

Former Kawakami Residence (Eguchi Dango Settaya Shop)

The former Kawakami family residence was converted into a branch of the popular Nagaoka-based sweets shop Eguchi Dango in 2022 to preserve a valuable piece of the Settaya district's history. The Kawakami family is credited with founding Koshi no Murasaki, which has been brewing soy sauce in the Settaya area since 1831.



The residence was originally built in 1916 on grounds shared with the Koshi no Murasaki Soy Sauce Brewery. It was damaged in the 2004 Chuetsu earthquake but was partially rebuilt using the original materials. The design and construction of the original residence demonstrated an understated elegance and luxury befitting a home that was used to host guests and entertain business associates. Expensive *keyaki* (zelkova) wood was used for the construction, and the interior faced a dry landscape garden. The reception room, which now serves as the shop's café, had a large tokonoma alcove that was used to display carefully selected artworks.

The former residence underwent a series of renovations when it was converted for the Eguchi Dango Settaya Shop. These included replacing tatami mats with hardwood floors, installing booths in the alcove spaces, creating a garden-view seating area, and constructing an on-site confectionary kitchen. Various fixtures and items from the house are now used throughout the shop, including chests of drawers, desks, lights, and a large kneading bowl. Also remaining are a number of architectural features from the original home, such as the *keyaki* wood corridors and carved transoms. The exterior likewise retains elements of the former residence, including the decorative woodcarving of characters reading “Kawakami” at the apex of the gable entrance and a circular stone driveway shaped to allow carriages and rickshaws to easily drop off guests.

Eguchi Dango Settaya Shop

The Eguchi Dango corporation established the Settaya shop to help make the historic Kawakami residence into a site that would attract residents and tourists alike. They sell a variety of traditional and creative sweets, but their specialty is the popular local confection *sasa dango*: steamed mugwort-infused mochi cakes with sweet red bean filling wrapped in bamboo leaves.



The Settaya shop is committed to promoting fermented and brewed ingredients produced by local businesses. They incorporate the district's famous sake, saffron liquor, soy sauce, miso, and sake lees into sweets such as *mitarashi dango* (skewered rice flour balls dipped in a sweet soy sauce glaze), *manju*

(a dense sweet bun with a red bean filling), and *dorayaki* (a “sandwich” of two fluffy sponge pancakes and sweet red bean paste). In the café area, visitors can order the standard shop offerings in addition to tea grown with sake lees as a fertilizer, vegetables pickled in koji, ice cream, and various seasonal sweets.

Shop Hours: 9:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Café Hours: 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. (last order 5:00 p.m.)

Closed: Tuesdays