

{Inscribed on the World Heritage List in July 2018.}



World Cultural Heritage
Hidden Christian Sites
in the Nagasaki Region

4

Sakitsu Village in Amakusa

Guide Map

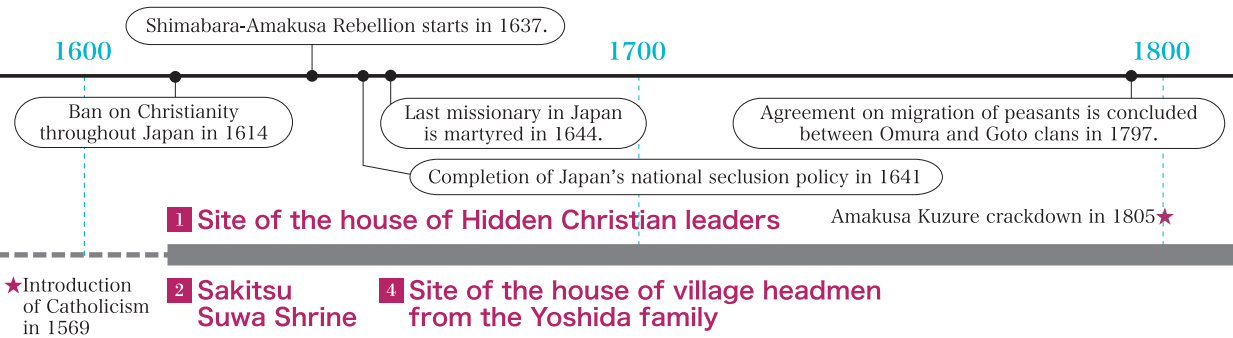


Significance of Sakitsu Village in Amakusa

I. Beginning of the absence of missionaries and hiding of Christians

II. Hidden Christians' endeavours to continue their religious faith

III. Hidden Christians' endeavours to maintain their religious faith



Position in 'Hidden Christian Sites in the Nagasaki Region'

- ◎ Sakitsu Village in Amakusa bears testimony to what Hidden Christians venerated to practise their religious faith.
- ◎ Hidden Christian villagers in Sakitsu practised their religious faith by substituting everyday items used in daily life and work for Christian devotional objects.

《Basic information》

Designation title as cultural assets	Cultural Landscape of Sakitsu and Imatomi in Amakusa
Designation category	Important Cultural Landscape selected by the national government
Year of designation	First in 2011, and additionally in 2012
Location	Amakusa City, Kumamoto Prefecture

Manners when visiting the village

Please remember that there are people living in the village. Thus, please respect their privacy and follow proper manners while you enjoy exploring around.

- Since there are no public trash cans, please take home any trash you may have.
- When you walk in the street, please do not take up the entire street and always walk within the shoulders of the roads.
- If you smoke, please do so within designated areas and do not smoke and walk at the same time or litter cigarette butts.
- Please never under any circumstances trespass, enter any crop field, peek into people's homes, or open any doors to people's homes without permission.
- Please use designated restrooms only.

Give prior notice before visiting the churches

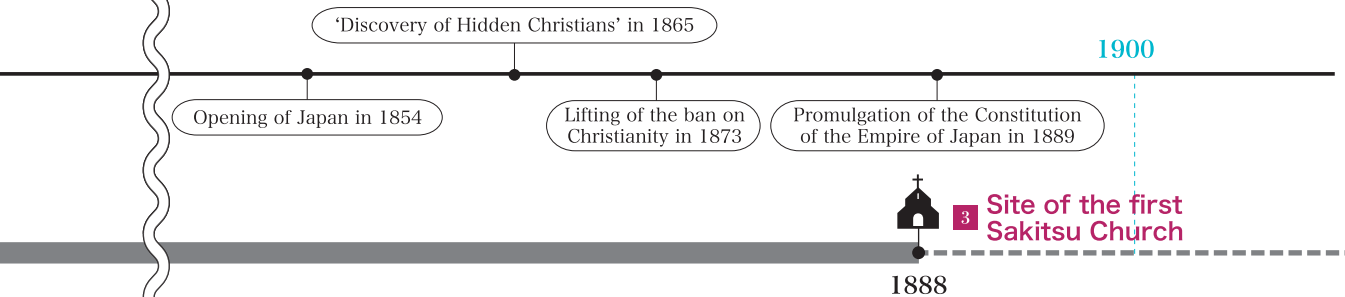
When you wish to visit Sakitsu Church, please contact the relevant organisation below and give it prior notice via its website. Please note that, owing to a large number of visitors or due to religious events inside the church, there are times when it may not be possible for you to visit.

Kyushu Sanko Tourism Co., Ltd. Travel Centre

9th floor, Taiyo Seimei Kumamoto Building, 4-3 Hanabata-cho, Chuo-ku, Kumamoto City, Kumamoto Prefecture, 860-0806
Tel +81-96-300-5535, Opening hours: 10:00 to 18:00

<https://www.kyusanko.co.jp/ryoko/pickup/sakitsu-church/>

IV. The transitional phase triggered by contact with missionaries, leading to the end of Hidden Christians' hiding



History

- ◎ Sakitsu Village was established as early as the 15th century according to historic documents, where the Jesuit Luis de Almeida started missionary work in 1569.
- ◎ Villagers secretly continued the Christian faith even during the ban on Christianity in an organisational way under the guidance of their own leaders who administered Christian ceremonies and events.
- ◎ The Hidden Christian villagers were registered on the village temple, and at the same time they outwardly affiliated themselves with Sakitsu Suwa Shrine **2**, which is the seat of the village's guardian deity. They had to participate in the *Efumi* ceremony conducted in the house of the village headman **4**, in which all of the residents trampled on an image of Christ or the Virgin Mary to prove that they were not Christians.
- ◎ While continuing their Christian faith by themselves for long centuries, the villagers practised their faith by substituting everyday items used in daily life and work, such as abalone shells, for Christian devotional objects. **1**
- ◎ In the Amakusa Kuzure crackdown of 1805, the authorities investigated the villagers' religious faith but they did not officially admit these villagers were Christians and tacitly accepted their faith. The authorities did not take harsh measures and only continued *Efumi* ceremony.
- ◎ After the 'Discovery of Hidden Christians' at Oura Cathedral, the villagers contacted missionaries in Nagasaki and many of them rejoined the Catholic Church. The first church in the village was built in 1888.
- ◎ The present church was constructed in 1934 at the site of the house of former village headmen from the Yoshida family. This came about because the French missionary, Father Halbout, strongly wished to build a church symbolising the revival of Catholicism at the same place in memory of the *Efumi* ceremony.

Wide-area map around Sakitsu Village in Amakusa



Enlarged map of Sakitsu Village in Amakusa



《Recommended route》

(A) → (B) → (C) → (2) → (D) → (E) → (5) → (F) → (G) → (H) → (I)

.....	Boundaries of the component	(0)	Important spot	(P)	Parking space	(R)	Rest space	(M)	Monument, etc.	(C)	Remains of church
-----	On foot	(A)	Guidance facility	(T)	Toilets	(E)	Exhibition	(S)	Shinto shrine	(G)	Tomb or graveyard
———	On foot or by car, etc.	(A)	Other spot	(G)	Guide and information office	(V)	Viewing spot	(C)	Church	(R)	Remains of related building

Introduction to important spots in Sakitsu Village in Amakusa

1

Site of a house of Hidden Christian leaders



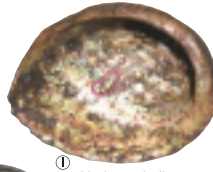
※Hidden Christian devotional items are exhibited in Sakitsu Archive Centre 'Minatoya' (C).



Hidden Christian devotional items



① Medal made with white shells (5.1 x 4.5 cm, 0.2 cm)



① Abalone shell (9.7 x 12.4 cm, 2.9 cm)



① Japanese mirror kept by a villager (10.8 x 10.8 cm, 1.0 cm)



※This image is for illustrative purposes only.

Hidden Christians in Sakitsu continued practising their religious faith by substituting everyday items for Christian devotional objects, in the absence of missionaries. They venerated statues of the traditional Japanese divine beings associated with large fish catches, *Daikokuten* and *Ebisu*, as Deus, and linked the shells of abalone with their mother-of-pearl patterns to the image of the Virgin Mary. Until about 50 years ago, the descendants of the Hidden Christian leaders took the devotional tools out of a box and offered prayers on Christmas Day.

2

Sakitsu Suwa Shrine



① Sakitsu Suwa Shrine



① Festival of Sakitsu Suwa Shrine

Sakitsu Suwa Shrine has been the seat of the village's guardian deity since its establishment in 1647. During the religious ban, Hidden Christian villagers were registered with the village temple, and at the same time they were outwardly affiliated with this Shinto shrine. When some villagers were exposed as Hidden Christians in the Amakusa Kuzure crackdown of 1805, they were told to hand over their devotional items to this shrine by the authorities. The shrine is still venerated by villagers, and festivals are held in spring and autumn.



※This image is for illustrative purposes only.

3 Site of the first Sakitsu Church (Former convent building)



※Please do not enter the precincts.



① The former convent standing in the vicinity of Sakitsu Suwa Shrine



The first Sakitsu Church

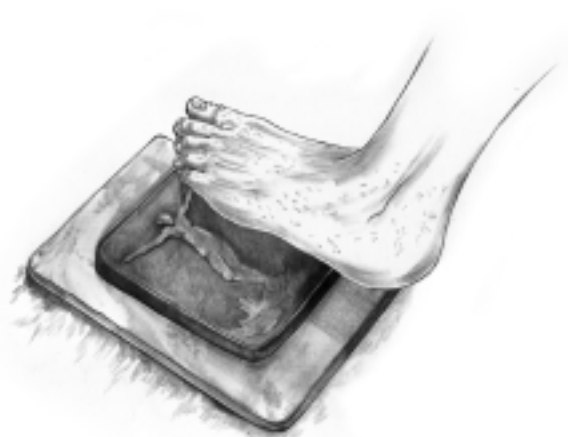
This is where the first church in Sakitsu Village was built in 1888 after the ban on Christianity was lifted and villagers re-joined the Catholic Church. The site was offered for construction of the church by a former Hidden Christian who owned it. The construction of the church marked the end of 'hiding' of Christian villagers in Sakitsu. The present convent building was constructed in 1957, but it is not in use today.

4 Site of the house of village headmen from the Yoshida family



Site of the house of village headmen (The current Sakitsu Church stands here.)

Sakitsu Church (①) stands at the site of the former village headmen's house, where the *Efumi* ceremony was conducted to make people trample on sacred images and prove they were not Christians during the ban on Christianity. After the lifting of the ban, this site was selected for construction of the church in 1934 based on Father Halbout's strong wish. Local traditions say that the altar is over the very place the *Efumi* ceremony was conducted.



※These images are for illustrative purposes only.

Comparison of the village area: past and present

Past



Pictorial map of Sakitsu Village (Created after 1842 and kept by the Matsuura Family in Amakusa.)

Present



Introduction to other spots in Sakitsu Village in Amakusa

A Amakusa City Sakitsu Village Guidance Centre



①



①

This centre provides necessary information for visitors with audio-visual materials and brochures. The staff of the centre explains visiting manners in the village and Sakitsu Church to visitors.

- Address: 1117-10 Kawaura, Kawaura-machi, Amakusa City TEL: +81-969-78-6000
- Opening hours: 9:00 to 17:30
- Closed from 30th Dec. to 1st Jan.
- Admission free

B Rest space 'Oyasumi-dokoro Yorankana' and *Kake* pier



①



①

Kake pier

This building was formerly the house of fishermen's boss, but it is now used as rest space for visitors. *Kake pier* is an overhanging terrace used by fishermen for anchoring boats, making dried fish, maintaining fishing implement, and other purposes.

C Viewing spot ① facing Sakitsu Village



①

Sakitsu Church in front was the place where the former village headman's house stood during the ban on Christianity. That place, Sakitsu Suwa Shrine, its frontal approach and the other village area have still retained nearly the same features since the period of the ban. Today in Sakitsu Village, we can see a distinctive landscape in which the Catholic church coexists with facilities of Japanese traditional religions.

D Grave of Father Halbout



①

Father Halbout from France built the current Sakitsu Church. He was sent to Sakitsu as missionary in December 1927. Since then, he devoted himself to church construction and missionary work until he died at the age of 81 in January 1945.

Introduction to other spots in Sakitsu Village in Amakusa

E Visitor centre of Sakitsu Village



①

The staff of this centre explain the history of the village and other topics to visitors. The staff also explain the code of etiquette in the village to visitors and watch over the church building.

F Sakitsu Church



②



①



①

Sakitsu Church was built in 1934 using donations from Father Halbout and villagers. Although the plan was for the church to be built with concrete, because the builders switched to wood halfway through due to lack of funds it has become a unique church featuring a mixture of grey concrete and white wooden components. Since the construction of the church, tatami mats have been placed for worshippers to be seated on the floor during Mass, accommodating the lifestyle in Japan.

Code of etiquette

A church is a place of prayer. When visiting, you are kindly requested to observe the code of etiquette and respect the church's spiritual atmosphere.

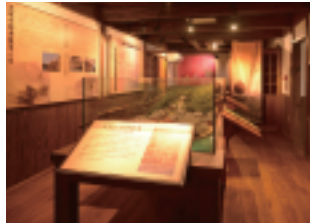
- Please remove your hat and respect the church's spiritual atmosphere.
- Please do not touch any statues or other items within the church.
- Please do not enter the chancel (the area surrounding the altar and marked by an altar rail).
- Please do not eat, drink or smoke within the church.
- Please do not take photos inside the church.
- Please refrain from entering the church to sightsee when a Mass or other religious ceremony is being held.
- Thank you for your donation towards the preservation of the church. Offertory boxes are set inside the church.



G Sakitsu Archive Centre 'Minatoya'



①



①

- Address: 463 Sakitsu, Kawaura-machi, Amakusa City
TEL: +81-969-75-9911
- Opening hours: 9:00 to 17:00
- Closed from 30th Dec. to 1st Jan.
- Admission free

Renovation was conducted for a Japanese style inn built in 1936 in order to use it as an archive centre. This centre houses an exhibit of Hidden Christian devotional tools that have been inherited and preserved by inhabitants in Sakitsu Village, as well as materials owned by Sakitsu Church. This centre explains the history of Sakitsu Village and the distinctive way of practising the Christian faith with audio-visual materials, panels and diorama.

H Gallery 'Tsudoi-dokoro Matsuda'



①

This gallery displays painting and other materials on the history and atmosphere of Sakitsu Village. Visitors can use it as rest space.

- Address: 470 Sakitsu, Kawaura-machi, Amakusa City
- Opening hours: 9:00 to 17:00
- Closed from 30th Dec. to 1st Jan.
- Admission free

I Viewing spot ② facing Sakitsu Village



①

One can command a panoramic view here of Sakitsu Village. The village has retained its original layout, such as the main streets, residential areas, religious sites and their remains dating back to the period of the ban on Christianity. These elements constitute the village's distinctive landscape.

J Statue of the Virgin Mary on the cape



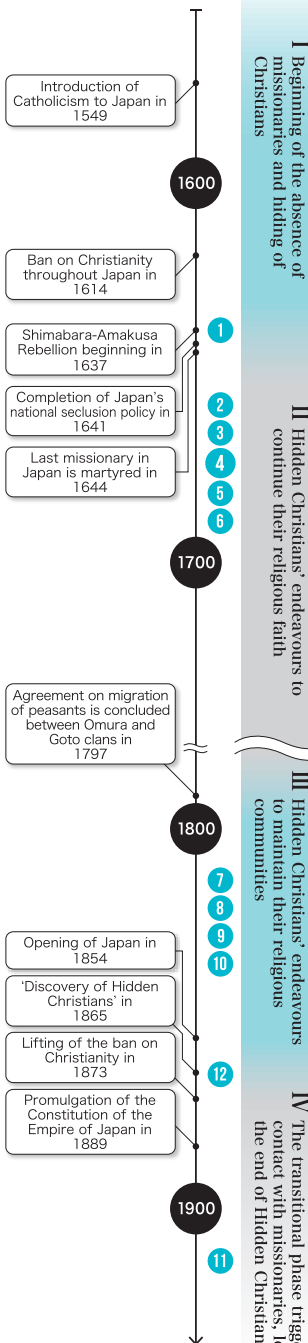
※Please see this statue from around the Sakitsu branch of the Amakusa fisheries cooperative.



②

This statue of the Virgin Mary was built in 1974 with the efforts of many people as a symbol of everlasting deep faith. It also serves as a marine navigation aid and a light for the heart for fishers. The sea cliff was a place of faith where Hidden Christians felt the presence of the Virgin Mary. The view of the sun setting behind the statue of Mary creates a romantic atmosphere and is famous as one of the eight most beautiful sunset views in Amakusa City.

12 components of 'Hidden Christian Sites in the Nagasaki Region'



Inquiries regarding Sakitsu Village in Amakusa:
Amakusa City, Tourism and Culture Department, World Heritage Promotion Division
 Address: 5253 Kawaura, Kawaura-machi, Amakusa City, Kumamoto Prefecture 863-1202 JAPAN
 TEL: +81-969-76-1116
 [Website] <http://www.city.amakusa.kumamoto.jp/sakitsu-sekai/>
 [Email] sekai@city.amakusa.lg.jp

Issued by **Prefectures of Nagasaki and Kumamoto, Cities of Nagasaki, Sasebo, Hirado, Goto, Minamishimabara and Amakusa, and Towns of Ojika and Shinkamigoto**

Hidden Christian Sites <http://kirishitan.jp/en>

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United Nations
 Educational, Scientific and
 Cultural Organization



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