

## **Echizen Railway Eiheiji-guchi Station Building**

The Echizen Railway Eiheiji-guchi Station Building was built in 1914 and was designated a Registered Tangible Cultural Property in 2011 in recognition of its unique blend of Japanese and Western architectural styles.

The station is a single-story wooden building measuring 17 meters long and 4.5 meters wide. In the Japanese style, it features a clay-tiled hipped roof that extends out over the platform on one side and a gabled portico at the main entrance. The exterior of the building is covered with clapboard, a type of siding with horizontal boards laid in slightly overlapping rows, which is a Western feature.

The building dates from the Taisho era (1912–1926), when Western architectural techniques and materials such as iron, glass, and concrete were fully adopted by Japanese architects. Beginning in the Meiji era (1868–1912), the government demonstrated a renewed interest in international exchange after roughly 200 years of almost total isolation. In the early years of the era, it hired foreign experts to help facilitate the spread of Western knowledge, including Western architecture.

By the time Eiheiji-guchi Station was constructed, mastery of Western techniques was no longer limited to highly educated architects in major cities, and Western influence had reached even to the area of Eiheiji. One example of this influence can be seen in the semicircular glass window of the portico, which is similar to a transom window. The ceilings were also decorated in a distinctly Western style, which has been preserved in one room of the station building.

For many years, the station was an important transit hub where passengers could transfer to a separate line bound for the vicinity of Eiheiji Temple, but the Eiheiji Line ceased operations in 2002. At the time of the building's construction, several of the train lines in this area were managed by an electric power company called Kyoto Dentō. Although Kyoto Dentō no longer exists, its logo—an angled spiral—can still be seen in many of the building's decorative elements. Today, the old station building is a community center where local residents can relax, study, or hold events.