

Kurume History Walks

No.12 Remains of Kurume Castle Kurumejoushi 久留米城跡



The main enclosure of the Kurume Castle (Drawn by Amano Koho)

Through the Edo period (1603-1868) the Arima family dominated eight districts of Chikugo Province. They resided at the honmaru palace of the Kurume Castle. The palace was a wooden building without the main keep, surrounded by seven turrets (*yagura*) and long guard towers on two levels (*tamon*).



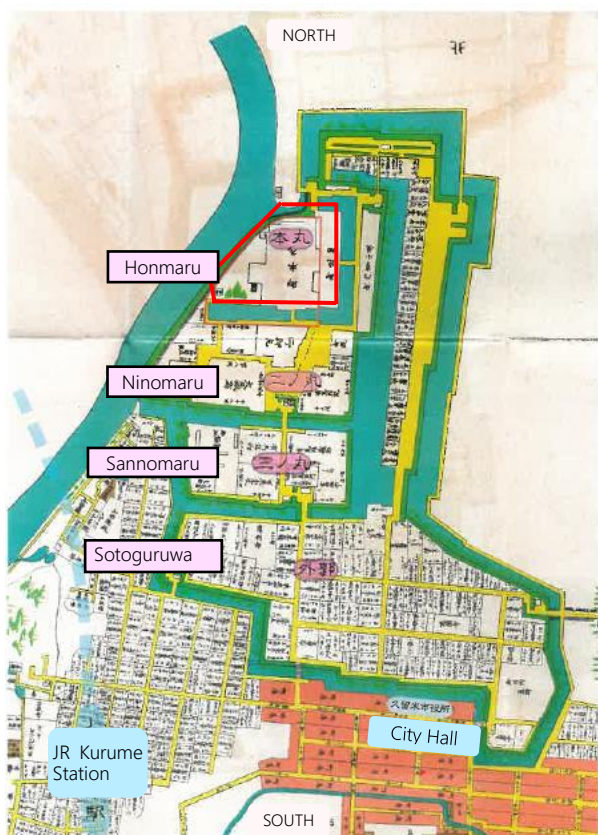
The castle was closed in 1871 (four years after the end of the Tokugawa Shogunate), and all buildings were destroyed. In 1879 the Sasayama-jinja Shrine was established to enshrine the spirits of the Arima lords at where the honmaru had been existed.

Today, next to the shrine, there is the Arima Memorial Museum which exhibits the materials regarding the Arima family and the Kurume Domain.



◆ The honmaru just before the destruction

The government ordered to sell the Kurume Castle in 1872, and all buildings were destroyed in 1875. The picture above is the last image of the honmaru, which was photographed between those years. The right turret was “Tatsumi yagura” which served as a castle keep.



◆ Overview

The castle was nearly abandoned when Arima Toyouji, the first Arima lord in Kurume, entered the castle in 1621.

Soon after, the reconstruction started. He ordered to enlarge the castle and to move the main entrance from the east to the south. Until Yorimoto, the fourth, the construction, and the reparation continued. The map on the left was drawn in 1680. Around this time, the castle and the town were almost completed.

A red frame, folding-fan shaped, at the upper part of the drawing indicates the main enclosure (*Honmaru* 本丸) that remains today. Separately surrounded by moat, the rest expanded to the south and today changed into a modern city. Each part was respectively called the second bailey (*Ninomaru* 二ノ丸), the third bailey (*Sannomaru* 三ノ丸) and the outer compound (*Sotoguruwa* 外郭). The actual city hall (久留米市役所) stands around the southeast corner of the outer compound.

There used to be the palaces, in the main enclosure and in the second bailey where Arima family resided and which were the political center of the domain. On the day of visiting the castle, samurais came and went in ceremonial attire. Or, a day of the lord's returning to the domain, they celebrated and organized a Noh theater inviting the village headmen and wealthy merchants. (The lords were required to alternate living for a year in their domain and in Edo, the capital.)

◆ Walking around

On the site of the remains, there are also several monuments.

Cenotaph of loyal subjects (*Saikai Chushi no Hi*): It was erected near the entrance for the recollection of the people who devoted themselves to the pro-Imperial movement during the Meiji Restoration.

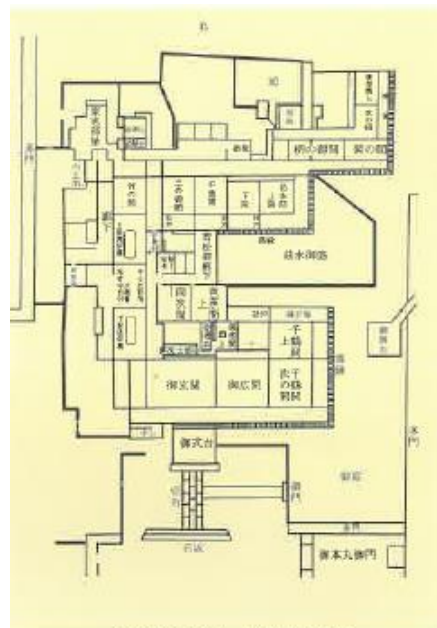
Cenotaph of Ogo Mafumi and Mizuno Masana: they held the most important role in the pro-Imperial party of Kurume. Masana became the major councilor of Kurume Domain before and during the Meiji Restoration.

Cenotaph of Suitai Sensei: Tsuda Ichizaemon (his pseudonym was Tsutai) was an instructor of Kendo and started a new school, called Tsuda Ichiden Ryu. His pupil built the cenotaph.

Cenotaph of Inoue Tsuruyo: Poet. Born as a daughter of a Confucian scholar in 1832.

Cetanoph of Otomobe no Hakama: A soldier of the Asuka period (592-710). He was captured by the Tang (China) forces upon Yamato (Japan)'s loss in the battle of Baekgang in 663. And he sold himself into slavery to get money for his comrades' return to Japan. About thirty years later, he was released and came back to the country. It is said that he was born in today's Yame city.

Kobayakawa-jinja Shrine: It is said that the spirit of Kobayakawa Hidekane was enshrined. He became the first lord of Chikugo Province of the early modern period under the Toyotomi Hideyoshi government from around 1585 to 1603.



Plan of the palace



Arima Memorial Museum



Cenotaph of Inoue Tsuruyo



Kobayakawa-jinja Shrine

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