

The Main Building

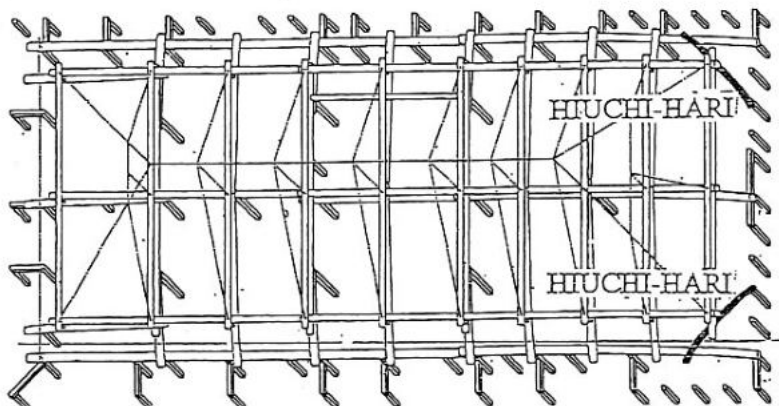
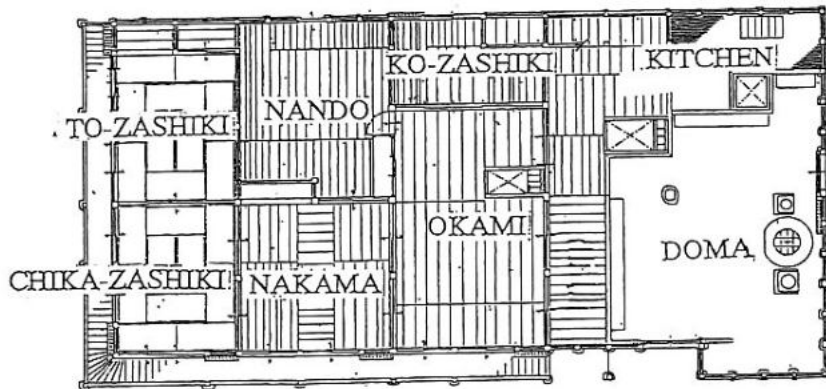
The plan of the house:

DOMA

Just inside the house, there is a large entrance hall with an earthen floor called the *doma*. On the right side of the *doma* you may see a large cylindrical device that appears to be a bathtub. This is actually a big cooking stove. Inside the stove is an iron pan with a bucket on it. This was used to boil water and beans for making *miso* (fermented soy bean paste). The stoves on either side of this large stove were made of stone and were used to cook rice. The big mortar was used for rice polishing and threshing wheat, as well as being used to pound rice cakes.

KITCHEN

The kitchen is located towards the back of the *doma*. The bamboo floor of the kitchen was restored in accordance with old drawings of the house. On the floor of the kitchen you may notice a box. This was used as a sink and in the typical style of the *Edo* period, it was designed for use while sitting. At the right the kitchen shelf, where a candle-shaped light is now fit, there was once a large image of the *Kama-gami*, the household god. It was made of clay and was believed to ensure safety in the kitchen especially to prevent the kitchen fireplace from burning out of control. This was an all too real threat as this inlaid fireplace was burned continuously. The smoke is important for protecting the thatched roof from damage by insects. Attached to the fireplace there is a storage box. Potatoes and charcoal were kept there so that they would not freeze in winter.



In addition to the *doma* and kitchen, the house has four rooms with wooden floors and two rooms floored with *tatami*, mats tightly woven from rice straw, covered with woven rush grasses.

OKAMI

The first of the wooden floored rooms to the left, called *okami* was the main room used for daily living. It is the largest room in the house with a fireplace and has enough room to lay twenty mats. During this period in *Monoo* County, it was typical to make this living room very large while making other rooms smaller. The room was also traditionally used for wedding ceremonies and other Buddhism activities. In Japan, Buddhism and Shintoism, traditional religion, amalgamated in the minds of the Japanese people. You can see the small Shinto altar in this room. It is the small wooden shrine placed high on a shelf.

KO-ZASHIKI

Behind *OKAMI* is small wooden floored room called *KO-ZASHIKI*. It was used as a closet and a bedroom. The grandmother of the family used it as her bedroom in later years and 1992, when this house was dismantled, there was a fine Buddhist altar in the room. There is a large oblong chest for clothing in *ko-zashiki*. You can see a colorful cotten padded jacket for a little girl and other old-fashioned clothing inside the chest.

NAKAMA

The room to the left of *okami* is called *nakama*. In the *Edo* period, it was the room for the masters of the house. There they did their official work as village chief. Important Buddhist mortuary tablets, *Ihai*, were enshrined in an alcove like place in the room. However, as they were for the private use of the family, the mortuary tablets are now in the family's possession. You may notice that in the center of the room the flooring looks different. There is a fireplace under these boards as the room was once used for raising silkworms, *Kaiko*. The fireplace was needed from spring to fall to maintain the consistent temperature required for silkworms to grow. Also, the next room, *okami*, was used for breeding them.

NANDO

The last of the wooden floored room, called *nando* was where the family members slept.

THE TATAMI MAT ROOMS: *TO-ZASHIKI* and *CHIKA-ZASHIKI*

The only rooms with ceilings and luxurious *tatami* mats, *to-zashiki* and *chika-zashiki* were the rooms where the village chief would meet *samurai*, high ranking officials, and other important guests. In fact, these exclusive visitors entered from a side alley in the garden on the left side of the house so as not to come through the central living space of the family. Being reserved for important guests, family members weren't allowed in these rooms except for cleaning.

Additional Buildings

THE BATHROOM AND TOILET

The bathroom and toilet are separate structures located outside and to the right of the house. In this bathroom built in Showa era, firewood was burned in the top of the bath heater, which is attached to the bathtub. As it did not have a chimney, it must have been very smokey inside. There is also an urinal on the right side of the bathroom. The cedar leaves you see were used to prevent splashing and to muffle the sound. The building containing the toilet is equipped with two pots. The one on the left side was reserved for the master of the house, while the other family members used the one on the right. Urine was stored and used as organic fertilizer.

WELL

This is an artesian well, and is cribbed of wood, using well-sweep, *Hane-tsurube*, to draw water.

STRUCTURE

The roof is thatched and of the *Yosemune-dsukuri* style. It stands at 8.4 meters (about 28 feet). The roof is so heavy that the pillar in the center of the entrance hall can not bear the weight. So, two large lumber of beams were attached to the corners to disperse the weight of the roof. The use of such angle braces, *Huuchi-hari*, on the corners of the entrance hall is one of the characteristic features of farmhouse architecture of that era. Cedar and chestnut trees were used as pillars and beams.

The pillars and beams in the main house remain exactly as they were 230 years ago. However, some of the bottom parts has rotted. The rotted parts were cut and connected with some new material. Some years before the middle gate had been reconstructed as a two story building, but it has been restored to the state it was in the late *Edo* to *Meiji* era. The museum invested about 200 million yen in the restoration of these buildings and planted fruit trees such as persimmon and plum as well as some kinds of herbs on the premises and especially in the garden.



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