

Construction of Sendai Castle

Sendai Castle was built by Date Masamune, the first feudal lord of the Sendai Domain, and is thought to have been tentatively completed in 1602. The castle's natural defenses include the Hirosegawa River and the cliffs of Tatsunokuchi Gorge to the east and south and steep mountains to the west, and stone walls were built mainly around the Main Compound. During construction, the Main Compound and the site that is now known as the Third Compound were developed. Later, the second feudal lord, Tadamune, built the Second Compound, which became the seat of the feudal government.

Sendai Castle's Stone Walls

The Main Compound's north stone wall underwent repairs from 1997 to 2004, and in the excavation conducted during construction, an older stone wall, now known to be the second stone wall, was discovered underneath the current stone wall. An even older stone wall, the first stone wall, dates from the beginning of the 17th century when Masamune built the castle, and is made of natural, unhewn stones stacked with their longest side parallel to the wall. The subsequent second stone wall dates from the former half of the 17th century and is made of somewhat shaped natural stones stacked with their longest side perpendicular to the wall. The current third stone wall was built in the latter half of the 17th century during restoration after the 1668 earthquake, and is made of stones hewn on all sides stacked with the joints aligned.



Stone wall on the northeast side of the Main Compound (from the northeast)

Different Stone Walls

These are examples of various stone walls which allow you to study how those stones had been hewn and how the stones were stacked to form the walls around the castle.



Ohiroma (Large Hall) of the Main Compound : Symbol of Sendai Castle

The Main Compound was divided into a public front half and private back half, and contained many buildings. The main building was the Ohiroma, completed in 1610. The Ohiroma was a magnificent building with a total of 14 rooms, and including the porch around its perimeter, had a floor area of about 430 tatami mats. To the north of the Ohiroma was a Noh stage, and another building overhung the cliff to the east.

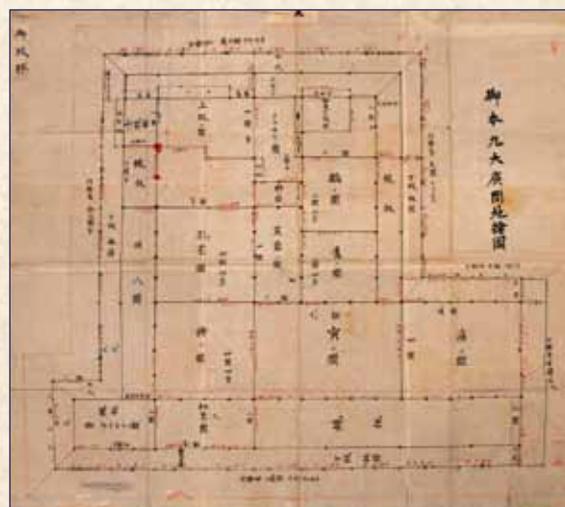


Chida Family Drawing (Main Compound Ohiroma portion) (Sendai City Museum)

Please see our 1/50 scale model of the Ohiroma based on this drawing and excavations.

Jodan-no-ma : Where Masamune sat

The Jodan-no-ma was a very formal room where the most important ceremonies and meetings between the feudal lord and his retainers were held. It was 7.9m wide, and the alcove contained a wall painting entitled Paulownia and Phoenix by Kano Sakyo. To the north was the Jojodan-no-ma, used during visits from the Imperial Family and the Shogun's family.



Floor Plan of the Main Compound's Ohiroma (Sendai City Museum)



Folding Screen with Phoenix (Town of Matsushima)

There is a full-size reproduction of the alcove in the Jodan-no-ma Corner. You can see its size and its magnificent wall paintings.



Excavated Gilt Bronze Metal Fitting

History of Sendai Castle

A.D.	Main events
1600	Masamune changes the characters used to write "Sendai"; and plans layout of castle premises.
1601	Masamune begins construction of Sendai Castle
1603	Masamune moves into Sendai Castle
1610	Sendai Castle's Ohiroma (Large Hall) completed
1616	Stone walls and watchtowers damaged in an earthquake
1627	Shogunate authorizes construction of Wakabayashi Castle
1638	Construction begins on Second Compound
1646	Stone walls and watchtowers collapse in an earthquake
1668	Giant earthquake; stone walls of Main Compound collapse
1683	Restoration of stone walls of Main Compound completed
1688	Genroku era renovation of Second Compound
1804	Second Compound burns down in fire started by lightning
1805	Reconstruction of Second Compound begins
1868	Sendai Domain surrenders
1871	Tohoku Garrison transferred to Second Compound
1931	Otemon Gate and Waki-yagura Watchtower designated National Treasures
1945	Air raids on Sendai. Otemon Gate, Waki-yagura Watchtower, and Tatsumimon Gate burned down.
1963	Construction begins on Otemon Gate's Waki-yagura Watchtower
1997	Restoration work on stone walls and excavation of Main Compound begin
2003	Site of Sendai Castle designated a National Historic Site
2004	Restoration work on Main Compound North Stone Wall completed
2011	Stone and earthen walls damaged in the Great East Japan Earthquake
2015	Restoration of stone walls after the Great East Japan Earthquake completed

Sendai Castle Guidance Facility Information

Hours	9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. No closed days
Admission	Free
Location	1-11 Kawauchi, Aoba-ku, Sendai 〒980-0862
Inquiries	Sendai Board of Education Cultural Assets Section TEL : 022-214-8544 FAX : 022-214-8399



<http://www.city.sendai.jp/shisekichosa/kurashi/manabu/kyoiku/inkai/bunkazai/bunkazai/joseki/index.html>