

Attic (*Ama*)

In the Edo period (1603–1867), a person's class and rank determined the plan, ornamentation, and size of the residence permitted to him. As a rule, the houses of *ashigaru* (foot soldiers) were single story. A single-story house, however, left limited space for storage, so many *ashigaru* found ways to make use of the roof space. This space was called the *ama* or attic. In winter, it often became an area to store firewood. Also, despite the single-story policy, some families may have put *tatami* flooring in this space and used it as an additional room. The ladder affixed to the wall allowed household members to obtain easy access to it.