

An Artisan's Town

Survey of Yonagomachi

In the castle town of Matsue, there were townhouses that surrounded the outer moat, and these residents supported the lifestyle of the samurai. The townhouse area facing here at Higashisotobori (“East Outer Moat;” present-day Yonago River) is called Yonagomachi. It is said that the name originates from the migration of artisans for castle construction, from the Yonago District of the old neighboring Hōki Province. Evidence to support this theory emerged from an archaeological excavation, which uncovered workers’ tools such as carpenter’s squares, drafting compasses, grindstones, and crucibles for melting metal; items that are thought to be manufactured goods were also unearthed, such as sword hilt washers, metal-tipped tobacco pipes, and small knives that attach to sword sheaths.

The excavation was not able to specify the width of the Edo-period road, but there remain some very interesting photographs taken before World War Two (picture on the right). As can be seen in the photograph, before WWII the street was so narrow that people had to move under building eaves to let buses through; it is thought that the road width during the Edo period was around the same. The road widened with time and is currently 29m in width.