

The Remains of Edo-Period Masonry in Otemae Street

“Beautifying the visible” ~ The Culture of Vanity ~

In the survey for buried cultural assets conducted during the widening of Otemae Street, an Edo-period canal made of piled-up stones was found. Stones visible from the road are neatly arranged, while stones that are difficult to see, such as those in the gutter and near the roadside, are haphazardly piled up. It is not, as the Japanese would say, “Samurai using toothpicks (for vanity) despite having no food,” but it is indeed a glimpse at a side of ostentatiousness.

Digging below the stone canal to a depth of about 1.1m, a large gutter made without timbering was found. This was dug during the earliest creation of the castle town for drainage and boundary demarcation and it ran along the same roadway as the later stone canal.

From this evidence, we know that Otemae Street was constructed at the beginning of the Edo period – when the castle town of Matsue was built – and that it had been used with an unchanged width until the present day. It appears that Lord Horio, who created the castle town of Matsue, was a superior urban planner as well as a brave military commander.