

LIVING GUIDE MORIOKA

MORIOKA INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS ASSOCIATION

12-2 UCHIMARU, MORIOKA, IWATE 020-8530

TEL 019-626-7524 / URL <http://www.mira-morioka.com> / e-mail info@mira-morioka.com

Let's go and see 'Morioka Machiya'

Did you know that Morioka is called 'A small Kyoto in Michinoku (Deep North)'? The reasons are that the many old-style buildings left in the city create a certain kind of atmosphere and flavour and also the region is richly endowed with natural beauty such as the Kitakami River or Mt. Iwate. Especially in the areas around Nataya-cho, traditional merchants' residences called 'Morioka Machiya' have been preserved. It hands down to posterity a typical Morioka town scene from the time when the castle town was developed until the 1960s.



Why don't you take a walk around Nataya-cho and feel the atmosphere of Morioka at that time?

What is 'Morioka Machiya'?

It is a house for merchants in the castle town in which the residence and retail store functions are combined. As many people lived along the road, the frontage of the house is narrow but deep and there's almost no gap to the next door. It is similar to the 'Kyo-machiya' in Kyoto in some ways, though a distinctive architectural style was created in the mercantile culture in Morioka. In the master's work place, called 'Joi' the room is open to the roof and there is a large home shrine. So it is sometimes called, 'A house where the gods live'.

<Floor plan and explanation of each room in Machiya>

- ①Mise : What we call in modern day a store. In houses that did not run a store, this space was reserved for guests.
- ②Joi : The owner's work area. Also contains an impressive *Kamidana* shrine. Even those who lived in the house would enter this sacred area with respect. Based on the idea that it is impolite to walk over the gods and master, there is no floor above and only a stairwell in the room.
- ③Kamidana : *Kamidana* is a household Shinto shrine and essential for any merchant house. Generally south facing, it sometimes faces east.
- ④Roji : Earthen road-like alley. The position of the *Roji* depended on the district. The space of the *Roji* helped to preserve privacy.
- ⑤Zashiki : The master or guest tatami mat bedroom.
- ⑥Daidoko : Where food is eaten. Dining room.
- ⑦Hashiri : Kitchen.
- ⑧Main 2nd Floor : This was a room for employees of the store. It was also used as a temporary inn or as a warehouse.
- ⑨Rear 2nd Floor : A room used by the master or woman servants.
- ⑩Tsuboniwa : The *Tsuboniwa* is an inner garden built to let light and air into the *Joi* area. In summer it acted as a natural cooler.



Let's visit 'Morioka Machiya Story House'

Morioka Machiya Story House was opened with the concept, 'Experience nostalgic bustle'. In this facility you can feel the atmosphere of Morioka in the Showa era.

◆Information ('Omoya' : Main building)

It is a building in which characteristics of Morioka Machiya remain. There is a *Tori-doma* (earthen floor passage) leading to the courtyard, an entrance to the residential area, and a staircase to the second floor with drawers beneath each step. You can experience the Showa era through the furnishings of that time. Also, annual events in the area are introduced here.



◆Taisho era *Kura* (warehouse)

A lively and nostalgic shopping street based on Morioka in the 1960s (Showa 30s) is recreated in the Taisho era sake storehouse. Records and toys from the Showa era are exhibited on the second floor, creating a space that takes you back in time.



◆Bunko-Gura (Library-warehouse)

People connected with Morioka, especially to Nataya-cho are highlighted in an earthen-walled warehouse from the early Showa era. A correlation diagram of these people and a map showing related places are displayed. On the second floor there is a library for parents and their children. The atmosphere makes you feel as if you have wandered into an attic.



◆Hamato Hall



A hall that also can be used as a stage, making the most of a late Edo era sake storehouse. At the gallery, video recordings of ordinary people's lives are shown. It is a place where you can experience Morioka at that time.

(Reference : Official website of Morioka)

◆Places where you can see Machiya

Daijishimizu Resting Area

Open: 10 : 00 ~ 16 : 00

Closed: every Wednesday (If a national holiday, closed the next day.)

◆Morioka Machiya Story House

Open : 9 : 00 ~ 19 : 00

(Last entrance 18 : 30)

Holidays : Fourth Tuesday of each month,
December 29 to January 3rd.

