

【*Jōdan no Ma*, Rooms for High-ranking Guests】

These rooms were reserved for minor daimyo, as well as chief retainers, magistrates, and other government officials of high rank. These important guests entered through the main entrance at the north end of the building, which is no longer in use. These rooms are built in the formal *shoin* style, which is characterized by square pillars and tatami-mat flooring. The main room in the back, called the *jōdan no ma*, was used by the main guest. The room contains a decorative alcove, staggered shelves, and a built-in desk. The room is unusual in that it has two solid floors, one directly above the other, to hinder would-be assassins from crawling underneath and thrusting swords up into the room. Each of the illustrations on the small cabinet's sliding doors depicts a demon being expelled as a ward against any calamity that might befall the guest.

The rooms are partitioned with sliding panels (*fusuma*) covered with paper or cloth. The transoms above them are carved with the official Ikeda family crest, a swallowtail butterfly resting with its wings folded, which is flanked on both sides by the wife's family crest, an orange surrounded by leaves.

The ceilings of the high-ranking guest rooms are made of thin wood panels, which are suspended in such a way that any assailants stalking above the dignitary and his retinue would fall through. In comparison, the ceiling in the business area is covered in solid wood planks. Both areas have air vents to conduct smoke from the open hearth and braziers.