

Ohashi Moemon and the Yoriki

By looking at an illustration from the Enkyō years (1744-1748) in the middle of the Edo period, it is understood that Minamitamachi was the site of the grand estate of Ohashi Moemon, chief karō (samurai official) of the Matsue feudal domain. The Ohashi household employed those with close connections as yoriki (feudal police) and built numerous yoriki residences on their land.

Along with cornerstones and the remains of pillars implanted into the ground belonging to yoriki houses, surveys have uncovered clay dolls, metal-tipped tobacco pipes, coins, and numerous ceramic items. One artifact which draws attention is an iron ball 6~8cm in diameter, unearthed from a yoriki residence of Ohashi Izaemon. Called “Tetsumaru,” the iron ball was a ritual tool used to ward off fire calamities, and similar items have been discovered primarily in the Izumo region.

Surveys uncovered a yoriki residence where good luck charms were performed by scattering coins under the floor (called “Makizeni”), and buckets of iron scraps were buried in another yoriki residence. These discoveries have brought to light parts of religious ceremonies that are no longer practiced.

Who are the Yoriki?

The yoriki were samurai who were under command of senior vassals, to whom they had pledged allegiance. Yoriki residences of Ohashi Moemon used to stand here, and the name “Yorikimachi” remains as a vestige of that time.