roofed Passage must climb 1.4 meters to reach the first floor of the Great Keep.

One of the huge crossbeams on the second floor of the Roofed Passage has been left in the curved shape of the tree from which it was made. It was thought that keeping such beams in their natural shapes would allow them to flex and bend more easily during an earthquake.

The items on display in the Roofed Passage were found during repairs to the Great Keep. The display includes large nails and samples of wood used in the keep's construction, as well as an assortment of roof tiles. Several styles of ornamental roof tiles that were used to cap the ends of roof ridges (*onigawara*) are also displayed. These tiles were often decorated with the family crest of the current lord of Matsumoto or with the face of an ogre or demon (*oni*). The fearsome expressions depicted on the tiles were thought to protect the castle by warding off evil.