

Gasshozukuri Minkaen Outdoor Museum: Former Higashi Shina House

The Former Higashi Shina House was relocated to the Gasshozukuri Minkaen Outdoor Museum from Kazura, some 15 kilometers north of the museum, after the village there was abandoned in 1967 due to its isolated location and lack of modern conveniences such as electricity. The house belonged to the Higashi Shina family, who served as assistants to the head priest of the local Buddhist temple in Kazura for generations, and is thought to have been built in the latter half of the nineteenth century. It is a typical *gassho*-style farmhouse in that the foundation and first floor were built by professional carpenters, whereas everything above the house's lattice ceiling was assembled by ordinary villagers. Also conventional are the earthen-floored open space by the entrance, where farm animals were kept, the spacious living room with an *irori* sunken fireplace at the center, and the innermost room with a Buddhist family altar at the very end.