

# WELCOME TO NIJO JINYA

## HISTORY

The Ogawa family which built Nijo Jinya descends from a man who worked at the Kasuga Shrine in Nara. One of the descendants of this first Ogawa was a retainer to Nobunaga Oda and Hideyoshi Toyotomi during Momoyama period (A.D.1573-1600). Under them he held a castle at Imabari, but after Hideyoshi's death (A.D.1598) Ogawa decided to quit his post and become a merchant. At that time he moved to a house in Kyoto.

During the Tokugawa period (A.D.1603-1867) which followed, Ogawa turned this ordinary house into an inn at which daimyo coming to Kyoto from all over Japan could stay while they visited the Imperial Palace or Nijo Castle.

Nijo Jinya, as this ancient house is called, still exists as it was in the Tokugawa period. The original architecture is that of an ordinary house, but Ogawa made special improvements inside so that it would be specifically suited for daimyo to stay at the inn.

The house is about 1,650 square meters. A tea ceremony room and a Noh drama stage are included among the 24 rooms.

In 1944 Nijo Jinya was designated a national treasure.



## THE BUILDING IN DETAIL

### A. O-ZASHIKI (Great Parlor).

This is the largest room in the building: 15 mats. It is the principal room for receiving guests and entertaining.

Along its north wall, above the alcove, is a cupboard (NO.1) decorated with a charcoal drawing by Kano Eishin (1616-85). The handles on the cupboard doors are patterned to be an abbreviated form of the Kuyoboshi, the Ogawa crest. The tokonoma (NO.2) and the tukesho (NO.4) are made from a single piece of maple timber. The painting of a seated man on the panels of the jibukuro (NO.3), which has raised contours and is inlaid with pearl,

was done by Ogawa Haritsu, an artist who belonged to a branch of the Jinya's family. It also has some inlaid glass, noteworthy because at that time glass was rare and considered precious. The decorative nail covers (NO.5) on the beams of this room are made of china rather than the usual metal; they date from the early part of the 17th century. They are Kutani ware, a famous older Japanese China, made on the coast of the Japan Sea in Ishikawa Prefecture.

The sheet paulownia-wood ceiling has a square hole in it which appears to be solely for access to the skylight window above it. However, this hole also leads to a hidden, soundproof guard post built into the floor above. The trap is situated directly over the residing baron's visitor (in the normal seating arrangement), so that the guard above could drop right on him should this prove necessary.





The hole is designed, however, so that one can not see anything above it except the innocent skylight window. It has acoustic qualities which enable the guard to hear everything spoken below.

The hooks under the eaves were used to hang wet mats on them in order to prevent fire. Nijo Jinya has 12 wells in its gardens. They are connected to each other underground so that there is never a lack of water in any of them.

**B.** O-NOH-NO-MA, Noh Room, 8 mats. The mats can be taken off to reveal a fine floor which can be used as a Noh stage. Beneath the floor there is a deep open space and strategically placed great jars to amplify the sound of the steps made by the Noh actors. The hanging post at the corner of the Tokonoma is hollow and gives a resonant sound when its end is struck.

The pine tree painting usually found on Noh stages is in the adjoining hall. The screens on both the west and east sides have soundproof panels which can be dropped into place to contain the Noh sound or to prevent eavesdropping between rooms.



**C.** A HALLWAY ; SARU-HASHIGO, running north and then west. Where it turns, the corner beams are built out so that a man can scale them and escape to a concealed half-story above by means of a small triangular hole near the ceiling.

**D.** KASUGA-NO-MA

A six-mat room looking out on a garden. It is named after the Kasuga Shrine in Nara, honoring the Ogawa ancestor who worked there. The Tokonoma displays a scene of Mt. Mikasa in Nara. The gourd shape cut-out is a symbol for Nara's Sarusawa Pond. The cupboard panels on the east wall are painted with a view of Nara's Todaiji, showing two gates, the Daibutsu-den, and the Nigatsu-do with its famous cedar tree.

This room has revolving shutters, which enables the tokonoma to be shut off.

A small well dug in this garden provided hiding places for valuables and documents in case of fire or siege.





**E. KAINYO-AN**

A small tearoom, good quality. Bamboo uprights on the north wall form a symbolic Tokonoma. The closet at the south end of this room has a "back door" into the hallway, so that someone hiding there can escape if necessary.

**F. TSURI-KAIDAN**(Suspended staircase, a trap-ladder) In the hallway outside KAINYO-AN there is a shelf which, when unhooked, lowers to provide an escape stairway to the concealed upper stories of the building.



**G. TOMABUNE-NO-MA** (Thatched Boat Room)

This room is built to resemble the interior of a boat. One must step down to enter it as one would step into a boat. The room hangs out over the wall of the grounds, and in former days the school yard underneath it was the lower reaches of Shinsen-en's pond. Water could be brought up by the bucket and pulley outside the west window as if one were dipping it from a boat. In practical terms the overhang of this room provided a means of emergency escape to the grounds, while the water dipping was an additional safeguard against fire.

**H. Across the hall from the above, a partition conceals a half-story which can be used for hiding. At its far end is the small triangular opening reached by the hallway escape ladder described in (C) above.**

**I. MUSYA-DAMARI**(soundproof hiding place) for the bodyguard lying over the main downstairs parlor. To make this compartment noiseless, its walls and screens were doubled and its floor is specially insulated.

**J. AKA-KABE-NO-MA**(The red wall room), named after the former color of its walls. It is 8 mats with an old-style flat Tokonoma. The east wall has a four screen map of the main route between Nagasaki and Edo(Tokyo) in which cities are generally represented by pictures of their castles.

**K. A narrow HALLWAY** with a low ceiling to limit swordplay. Its small fireproof windows let in little light to assist the intruder. It doglegs about a blind staircase in which a person may trap an enemy. Farther on, the flooring can be removed, exposing anklebreaking beams.

**L. KAKOI-NO-MA**

A tearoom of 4½ mats with an anteroom of 2 mats. The fine bamboo, GOMATAKE, is said to have lasted more than three centuries in perfect condition because it was "cut at exactly the right moment."

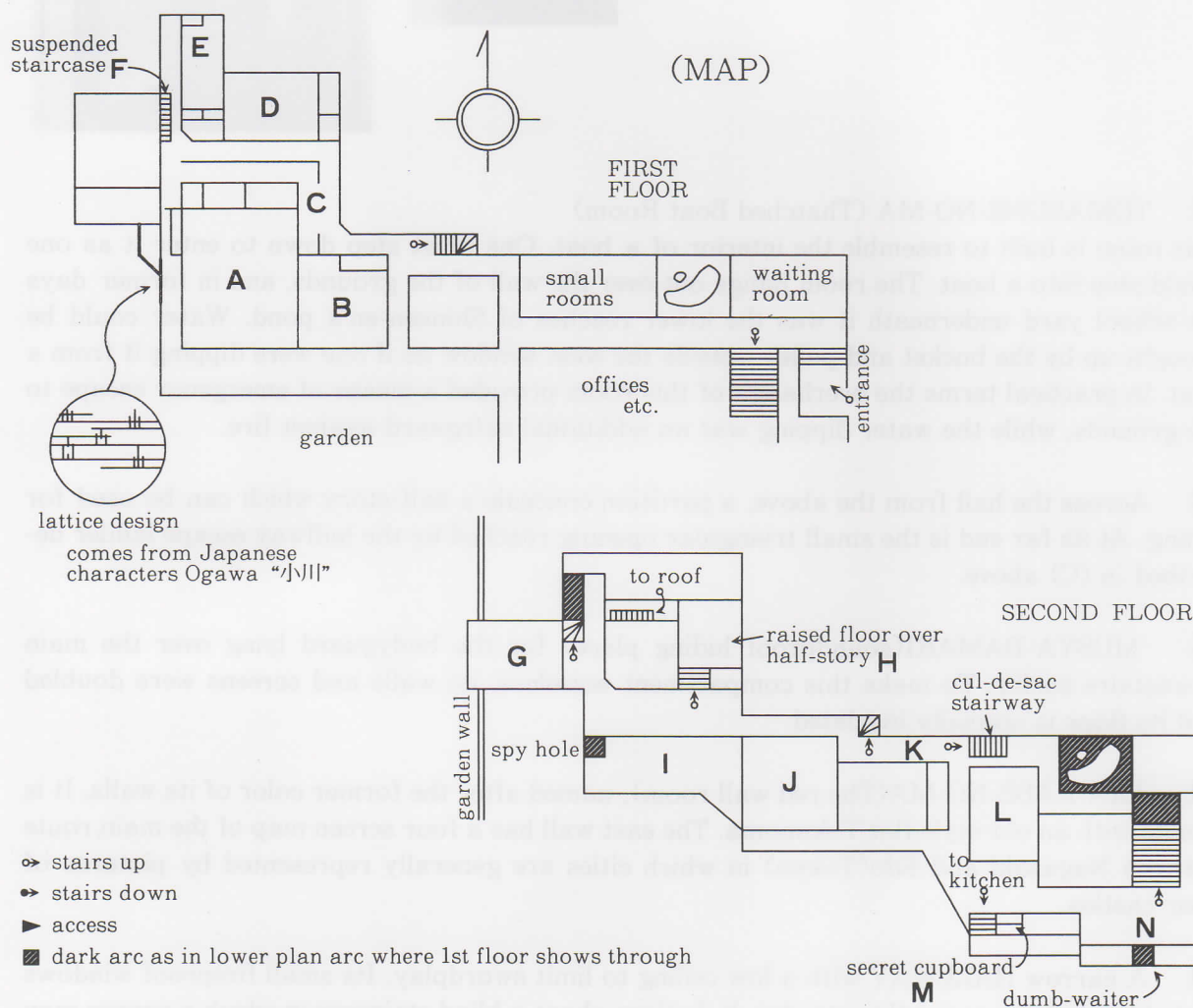
The net pattern on the ceiling gave this room its name KAKOI, "fenced."

# M. SECRET CUPBOARD

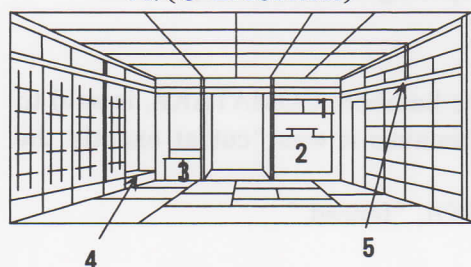
At the stairs there are two cupboards - for hiding purpose there is the third cupboard concealed between them, so both may be opened without revealing a person inside.

N. There is a DUMB-WAITER and a medicine chest from the family's apothecary day here. The wide stairway which leads back down to a point next to the Jinya's entrance is relatively new. The skylight and round window here are designed so that the lattices of the window can be read as a sundial.

"THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR COMING TO NIJO JINYA."



A. (O-ZASHIKI)



- 1 tenbukuro (cupboard)
- 2 tokonoma (alcove)
- 3 jibukuro
- 4 tukeshoin (attached study)
- 5 kugi-kakushi (nail cover)