

Shimotsumichi (Hieda site, Nara Capital Third Row Street, Hachijō Kita site)

Shimotsumichi is one of the three Yamato roads built in the Ancient period, even appearing in the *Nihon shoki* chronicle's account of the Jinshin Disturbance of 672. Running parallel with the Kamitsumichi and Nakamichi, it passes north–south through the Nara basin for about 24 km in nearly straight line fashion, with a width of 22–24 m. Also, Shimotsumichi was a major road serving as a point of reference on the occasions of building the Fujiwara and the Nara capitals, and for the latter it was positioned at the center of Suzaku Boulevard, the Nara capital's main axis.

In conjunction with the construction of the Nara capital, the side gutters of Shimotsumichi were filled in within the capital, but southward from the Nara capital it was used as the main road, and at the Hieda/Wakatsuki site in the city of Yamato Kōriyama, the remains of bridge piers where a man-made river cut across the Shimotsumichi road were found over an area 18 m wide by 19 m long. While this was later replaced with a bridge 12 m in width, Shimotsumichi is still seen to have served as a main road throughout the Nara period. From the vicinity of this bridge and nearby river, large numbers of ritual artifacts were found, beginning with ink-inscribed pottery painted with human faces.

Also, there are intervals where the Shimotsumichi eastern gutter was 11 m wide and 2 m deep, attaining a scale suitable for a canal. At the Hachijō Kita site in Yamato Kōriyama, Shimotsumichi has been investigated over a north–south span of 100 m, and the canal-like eastern gutter was confirmed in the same manner as at the Hieda/Wakatsuki site.

The age when Shimotsumichi was laid out had not been determined, but in an investigation at the intersection of Third Row Street and Suzaku Boulevard in the Nara capital, the lid of a Sue ware dish from the end of the sixth to the start of the seventh centuries was found stuck to the bottom of the Shimotsumichi eastern gutter, and is receiving attention as an indicator of the age of construction.