

## Literature Reference Room

# Kasumi-no-ma



## Part of Takahan's literature collection



Written by  
Yasunari Kawabata



Collection of autographs



Hakutei Ishii (painting)



Shigeru Nakazawa (painting)



[left] Tekkan Yosano (calligraphy)  
[right] Akiko Yosano (calligraphy)



Hakushu Kitahara  
(calligraphy)



Sakado Castle transom



Sakado Castle transom



Gentaro Kumakura (door at Mikuni Gongen Shrine)  
Cultural asset designated by Yuzawa Town government

### Open Hours:

9:00 - 17:00 (closed occasionally)

16:00 - : "Snow Country" video screening

Admission: 500 yen/adult

(free of charge for Takahan guests,  
elementary school children, and younger children)

The lodge where Yasunari Kawabata wrote his famous novel "Snow Country"

雪国小宿 高半

The lodge where Yasunari Kawabata wrote his famous novel "Snow Country"

# 高半

Takahana

The ryokan where Yasunari Kawabata's masterpiece "Yukiguni (Snow Country)" was written.

The first line of Kawabata's masterpiece Snow Country is "The train came out of the long border tunnel, and there was the Snow Country". This classic by the famous writer was composed in Takahan's "Kasumi-no-ma" room between the late autumn of 1934 and 1937, and tells the poetic tale in beautiful prose of the tragic love between Shimamura and the geisha Komako, set in the bleak winter at "Yukiguni no yado" Takahan.

Towards the end of 1937 Shotaro Hanayanagi gave a moving performance for one month at Shinbashi Theater. His autograph is also on display.

Then from the autumn of 1956 until the late spring of 1957, with Takahan as the setting, the novel Yukiguni was made into a film. It was an allstar cast with the main roles being taken by Ryo Ikebe as Shimamura, Keiko Kishi as Komako and Kaoru Yachigusa as Yoko, all directed by Shiro Toyoda. This production was a popular hit which received much praise across the board.

Much of this film of Yukiguni was based in the Kasumi-no-ma room in Takahan at the time of writing. This room was recreated and has been preserved to this day.

We hope that everyone who stays in Takahan can feel that they are in the Yukiguni novel for a night and remember the tragic love story of Shimamura and Komako the geisha.

Also, the poets and songwriters Tekkan Yosano and his wife Akiko, and Hakushu Kitahara and his wife, came to the baths at Takahan and composed a song in the "Yukiguni no ma, Kasumi no ma" room. The brush that they used is now a treasured possession of the establishment. The artist Hakutei Ishii also stayed in "Yukiguni no ma, Kasumi no ma" and drew a highly prized picture of a ski resort.

## 高半 The History of Takahan

This hotel has Yuzawa's oldest pedigree. Over 900 years ago the founder of Takahan, Hanroku Takahashi, a native of Shibata in Echigo Province (modern day Niigata Prefecture) was travelling to Kanto and passing through this undeveloped area when he was suddenly taken ill. Heading up a mountain stream searching for snakes or frogs from which to make medicine, by chance he discovered a natural hot spring source.

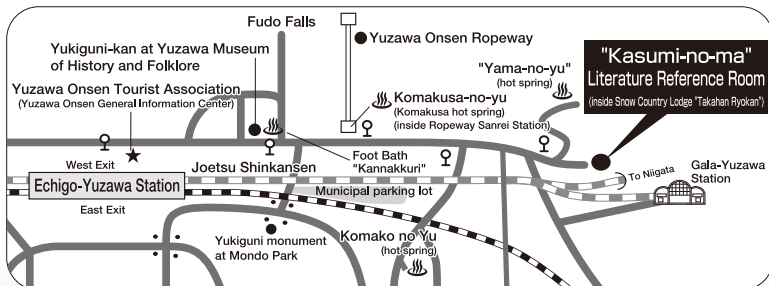
About 830 years ago there was a big landslide but that did not stop the flow of hot spring water. Around 300 years ago there was an avalanche which collapsed the building of the time. It was rebuilt 200 metres from the spring source. According to Bokushi Suzuki in "Hokuetsu Seppu (Snow Stories of Northern Etsu Province)" Takahan was used as a way station by daimyos heading to the capital to carry out their official duties.

In the museum you can see carved wooden lintels from Sakado Castle. 900 years ago Yuzawa used to be part of its territory. You can also see a carving crafted by Gentaro Kumagaya, an artisan during the Kansei period (1789-1801) who was resting during a journey through the area.

Through the years the spring water has been thought to be medicinal, and also effective for beautiful skin, hence being called 'tamago no yu'. It has also been said to be effective for curing palsy. Since the Meiji Period and the extension of the Shintetsu train line the onsen has grown into a ryokan in the mountains.

In September 1931 Asia's first tunnel (the 9th one in the world), the Shimizu tunnel, opened, and the Joetsu Line was completed. Suddenly Yuzawa Onsen became well known. The amount of snowfall and the skiing also made it famous and celebrities came.

Throughout the ages, regardless of all else going on, for over 900 years without stopping, the spring has been providing Takahan with natural onsen water. The sulphur crystals have the same aroma as in the past, and the facility and the generations of the founder's family who run it have looked after the onsen, and the name Hanzemon Takahashi has been passed down through the male line to the present day.



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