

Miyauchi Station and Miyauchi Shopping Street

Nagaoka's historic Settaya district is easily accessible from Miyauchi Station on the JR Joetsu and Shinetsu lines. Before the rise of car culture in the 1970s, this station was a bustling center that drew countless shoppers, businesspeople, laborers, and tourists on their way to explore Miyauchi and the old sake, soy sauce, and miso breweries of Settaya.

A portion of the former Mikuni Kaido trade route located near Miyauchi Station is lined with a row of shops known as Miyauchi Shopping Street. At the height of its prosperity in the early twentieth century, the street had a movie theater and a public bathhouse. The road has built-in snow-melting pipes invented by Settaya businessman Imai Yosaburo and first installed in Nagaoka in 1961. These pipes release warm groundwater to melt snow.

The number of stores lining Miyauchi Shopping Street slowly decreased as car use became more common, but some longstanding businesses remain.

The current shopping street includes a barbershop, apparel store, rice dealer, pharmacy, hardware shop, and several restaurants. Aoshima Shokudo, located near Miyauchi Station, is said to be the originator of ginger and soy sauce ramen, a Nagaoka specialty.

Many of the buildings along the street have extended, pillar-supported eaves that allow pedestrians to shop in winter unimpeded by heavy snows. These covered pathways contribute to the traditional feel of the townscape. The city is currently working with residents to support businesses and sponsor events that promote the charm of the area.