

Dream Highway

Hamada Castle ... the Road from Edo to Meiji

Travel through this historic and romantic place filled with mystery.

In the middle of the Nara Period (710-794) Hamada was founded as a center of Iwami Province. When the Iwami Provincial Government was formed Kokubun-ji (National Temple) and Kokubun-niji (National Nunnery) were constructed. During that period a famous poet, Kakinomoto Hitomaro, was sent to the province as a local governor. His death is surrounded in mystery. Other puzzles connected to his life are the Five Poems of the Kamoyama, his love with Yosami-no-otome, his secret code, Iroha uta, and the mystery of Kamoyama, one of his final residences.

In the Kamakura and Muromachi periods of the Middle Ages, Setogasima Port, the northern point of Hamada Bay, was an important port for ocean trade. It has many legends and historical sights. Nagahama Port, a town of merchants and craftsmen at the western point of Hamada Bay, was also a busy and prosperous trading post, bringing cargo in and out of the region.

In 1619 (Genna 5) in the pre-modern Edo period, the Tokugawa government sent Furuta Shigeharu to Hamada from Ise Province in Matsuzaka to create a Han, or domain, and become its first feudal lord. He changed the name of the hill, from Kamoyama to Kameyama and built a castle there. Furuta was the nephew of the grand tea master, Furuta Oribe and was himself a tea master. He loved Tsubaki(camellia japonica) as tea flowers, and planted many flower trees on the castle hill, adorning the town with both culture and color. Later he was named the fifth grand master of the Oribe Tea School.

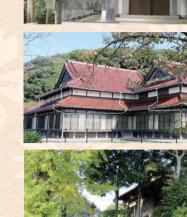
With the extension of the Kitamae Sea Line with the West Round Sea Line the ports of Hamada Han became bustling centers of trade, serving as the junction of shipping routes with land highways.

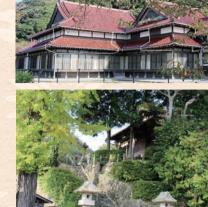
The domain was governed by four clans over 18 generations for 248 years, experiencing many changes and shaken by mysterious events, such as the Furuta Soudou Conflict and the Kagamiyama and Takeshima Jiken Incidents.

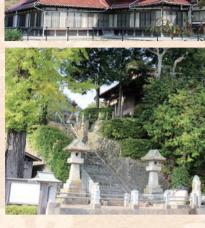
At the end of the Edo period Hamada Han was thrown into a difficult historical current. It was defeated in the Sekishu-guchi Conflict in the Second Choushu Battle, but rather than surrender the castle, the samurai of Hamada Han burned it down themselves.

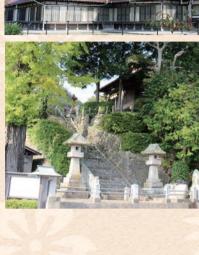
Through the changing periods, from ancient to modern, the poets of the central palace, samurai, merchants, and many youths tried to pursue their dreams... the story of Hamada Castle is the drama of life, looking forward to the dawn after many glories and failures.

Travel through this historic and romantic place filled with mystery.



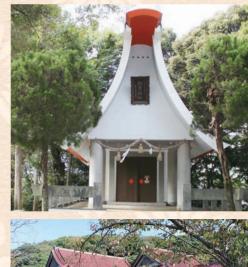












































WELCOME TO HAMADA

I am Furuta Shigeharu. 400 years ago the central government of Japan sent me to Hamada to establish this area as a Han, or

domain, and rule it as its first feudal lord. I surveyed the geography and picked Kamoyama because it was a natural fort, convenient for sea and land transportation. I changed the name of the hill from Kamoyama to Kameyama, and built a castle on top of it. It was such a long time ago that I was totally forgotten, but about 40 years ago the citizens of Hamada started a movement called the Revival of the Tsubaki(camellia japonica) Culture in the Han-sei Period, bringing me back from obscurity. Let me tell you the story of Hamada Castle.

Hamada Han Aoguchi Gate and a plague marking original location of defensive ramparts.

2 Hamada Ura, the seashore managed directly by Hamada Han In June of 1866, (Keiou 2), an order came from the Emperor to conquer the neighboring Choushu Han. The Bakufu (government) army advanced to Choushu and the battle of Seicho-no-Eki began. However the government army was defeated in all the conflicts, from Ougihara Gate to Taimasan Mountain and Sufu to Uchida. Fearing that Choushu Han would turn against Hamada Han as supporters of the government army, the citizens built a sandbag fort at Aoguchi Gate to prevent them from invading the city. However, on July 18th of the same year Hamada Castle fell to

the Choushu army. Rather than surrender it to the enemy, the samurai of Hamada Han burned it down themselves. The lord of Hamada Castle, Matsudaira Takeakira, was a brother of the Shogun, Tokugawa Yoshinobu, Capturing the castle and the economically important port of the Kitamae Sea Line was therefore the beginning of the end for the Tokugawa Shogunate and the opening of the road to the new Meiji era.

3 Hamada Marine Bridge

It is believed that a part of the Choushu army invaded Hamada Han from the Hamada Ura Seashore, traveling to Oohashiguchi Gate along the town highway, while another part entered from Sedogashima Port.

(4) The Kitamae Sea Line

Because of the Kitamae Sea Line, Setogashima Port was the crossroad of many cultures. As a result, the customs the islanders kept were unique

and were governed by their relationship to the ocean. In 1354 Ashikaga Naofuyu introduced a branch of Itsukushima Shrine from Kyushu Gotou when fishermen from the same region moved to Hamada. The shrine is still respected and honored. In my time, during the Edo Period, the islanders continued their special customs, which included the Ama, or female sea harvesters, whalers, and people who produced distinctive marine goods. You can hear about the old customs in the "Mackerel Gutting Song (Sabawari Uta)."

Itsukushima Shrine, the protector of the islanders, was prosperous because many Kitamae Sea Line captains and sailors, praying for their ship's safety, would donate money and dedicate such things as colored whaling board pictures. These pictures show the prosperity of the period. Near the main shrine there are a pair of stone lions which have been washed brown over the past 200 years. In sight of the mooring area there is an old stone well which was used to supply drinking water for the ships. The houses in the narrow maze-like roads still keep the atmosphere of the



Awashima Park, Ootoshi Shrine, Houfukuji Temple, Ohatsu's Grave, Seicho-no-Eki, Hyakudo Ishi, Chidousan Gokurakuji Temple, the Second Shogun, Tokugawa Hidetada's Grave and his memorial tablet in the golden shrine.

In Awashima Park, a part of the Prefectural Nature Park of Hamada Ura, many historical temples and shrines are concentrated. About 400 years ago I came to Hamada from Matsuzaka in Ise Province. While staving in Gokurakuji Temple of the Joudo School I constructed Hamada Castle. I also planned and formed the town, including the river and water system, and thus made the firm foundation of Hamada Han. I tried to realize my dreams in Hamada Castle......

In the Gokurakuji Temple, where I was stationed, you can find the grave of the second Shogun, Lord Hidetada, and a memorial tablet housed in a golden shrine. My nephew, Furuta Shigetune, the second lord of Hamada Han, dedicated it about 400 years ago to memorialize the Shogun's death. Our clan felt gratitude to Lord Hidetada because of his support of our Oribe Tea School.

Ootoshi Shrine, Tsurushima Yama, Awashima Kaku Houfukuji Temple

Ootoshi Shrine practiced the ceremonies of the Miyaza Guild. In one such ceremony new ship captains received a cup of sake from the shrine priest. The shrine has a few old lion statues presented by these new captains.

On the ocean-front grounds of Awashimakaku-Houfukuji Temple, there remains a stone called "Hundred Times" set by the local people when they learned that the Choushu army was threatening to invade in 1866. You can imagine that each person visited the stone a hundred times, praying for the safety of Hamada Han.

Kagamiyama Incident In 1723 a high ranking otsubone named Sawano shamed a lady, Okamoto Michijo, of the Hamada Han residency in Edo, leading to her suicide. Lady Michijo's attending maid, Matsuda Satsu-Jo, tricked Sawano into meeting her and killed her in revenge for her mistress. The heroine Ohatsu in the kabuki play "Kagamiyama-Kokyou-no-Nishikie" was directly based on Matsuda. Her gravestone, along with a memorial stone carved with the words "Loyal, strong willed woman, Ohatsu" written by the contemporary kabuki actor, Onoe Baiko, are standing on a hill overlooking the ocean. Lady Michijo, who wrote a poem before she died, is now sleeping in Kagamiyama Mountain.

67 An Old History: Hamada Castle

Hamada Castle was my masterpiece. Before I came to Hamada my uncle, Furuta Oribe, killed himself by seppuku in 1615 (Keichou 20). Therefore his family name was discontinued

and their properties were taken away, resulting in the death of his whole family. After having survived the chaotic Battling Period, as well as this family tragedy, I built the castle as a symbol of the dignity of people prepared for unexpected crises, in the spirit of the tea ceremony tradition. When Hamada Castle was completed I gave the title of Lord of Hamada to my older brother Shigekatsu's son, Shigetsune, and retired in Edo at age 46 and 2 years later passed away in 1625 (Kaei 2).

For me the only way to live is with nature. I devoted the remaining two years of my life to the tea world. As the 5th grand master of the Oribe School, I practiced the art of tea ceremony for the samurai class, which is called shikisei chaho. Shigetsune, who was only 20 when I chose him to become the Second Hamada Lord of the Furuta family, did not have a son. As a result there was a family feud and the family name was taken away, this time from my branch of the family, resulting in the end of the family line. The Furuta clan suffered tragedies one after another.

The woods may be in the middle of the town but they are removed from the everyday world, containing big Shii (castanopsis) and Tabu (machilus thunbergii) trees, as well as large groves of Tsubaki (camellias japonica). I built the castle wall to stand in harmony with the surrounding nature. Listen to the whisper of the wind and singing of the birds. You can even hear the story of the flowers. Although Hamada Castle burned down in the Choushu Battle at the end of the Edo Shogunate, the seeds of tsubaki survived and self-hybridized tsubaki started new

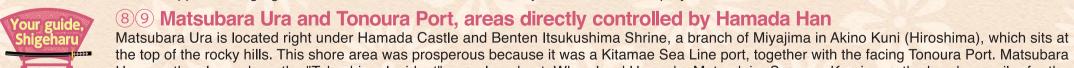
flower species. I had been all but forgotten when two tsubaki scholars realized that my family and I were the connection between these new flower species and the grave of Lord Hidetada, the Second Shogun of Japan, in Gokurakuji Temple. In the old paths on the castle hill near the ocean there are fields of native plants and flowers, alongside unusual flowers such as Musashi-abumi (Arisaema ringens), which are mentioned in Sen-no-Rikyu's affectionate letter to my uncle, Furuta Oribe, who was his student. Keep going down the old path on the castle hill and you come

to Kakinomoto Hitomaro Shrine, which was dedicated together with Akiba Shrine, four kilometers away from the ancient local government seat, Iwami Kokufu.

Not knowing I am pillowed / among the crags on Kamo Mountain, / my wife must still be waiting / for my return Today, today! / Each day I have waited for you, / and now do they not say / you are strewn with the shells / of Ishi River? Referrence "Manyo-shu in English reading" by Mr. lan Hideo Levy, Iwanami shinsho, 2004

Listen to the Iwami Soumonka (love songs) mixed with the ocean waves. The natural beauty of the Hamada Castle Woods is all yours. I have enjoyed uncovering and sharing the history of Hamada Castle with you.

At the foot of the castle hill appears the gorgeous form of Gobenden, built in the Meiji Period. Please stop by.



Hamada was the place where a new era began.

the top of the rocky hills. This shore area was prosperous because it was a Kitamae Sea Line port, together with the facing Tonoura Port. Matsubara Ura was the place where the "Takeshima Incident" was played out. When Lord Hamada, Matsudaira Suou-no-Kami, was the head councilor for the Shogun, forbidden foreign trade in Hamada was uncovered by the government secret agent, Mamiya Rinzo. It became a popular topic during the Edo Period. There is a

memorial stone erected for Aizuya Hachiemon, one of the illegal traders. Tonoura Port has a fantastic landscape, with ocean cutting deep into the land. In this port the beautiful Konpira Shrine sits atop steep rocks. There are 16 directional stones used by sailors for navigation in all of Japan and one of them is located on

the Hiyori Yama on this peninsula. An old picture from 1806 shows the prosperous life of Tonoura Port.

Oohashi Guchi Gate, old Sakura-no-Baba, Ishi Shrine, memorial grave stones of the Lords of Hamada Han.

A memorial stone, carved with words written by the Hamada Governor during the Meiji Period

The time from Pre-Modern to Modern (from Edo to Meiji) When Hamada Castle fell in July of 1866 (Keiou 2), the road to the Meiji Restoration was opened. The following October (Keiou 3) the shogunate system collapsed and

the restoration of imperial rule occurred Hamada Han was supervised by Choushu after the castle fell. In January of 1870 (Meiji 3) it became the first prefecture under the new Meiji Government, and Hamada Prefecture served as a model of local government. In July of 1871 (Meiji 4) the abolition of clans and establishment of prefectures was enforced throughout the whole

Satou Nobuhiro, who was the governor of Hamada Prefecture, was a member of the Choushu Samurai and the great-grandfather of the late prime ministers, Kishi Nobusuke and Sato Eisaku.

The main gate of the Hamada Prefecture Government Building was moved and is standing now in front of the entrance to the old Hamada Castle. There is a memorial stone written by Governor Nobuhiro in the Ishi Shrine. When Hamada Castle fell, time moved from pre-modern to modern and Bunmei Kaika (Civilization and Enlightenment) and the Industrial Revolution rapidly followed.

I hope you enjoyed my stories about Hamada. Please Take care of yourself and come see us again!