

## **Portraits of Unzen: Historical Photographs from the Late 1800s and 1900s**

We hope you enjoy this fascinating display on the walls of the Visitor Center, a photographic record of Unzen Onsen's long history as a popular destination for foreign visitors. From the early Meiji period (1868–1912), foreigners found Unzen's mountain location to be a cool escape from the summer heat. Traffic from Shanghai's International Settlement increased after a local newspaper introduced Unzen to its readers in 1890, and the beginning of a ferry service between Shanghai and Nagasaki further improved access. The visitors changed the life of Unzen, which soon saw the introduction of segregated bathing and Western-style hotels with beds. A golf course and tennis courts (both still in operation) were laid out by 1913, and the visitors even had their own newspaper. Eminent visitors, such as Helen Keller and Chiang Kai-Shek, made their way here, as did the Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore. While there is little detailed information about the people in these photos—both Japanese and foreigners—we think they offer a fascinating look at the social and cultural activities of the time.