

Kaneyū

Kaneyū was an exclusive dining establishment used by Noshiro's lumber companies to entertain clients and politicians. It opened in 1880, but the current building is from 1937.

In the early twentieth century, the town of Noshiro prospered as a hub for the area's logging industry. Expensive Akita cedar (*Cryptomeria japonica*) was shipped from the mouth of the Yoneshiro River to locations all over the country. Kaneyū was built at the height of the industry's prosperity, and its luxurious interior and stunning woodwork were designed to impress guests with the quality of local timber. Akita cedar was used in every element of the building's design—providing both structure and decoration.

In several rooms, ceiling panels were cut from massive cedars. The main room on the first floor has five boards that were cut from a single tree that measure over 9 meters long and about 1 meter across. The second-floor's grand hall has a 200-square-meter coffered ceiling of boards all made from the root wood of massive Japanese cedars. Other rooms on the first floor display *harimasa* plywood (a veneer of cedar applied to lauan boards), a cutting-edge technique invented in Noshiro only a few years before the building was finished. Many other intricate, hand-crafted fixtures adorn the sliding doors and alcoves of the private dining chambers. The auspicious decorative motif of "pine-bamboo-plum," a trio symbolic of endurance and success, appears throughout the building.