

This building took ten years to complete and was used for only 30 minutes. Construction began in 1882 to accommodate Emperor Meiji (1852-1912) during his travels in northern Japan. The house was finished in 1892, and the emperor finally came to visit in 1909. The lodgings were built by the Hanzawa family to entice the emperor to stay at their home rather than a government building. The entire house is believed to have been built from the wood of a single tree. The windows are over one hundred years old, and still have their original glass fittings. The rooms are divided by painted sliding doors (*fusuma*), and the floors are raised to different heights for different levels of dignitaries. Accordingly, the highest room was reserved for the emperor himself. Although it may seem extreme, the Hanwaza family's work was not in vain: the emperor reportedly relaxed here for a brief time before moving on.