

### **【Ikedaya Business Area】**

The Ikedaya inn was built from Japanese cypress using only traditional wood-joining techniques. Just as today, during the Edo period (1603–1868) most entry to the building was done via the door on the south end of the building. Messengers and merchants arriving on foot entered through a low wicket door, but the entire wall could be opened to allow entry for horses and carts loaded with rice, cloth, and other goods. The freight was unloaded in the earthen-floored area, recorded in the log, and then hauled to the rear storehouse. The second floor contained five lodging rooms for general travelers and merchants. Ikedaya was the area's largest inn, with a total of 12 rooms for lodging guests.

Business was traditionally conducted at the open hearth (*irori*). On the wall behind the hearth is a household altar dedicated to all the Shinto deities. Opposite the service entrance and behind the *irori* is an altar dedicated to Uke Mochi no Kami, the goddess of food enshrined at Ime Jinja Shrine. The whale baleen hanging below is thought to have been placed there for good luck due to its rarity. In the corner is another Shinto altar that is dedicated to the sun goddess, Amaterasu.

An old hornet's nest hangs in front of the altar. Another, smaller one hangs in the service entrance. These were talismans for business prosperity and perpetuation of the family line.

The weapons hanging on the wall were used in the Ikedas' capacity as village headmen, whose responsibilities included defending the local checkpoint. During the Edo period (1603–1868), the weapon rack would have held three specialized weapons that were used to subdue and capture criminals. These were a barbed, T-shaped pole called a "pushing pole" (*tsukubō*), a staff with several barbed, C-shaped heads called a "sleeve entangler" (*sodegarami*) and a pole with a crescent-shaped head used for pinning or immobilizing. The last of these, called a "spear-fork" (*sasumata*), is still employed as a non-lethal weapon by Japanese police and in Japanese schools.