

This small *tatami* room in his family's home is where Yoshida Shoin (1830–1859) was placed under house arrest in December of 1855 after his imprisonment in both the Edo (Tokyo) Tenmacho Prison and Noyama Prison in Hagi. He was charged with attempting to stow away on one of the “black ships” that American Commodore Matthew Perry used to force open Japan's ports in 1854. The Tokugawa shogunate's strict isolationist policies forbade any travel abroad, and Shoin's attempt was punished with house arrest.

Despite being confined to a single room Shoin did not stop reading and writing, and at the urging of his former students he resumed lecturing. His popularity grew, and due to the leniency of the Mori clan he was allowed to move around on his family's land. His lectures continued in a small shack on the property, which became the new location of the Shokasonjuku Academy.