

Traditional Houses in Kamikatsu

Older houses in the mountains of Kamikatsu have evolved with the needs of the times while retaining traditional characteristics. The steep terrain meant that land plots had to conform to the contours of the mountains, and so generally have long, shallow shapes. Buildings on the plots, such as the main house and shed, are typically lined up in a row.

The Tanaka Family Residence in Yaeji was built in 1685 and is representative of early traditional houses in the region. The house initially had a thatched hipped roof, although it has been replaced by a tin roof. The floor plan is common to farmhouses from the late seventeenth century. It has a room with a compacted earth floor (*doma*) where cooking was done and three rooms on a raised wooden floor: a front room, a middle room with an *irori* hearth, and a sleeping room. In such homes, smoke from daily use of the *kamado* stove and the *irori* hearth drove away pests and increased the durability of the thatched roof.

Relatively newer houses have two stories. Over time, thatched roofs were replaced by metal, and small rooms were added, such as children's rooms.

The Tanaka Family Residence is the third oldest surviving house in Tokushima Prefecture and was designated an Important Cultural Property in 1976. It can be viewed only from the outside, while the Hanano Residence is open to the public to get a feel for the layout of a traditional house.

Structure: Chestnut, pine, Japanese cedar, cypress

Roof: Silvergrass, cedar bark

Wall: Mud, cedar board, cedar bark