

Access Map of the Hiketa Castle Ruins

See the enlarged map on the inside of this pamphlet.



Access (trailhead No.1)

[When Visiting by JR]
Located about 20 minutes on foot from Hiketa Station on the JR Kotoku Line
[When Visiting by Car]
Located about 10 minutes from the Hiketa Interchange on the Takamatsu Expressway

This map has been created based on the Higashikagawa City urban planning map

The Hiketa Castle ruins are a precious national historic site. The Shiroyama area, where the ruins of Hiketa Castle are located, includes state-owned forests, Setonaikai National Park, and forest reserves.

We ask that you comply with the relevant laws and regulations when visiting.

Precautions

- Wear comfortable shoes and clothes suitable for hiking.
- Do not take routes other than the established footpaths.
- It is dangerous to take a walk at night. Hike while it is bright during the day.
- Take into account your physical condition such as your level of hydration when hiking.

Prohibitions

- Use of fire (including smoking)
- Taking out and/or moving roof tiles or stones from stonewalls
- Dangerous acts such as graffiti on stonewalls or climbing up onto stonewalls.
- Littering
- Cutting down trees and capturing and/or collecting animals and/or plants

Spots of "The Continued Top 100 Japanese Castles" Stamps Collection

•Sanshu-Izutsuyashiki

2163 Hiketa, Higashikagawa-shi
TEL 0879-23-8550
Opening hours: 10:00 to 16:00
Closed: Every Wednesday, year-end and New Year's holiday period

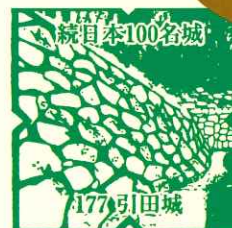
•Hiketa Community Center

(Located inside the Hiketa Government Office Building in Higashikagawa City)
513-1, Hiketa, Higashikagawa-shi
TEL 0879-33-2533
Opening hours: 9:00 to 17:00
Closed: Every Tuesday, year-end and New Year's holiday period

★Stamps are unavailable except during opening hours. Thank you for your cooperation.

Issued by

Lifelong Learning Division, Higashikagawa City Board of Education
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As of March 2021 *Details are subject to change.



A Castle Overlooking Harima Nada

Hiketa Castle Ruins

2020 Designated as a National Historic Site
2017 Selected for "The Continued Top 100 Japanese Castles" initiative

Outline of Hiketa Castle

The ruins of Hiketa Castle are late 16th century to early 17th century (from the late Sengoku period to the early Edo period) ruins from a castle built on the summit of Shiroyama (82 meters above sea level) that protruded out like a cape so as to surround the north side of Hiketa Port, which had been a key point of Harima Nada (the sea area in the east part of the Seto Inland Sea of West-Japan) since the Middle Ages.

Hiketa Castle became an important military base during the invasion of Sanuki Province by the Chosokabe clan of Tosa Province during the Tensho era (1573-1592), and it is said that Ikoma Chikamasa took the castle in the 15th year of the Tensho era (1587). After seizing Hiketa Castle, the Ikoma clan built Takamatsu Castle and Marugame Castle. Hiketa Castle would become the clan's base of territorial rule along with the aforementioned two castles.

The "kuruwa" (or castle compounds) of the Hiketa Castle ruins are made entirely by stonewalls. Passing through the passage that is presumed to be the main path from the entrance of the valley, the kuruwa of kita-ninomaru, minami-ninomaru, honmaru, and higashinomaru are systematically arranged in a U-shape and flatten the mountain ridge. Here you will also find Keshoike Pond, which is a reservoir.

The stonewalls of each kuruwa are characterized by the nozura-zumi method of building robust stonewalls by stacking natural stones. The total length of the walls is about 600 meters. Analysis of the shape of the walls and excavated artifacts tells us that they were constructed during the Keicho era (1596-1615).

As the ruins of Hiketa Castle are located at a military and economic base near the border, a key point of Harima Nada, they are important for understanding the economic and military and policies and the territorial rule system of Toyotomi Daimyo. The division of territory (castle's ground plan) and stonewalls of the ruins highlight characteristics of the Keicho era and remain in good condition.

A castle town was also built in Hiketa along with the castle. Hiketa is home to traces of the castle town in the form of its grid-like streets and avenues as well as its place names. The sight of this picturesque town seen from the ruins of Hiketa Castle is breathtaking.

View of Hiketa Castle Ruins (Shiroyama) and Hiketa Port

Brief Chronology of Hiketa Castle Ruins

The 1st year of the Onin era	1467	The indigenous (kokuji) Sangawa clan claims Hiketa as their territory.
Eisho era	1504-1521	Shinomiya Ukon, who marched in from Shinano Province, belongs to the Sangawa clan and makes Hiketa Castle his residence. He engages in warfare with the Awa Miyoshi clan.
The 1st year of the Genki era	1570	Yano Suruganokami, a vassal of the Awa Miyoshi clan becomes the lord of Hiketa Castle.
The 5th year of the Tensho era	1577	Yano Suruganokami makes Awa a province, and then the lord of Hiketa Castle disappears after that.
The 10th year of the Tensho era	1582	The invasion of Sanuki Province by the Chosokabe clan of Tosa Province is in full swing.
The 11th year of the Tensho era	1583	Hashiba Hideyoshi dispatches Sengoku Hidehisa of Sumoto, Awaji Province to Sanuki Province. The vassal Mori Shimanokami occupies Hiketa Castle. A battle takes place at Hiketa between Chosokabe's forces and Sengoku's forces. Sengoku's forces are defeated and retreat to Shodoshima Island.
The 15th year of the Tensho era	1587	Ikoma Chikamasa is given Sanuki Province by Toyotomi Hideyoshi and takes Hiketa Castle from Ako, Harima Province. Soon after leaving Hiketa, Ikoma Chikamasa moves to Utazu and Takamatsu.
The 20th year of the Kanei era	1643	Matsudaira Yorishige, the first feudal lord of the Takamatsu domain, hunts deer on Shiroyama. By this time, the castle has become abandoned.
The 3rd year of the Bunkyo era	1863	A bell tower is built in Shiroyama to warn foreign ships.
Late Taisho era to early Showa era	1924-1930	Shiroyama, where the ruins of Hiketa Castle are located, become a tourist destination in the form of the Shiroyama Park with its footpaths and viewing platform.

The stonewall of each kuruwa is a nozura-zumi, which is an old method of building robust stonewalls by stacking natural stones on top of each other. The total length of the stonewall is 600 meters. The kuruwa of the Hiketa Castle ruins vary significantly depending on the height and scale of the stonewalls of the castle built by the feudal lord to the land in what is now Kagawa Prefecture.

The excavation research which contains a large amount of cornerstones and tiles revealed that Hiketa Castle was built in a cornerstone building style with tiled rooftop.

The construction technique represents the key features of "Shokuho period fortresses" which was originated from Azuchi Castle by Oda Nobunaga and then developed by Oda and Toyotomi administration. The fact that the kuruwa and stonewalls built by the Ikoma clan, a vassal of Toyotomi Hideyoshi, still stand tall means that it is a valuable mountain castle in order to understand the popularizing of the shokuho period fortresses across the country.

From the top of the mountain, you can overlook Harima Nada, the Sanuki Mountain Range, Hiketa Port, and the townscape of Hiketa. It is obvious that Hiketa Castle was positioned as the hub of the marine shipping network.

Highlights of the Hiketa Castle Ruins



1 Honmaru Stonewall

The honmaru's trimmed-style stonewall known as a sangizumi is an old method of stacking stones that use smaller stones to fill the gaps. This was the first stonewall built at the site of Hiketa Castle.



2 The Townscape of Hiketa as Seen from the Honmaru

Honmaru is the most visible spot from the town of Hiketa and is the perfect place to show one's political power.



3 Otemon Gate

Large stones are placed around the Otemon gate. The scale of the stonewall represented the power of the lord.



4 Kita-ninomaru

As you go up the main path (Otemichi), you will see the stonewalls of kita-ninomaru (northern second compound) and minami-ninomaru (southern second compound) to the both side of the road. The kita-ninomaru has stonewalls with an upper tier of 2 to 3 meters and a lower tier of 5 to 6 meters. Large stones are used for the upper tier of the stonewall even on the inside of the castle. The lower tier of the high stonewall is carefully filled with smaller filler stones between the gaps. The kita-ninomaru and minami-ninomaru surrounded by stonewalls are thought to be where the castle has been located.



Map for Walks Around the Hiketa Castle Ruins



The footpaths currently in use are the footpaths constructed at the end of the Taisho era. Consequently, there are different routes to when the castle was built. There are places where some of the stonewalls that could potentially collapse are covered with sheets to protect them, and there are also places where undergrowth may grow depending on the time of year.



Hypothetical Diagram of Hiketa Castle

Created in the Taisho Era
As this is a hypothetical diagram made generations after the castle was built, it's not very credible with regards to the structure of the buildings, but the layout of the kuruwa has been captured more or less perfectly.



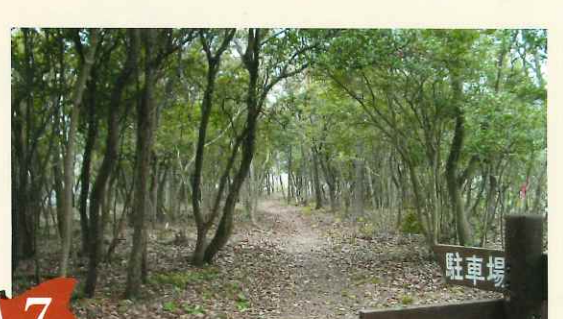
6 Keshoike Pond

Keshoike gets its name from the legend that the princesses and maids of Hiketa Castle used the water from this pond to make themselves look beautiful. Keshoike is an artificial reservoir built to overcome potential water shortages. The stonewall on the south side of Keshoike was built years after the other stonewalls.



5 Higashinomaru

The higashinomaru (eastern compound) is composed of three kuruwa; the upper, middle, and lower. It is thought that there were military facilities located here such as an ammunition storage building that stored gunpowder. There was a turret at the middle kuruwa.



7 Kita-kuruwa

No stonewall has been built in the kita-kuruwa. This is thought to be the remains of the Hiketa Castle from the time in which it was built using soil and trees before the Hiketa Castle of the Shokuho period that was reinforced with stonewalls.