

## Matsumoto House: Prefecture-Designated Tangible Cultural Property

The Matsumoto family were retainers of the Imamiya family, who were themselves senior retainers to the Satake clan. From 1603 until 1653, the castle town of Kakunodate, located in the Akita domain, was ruled by the Ashina family under the Satake family. During this time, the Matsumoto family lived on the south side of Kakunodate in the Tamachi area, apart from other retainers of the Imamiya who lived in the *uchi-machi* (inner city) part of town.

When the Ashina family line died out in 1653 and the Kakunodate area came under the rule of the North Satake branch of the Satake clan, the Matsumoto family relocated to Kobitomachi, an area for lower-ranked samurai and foot soldiers located in the *uchi-machi*.

Reflecting the family's position among the lowest class of samurai, the Matsumoto house is small and compact, with a thatched roof and brushwood (*shibagaki*) fence. The house is believed to have been built in the late Edo period, and in addition to the main building, also retains a bedroom from a former annex. The well-preserved house has been used as a film set for historical dramas.

While the Matsumoto family was of a lower rank, their members' talents were in demand. For instance, Sudo Hangoro (1775–1851) not only worked as a teacher at Kyoko Kodo Shoin, an Akita domain school, but was also the author of *Eboshi-Oya*, a textbook on proper samurai conduct.

The Matsumoto house is open to the public, and from spring to fall hosts demonstrations of *itaya* wickerwork, the 200-year-old craft of weaving various objects using thin strips of maple wood.