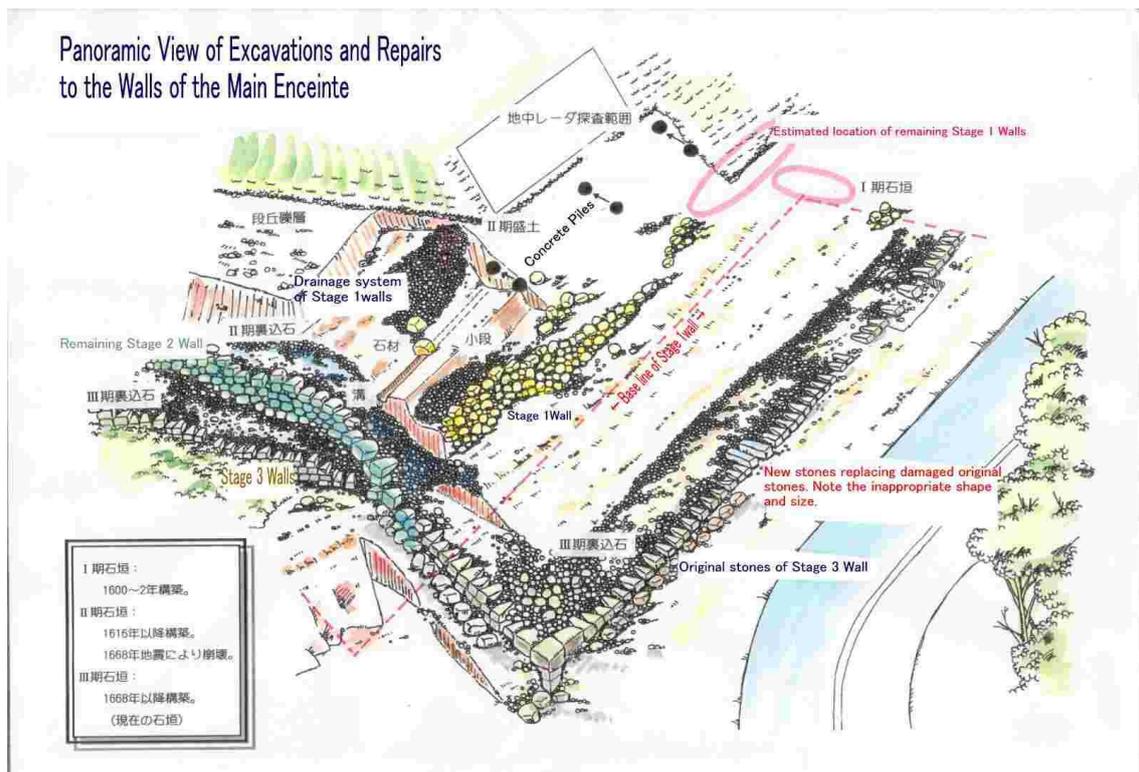


# Sendai Castle

## The Uses and Abuses of 'History



(Artwork by NANAMI Masato, Professor, Tōhoku Gakuin Uni.)

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## Preamble (Original)

The City of Sendai plans to build a turret on the northeastern corner of the Main Enceinte of former Sendai Castle. This plan was originally conceived of by the local Chamber of Commerce as a way to promote tourism. However, this plan has come under severe criticism from historical and archaeological societies throughout Japan, as representing a serious abuse of a major historical site, and thereby providing a dangerous precedent for heritage development throughout Japan.

5<sup>th</sup> September, 2001

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The above Preamble was written in September, 2001, as the Society to Preserve the Walls of Sendai Castle (仙台城石垣を守る会), a coalition of historians collaborating behind the scenes with the archaeologists actually doing the excavations of Sendai Castle, was engaged in a campaign to gain public support for what at the time was a very unpopular position, i.e. to stop Sendai City's plans to destroy the historical worth of the Sendai Castle site and build a tourist trap that would not stand up to close scrutiny as to its validity. As one of the leading scholars of Sendai Domain at the time, I participated in this movement from its inception. This polemic does not have a bibliography, but the assertions contained within this piece are all based either upon the findings of the municipal archaeologists responsible for the excavation of the site in preparation for the projected construction and communicated directly to us, the historians, or are based upon independent evaluations of the available documentary and archaeological evidence made by expert members of our group. I have decided to make this polemic available in the Miyagi Gakuin Women's University's Repository, as a record of the efforts of our Society to preserve the walls of the main enceinte of Sendai Castle. As a document, it may be of interest for people seeking reliable information on Sendai, and Japanese castles in general, cultural preservation and heritage tourism, and to scholars interested in civic movements in Japan.

J.F. Morris, 11<sup>th</sup> September, 2019

# INDEX

## [An Outline of Sendai Castle](#)

- [1\) History of the Castle](#)
- [2\) Earthquakes: Destruction and Reconstruction](#)
- [3\) Sendai Castle Today](#)

## [The Mt Aoba Park Development Plan](#)

## [Sendai: a Special Kind of Castle](#)

### [Excavation and the 'Rediscovery' of Sendai Castle](#)

- [\(1\) Rewriting the History of Japanese Engineering](#)
- [\(2\) The 'Reconstruction' of the Northeastern Corner Turret: a Blatant Forgery](#)

## [The Battle for Sendai Castle](#)

## [The Future](#)

## [AFTERWORD: A Happy Ending](#)

## [The Walls Today](#)

## An Outline of Sendai Castle

### (1) History of the Castle

The castle is situated on a plateau overlooking the city of Sendai across the Hirose River. This plateau is joined to the backspine of northern Honshu, the Ōū Mountain Range on its western side, and is protected by deep forest to its west, and sheer cliffs on its southern and eastern sides. The woods immediately adjacent to the castle were strictly protected against human encroachment during the Edo Period (1600-1868), and today they are protected as a botanical garden attached to Tōhoku University, since they provide us with one of the rare examples of virgin woodland left on the island of Honshu. Moreover, all of Aoba Mountain as the plateau is called, is designated as a National Natural Monument due to the diversity and rarity of its biosystem.

Construction on the castle we see today was begun in 1600 at the order of DATE Masamune (1567-1636), the first lord of Sendai Domain. Previous to this, the site had been a castle of the Kokubun Family, who had occupied the area around modern Sendai for some centuries until being replaced by the Date. In 1600, Masamune was engaged in fighting the Uesugi Family who occupied an extensive domain to the south. The initial castle was completed within just 17 months as a frontline base against this enemy.

Masamune's castle consisted of the Main Enceinte on the plateau, and what is now the Third Enceinte at the base of the plateau. Masamune's son started construction on a Second Enceinte in 1638. This extensive complex was built on a gentle rise at the base of the long climb up to the Main Enceinte. After its completion, the Second Enceinte became the centre of the both the public administrative functions and the private residential functions of the castle, and the Main Enceinte was rarely used but for only the most important of ceremonies, such as those surrounding the New Year audience of the lord and his vassals.

Nothing of the original castle remains today except the earth and stoneworks of the walls. The main hall of the Main Enceinte was dismantled after Sendai Domain's defeat in the Restoration War of 1868. The buildings of the Second Enceinte were destroyed by fire in 1883. The few remaining gates were destroyed in the bombing of Sendai in 1945.

## (2) Earthquakes: Destruction and Reconstruction

Sendai Castle has a long history of earthquakes.

1616 The first 'walls and turrets' (Stage 1) built by Masamune were destroyed by earthquake.

1646 The second walls (Stage 2) damaged by an earthquake, which also destroyed all the turrets of the main enceinte.

1668 The second walls (Stage 2) destroyed by earthquake

1683 Repairs completed to the stonewalls. The side turrets around the gate to the Main Enceinte were rebuilt on a smaller scale, but the original 2 corner turrets were left unbuilt.

1710 Stonewalls at the western extreme of the Main Enceinte damaged by earthquake

Sendai castle suffered 6 more earthquakes, major and minor up until 1868, but no records remain of the castle walls having suffered damage or having undergone any repairs after 1710.

While talking of earthquakes, it is predicted that there is 80% probability of an earthquake to the order of magnitude 7 occurring in Sendai sometime within the next 20 years.

## (3) Sendai Castle Today

Nothing remains on the site of the original buildings. After the abolishment of Sendai Domain in 1871, the castle became a major base of the Imperial Army, which was converted into a US army base during the Occupation.

Today, the greater part of the Main Enceinte is the property of the 'Protect the Nation Shrine,' a Shinto shrine built when the castle was an army base in the prewar period. As its name suggests, this shrine is connected with the state Shinto of prewar Japan. Today, it utilises its location to cater to tourists visiting the castle site, providing an expensive parking area, a museum with flashy computer graphics to show the original buildings of the Main Enceinte, a souvenir shop and other facilities targeted towards tourists.

The woods to the northwest are State land under the supervision of Tōhoku University as a botanical garden.

The Second Enceinte is also State land on loan to Tōhoku University, housing mainly the Faculties of Law, Economics, Arts, and the University library.

The Third Enceinte, most of the road leading up the Main Enceinte, and that part of the stone walls and the land immediately behind the walls that lie between the eastern-most extremity of the walls and the gate to the Main Enceinte, are the property of Sendai City.

Sendai Castle is one of only 2 or 3 major Edo Period castles throughout Japan which have not been designated as a historical site by either national or local government. The complicated landholding which covers the site, and the influential status of the owners/incumbents, are one reason why Sendai City has not made any visible efforts towards designating the area as an 'historical site' subject to the protection and restrictions that this status would entail, despite that fact that the City's own Cultural Heritage Committee made a strong recommendation 15 years ago to the municipal government to do so. Administratively speaking, Sendai Castle is not an historical site, but just a piece of ill-kept parkland with some stone edifices which are serious safety hazards strewn around in parts of it.

## The Mt Aoba Park Development Plan

Sendai City has declared its commitment to the ideal of taking the necessary steps to have Sendai Castle designated as a national historical site. However, while it has taken no concrete steps to implement this goal over the past 15 years, the City does have a plan to turn that limited part of the site which is City land into a park which would seriously impede fulfilling the conditions necessary for designation as a national historical site.

Sendai City's plan for developing the land to which it does have legal title consists of making an expansive Japanese-style garden at the base of the mountain, putting a large parking area at the rear of this park, and then linking this parking-lot to the former Main Enceinte by an underground elevator, situated to come out so as to destroy the foundations of the Southwest Turret, twin to the Northeast Turret, the reconstruction of which is the centre of the current controversy. The land targeted for development as a garden and parking-lot, is government land which has been occupied since 1945 by families of people who were driven out of the old centre of Sendai by the bombing of the city in July, 1945. These people became squatters on government land where they had sought

refuge, and since have paid a nominal rent to the government for their tenancy. While no-one is being forcibly evicted, the pressure on these families to abandon their homes of 50 years standing is slow and relentless. On the other hand, it is blatantly obvious who will benefit from having a large-scale parking-lot with easy road access and a high-speed underground elevator to effortlessly whisk tourists up to their tourist site, with a large-scale castle-like edifice built at public expense to add 'historical ambience' to the site.

### Sendai City's Plan for Redeveloping Mt Aoba Park



Taken from a pamphlet published by Sendai City

The plan to 'reconstruct' the Northeastern Turret is a key part of this Development Plan. In the attached artist's impression of the completed plan, other buildings, specifically the Moon Viewing Turret of the Main Enceinte and the castle's Main Gate leading into the Second Enceinte, are also depicted as if they will be reconstructed, but they are conspicuously missing from other depictions of the completed project. While claiming to have the upgrading of the historical heritage of the site as one of its primary aims, the lack of any kind of attention being given to the lesser-known parts of the castle hidden and included within the limits of the proposed park is one of this plan's most conspicuous features. The underground elevator will destroy the only surviving evidence concerning the proportions of the original towers on the site, and

the ‘reconstructed’ Northeastern Turret’ s foundations will permanently alter and damage the internal structure of the stone walls below it. Combined, the damage that this plan will do to the site will so downgrade its already fragile historicity to the extent that the possibility of its being designated as a national historical site will be seriously impaired.

## Sendai Castle: a Special Kind of Castle

The ‘typical’ Japanese castle must undoubtedly be [Himeji Castle](#), west of Osaka in Western Japan. This castle bristles with towering walls, deep moats, convoluted approaches guarded by forbidding gates and overwhelming towers, all of which is aesthetically appealing at a distance, but which would guarantee certain death to any foe foolhardy enough to attempt a direct assault. The degree to which this castle, reproduced endlessly in tourist postcards, school textbooks and glossy art books on ‘Japanese culture’ thereby comes to form a communal consensus about what a proper Japanese castle ‘should’ look like, cannot be underestimated. However, Himeji Castle is not at all the kind of castle that Sendai Castle was, for at least two reasons.

First of all, the historical Himeji Castle was built as a frontline defence against powerful lords to its west. Its projected role was to tie down an enemy advancing up the coast of the Inland Sea until reinforcements could arrive from Osaka or Edo. Standing siege within this castle made sense, since it was only one part of a much larger military defense system. On the other hand, standing siege in Sendai Castle would have made no sense at all. As the Date Family were ‘outsiders’ to the Tokugawa system, any battle fought on Sendai territory was not likely to be brought to a fortuitous end by relief arriving from Edo. Moreover, Sendai Domain was atypical within the Tokugawa System, in that the ruling Date Family were allowed to maintain the extensive system of outer castles and forts which was typical of the turbulent times prior to the unification of the country in 1590.

While other large domains often had 2 or 3 such outer castles, Sendai Domain, nominally the third largest domain in Edo Japan, had some 20 to 50 such outer castles and lesser establishments as its defense system. Should any fighting have occurred on Sendai land, only the total military collapse of the massive Date forces

would allow any enemy to get close to Sendai Castle. Apart from the very first few years after the castle was first built, the anticipated military role of the castle was merely ceremonial. While the natural defenses of the Main Enceinte are impressive, the man-made defenses of this castle are most conspicuous by their absence. It was this very lack of exaggerated signs of heavy defence which signified what was special about the Date Family and Sendai Castle to contemporaries. After 1646, the face that Sendai Castle would have presented to anyone viewing it from the city below, would have been one distinguished as much by the ceremonial and cultural buildings on the site such as the highly-decorated Main Hall, or the unique Moon-Viewing Turret built out over the cliffs of the Main Enceinte, as by the defensive structures of the castle. In the symbolic language of the period, the dominance of pacific over antagonistic symbols signified that the lord of Sendai Castle was a 'virtuous ruler' who did not need to rely on brute force to rule, but paradoxically, the very lack of conspicuous defensive facilities would have reminded contemporaries of the ubiquitous and overwhelming military force that the Date maintained throughout their domain.

Secondly, contemporary Himeji Castle is very 'untypical' as a Japanese castle, in that the residential and ceremonial complex which used to exist at the base of the castle has been demolished without any trace remaining today. If Himeji must serve as the 'ideal' Japanese castle, then it should be remembered that that which Himeji Castle shared most with Sendai Castle, no longer exists for us to see in Himeji.

Notwithstanding, the model of Sendai Castle based on a 'reconstruction' carried out in 1967 by the Sendai Board of Education (the municipal equivalent of a Ministry of Education and Culture) and which has since formed the basis for Sendai residents' conception of what the castle looked like, tries to fit Sendai Castle into the model of a Himeji-kind of castle. It achieves this by 4 giant turrets around the Main Enceinte. These 'corner' and 'side' turrets are actually much larger than the extant donjons of several former real castles, such as [Hirosaki Castle](#) in Aomori Prefecture. The distortion of Sendai Castle represented by these oversized turrets is not simply a matter of architecture. They distort the powerful messages contained in the

symbolism of the Castle's façade, and the references these contain to the unique history and culture of the Date Family, and replace it with a symbolism derived from the 'national history' of Japan, deracinated from both real place and time to provide the cultural underpinnings of a homogenous people united as 'One Race, One Culture.'

## Excavation and the 'Rediscovery' of Sendai Castle

After Sendai City built a major arterial road passing up and around the Main Enceinte in the 1960's, the stone walls of the Main Enceinte started to bulge. By around 1990, this protrusion of the walls was beginning to reach dangerous proportions and require major repairs. Excavation of the walls was begun in 1997 prior to repairs, and these excavations have resulted in a series of major discoveries about the structural history of the Main Enceinte. These discoveries have made it clear that the model of Sendai Castle drawn up in 1967 represents a serious distortion of the real appearance and significance of former Sendai Castle. The most important of these discoveries centres on the walls themselves.

### (1) Rewriting the History of Japanese Engineering

The excavation of the walls of the Main Enceinte of Sendai Castle has produced results which have rewritten the history of Japanese engineering.

The stone walls of Japanese castles are usually built up as a reinforcement of the natural rise in the land behind them. The walls rest on a bed of pebbles and larger river stones laid as a packing between the natural contour of the earth they cover and the walls themselves. The distance between the walls and the natural rise supporting them is typically 3 metres. Until their excavation, this was assumed to be the case of the walls of Sendai Castle, too. However, [excavations](#) revealed that the straight lines of the walls of the Main Enceinte hid the complicated contours of the land behind them, and that at their northeastern corner, the walls were built some 17 metres away from the mountain behind them. Moreover, it is at this very point that the walls tower to their highest point, an impressive 18 metres from ground level. At their

highest point, the walls had been standing for over 300 years with nothing solid behind them to support them.

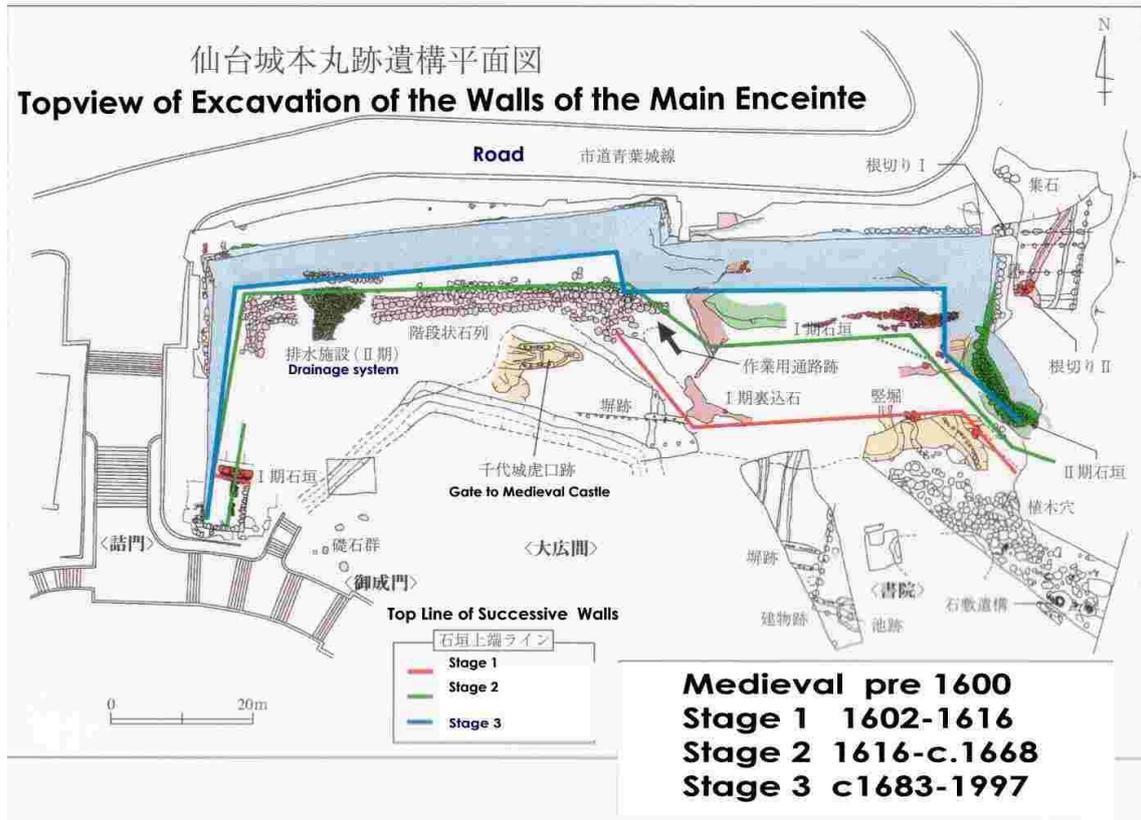
Excavation of the [structure behind the walls](#) revealed why this feat was possible. First, alternate layers of clay and sandy soil were packed down to provide a firm but supple support. These alternate layers of porous and non-porous soil served to drain water either into the drainage systems of pebbles built into the soil base, or out to the thick layer of river stones directly behind the walls themselves. This soil base was separated from the next layer of river stones by an internal stone wall buried within the walls themselves, to prevent the soil creeping into the drainage stones and silting them up, thereby blocking their drainage function. Beyond the internal stone wall, a thick layer of river stones provided an internal drainage system immediately behind the walls proper, preventing water pressure building up within the walls and causing them to bulge out. The stones of the walls were dressed so as to interface precisely at their front, but were cut away into a sharp wedged shape at their rear, and the waste stone produced by cutting away the rear end of the wall stones was carefully placed in the gaps thereby produced to provide a pliant packing which would yield when the stones came under lateral pressure during an earthquake.

The excavation not only revealed the sophisticated engineering which supported the walls: it also revealed that the earlier walls destroyed by earthquakes in the 17<sup>th</sup> century each had a different structure, different angle of rise and followed a different base and top line from the final Stage 3 wall. In particular, although the Stage 2 wall was closer in construction and base line to the Stage 3 one, at the northeastern corner it had two obtuse corners, instead of the single acute angle of the corner on the Stage 3 wall. The corner turret which stood here on the Stage 2 wall would have had the irregular shape depicted in a [map drawn in 1646](#), which is the only surviving documentary evidence for the appearance of this turret.

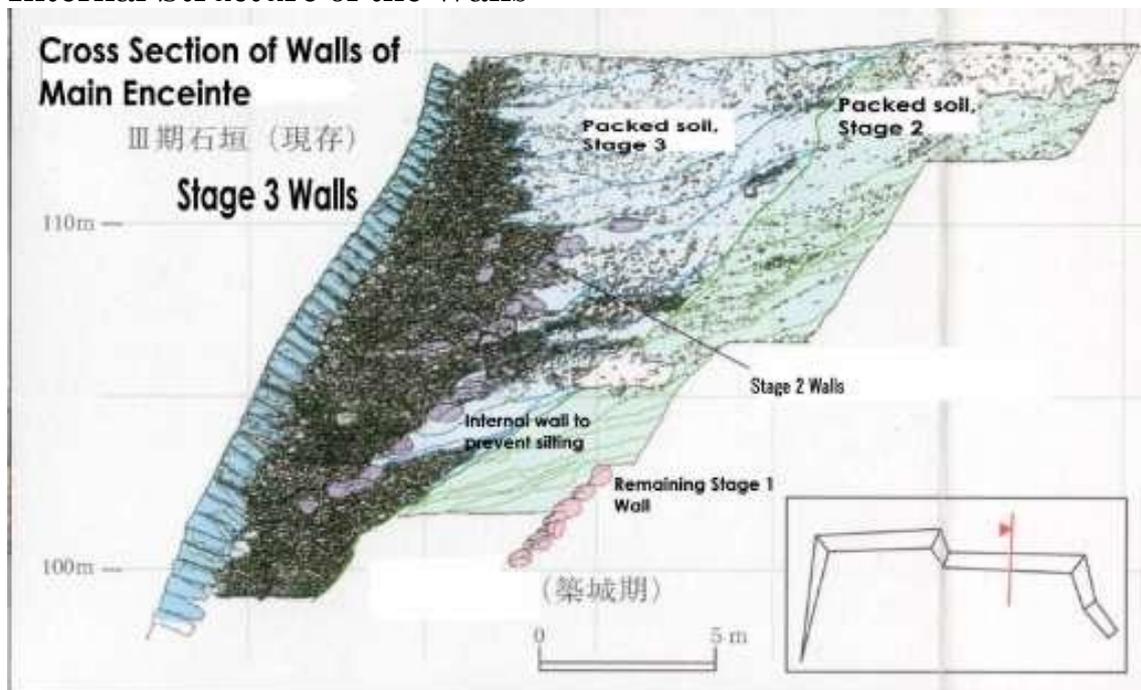
The excavation showed that the walls of the Main Enceinte as they had existed from 1683 to 1997 had developed through the experience of rebuilding the walls after successive earthquakes, to produce a structure which was both solid on the outside, and yet sufficiently supple within to have survived over 300 years of earthquakes. This excavation has established the walls of the Main Enceinte and the supporting structure behind them as being of

major significance to the history of Japanese engineering and castle archaeology.

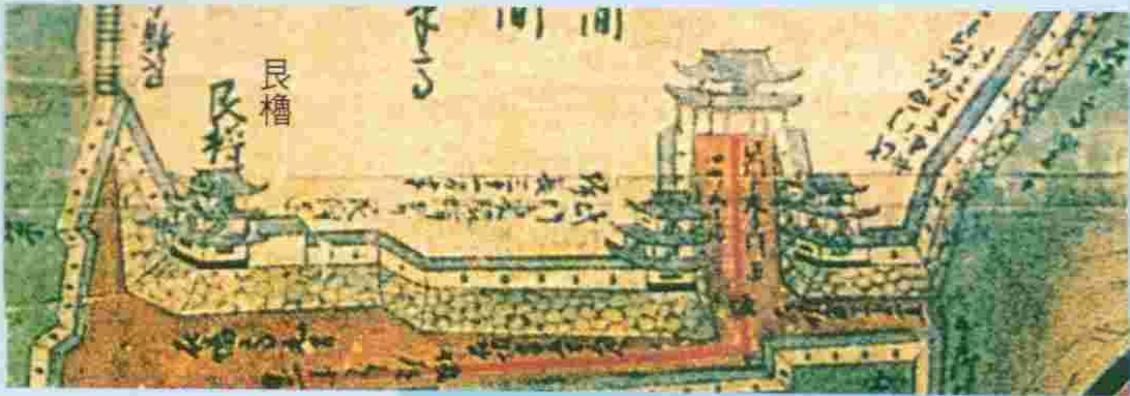
### Excavation of the Walls of the Main Enceinte



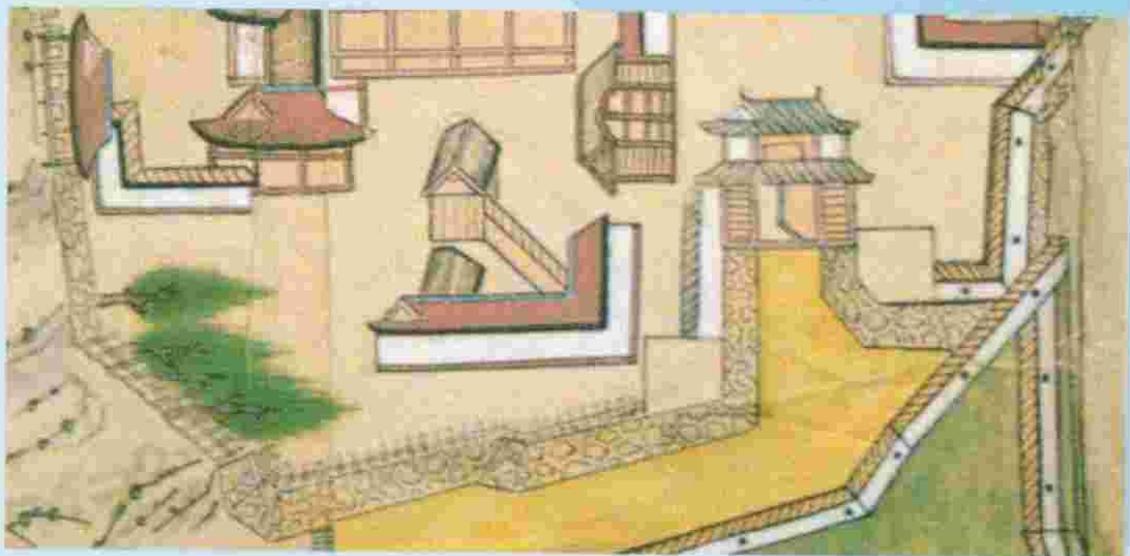
### Internal Structure of the Walls



## Contemporary Maps of the Walls and Turrets from 1646 & 1664



『奥州仙台城絵図』  
正保2・3（1645・46）年（斎藤報恩会館蔵）



『仙台城下絵図』  
寛文4（1664）年（宮城県図書館蔵）

## Original Maps of Sendai Castle 1645 & 1664

These two contemporary maps clearly show that the line of the walls of the Main Enceinte in State 2 was markedly different from that of the walls in Stage 3. Compare the line of these two maps at the northeastern corner with that in the reconstructed mode. The top map here is the only evidence we have concerning the shape of the original corner turrets. They are markedly smaller in size than the overwhelming edifices in the reconstructed model.

## (2) The 'Reconstruction' of the Northeastern Corner Turret: a Blatant Forgery

The proposed 'reconstruction' of the Northeastern Turret is controversial for at least two reasons: the proposed turret itself is a laughable forgery, and yet to build it necessitates doing irreversible damage to the valuable walls underneath.

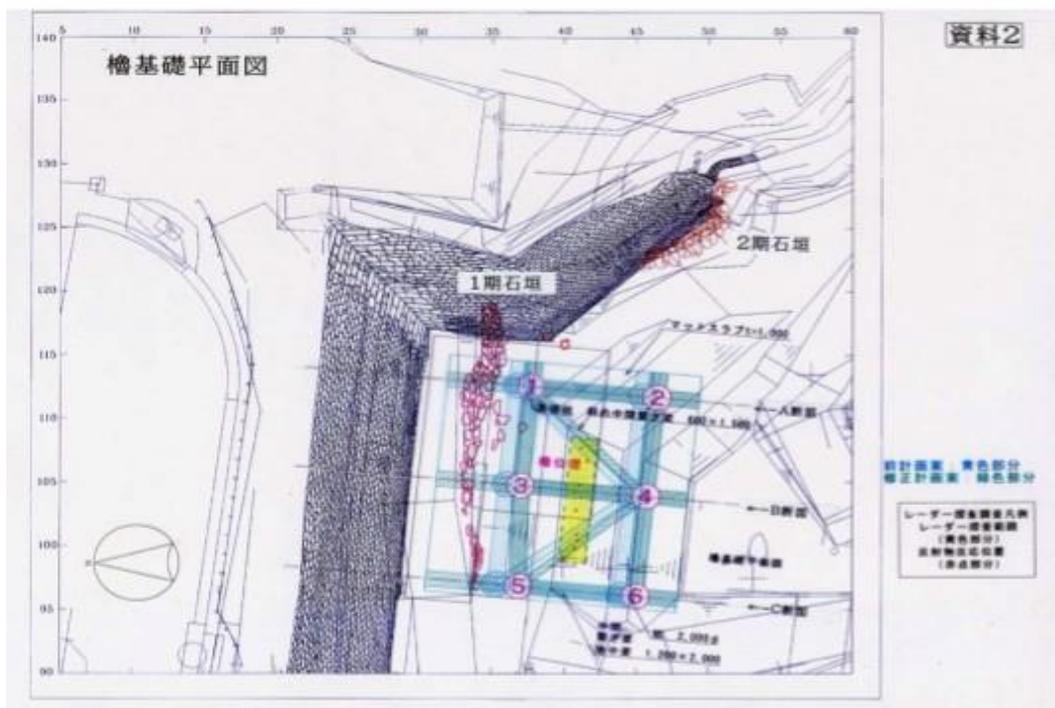
The basic plan for the 'reconstruction' of the Northeastern Turret is based upon the initial research on Sendai Castle conducted by the Sendai Board of Education in 1967. In 1967 no-one had conducted any archaeological excavations of the Main Enceinte, and a certain amount of guesswork was inevitable. Today, however, we know a lot more about the layout and change over time of the Main Enceinte, and the same degree of guesswork is no longer admissible. Nonetheless, the plan for the Northeastern Turret has not been revised in the light of the major archaeological finds resulting from the excavation of the walls. Moreover, even an elementary excavation of the extant site of the Southwestern Turret would provide accurate measurements for its twin, the Northeastern Turret, but Sendai City refuses to do this until it has completed its 'reconstruction' of the Northeastern Turret! The result is a plan for a turret that is almost twice the area at its base of what the original turret would have been, and one that is about 20% too high. Moreover, it is planned to build this on top of the Stage 3 wall, where no turret ever existed, and of a shape markedly different from the turret that did exist on the Stage 2 walls. To add insult to injury, the blueprint for the structure was commissioned to a company specializing in repairing temples, and the roof structure and walls of the proposed building are those of a Buddhist temple, not a castle turret!

However, what has made this particular project the subject of calls for its cancellation by almost every major historical and archaeological society throughout Japan, is that to support this oversized edifice on the unstable base of the northeastern corner of the walls, it is necessary to put [six concrete piles](#) and accompanying crossbeams within the supporting structure which lies between the stones of the walls, and the natural line of the original mountain, 17 metres behind the walls. Moreover, two of these supporting piles will penetrate the surviving parts of the old Stage 1 walls, still buried within the unexcavated part of the supporting structure of the walls. If the walls of the Main Enceinte

are rebuilt with this massive, unyielding concrete structure inside them, when the next major earthquake hits Sendai, it is most likely that the walls will collapse, leaving the 'turret' sitting on its concrete legs high in the air, and this will be the only legacy of the current 'reconstruction' of Sendai Castle to posterity.

### Foundations of the Northeastern Turret

This drawing shows the piles and crossbeams which would be necessary to support the NE turret, and their impact on the walls. The circles numbered 1 to 6 mark the piles.



## The Battle for Sendai Castle

Historians in Sendai have fought for a reconsideration of the plans for the 'reconstruction' of Sendai Castle for the past two years. At first this 'Battle of Sendai Castle' looked as if it would result in the rout of the historians, and an overwhelming victory for the 'reconstructionists.' However, since June, 2001, some changes have appeared in Sendai City's handling of the matter.

The single most significant change is that Sendai City has yielded to pressure to reopen three public advisory committees; i.e. a committee each on the reconstruction of the walls, the 'reconstruction' of the corner turret, and the complete evaluation, excavation and preservation of the whole of the castle site. Of these three committees, the committee on the walls is proceeding at a rapid pace, and has forced Sendai City to fulfill its original committee to rebuilding the walls according to traditional techniques discovered by the excavations. As of 5<sup>th</sup> September 2001, the turret committee has met only once since its instigation in June. Perhaps it is taking time to answer criticisms of the blueprint that its predecessor drew up for the grotesque edifice it proposes to erect. The membership of the third committee has yet to be announced, and perhaps the City is having trouble finding reputable members with suitable qualifications willing to serve on a committee serving a project which the academic associations to which any such members would belong have roundly condemned.

Another new development is that citizens groups within Sendai, which did not participate in the early stages of 'the Battle,' have begun to recognise the wider implications of this debate, and have joined in the fray.

Nonetheless, 'The Battle' is still decidedly going the direction of the City, the building industry and the local Chamber of Commerce, the strongest champion of 'reconstruction,' as they hope that tourists will flock to see their incredible edifice.

## The Future

What can be said with certainty about the proposal to rebuild any of the corner or side turrets of Sendai Castle is that none of them can be reconstructed with any degree of certainty, since the only thing that can be ascertained with any degree of accuracy, is

their base plan. Moreover, for the overwhelming part of the history of Sendai Castle, the corner turrets were left unbuilt, not only because the walls at the northeast corner of the Main Enceinte could not support a turret, but more importantly, because they had become extraneous to the needs of the castle. The Main Gate to the Second Enceinte and a lesser gate to the Third Enceinte survived until 1945, and accurate and detailed measurements of these buildings survive so that a historically accurate reconstruction would be possible. Plans for the Main Hall and the Moon Viewing Turret of the Main Enceinte also survive, making a reasonably accurate reconstruction possible. However, apart from the Moon Viewing Turret, reconstructing any of these edifices would require much time and political judgement, which is why the Northeastern Turret has been scheduled first, and the timetable for other parts of the castle is undetermined.

Sendai City has precipitated a national furor over its ill-considered plans for utilising Sendai Castle as a tourist trap. What is really necessary to turn Sendai Castle into a site which will serve both as a focus for local civic pride and for tourists, is an overall, long-term plan to re-evaluate the extent of the original castle and 'rebuild' only that which is reconstructable with some degree of certainty, and that which is unique to Sendai Castle.

(5th September, 2001)

## AFTERWORD A Happy Ending

On 20th May, 2002, FUJII Hajime, the mayor of Sendai, announced that the City has abandoned its plans for building the Northeastern Turret on the main enceinte. The reason given for this change in policy was that the Ministry of Culture and Science has given provisional approval for designating that area of the castle owned by Sendai City as a National Historical Site. Previously, the Ministry had only granted this approval for sites *in toto*, and the decision to grant this designation to only part of a site marks an important step forward in cultural policy in Japan. This decision by the Ministry of Culture and Science has given the Mayor of Sendai an excuse for abandoning plans for the Northeastern Turret. The full significance of this designation has yet to be announced, but it is expected that it will also mean that a great part of the Mt Aoba Development Plan will also have to be revised, or abandoned. When questioned by reporters as to whether

the opposition by historical and archaeological societies across Japan had any influence on his decision, the Mayor stated clearly that this had absolutely no influence at all...

And everyone lived happily ever after.

*Many thanks to those people across the planet, who have expressed their concern and support for our efforts to bring this tale to a happy conclusion.*

## [An Afterthought to the Afterword](#)

I attended the public hearings of the Committee responsible for the excavation and preservation of the castle site on 3rd December, 2002. Compared to the tense and adversary atmosphere of the committee prior to 20th May, the proceedings of the committee this time were remarkable for their cordiality, and commitment to getting on with the job, and doing the best job possible. One sub-issue in the debate over Sendai Castle, which I had omitted from the discussion above, was a serious conflict over whether to give precedence to modern scientific engineering techniques, or rebuilding the walls as closely as possible to the principles of the originals. With the conflict over the corner turret being resolved, the need to treat the walls as the understructure of a modern building has gone, and the engineers and archaeologists are now able to cooperate. As a result, something very good has come out of the original conflict.

Sendai City has devoted what is probably an unprecedented amount of human, technological and financial resources to scientifically analysing and testing the traditional engineering practices used in the original construction. As the castle is now listed for classification as a national cultural site, a representative from the Bureau of Culture (a subsection of the Ministry of Education and Science) attends all committee hearings, and at the December hearing of the committee, this representative announced that his Bureau intended to hold a national seminar of specialists involved in the maintenance and repair of castles throughout Japan, and that he wanted representatives of Sendai to attend this seminar and present their efforts to reconstruct the walls of Sendai Castle, as a model case of the fruits of meaningful cooperation

between modern science and traditional technology. It looks as if the 21st century reconstruction of the walls of Sendai Castle will go down in the annals of Japanese engineering, not only for being an historical 'reconstruction,' but also as a thoroughly modern development in cooperation between modern and traditional technologies.

## The Walls Today

Reconstruction work on the main walls of the main enceinte of Sendai Castle was completed in 2003. The photos below show the new walls of the castle as they stand reconstructed today (*26th August, 2007*).

The northeast corner



## View Looking Back Towards the Northeast Corner



The dark-coloured stones are original; lighter-coloured stones are new stones replacing original stones which were too damaged to be reused in the reconstruction of the walls.

### Related Online Sources:

As of September 2019, the only online source relating to the original ‘Battle for Sendai Castle’ currently active is the following Japanese language source

「仙台城跡保存問題への取り組み」（『宮城考古学情報』）

<http://miyagi.arcpot.com/arc/castle/activity.htm>