

Special Architectural Characteristics of Nagayamon Gate

The doors of Nagayamon Gate are flanked by rooms on either side. The room to the east was used to store goods and supplies, and its dirt floor indicates that the items stored here were used often. On the west side is a small room where the gatekeeper was stationed. Beyond the guard room is a small storeroom with a raised wooden floor, indicating that the room was likely used to store food and valuables.

The building is made from four types of wood: northern Japanese fir, chestnut, Japanese cedar, and Japanese zelkova. During the Edo period (1603–1867), the lower classes of Japanese society were forbidden to use zelkova wood. The gate doors are made entirely from zelkova, which shows both the wealth and rank of the Takayama family. The innermost *kitōfuda* (protective talisman) tacked next to the doors dates back to the reign of shogun Tokugawa Tsunayoshi (1646–1709).

The metalwork on the gate has been cut into what appears to be a heart-shaped pattern. In fact, it represents the eye of a wild boar, known in Japanese as *inome*, and is said to ward off evil spirits. It was believed to serve as protection against fire, as boars are first to flee from the forest when a wildfire breaks out.