

Yanagihara House

The Yanagihara House is among the most modest samurai residences in the town of Omori. A relatively small single-story structure, it was built after 1800, when a fire destroyed much of the town. It was the home of a *doshin*, a low-ranking official roughly equivalent to a modern-day police inspector, who was hired to oversee the checkpoints that regulated the flow of people and goods into and out of the central mining area. The guards at these checkpoints were tasked with ensuring that taxes were paid on goods entering the silver mine, that silver destined for the government's coffers was not smuggled out, and that only people authorized to work and/or live in the mining zone entered it. The *doshin* served as the point of contact between the checkpoints and the Omori magistrate's office, where the government-appointed supervisor of the silver mine was based.

Though not particularly well paid, the *doshin* was still considered "middle class" in the Iwami Ginzan community, which centered on the magistrate's office. This is reflected in the Yanagihara House: though simple, it incorporated many of the signs of status valued by the warrior class. Among these were an imposing gate and walls, which have unfortunately been lost, and a spacious garden, which originally included a structure for rental accommodation to bring in additional income but now extends from the house all the way to the fence. Next to the main building is a small fire-resistant storehouse—another requisite for any self-respecting samurai. The Yanagihara House is not open to visitors.