

Jikido Refectory

This Refectory building dates from the Nara period (710–794) and was originally a temple office (*mandokoro-ya*). It was converted to a dining room for priests in the Heian period (794–1185). The Japanese word *jikido* is today more commonly pronounced *shokudo*, meaning restaurant or dining room, but in the ancient past eating itself served as a form of religious practice and the refectory was also a place of prayer. Priests use the hall to celebrate the birthday of Shakyamuni, the historical Buddha on April 8 in a ceremony known as *Bussho-e*.