

Discovery of Remains of Kyoto Shinjo Castle — Excavation Survey Conducted at Kyoto Sento Imperial Palace —

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From November 2019 to 2020, a pre-construction survey prior to building underground fire cisterns was conducted at the Kyoto Sento Imperial Palace, as a result of which a stone wall and a moat of the Kyoto Shinjo Castle were discovered. The Kyoto Shinjo Castle is the last castle built by Toyotomi Hideyoshi in 1597, in his last years. The details of the Kyoto Shinjo Castle remained unknown for many years because historical materials were scarce. No traces of the castle remain on the surface of the ground, where later the Sento Imperial Palace (built in 1627) and other residences of the court nobility were built.

This paper describes the scale and structure of the stone wall and moat discovered and outlines their characteristics. Then, the paper identifies the size, construction process, facilities, and functions of the Kyoto Shinjo Castle, based on the historical materials including pictorial diagrams drawn in the Edo period. Although the scope of this investigation is rather limited due to the scarcity of historical documents regarding the castle, it can be affirmed that: (i) the Kyoto Shinjo Castle gradually decreased in size following the death of Hideyoshi, and was renovated to the residence of Kodai-in (lawful wife of Hideyoshi); (ii) after Kodai-in died, the Sento Imperial Palace and Tofukumon-in Palace were built in 1627 on the site; and (iii) the palaces were replaced by the current Kyoto Sento Imperial Palace and Kyoto Omiya Imperial Palace.

From the above, it is concluded that the discovered stone wall and moat were of the main area of the Kyoto Shinjo Castle. The paper also points to the similarity in floor plans between the Kyoto Shinjo Castle and the Jurakudai Castle that Hideyoshi built in Kyoto before the Kyoto Shinjo Castle.

Finally, this paper discusses the gold gilded roof tiles unearthed at the presumed southern boundary of the Kyoto Shinjo Castle in the past excavations to consider the relevance between the two castles. It is strongly suggested that, in order to advance the study of the Kyoto Shinjo Castle, further examination is needed on the historical materials obtained so far.

Style and Ways of Use Seen in the Restored Higyosha, Kyoto Imperial Palace

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The existing Kyoto Imperial Palace was rebuilt in 1855 (late Edo period). The palace buildings were constructed in line with their own historical origins in such a manner that the Shishinden, Seiryoden, and Higyosha, at which important rituals/ceremonies have been conducted since ancient times, can form architectural spaces based on the restoration of the Heian period style. The Higyosha, the subject of this paper, is the main hall of the inner palace serving as the living quarters for the empress including young princes/princesses and court ladies. Despite being as significant as the Shishinden and Seiryoden, few studies have focused on the Higyosha, and its significance has not been fully understood. This paper aims to clarify the characteristics of the Higyosha's architectural space and how it was used, and to explain the historical significance of the Higyosha from an architectural view point.

The Higyosha of the Kyoto Imperial Palace is also known as "Fuji-tsubo", named after the wisteria (fuji) tree planted in the inner courtyard following the tradition from the ancient Heian Palace ("Heian-kyu"). At the Heian Palace, the Higyosha was mainly used as the residence of the empress, and is known for being the wellspring of refined court culture of the Heian period, including hosting wedding ceremonies, the greeting ceremony of the new year, the wisteria banquet, etc.

Compared to the original planar shape of the Heian Palace, the architecture of the Higyosha restored in the Edo period was confined to a partial restoration. However, focusing on how it was used during ceremonies, it becomes apparent that the shape of the Higyosha has been restored through making careful and deliberate choices based on its use, not through simplifying the original style/forms. In other words, under stricter design conditions than those of the public and official buildings such as the Shishinden and Seiryoden, the essential restoration of the Higyosha was undertaken with full knowledge of the original appearance that it should return to, and a reinterpretation of the historical contexts of the origins. One could argue that the Higyosha embodies the very court cultures that reflect the memories of bygone times and the history made by the people who had used it, and is not simply a product of nostalgia for the good old days.