

### "Sōmon", the gateway to Morioka Castle

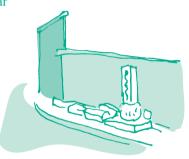
In order to enter the castle town, it was necessary to pass through a "gate" called "Sōmon". There were 7 different Sōmon placed along the Morioka Castle; the Nio Sōmon, the Yotsuya Sōmon, the Kitayama Sōmon, the Shitakoji Sōmon, the Kagano Sōmon, the Hachimancho Sōmon, and the Kokucho Sōmon. By each gate, there were guards to restrict people and horses coming inside and out the castle, also to check on guns carried in.

In particular, the area around the Kokumachi Sōmon, which leads to the Edo-Tono-Miyako Kaido Road, was said to be the most prosperous area. Many merchant houses and inns were lined up along the street and the area was always filled with merchants, travelers, and contingents from various areas.

The "Kizuya Ikeno Tōbe Residence" built behind the site of Kokumachi Sōmon is one of the few remained townhouses which you could feel the atmosphere of the feudal period.

Such as the residence, the areas near the gates have a lot of stories to tell.

Why don't you walk along the 7 Sōmon and immerse yourself into the good old days.



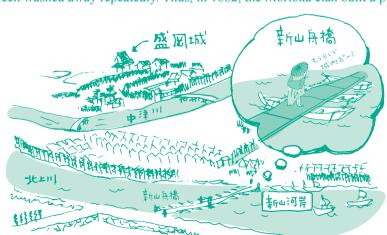
## walk through the vestiges of the castle

# through the vestiges of the castle town "Morioka"

## **Destruction and Blessing of the Kitakami River**

During the Edo period, the Morioka clan secured foreign currency by transporting rice, grain, and lumber to Edo and Osaka, and converting the goods into cash. Therefore, boats for a large-scale transport had an important role for the clans.

The bridge across the Shinzan riverbank (Shinzan-kashi) was the starting point for water transportation on the Kitakami River. As the guardhouses and boathouses built by the river, the number of people visiting had been increasing. While the Kitakami River was known for the "Rampage River" due to the repeated flooding, the bridge had been washed away repeatedly. Thus, in 1682, the Morioka clan built a pontoon bridge called "Shinzan Funabashi" by



chaining multiple boats to pillars on both banks and placing planks on top of the boats. By doing so, the bridge could be moved before flooding and erected as soon as the floods subsided. This idea made people continuously use the bridge until the early Meiji period. Due to its historical value, the Shinzan Funabashi was designed as a historic site by Morioka city in 1966. Also, the rice stoking warehouse built by the bridge has been preserved as one of the important landscape structures in Morioka city.

### Visiting retain traces of the past 100 years

By the street to Nataya-cho (Nataya town), there is a Former Wada Liquor Store.

The building was originally the Miyako Bank with a huge basement that was used as a stockroom. Still, an old sake billboard being displayed, such as local famous sake brand "Iwategawa (Iwate River)" or the Suntory Whiskey tin plates, the building is regarded as invaluable architecture.

Also, in 2019, a guesthouse "ToToTo" opened in a renovated Wada's warehouse across the liquor store. The renovation plan of the former Wada Liquor Store is being discussed.



### **Renovated Constructions**

"ToToTo": Although it's a guesthouse, feel free to just stop by and gather around! Throughout the days of before and after the Miyako Bank established in 1918 and became the Wada Liquor Store, the building is loved and cherished by the community. The guesthouse "ToToTo" built across the former Wada Liquor Store is valued by the tourists all around the world.

\*Renovation is the purpose of restoring an aging building to return it to its original performance, while renovation involves large-scale renovations such as changing the floor plan and plumbing work of an aging building to add new functionality. The purpose is to add and improve value.