

Gasshozukuri Minkaen Outdoor Museum: Former Nakano Yoshimori House

The Former Nakano Yoshimori House is the newest of the three *gassho*-style farmhouses that were relocated to the Gasshozukuri Minkaen Outdoor Museum from the village of Kazura, at the northwestern end of Shirakawa. The house was built in 1909 after the Nakano Yoshimori family's former home burned down. It is distinguished by the large open space in the first-floor living quarters. The central beam that supports the structure, running parallel to the ridge of the roof, is the thickest among the houses in the museum and is an indication of the expense and effort put into the house's construction.

The Nakano Yoshimori family was able to afford such a grand home because it was traditionally wealthy and its members held the hereditary position of village headman in Kazura, a remote community of seven households and a Buddhist temple. Kazura had been inhabited for hundreds of years, but by the mid-twentieth century its inaccessible location and lack of conveniences such as electricity had caused many residents to consider moving away. The incentive to do so materialized in the 1960s, when a paper company purchased the forested land around Kazura from the villagers. The village was abandoned entirely in 1967, and the residents of nearby Katsura, on the other side of the Sakai River in Toyama Prefecture, soon followed suit. Photos depicting life in the twin villages before the relocation are displayed on the second floor of the Nakano Yoshimori House.