

# 雪国のおもてなし

## The Warm Hospitality of the Snow Country

そびえる霊峰八海山  
はこの地のシンボル

The towering sacred  
peak of Mt. Hakkai  
is the symbol of the  
region.

Tokyo

**地**域ごとに独特な四季の表情が豊かな日本——雪国では今まさに人々が雪に向き合い、雪と共に生きています。日本有数の豪雪地帯・新潟県南魚沼市は、東京から電車で2時間程度の手軽な近さにありながら、見渡す限りの雪の風景が未知の世界にやって来たというインパクトをそこを訪れる人々に与えます。今回は、同市六日町にある山あいの自然に囲まれた温泉宿「いろりあん」と、越後の庄屋や豪農の館を移築した建物が秀逸の「温泉御龍言<sup>りゅうごん</sup>」でのおもてなしと冬の趣向を紹介します。

Japan's regions are rich in unique seasonal expressions. In the snow country, this very moment people are braving the snow and living together with the snow. The city of Minamiuonuma in Niigata Prefecture is one of the snowiest districts in Japan. Although it is only about two hours away from Tokyo by train, the snowy scenery all around gives visitors the feeling that they have arrived in an unknown world. In this issue, IHCSA Café introduces the hospitality and wintry elegance of two hot-spring *ryokan* in this district: Irorian, which is located in the town of Muika-machi in Minamiuonuma and is surrounded by mountain valley nature, and Ryugon, which has superb buildings reconstructed from the residences of village headmen and wealthy farmers in Echigo (present-day Niigata Prefecture).

雪に埋もれる **いろりあん**

Buried snugly in snow: **Irorian**



### 各自の楽しみ方で雪と触れ合う

この地方の積雪は、例年約2メートル以上に達する。一面に白銀の世界が広がり、はるか身の丈以上に積み重なった雪は人やあらゆる物を容赦なく圧迫する。しかしながら、雪に包まれる神秘的な体験、とりわけ満月の雲ひとつない夜に蒼い月明かりが雪面にキラキラ反射する様子は言葉では表せない。厳冬の地であるが、ふぶくことがあまりなく、真綿のように雪がくるんでくれるので厳しさも比較的穏やかなこの地方は、雪に慣れていない都会人でも割に入っていくやすい。

上の原高原温泉にある温泉宿「いろりあん」も雪にすっぽり埋もれてたたずんでいる。雪と触れ合うことを楽しみにやってくる人々はここを拠点にして、踏み荒らされていない新雪の原野を自分の足ではるばると巡ったり、



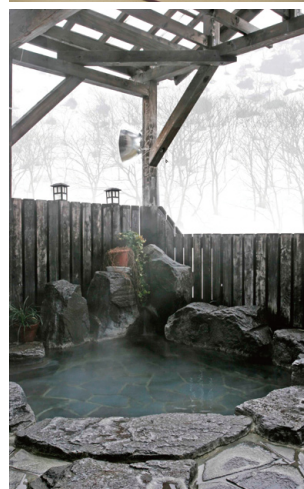
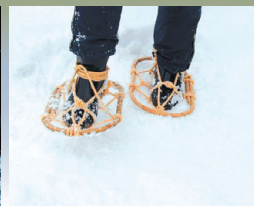
雪の林の中を動物の足跡をたどりながら散策して、雪の感触を心行くまでたっぷり満喫できる。足が雪に埋もれて難儀し

### Enjoy the snow as you please

The snow in this region usually lies more than two meters deep and creates a silvery white world spreading out in all directions. Piling up much higher than the human body, the heavy snow mercilessly puts pressure on both people and things. Nevertheless, the experience of being enveloped by snow is magical. Especially on a night with a full moon in a cloudless sky, the sight of sparkling blue moonlight reflected off the snow is simply indescribable. And although the winter in this region is certainly harsh, the severity is relatively mild. There are actually very few blizzards; the snow seems to wrap around you like fluffy down. It is, therefore, a good region for people living in big cities and not so accustomed to snow to visit.

The hot-spring *ryokan* Irorian at Uenohara Kogen Onsen is buried snugly in snow as well. People who come here for the snow use Irorian as a base from where to go out and enjoy the snow to their heart's content, walking around fields of untrodden new snow or strolling through snowy forests following the footprints of animals. Guests are recommended to wear the traditional snowshoes rented out by the *ryokan* to prevent their feet from sinking into the snow. The paddy field behind the *ryokan* has been developed as a kid's playground especially for family guests. Both children and their parents completely forget about the passage of time as they have fun in the snow, joyfully riding on sledges or building snowmen. Some people put on hooded straw raincoats and become snow fairies.





ないよう、宿が貸し出すかんじきを履いて行くのがお薦め。裏の田んぼは宿専用の「ちびっこ広場」としてファミリー向けに整備されており、思いっきりソリで滑ったり、真っ白な雪だるまを作ったり、親子ともども時を忘れて雪遊びに夢中になってしまう。「わらぼし<sup>みの</sup>」蓑をかぶって雪ん子(雪の精)に変身するのもおもしろい。10人は入れるほど大きなまくらも作られており、その中でふるまわれる焼いたおもちやおしるこを食べながら過ごす夕方のひとときは、とても印象深い思い出になる。玄関前に連なる雪の灯籠は、暗くなってから到着するお客様を幻想的な雰囲気でお迎えする。

### ゆっくりのんびり憩う

雪遊びで疲れた体をほぐしてくれる温泉は、雪見をしながら浸かる天然温泉の露天風呂も風情があるし、いろいろな効果がある薬草風呂もうれしい。館内は民芸調で落ち着いた雰囲気に満ち、あちらこちらに配されたアンティークな古民具が趣をさらに演出する。屋号の由来にもなっている囲炉裏を囲みながら頂く滋味に富む料理は、地元の食材を中心に日本海の海の幸を加えた季節の旬を凝らしたものの。米どころ越後の銘酒との相性もいい。古い民家を移築して再生した離れは茶室として使われ、食後には女将が語る地元の民話や言い伝えや昔の人々の暮らしぶりに耳を傾けて、いにしえの情緒に包まれた中で宵のひとときを過ごすことができる。

### 四季を楽しむリピーターが集う

自分で布草履を編んだり、地元産のそば粉を使ったそば打ちを体験することも通年でできる。隣接のそば処「草庵」で新鮮な山菜のてんぷらと共に食する打ちたてのそばはまさに絶品。6月中旬から8月下旬まではホタルの乱舞する幻想的な光景を目の当たりにすることができる。日本一と評される南魚沼産コシヒカリの新米の釜炊きと穫れたての天然キノコで秋の味覚は風味満点。——「いろりあん」では、“せっかくこの地を選んで来てくれたのだから、たっぷり満喫してもらいたい”と、四季それぞれのプランを充実させ、また、お客様に合わせた最適な周辺情報を差し上げることも重視している。女将をはじめ従業員が心の込められた「おもてなし」をさりげなくご提供できるよう心掛けています。

There is also a *kamakura* (snow hut) with room for about 10 people. You can enjoy a very memorable time in the late afternoon here, enjoying the toasted rice cakes and *shiruko* porridge that are served in this hut. The snow lanterns in front of the *ryokan's* entrance greet guests arriving after dark with an air of fantasy.

### A leisurely, peaceful break

After all that fun in the snow, the hot-spring baths are just what you need to soothe your exhausted body. At Irorian, there is an outdoor bath where you can gaze at the snowy scenery while soaking in the natural hot-spring water. There is also a herbal bath that is said to have various medicinal benefits.

Inside the *ryokan*, the atmosphere is countrified and composed, and the antique folk crafts displayed here and there add to the charm. Guests can take their delicious meals seated around an *irori* (sunken hearth), from which the *ryokan* takes its name. The menu consists of seasonal dishes with mainly local ingredients plus seafood caught in the Sea of Japan. Choice sake from the rice-growing Echigo region goes down very well with the cuisine.

The annex, a dismantled and reconstructed old cottage, is used as a tea ceremony room. After your meal, you can spend a pleasant evening here enveloped in a historical atmosphere, listening to the proprietress talk about local folk tales, traditions, and the lifestyles of people in the past.

### Repeaters come to enjoy the four seasons

Irorian offers various seasonal plans to enable guests to fully enjoy their stay whenever they come. “They have chosen to come to this locality,” says the *ryokan*, “so we want them to get the most out of their stay.” Throughout the year guests are able to experience making cloth sandals and soba noodles using local buckwheat flour. At the adjacent Soan soba restaurant, the newly made soba with tempura of fresh mountain vegetables is truly superb. From mid-June until late August there is the fantastic spectacle of dancing fireflies. And autumn brings the satisfying taste of rice-pot cooked new Minamiuonuma Koshihikari rice, said to be the best in Japan, and freshly harvested natural mushrooms.

Irorian also emphasizes supplying guests with local information that is most appropriate for them. The proprietress and staff endeavor to provide warmhearted hospitality in a casual manner. □



#### Information

山の温泉宿 **いろりあん Irorian** Tel.: 025-773-5847 Fax: 025-773-3110

URL: <http://www.irorian.co.jp> \*日本語のみ、英語ページ準備中 Japanese only; English page under construction

〒949-6636 新潟県南魚沼市小栗山 2089-4 上の原高原温泉

Uenohara Kogen Onsen, 2089-4 Koguriyama, Minamiuonuma, Niigata Prefecture 949-6636

#### アクセス

電車: JR 上越新幹線越後湯沢駅または浦佐駅で上越線に乗り換えて六日町駅より送迎車で 10 分

お車: 関越自動車道六日町 I.C. より 10 分

#### Access

**By train:** Take the JR Joetsu Shinkansen to Echigo-Yuzawa Station or Urasa Station; change there to the Joetsu Line and get off at Muika-machi Station; 10 min. from there by car; pickup service available

**By car:** 10 min. from the Muika-machi Interchange on the Kanetsu Expressway





荘厳にして静寂な館 **龍言**

Majestic and tranquil: **Ryugon**



### 往時の空気に包まれる

かつてこの地にあった寺の名称を授かった温泉宿「龍言」は、訪れる者に 200 年前の日本の姿を思い起こさせる。本館の建物は、越後の地に 150～250 年前に建てられて以来過酷な豪雪に耐えてきた庄屋や豪農の館を移築したものである。日本の伝統的な建築様式を現在にとどめ、殊に雪国ならではの太い梁と柱が特徴である。「故郷に帰ってきた」——どこかしら日本人の底流にある懐かしさを思い起こさせる。

重厚に構える黒塗りの門をくぐり、旅の疲れを一休みするために最初に通されるおつきの間は、江戸時代後期の村の長の館にあった茶の間や書院として実際に使われていたものである。古木の堅牢<sup>ひんろう</sup>さとぬくもりを感じさせながら、囲炉裏やいにしへの調度品が目を和ませてくれる。黒光りした長い廊下は昔の屋敷の作られ方を踏襲して複雑に張り巡らされており、客室に向かう左右にはいたるところ細部まで行き届いた装飾品や窓外の植栽などに目移りすることしきりである。



### Saturated in an atmosphere of history

Ryugon, which takes its name from a temple that existed on this site in the past, makes visitors recall what Japan must have been like two centuries ago. The main building consists of former mansions belonging to village headmen and wealthy farmers that were relocated to this site; they were built 150–250 years ago and have withstood severe snowfalls ever since then. It is a wonderful example of a traditional Japanese architectural style; in particular, the stout beams and pillars are characteristic of the snow country. “Coming home”—Ryugon kindles the nostalgia that lies somewhere deep in the subconscious of the Japanese.

After passing through the imposing black gate, guests are first of all shown to one of the drawing rooms (Otsuki no Ma) to rest their limbs after a tiring journey. These rooms were actually used as a living room and studies in the mansion of generations of village headmen in the later Edo period (1603–1868). The old timber gives a sense of solidity and warmth, and the sunken hearth and antique furnishings are restful on the eyes. Imitating the layout of mansions in the past, the long black-luster corridor stretches in a complicated fashion. As you head for the guest rooms, your attention will be frequently caught by the exquisite ornaments displayed along both sides and the plants outside the windows. Strolling around the large green garden, with its tea room annex, fountain, and waterfall, you will suddenly notice that you have forgotten all about the present world and are feeling quite relaxed both physically and mentally.

### Unsparing and warmhearted service

The *ryokan* grounds cover nearly 53,000 sq. meters, larger than Tokyo Dome, and there are 36 purely Japanese-style guest rooms with varying room plans and carefully arranged to offer pleasant views from their windows. Each room was named by head priests of Eihei-ji, a head temple of the Soto Zen sect of Buddhism, and Untoan, known as the foremost temple in Echigo. In winter every room is equipped with a *kotatsu* (a low table used as a foot warmer), and charcoal fires are lit in







離れの茶室、噴水、滝を擁する緑深い大庭園をそぞろ歩くと、我々が生きる現代はいつのまにか彼方に忘れ去られ、心身ともにくつろいでいるのに気が付く。

## 手間を惜しまず、心を込めて

東京ドームをしのぐ 16,000 坪の敷地には、さまざまな間取り、窓からの眺めを提供するよう工夫を凝らした純和室の 36 の客室が配され、その名は一室ごとに曹洞宗大本山永平寺や「越後の寺 雲洞庵」の住職により授けられたものである。冬場は各室にこたつがしつらえられ、囲炉裏のある部屋では炭火をおこしてくれるので、戸外がどれほど冷え込んでもしっかりと温まることができる。手の届くところまで雪が迫る露天風呂を含め、風呂は 8 つあり、体のしんから温まりながら風情を味わえる。無料でふるまわれる地元の「おばあちゃん」が昔から引き継いできた製法で作った甘酒も、厳冬のこの地で頂くのは格別である。秋から春にかけて毎夕杵と臼による餅つきが披露され、この地方独特の極めてきめが細かく、粘りの強い餅の出来たてを賞味できる。

板前が作る郷土料理と日本海の海の幸の料理に加え、毎夕・朝にスタッフが交代でかまどに薪をくべてお客様ごとの食事時刻に合わせて炊く地元コシヒカリのごはんを炊きたてで頂けるのは、まさにここならではの手間をいとわぬもてなしである。けんちん汁と漬物は地味ながらも、気候・清水・土壌に恵まれた地元の新鮮な食材のうまみを最大限に引き出して、この地に生まれ育った「おばあちゃん」の手でしか作れない、このうえなく心の込められた素朴な逸品。また、季節に合わせて取れたての川魚を丁寧に炭火で立て焼きにする様子は、「龍言」の名物である。

## 掛け替えのない土地への愛着

餅つきでもごはんでも“昔からこうやってきた”ということをしきんと踏まえ、この土地の「本物」を食してもらうことに妥協はない。施設のいたるところで表現されている越後の伝統を見たり触れたりして愛でることも、方言による民話の語りを鑑賞することも、お客様の五感に働きかけるよう提供されるものすべての根底には、この地を愛してやまないスタッフが一丸となって意欲的に取り組む姿勢が尽きることはないのである。

rooms with *irori* (sunken hearths). So however cold it might be outside, guests can keep themselves warm.

There are eight baths, including an outdoor bath from which the snow falls within reach, and guests can enjoy the atmosphere while warming themselves to the core. The sweet sake drinks that are served free of charge, made by local “grandmas” using methods inherited from the past, are a special treat in this region of harsh winters. And every evening from autumn until spring Ryugon holds rice-cake pounding meetings using mallets and mortars. Guests can enjoy the taste of freshly made rice cakes that have the extremely fine texture and stickiness unique to this region.

In addition to the local cuisine and seafood from the Sea of Japan prepared by the cooks, every morning and evening the staff members take turns to toss firewood into the cooking stove and prepare rice according to the meal schedules of the guests. The Ryugon staff spare no effort to ensure that guests enjoy freshly cooked local Koshihikari rice with their meals. The *kenchinjiru* (vegetable soup) and pickles are simple, but they fully bring out the taste of the fresh food materials of this region, which is blessed in terms of its climate, clean water, and soil. They are carefully prepared and homely gems that only the “grandmas” born and brought up in this area know how to make. Furthermore, another popular attraction at Ryugon is the sight of freshly caught seasonal river fish being grilled vertically over a charcoal fire.

## Affection for an irreplaceable region

Whether rice-cake pounding or rice cooking, Ryugon makes no concessions in terms of giving guests the real thing according to how it was done in the region in the past. Guests can see, touch, and admire the Echigo traditions displayed everywhere in the facility, and they can listen to folk tales read in the local dialect. Services are provided in a way that stimulates the five senses of visitors. At the root lie the united, earnest, and unceasing efforts of staff members to convey their own sincere affection for the locality. □



<b>Information</b> 〒 949-6611 新潟県南魚沼市坂戸 79 79 Sakado, Minamiuonuma, Niigata Prefecture 949-6611 <b>アクセス</b> <b>電車:</b> JR 上越新幹線越後湯沢駅または浦佐駅で上越線に乗り換えて六日町駅より送迎車で 5 分 <b>お車:</b> 関越自動車道六日町 I.C. より 10 分	<b>温泉御宿 龍言 Ryugon</b> <b>URL:</b> <a href="http://www.ryugon.co.jp">http://www.ryugon.co.jp</a> (日本語 / Japanese)	<b>Tel.:</b> 025-772-3470 <b>Fax:</b> 025-772-2124 <b>Access</b> <b>By train:</b> Take the JR Joetsu Shinkansen to Echigo-Yuzawa Station or Urusa Station; change there to the Joetsu Line and get off at Muika-machi Station; 5 min. from there by car; pickup service available <b>By car:</b> 10 min. from the Muika-machi Interchange on the Kansen Expressway	<b>写真提供:</b> 取材先 宿舎、南魚沼市商工観光課 <b>Photos:</b> Courtesy of the <i>ryokan</i> and the Commerce and Industry-Tourism Department, Minamiuonuma-City
	<b>URL:</b> <a href="http://www.ryugon.co.jp/ryugon/">http://www.ryugon.co.jp/ryugon/</a> (英語 / English)		