“Dear Sir,

The season of fresh greenery has arrived, and I would like to thank you sincerely for your thoughtful letter.
The cover illustrations for ‘Japan’ are intended to depict landscapes from various regions,
but since the Hachiya Clock Shop in Yamagata City is such a distinctive building, you recognized it immediately.
I also once sketched the Saiseikan Hospital and painted it in blue. I have enclosed a postcard of that painting.
I did see the building once before the war when the uppermost section still existed, but I no longer remember it clearly.
Since it is such a regrettable loss, I wish it could be restored to its former appearance.
I remember that, at dusk, when lights shone from the windows, it felt as though one had entered a dreamlike world.
Yamagata truly is a town that stirs our nostalgia.
I understand that you are recovering your health, and I sincerely hope you continue to rest well and regain your strength soon.
For now, please accept this reply together with my thanks.

Respectfully yours,
Higashiyama Kaji

May 1
To Mr. Endo Kohei”

This letter was written in 1958 by the renowned Japanese-style painter Higashiyama Kaji (1908–1999), who later received the Order of Culture in 1969. It was addressed to Endo Kohei of Nanukamachi, Yamagata City.

The enclosed postcard depicts the former Saiseikan Hospital Main Building, shown as it appeared in the 1st International Art Exhibition in São Paulo, South America (1951) (present-day São Paulo Biennale). The building in the painting differs from its current appearance; it is painted blue and lacks the fourth-floor tower.

During World War II, the fourth floor was removed because tall wooden buildings were considered easy targets for air raids. The building was also painted blue and remained in that condition until restoration work was carried out in 1968.

Higashiyama’s letter reveals that he had seen both the prewar and postwar appearances of the former Saiseikan Hospital building.