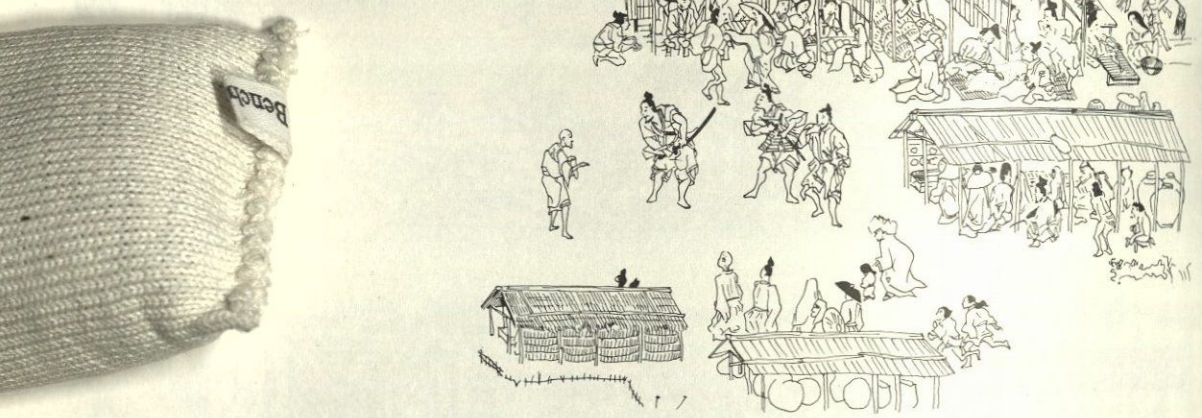
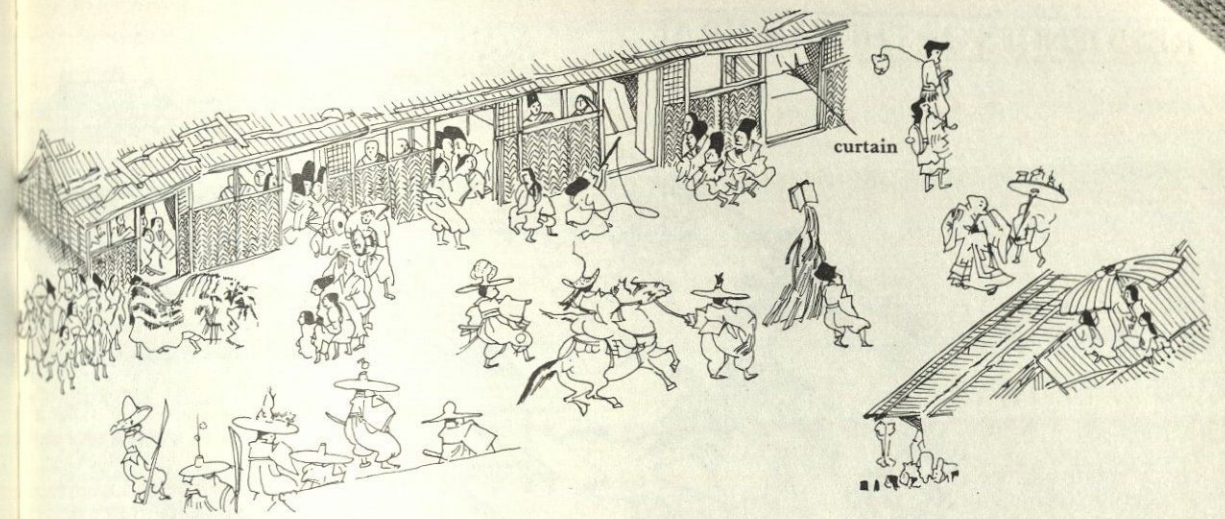
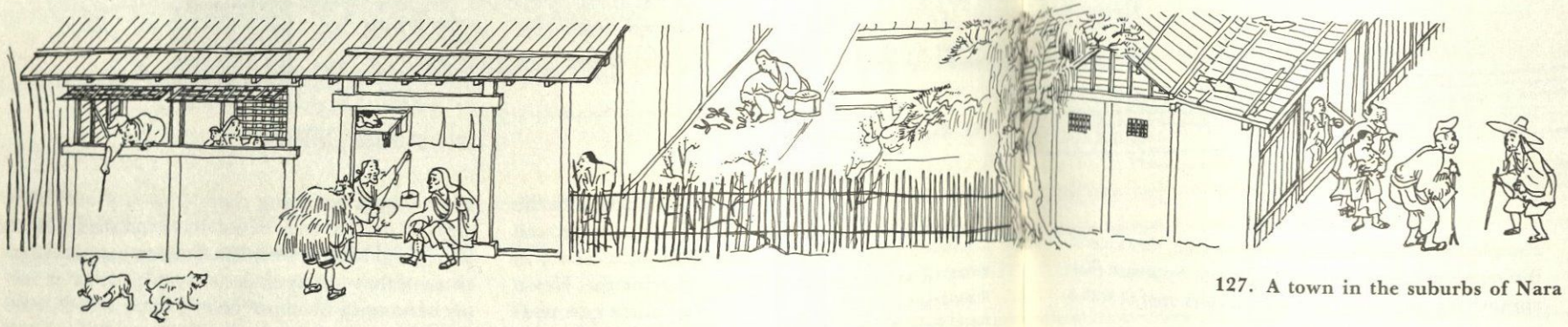


125. The town of Fukuoka



126. A street in the Heian Capital



127. A town in the suburbs of Nara

Urban Row-Houses If we know little of aristocratic residences in premodern Japan, we know less about the homes of the lower levels of society, and what information we do have is limited entirely to pictorial sources. The *Picture Scroll of Annual Rites and Ceremonies* is helpful not only for the aristocratic dwellings previously introduced but also for depictions of how the rest of society lived in the late Heian period, on the verge of Japan's middle ages.

The city dwellings illustrated in the scroll are of the row-house type, with the facade of each unit divided in half, the right side with a door and the left with a wall and a window above (fig. 126). Walls are made of woven strips of bamboo or thin wood, and partially planked. Short curtains (*noren*) hang over the entrance at the far right. Inside is an earth floor, though one section at the back not visible in the illustration was probably raised and floored with planks. The roofs are also of planks, reinforced by logs.

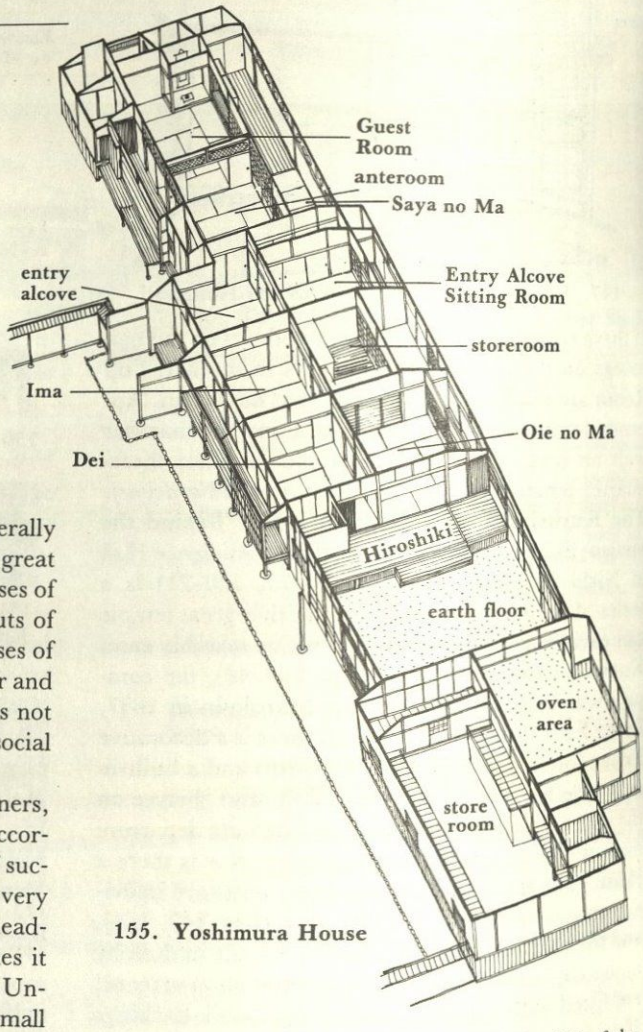
Provincial Towns Houses in towns further from the Heian Capital were even simpler in construction. One example is the town of Fukuoka in present-day Okayama Prefecture, depicted in the *Picture Scroll of the Monk Ippen* (*Ippen Shōnin eden*), painted in 1299 (fig. 125). Ippen (1239–89) was a traveling priest who preached a new doctrine, that of the Ji sect, to the common folk. In the section illustrated, Ippen has arrived on market day and is being challenged by a burly samurai who is about to draw his sword. The houses of the residents are little more than huts, with posts sunk in the ground and simple plank roofs. Rooms are separated by plank walls. The people are selling cloth, rice, fish, ceramic pots, and other such basic commodities. In the fish stall (top, far right), the vendor has laid a fish on a cutting board and seems about to slice some sashimi for a customer. Behind, a man walks away carrying more fish suspended from the ends of a bamboo pole resting on his shoulder. The adjoining shop appears to be that of a rice vendor, who measures out his goods in a square wooden cup. The shops are so simple one might take them for temporary huts set up just for market day, but many provincial towns were most likely built this way permanently. Another section of the *Picture Scroll of the Monk Ippen* depicts the outskirts of Kamakura, the city serving as the headquarters of Minamoto no Yoritomo's shogunate. It is a very quiet place despite its political importance, underscoring the fact that all cities were in no way the bustling commercial centers that the Heian Capital was.

The suburbs of Nara are portrayed in another famous work, the *Picture Scroll of the Legends of Mt. Shigi* (*Shigisan engi*), believed to have been made in the twelfth century (fig. 127). In the section illustrated, we see at the far right the gable end of a row-house, with people issuing from the entrance on to the street. The back yard is reserved for trees and a garden. The side view of the house is convenient for showing its construction, which consists of a central two-bay section (*moya*) surmounted by a steep, plank roof and flanked by one-bay subsidiary spaces (*hisashi*) to the front and rear, both with roofs of shallow pitch.

The house to the left, viewed from the front, shows an entry with *noren* curtains and an earth floor behind. In the rear, a cat sleeps on the step leading to the raised-floor section of the house. Beside the door, a man bends over a windowsill to drive off a pair of dogs. The windows are fit with small reticulated shutters propped up temporarily, and in the back of the room is a latticelike partition. As in the case of the houses in the other picture scrolls, the posts of these structures are sunk directly into the ground, the roof is of wooden planks, and the walls are wattle and daub.

The houses portrayed in these three city scenes are far removed from the luxurious Shinden-style residences of the aristocracy. It is important to remember too that many of the more outlying towns were even more crude, not to mention the houses of the poorer rural districts.

MINKA—DWELLINGS OF THE COMMON PEOPLE



155. Yoshimura House

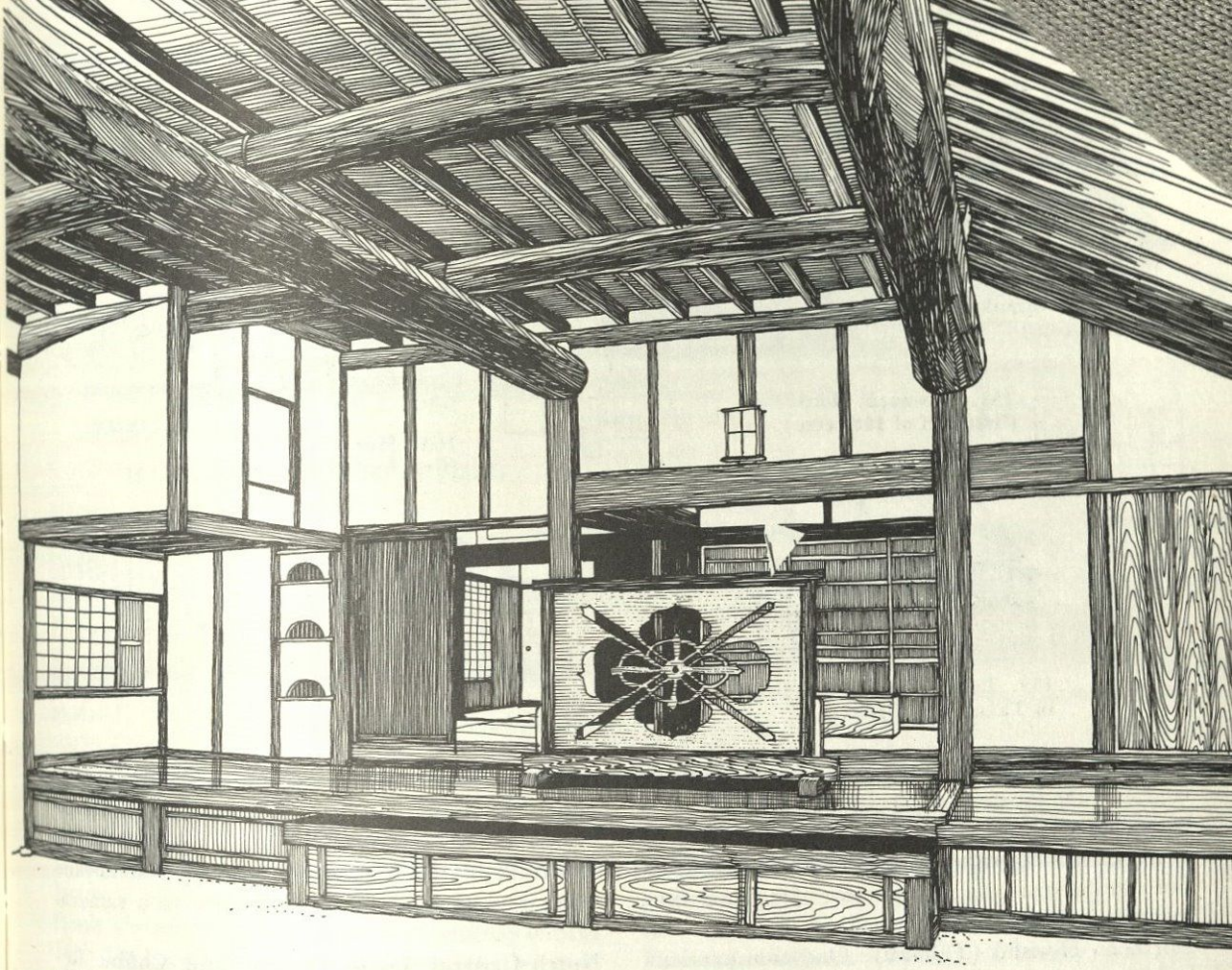
Varieties of Minka The term *minka*, literally meaning "houses of the people," covers a great variety of residential types, from the great houses of village headmen and rich merchants to the huts of the poorest farmers. It even applies to the houses of Shintō priests and the lower levels of the warrior and even courtly hierarchies; in short, to all houses not belonging to the members of the very highest social strata in premodern Japan.

The types of minka are as diverse as their owners, and most have been renovated or enlarged in accordance with the changing needs and incomes of successive generations of inhabitants. Most of the very old minka that still survive belonged to village headmen or other wealthy commoners, which makes it difficult to generalize about minka as a whole. Undoubtedly these large minka formed a relatively small percentage of the total. Those owned by village headmen began to incorporate Shoin-style elements as the Edo period wore on, particularly in the sitting rooms (*zashiki*) where representatives of the shōgun's government were received. But the use of these upper-class accoutrements was limited, in theory at least, by sumptuary laws designed to preserve rigid class distinctions.

The Yoshimura House The Yoshimura House, located in Habikino City, Ōsaka Prefecture, preserves the simple vitality and solidity of the best of the minka tradition, together with no small degree of sophistication and even elegance. The Yoshimura family, which still owns the house today, boasts a venerable and distinguished lineage. One if its patriarchs, Yoshimura Shichiemon, is listed as "overseer" (*mandokoro*) at the head of a document dated 1591, and he appears again as "headman (*shōya*) Shichiemon" in a cadastral record of 1594. The successive heads of the family retained the position as headmen of Shimaizumi village until the fall of the Tokugawa government in 1868.

As with nearly all minka, the history of the Yoshimura House is incomplete, but it is said to have been burnt during Tokugawa Ieyasu's Ōsaka Summer Campaign of 1615 when he crushed the last pocket of resistance to the national hegemony he had won at the battle of Sekigahara fifteen years before. The Yoshimura House was rebuilt soon thereafter. The formal sitting room area appended to the west of the main house is believed to have been built somewhat after that, and the storage and oven sections to the east date to after 1798 (fig. 155).

The central section of the Yoshimura House is divided, like most minka, into earth-floored (*doma*) and elevated, tatami-matted areas. The transition between the two parts is made possible at the Yoshimura House by a raised interior veranda, called the Hiroshiki, that projects into the earth-floored portion (figs. 155–56). Above, huge rough-hewn beams



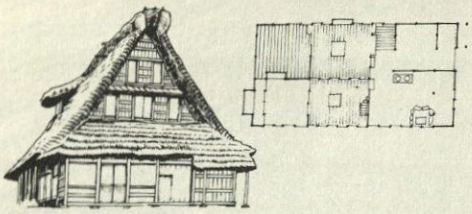
156. Hiroshiki in earth-floored area, Yoshimura House

crisscross below a bamboo ceiling (*sunoko tenjō*)—an unexpectedly refined conception. A family of standing such as the Yoshimura would be expected to have a number of servants and, in a novel touch, a small room thought to be for maids was accordingly hung over the Hiroshiki's south side. It is reached via a ladder of half-moon shaped rungs cut into the wall. The wooden screen with the elegant design that stands on the Hiroshiki was made of a transom that once divided the earth-floored section but was removed when the house was restored.

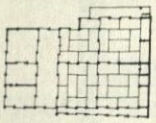
West of the Hiroshiki are six tatami-matted rooms for daily living and meeting with callers. A wooden-floored storeroom is located in the middle of the northern row. In feudal times, most visitors came and went via doors in the earth-floored section, while important personages made formal entries via the Entry Alcove Room (Genkan no Ma), which leads either back toward the earth-floored area or toward the sitting rooms at the far west.

The formal guest area is made up of two main rooms, the Guest Room and the anteroom, which are separated by an openwork transom. The Guest Room includes a Sukiya-style decorative alcove and, projecting into an interior corridor to the north, a built-in desk with an ogee-arched window. There are shōji screens with high wainscoting and cleverly designed latticework, ink monochrome mural paintings, and fine metal door pulls and nail covers. The posts are unplaned at the corners, save for those in the corners of the room, which are square-cut in the formal manner. Outside to the north is a garden with a spring and a man-made hill. The total effect was most appropriate for a family of prominence with important local responsibilities.

In its heyday in the Edo period, the Yoshimura House had a large number of subsidiary structures, and today a number still survive, such as the gatehouse (*nagayamon*), fireproof storage building, and bulletin-board area.

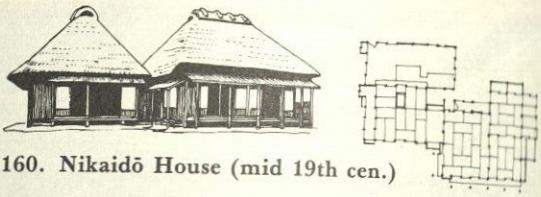


157. Former Emukai House (mid 18th cen.)

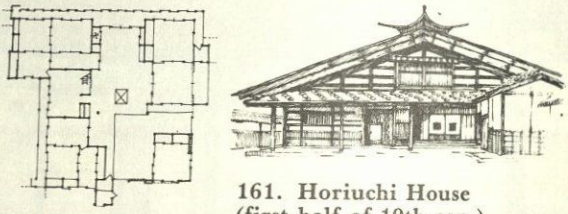


158. Kawauchi House (first half of 18th cen.)

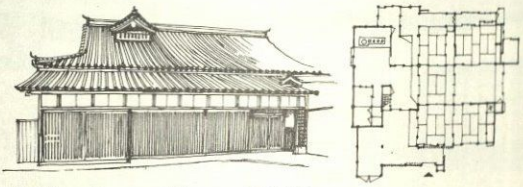
159. Typical Kudo-style house in Taku, Saga Prefecture



160. Nikaidō House (mid 19th cen.)



161. Horiuchi House (first half of 19th cen.)



162. Kuriyama House (1607)

Regional Variations Though relatively small in land area, the Japanese archipelago covers over twenty degrees of latitude, roughly from Maine to Miami in the United States. Differing climates have given rise over the years to a large number of regional minka types.

Northern Honshū (Tōhoku) One characteristic building style of northern Japan is the Chūmon style, so named for the *chūmon* ell that projects from the dwelling proper (*shuya*) in homes from Akita and Yamagata Prefectures south to Fukushima. The chūmon ell developed from the projecting corridor of the same name in Shoin structures (see p. 76) and earlier homes. The ell usually includes an entrance on the facade, earth-floored area, stable, and toilet, thus ensuring access to those areas in the snowy winter months.

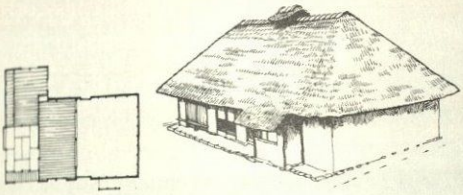
A variant of the style is seen in the so-called Ell Houses of Nambu (*Nambu no magariya*) in the region of the old Nambu fief in present-day Iwate Prefecture. The former Kikuchi House in Tōno City is an example of this type (fig. 166). The ell houses in general include only a stable and earth-floored area in the ell, with an entrance not on the ell's facade but on the side.

Another exemplary minka of the northern area is the former Shibuya House, originally located in Tamugimata, Higashitagawa District, Yamagata Prefecture (fig. 164). It has large windows on its second and third floors due both to the heavy snows of the region and also to the growing of silkworms carried out in the upper stories. Silkworm production was a popular cottage industry in the area when the home was built in 1822. The roof is in the Kabutoyane style, so called for its resemblance to a samurai helmet (*kabuto*).

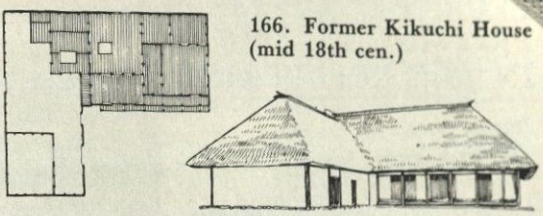
North-Central Japan (Kantō and Chūbu Regions) Many of the old minka of Ibaragi, Chiba, and Miyagi Prefectures have their earth-floored and tatami-matted areas under separate roofs. The former Sakuta House is a case in point (fig. 167). The Sakuta family were important fishermen of the Kujūkuri area on the coast of present-day Chibu Prefecture.

The former Kitamura House is another very old residence in the region (fig. 168). A farmhouse that once stood at the foot of Mt. Tanzawa outside Hadano City in Kanagawa Prefecture, it is noted for its Hiroma (literally "large room") set on the level of the elevated tatami rooms but three-quarters covered by bamboo flooring.

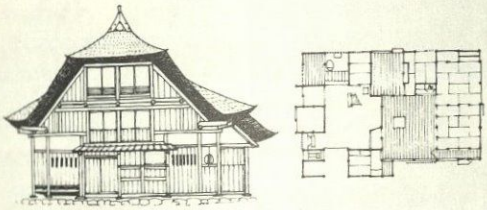
Moving toward the Sea of Japan, we find the Gasshō style used in many minka of Gifu and Toyama Prefectures. The name of the style is derived from the steep roofs of the houses, which resemble hands held in an attitude of prayer (*gasshō*). A representative example is the former Emukai House, originally located in the village of Kamitairamura, Toyama Prefecture, in the area drained by the Shōgawa river (fig. 157). As with the former Shibuya House, the



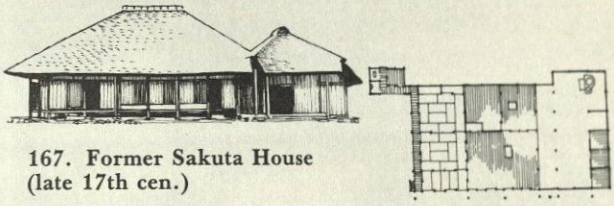
163. Former Eri House (late 17th cen.)



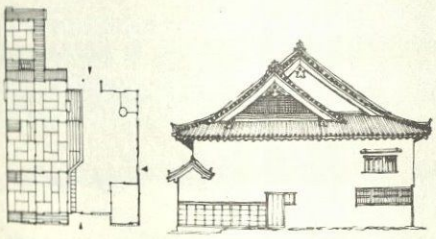
166. Former Kikuchi House (mid 18th cen.)



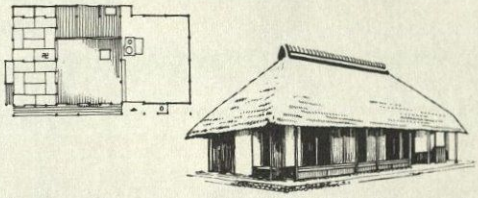
164. Former Shibuya House (1882)



167. Former Sakuta House (late 17th cen.)



165. Imanishi House (1650)



168. Former Kitamura House (1687)

three-story structure was used for silkworm cultivation.

Nagano Prefecture is known for its houses in the Hommune style. Our example here is the Horiuchi House in Shiojiri City, built by a prominent local family who served as overseers (*ōjōya*) for the area (fig. 161). The house is nearly square in plan, with a gently sloping pitched roof of planks. The facade is particularly noteworthy for its three-pronged roof ornament, called a "sparrow dance" (*suzume odori*) or "sparrow scare" (*suzume odoshi*), and for the impressive half-timbering of the gable beneath.

South-Central Japan (Kinki and Chūgoku Regions) According to the certification found on the roof ridgepole, the Kuriyama House, in the city of Gojō, Nara Prefecture, dates to 1607, making it the oldest minka to which a reliable date can be affixed (fig. 162). It is an imposing residence with thick plaster walls and a tiled hip-and-gable roof given added interest by a carefully designed smoke vent.

Another very old town house in the region was built for the Imanishi, headmen of Imaichō, a self-governing township built around a True Pure Land temple (fig. 165). Walls and a moat were built to protect the town's autonomy. The date 1650 was discovered on the ridgepole certification. The house is famous for its huge tiled roof, and the complex system of gables gives it the name Eight-roofed style (*yatsumune zukuri*).

There are a number of other very old houses in the region, among them the Nakamura House in Gose City, Nara Prefecture, dated 1632. Other undated houses may be older than even the Kuriyama family residence. These include the Hakogi House in Kōbe City and the Furui House in Hyōgo Prefecture. Both are familiarly known as Thousand Year Houses (*sennen'ya*) and are thought to date to the late Muromachi period.

Shikoku and Kyūshū A number of homes in eastern Kagawa Prefecture have pitched roofs and particularly large earth-floored areas. One such residence is the former Eri House (fig. 163). Its massive walls give it a very inward-looking and protected appearance.

Saga and Nagasaki Prefectures are known for the Kudo style of minka, which has a roof with a U-shaped plan (fig. 159). The design may have been developed to withstand the frequent typhoons that strike southern Japan. The name is said to be derived from the style's resemblance to a *kudo* oven. Another example of the type is the house of the Kawauchi family, but it was remodeled in later years (fig. 158). The plan shows an earlier form of the house more representative of the Kudo style.

In the southern prefecture of Kagoshima, some minka are composed of two sections with separate roofs. At the Nikaidō House, the section under the roof with the east-west ridgepole is called the Omote and that with the north-south ridgepole, the Nakae (fig. 160).