

The “Wachigai-mon” engraved stone

This street (also known as “Otemae Street”) was developed at the beginning of the Edo period, when the castle town of Matsue was built. The road was used with its width unchanged until the present day.

During road-widening construction work, a survey for buried cultural assets was conducted; underneath the road drains, an Edo-period canal made of piled-up stones remained. A large portion of this stone was locally quarried and is known as “Omizaki stone” (Wakurayama dacite). Much of this stone is also in the wall surrounding Matsue Castle.

One point of interest is that underneath the canal, an engraved geometric seal made of two interlocking rings known as a “Wachigai-mon” was discovered. Seals were originally the family crests of vassals and other people who oversaw building of the stone wall during castle construction. Many stones with engraved seals are visible in the walls inside Matsue Castle.

The “Wachigai-mon” discovered here was a family crest belonging to local lord Yoshiharu Horio, and it is thought that a vassal using the same family crest engraved this seal.

However, since the canal was constructed after Lord Horio’s reign, it is thought that the stones had been re-purposed for the canal.

The stone on display is actual stone excavated from the archaeological site.