**Monzenmachi**

The term *monzenmachi* means “gate-front town” and refers to settlements established near the entrance gates of important shrines or temples. Shiogama’s Monzenmachi area sits at the foot of Shiogama Jinja Shrine and Shiwahiko Jinja Shrine and retains many reminders of its heyday.

Walking around the area, visitors will find businesses that have been serving customers for centuries: Urakasumi Brewery, which has been producing sake since 1724; the soy sauce and miso producer Ota Yohachiro Shoten, in business since 1845; and Tanrokuen, which was founded in 1720 as a marine supplier but evolved into a tea and sweets shop.

Shiogama was an important port of the former Sendai domain (which encompassed present-day Miyagi Prefecture), and Monzenmachi’s streets used to be lined with restaurants, shops, and *ryokan* inns catering to visitors. One remaining example is the carefully preserved Ebiya Ryokan, just across the road from Okama Jinja Shrine. Although the inn has been welcoming visitors since the Edo period (1603–1867), the current structure was constructed around 140 years ago during the Meiji era (1868–1912) after a fire destroyed the original. The upstairs is open to the public only on weekends, but the downstairs café regularly serves drinks and sweets.

Monzenmachi continues to evolve as new businesses join beloved shops with centuries of history. Along the flagged pavement, cafés welcome visitors and shops selling sweets, sake, and *kamaboko* (cured *surimi* fish cake) tempt passersby with some of the flavors of Shiogama.