**Shōshibō (Temple Servants’ Quarters)**

The Shōshibō is a small building on the far south side of the temple. Today, the Shōshibō is a rest space for visitors to Gangōji, but it has been remodeled, relocated, and repurposed several times during the temple’s history. The Shōshibō is an excellent example of how traditional Japanese architecture can easily be disassembled and reused in response to natural disasters, dilapidation, and the changing demands of the period.

Information recorded on the building’s ridge tag indicates that the Shōshibō was constructed in 1663. However, examination of the lumber has revealed that it was built from far older materials. The Shōshibō is believed to have originally been part of one of Gangōji’s two massive dormitory buildings. The building’s name literally means “quarters for the youth,” suggesting the Shōshibō was a living space for young Buddhist novices who worked as temple servants. At some point, a portion of the building was repurposed to become the dormitory’s northern kitchen (*chūbō*). In 1663, that kitchen was relocated to the northern end of the **Zenshitsu**, where it functioned as an administrative and living space (*kuri*).

In 1949, the building was moved once again, to the south of the **Gokurakudō**, where it was expanded to become the Gokurakubō Nursery School. (The nursery school has since been relocated, but it is still open today.) In 1960, the Shōshibō was moved to its current location and reduced to its current size. The building shows some signs of its numerous transformations—its wood beams date to many different eras, and part of the structure leans slightly to the south.