

Roof Tiles

Fired-clay roof tiles were introduced to Japan in the late sixth century with the spread of Buddhism from the Asian mainland. More than 1,100 ceramic roof tiles were uncovered at the Ninomaru Goten site. Some of the tiles have decorative patterns, including Chinese-style scrollwork (*karakusa*), comma-like shapes called *tomoe*, paulownia leaves (*kiri*), threeleaf arrowhead plants (*omodaka*), and clusters of circles or dots (*rokusei*).

Order Tablet

This tile was used as a record of an order for tiles. It is inscribed with the details of the order, such as the number and pattern of each type of tile and the day the order was filled. These details indicate the tiles were made during the Mizuno family's stewardship of Matsumoto Castle (1642–1725).

The information on the tile reads:

Sixth day of the seventh month
Scrollwork pattern x89
Arrowhead crest pattern x56
Komaru pattern x65
Flat x82

Threeleaf Arrowhead Crest (*Omodaka-mon*)

Many of the tiles found at Ninomaru Goten are engraved with the image of a threeleaf arrowhead plant. The plant was the crest of the Mizuno family, lords of Matsumoto Castle from 1642 to 1725. In the example on display, the central crest is surrounded by 16 dots representing pearls, a design detail that suggests the tile was made in the early years of the Mizuno stewardship.

Tomoe-Pattern Tile

This tile is engraved with a pattern of three swirling comma-like shapes (*tomoe*). The origins of the three-*tomoe* figure are uncertain, but variations of it have been used in Japanese emblems and crests since the eleventh century.

Round tiles such as this one are affixed to the eaves of buildings to cover exposed tile joints. The example on display is believed to date from the construction of Matsumoto Castle, in the 1590s.