Kitchen (*Nagashi*) and Dining Area (C*ha no Ma*)

Near the formal entryway (*genkan*) and directly connected to the side entrance are rooms used for meal preparation and consumption by the family: the kitchen (*nagashi*) and dining area (*cha no ma*).

Kitchen (*Nagashi*)

The *nagashi* is where the wife of an *ashigaru* (foot soldier) would prepare meals and do other kitchen work. Gas and electricity did not exist in the Edo period (1603–1867), so rice was prepared in cauldrons set over cooking ranges, heated by blazing wood fires. The *nagashi* was often entered through a side door connected to the front garden, so air from the garden dispersed any smoke, making for a more comfortable working environment, and allowing easy access to the exterior for chores that required going in and out of the house. This included laundry, which was washed and dried in the garden. Displayed here is a large tub that was used for bathing.

The *nagashi* in the Shimizu Family House now has a wooden floor. In the Edo period, however, the entire *nagashi* would have had a floor of compacted earth (*doma*).

Dining Area (C*ha no Ma*)

The *cha no ma* was primarily used as a dining space. This was where the family gathered together to eat and relax. In the Shimizu Family House, a range of tableware that would have been used at the time is laid out to convey more vividly how it would have appeared when in use.

In the Edo period there was no single dining table; instead, individual trays with legs called *hakozen* were provided for each person. *Hakozen* are hollow and have a lid. At mealtimes, dishes would be placed atop the *hakozen* lid, and after all was finished, the clean dishes were stored inside.

At that time, a typical meal consisted of a bowl of soup, a vegetable dish, and a main dish of rice. Originally people typically took two meals a day (morning and evening), but around the end of the seventeenth century, the number of meals increased to three a day—perhaps a sign that people were prospering.