

彦根城を世界遺産に



HIKONE CASTLE

Built during the Tokugawa period, for centuries Hikone Castle Complex has overcome challenges and trials, thanks to the support and efforts of many people. To best convey the value of Hikone Castle Complex and see it passed on to future generations, we aim to achieve World Heritage Inscription.

歴史を次の時代へ。



Cherishing history
for future generations
Realizing World Heritage
Inscription for
Hikone Castle Complex

Tokugawa Period

— An era of stability based around the daimyo governance system —

During the 17th to 19th centuries, the years that cover the Tokugawa period, the world was fraught with upheaval, with the existing social order being disrupted by frequent conflict and dynastic changes, and governance systems undergoing realignment. Japan was no exception to such tumult, and in the process of realignment of social systems that had been in a state of flux until the Warring States period, a new and globally unique political system emerged, namely **the daimyo governance system**. Underpinned by this daimyo governance system, the Tokugawa period has attracted the attention of the world as a 250-year period of peace and stability, known as “Pax Tokugawana.”

Value of Hikone Castle Complex

The daimyo governance system of the Tokugawa period was a political system under which regional governors, known as daimyo, entrusted financial resources and authority from the shogun, and were responsible for regional governance. These daimyo each received a castle complex from the shogun as a governing base, and it was in this castle complex that the various institutions and facilities required for regional governance were established.

Castle complexes physically reflected the characteristics of the daimyo governance system.

Among all the 180 castles that existed in Japan, Hikone Castle Complex is the most complete in terms of the physical evidence that remains today and is a place where people can experience all the elements of the daimyo governance system.

Anticipated schedule leading to World Heritage Inscription



1992

Placed on the World Heritage tentative list



2020

Shiga Prefecture and Hikone City conclude an agreement on World Heritage Inscription



2023~2024

UNESCO Preliminary Assessment (dialogue with international organizations)

Results of Preliminary Assessment

Preliminary Assessment is a system that facilitates inscription by the advisory body's providing an indication of a property's potential for World Heritage inscription (potential to justify Outstanding Universal Value (OUV)) before a formal review. The result of the assessment was notified in October 2024, and it was evaluated that Hikone Castle Complex has the potential to justify OUV. Based on this outcome further efforts will be made to realize World Heritage inscription.



2024~2025

Preparation of Nomination Dossier draft



2025 (Target)

Domestic decision on submission of Nomination Dossier



2026 (Target)

Submission of Nomination Dossier to UNESCO / Evaluation by ICOMOS



2027 (Target)

World Heritage Inscription

Understanding Tokugawa period castles

Layout Consolidation of governing power

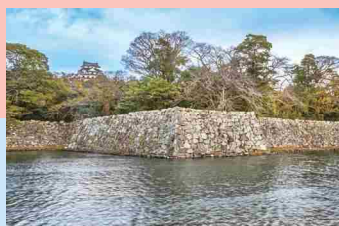
Hikone Castle Complex was separated from the outside world by **moats and stone walls (component 1)**. Within the moat lay the daimyo's **palace (component 2)** and **the senior vassals' residences**, where all vassals who played a role in daimyo governance resided (**component 3**). The daimyo's palace was where discussions and political decision-making would take place.

Also within the moat were such structures and facilities as **the daimyo's garden (component 4)** and the academy (domain school), where ceremonies, cultural activities and education took place. It was precisely because the daimyo and his vassals would gather within the walls of the castle and share common values and ideals through ceremonies and cultural activities, that a period of stable governance that lasted for 250 years was possible.

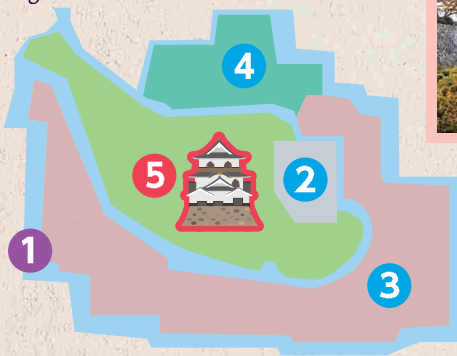
Elevation Symbol of governing power

The castle keep (component 5), perched atop the uppermost hill and visible from anywhere in the surrounding area, together with the combined **view of the moats, stone walls**, turrets, and castle keep from outside the castle presented a powerful **visual** indication of the governing power that lay within the castle complex.

1 Moats and stone walls



2 Daimyo's palace



3 Senior vassals' residences



4 Daimyo's garden



5 Castle keep



The (1) **moats and stone walls**, (2) **daimyo's palace**, (3) **senior vassals' residences**, (4) **daimyo's garden**, and (5) **castle keep** that are the components that present the features of the daimyo governance system were once common to all 180 castles around Japan. However, as the number of castles dwindled from the Meiji era onwards due to demolition or loss through conflict or disaster, **today the only castle that possesses all five of these components and can therefore provide a full picture of the daimyo governance system is none other than Hikone Castle Complex.**

Inquiries

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Inscribe Hikone Castle

Visit the special website for details on activities to realize World Heritage Inscription. ▶
<https://www.hikonejo-worldheritage.jp/>

