

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



World Cultural Heritage
Hidden Christian Sites
in the Nagasaki Region

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Kasuga Village and Sacred Places in Hirado

(Kasuga Village, Mt. Yasumandake
and Nakaenoshima Island)

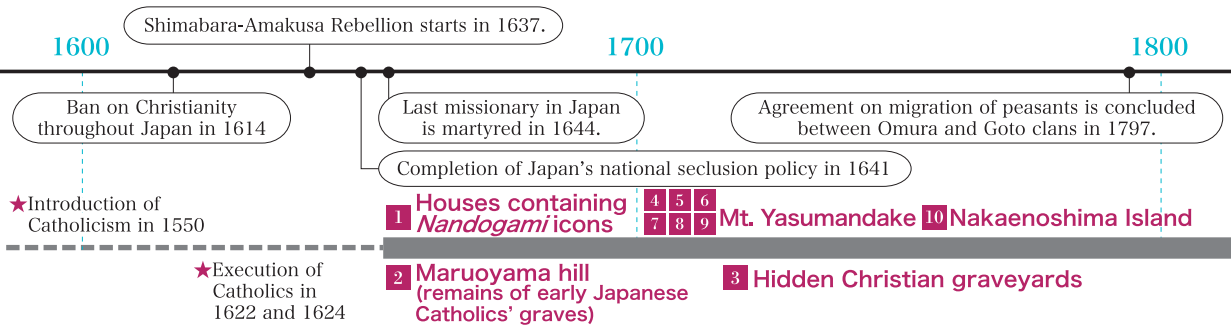
Guide Map



Significance of Kasuga Village and Sacred Places in Hirado (Kasuga Village, Mt. Yasumandake and Nakaenoshima Island)

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

II. Hidden Christians' endeavours to continue their religious faith



Position in 'Hidden Christian Sites in the Nagasaki Region'

- ◎ Kasuga Village and Sacred Places in Hirado bear testimony to what Hidden Christians venerated to practise their religious faith.
- ◎ Hidden Christian villagers in Kasuga practised their religious faith by venerating the mountain that had been worshiped since before the introduction of Christianity to Japan and the island on which their ancestors had been martyred.

《Basic information》

Designation title as cultural assets	Cultural Landscape of Hirado Island
Designation category	Important Cultural Landscape selected by the national government
Year of designation	2010
Location	Hirado City

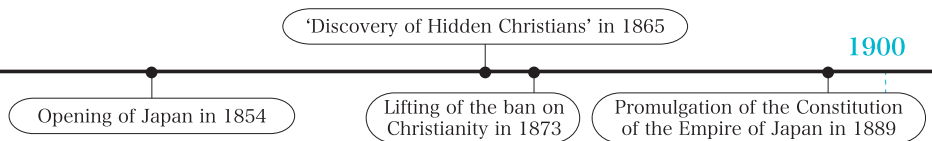
Manners when visiting the village

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.

III. Hidden Christians' endeavours to maintain their religious communities

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



Hidden Christians in Kasuga Village did not rejoin the Catholic Church but their tradition has changed over time.

History

- Kasuga Village lies on the western coast of Hirado Island. The village was ruled by the Koteda clan, an influential vassal of the Matura clan who ruled the entire island. Due to Francis Xavier's Catholic mission of 1550 in Hirado, the Koteda clan were baptised. The people in Kasuga followed suit and Catholic communities were established.
- Archaeological excavation of Maruoyama hill ², located on the centre of Kasuga Village, has revealed graves of early Japanese Catholics. It has also suggested that a cross stood on the hill.
- Even after the ban on Christianity was issued, villagers in Kasuga maintained the Catholic communities in secret and continued the faith under the guidance of their own religious leaders. ³
- While also practising Buddhism and Shinto, Hidden Christian villagers concealed their Christian devotional tools in closed rooms (called *Nando*) in their houses; those tools were called *Nandogami*. ¹
- Hidden Christian villagers venerated Nakaenoshima Island ¹⁰ as martyrdom site, on which Japanese Catholics had been executed in the initial phase of the ban on Christianity. They collected holy water for the baptismal ceremony and other rituals from this site.
- Hidden Christian villagers also venerated Mt. Yasumandake ⁴ as a sacred place for their faith. It was an object of ancient mountain worship long before the introduction of Christianity to Japan.
- In 'Kamiyose-no-Oratio', a Hidden Christian prayer passed down ever since the period of the ban on Christianity, prayers are offered to Mt. Yasumandake, using the respectful expression, 'Yasumandake-sama'. It indicates how important the mountain was for the Hidden Christian faith.
- In such ways, the Hidden Christian villagers practised their religious faith by venerating the mountain and the island during the religious ban.
- The villagers in Kasuga did not rejoin the Catholic Church, even after they met Catholic missionaries after the 'Discovery of Hidden Christians', and instead decided to continue with their own religious system, nurtured during the ban. This system gradually declined and no longer exists in the village.

Wide-area map around Kasuga Village and Sacred Places in Hirado



Ikitsuki Island

10

Nakaenoshima Island

※It is not allowed to land on the island.



Ikitsuki Ohashi Bridge

'Shimanoyakata' Hirado City Ikitsuki Town Museum

※Nandogami icons are exhibited here.

Kasuga Village

Kasuga Village

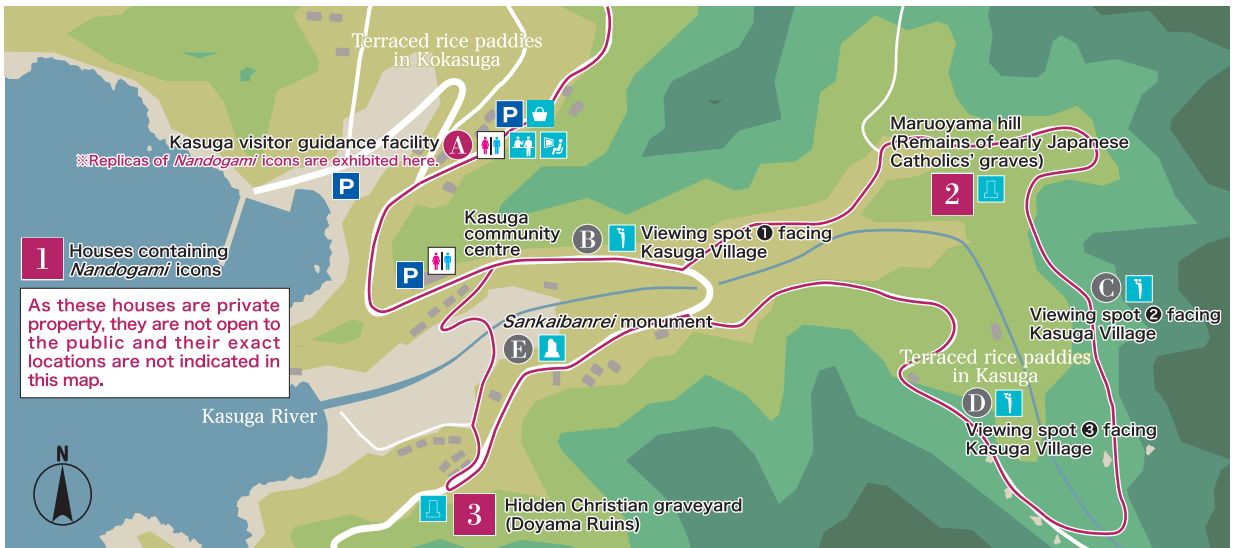
4 Mt. Yasumandake

Mt. Yasumandake

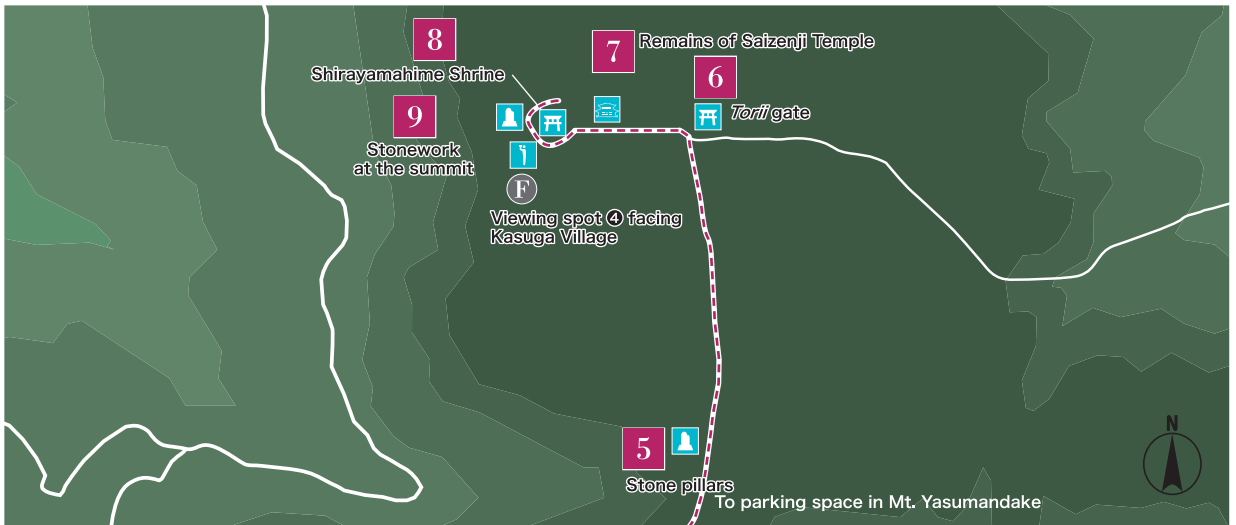
Parking space in Mt. Yasumandake

Enlarged map of Kasuga Village and Sacred Places in Hirado

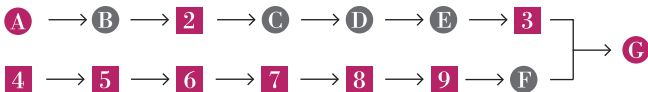
Kasuga Village



4 Mt. Yasumandake



《Recommended route》



.....	Boundaries of the component	A	Guidance facility		Guide and information office		Mountain		Viewing spot		Tomb or graveyard
-----	On foot	Ⓐ	Other spot		Rest space		Island		Shinto shrine		Remains of tomb or graveyard
———	On foot or by car, etc.	P	Parking space		Exhibition		Remains of Buddhist temple		Monument, etc.		
0	Important spot		Toilets		Shop						

Introduction to important spots in Kasuga Village and Sacred Places in Hirado

1 Houses containing *Nandogami* icons

※ *Nandogami* icons are exhibited in the Kasuga visitor guidance facility (A) and 'Shimanoyakata' Hirado City Ikitsuki Town Museum (C).

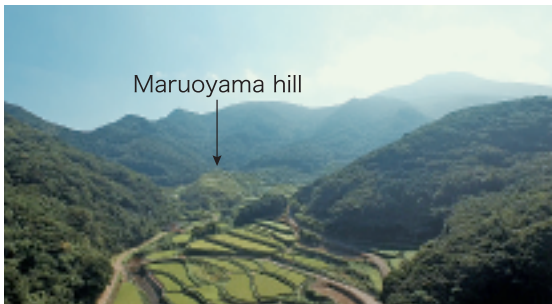


A Hidden Christian devotional tool called *Oterpensha*



During the ban on Christianity, Hidden Christians in Kasuga kept their devotional tools in the inner part of their houses called *Nando*. These devotional tools were brought to Kasuga by Catholic missionaries in the 16th century, and became the objects of covert prayers during the ban. The villagers used these tools for their religious rites.

2 Maruoyama hill (Remains of early Japanese Catholics' graves)



①



A letter from a Jesuit missionary in the 16th century indicates that there were a church and a cross in Kasuga Village. Archaeological excavation of Maruoyama hill revealed several pits considered to be the remains of Christian graves of that century. Judging from their location and comparing with other locations, this finding suggests the cross used to be on this hill overlooking the village.

3

Hidden Christian graveyard (Doyama Ruins)



The remains of graves are around this small shrine.

Archaeological excavation in Doyama Ruins has revealed an old graveyard presumably created in the early phase of the ban on Christianity. A rectangular arrangement of stones of around 20 to 30 cm in diameter is similar to the shape of the Christian grave excavated in a neighbouring village. At the back of the cemetery is the small stone shrine venerated by the residents of Kasuga Village as 'Inari-sama'.

4

Mt. Yasumandake



There are a Shinto shrine, the site of a Buddhist temple, and various stone work, demonstrating that the mountain has been worshipped by Buddhists and Shinto practitioners since antiquity. Hidden Christians in this area also venerated the mountain as well as martyrdom sites of their ancestors in the absence of church buildings. They offered prayers to the mountain in their 'Kamiyose-no-Oratio', respectfully calling it 'Yasumandake-sama'.

5

Stone pillars



The stone pillars are depicted in a 19th-century pictorial map, marking the boundary of the natural forest around the summit of Mt. Yasumandake.

6

Torii gate



This gate was erected at the entrance of a paved approach to the summit of Mt. Yasumandake. A Shinto shrine, remains of a Buddhist temple and other features are depicted in a 17th-century pictorial map.

①

7

Mt. Yasumandake (Remains of Saizenji Temple)



①

Saizenji Temple was established at the summit of Mt. Yasumandake around the beginning of the 8th century, at the same time as the establishment of Shirayamahime Shrine. The temple was abandoned in the Meiji era, but its foundation stones, pond and stone structures still remain within the precincts. It is known from a Jesuit's letter written in the 16th century that a mountain-based Buddhist group led by Saizenji Temple was hostile to Catholic missionaries.

8

Mt. Yasumandake (Shirayamahime Shrine)



This Shinto shrine (also known as Hakusan Gongen) is said to have received a tutelary deity in 718 from Kaga-hakusan-gu Shrine, which was one of the major bases of mountain worship in Japan. Although the shrine building was reconstructed during the modern period, its foundation stones and *Torii* gate date back to the period of the ban on Christianity. Shrine festivals are held in spring and autumn.

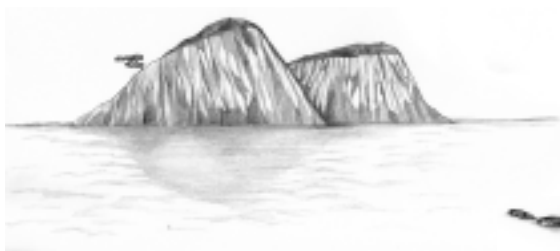
9

Mt. Yasumandake (Stonework at the summit)



①

A stone shrine on the summit of the mountain was called Kirishitan Hokora by Hidden Christians in Kasuga. The mountain well demonstrates how the Hidden Christians practised their religious faith together with Buddhism and Shinto.



※These images are for illustrative purposes only.

10 Nakaenoshima Island



※As it is easy to slip and extremely dangerous on the island, tourists are not allowed to land it.



Nakaenoshima Island has been an important place for believers in Hirado on which Hidden Christians, mainly coming from Ikitsuki Island, held a ritual called the Omizutori (or literally 'water-drawing') ceremony to collect the holy water that seeped out from the stones. Hidden Christians in Kasuga Village also revered this island.

Tabira Church

Tabira Church was designed and constructed by Tetsukawa Yosuke in Tabira on the opposite shore of Hirado Island. Its dedication ceremony was held in 1918. The floor plan has three naves. The church has independent roofs over the nave and aisle with a bell tower featured by an octagonal-based domed roof at the centre of its façade. The ceiling is created with rib-vaulting. The church is constructed in brick masonry wall with English bond. The decorative brickwork is its main architectural feature.

《Basic information》

Designation title as cultural assets	Tabira Church
Designation category	Important Cultural Property designated by the national government
Year of designation	2003
Location	Tabiracho, Hirado City

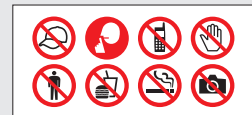


Ⓗ

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.



Give prior notice before visiting the church

When you wish to visit Tabira 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.

'Hidden Christian Sites in the Nagasaki Region' Information Centre

Dejima-Wharf 2nd floor, 1-1-205, Dejimamachi, Nagasaki City, Nagasaki Prefecture 850-0862
Tel +81-95-823-7650, Opening hours: 9:30 to 17:30

<http://kyoukaigun.jp/en/>

"Hidden Christian Sites Information Centre" Search



Introduction to other spots in Kasuga Village and Sacred Places in Hirado

A Kasuga visitor guidance facility

※Replicas of *Nandogami* icons are exhibited here.



An abandoned residence was refurbished to house this guidance facility, which provides brochures, screens videos, and has replicas of the *Nandogami* icons traditionally used in Kasuga Village on display. Please call in here before strolling around Kasuga Village.

- Address: 166-1 Kasuga-cho, Hirado City
- Opening hours: 8:30 to 17:30
- Closed from 31st Dec. to 3rd Jan.
- Admission free

B Viewing spot ① facing Kasuga Village



This spot commands a panoramic view of Kasuga Village.

C Viewing spot ② facing Kasuga Village



①

This spot commands a panoramic view of terraced rice paddies in Kasuga Village.

D Viewing spot ③ facing Kasuga Village



One can see Mt. Yasumandake and *Ningyo-iwa* stone from here.

E Sankaibanrei monument



This stone monument was erected in 1761, during the ban on Christianity, to outwardly show that there were no Christians in Kasuga Village. Similar stones were placed in all other Hidden Christian villages within Hirado.

F Viewing spot ④ facing Kasuga Village



④

The western shoreline of Hirado Island comes into view after passing by the shrine on the summit. The terraced rice paddies which spread across the base of the mountain are part of Kasuga Village. One can see Ikitsuki Ohashi Bridge and Ikitsuki Island. The Goto Islands can be seen, weather permitting.

G 'Shimanoyakata' Hirado City Ikitsuki Town Museum

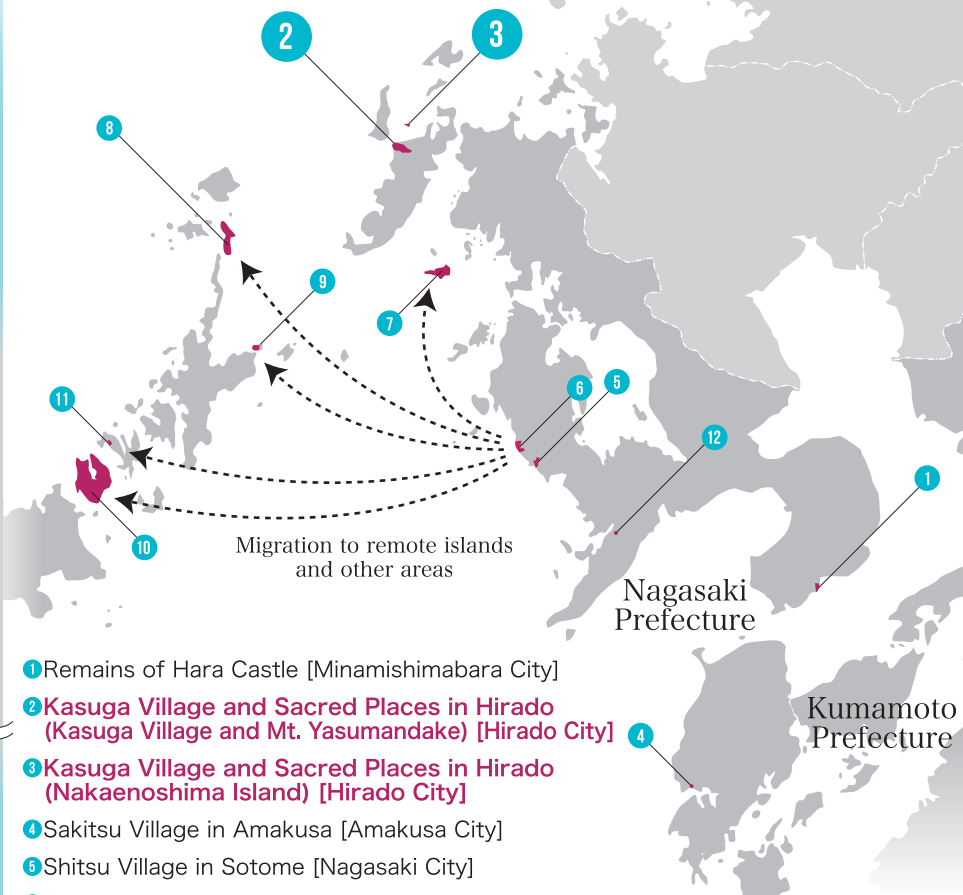
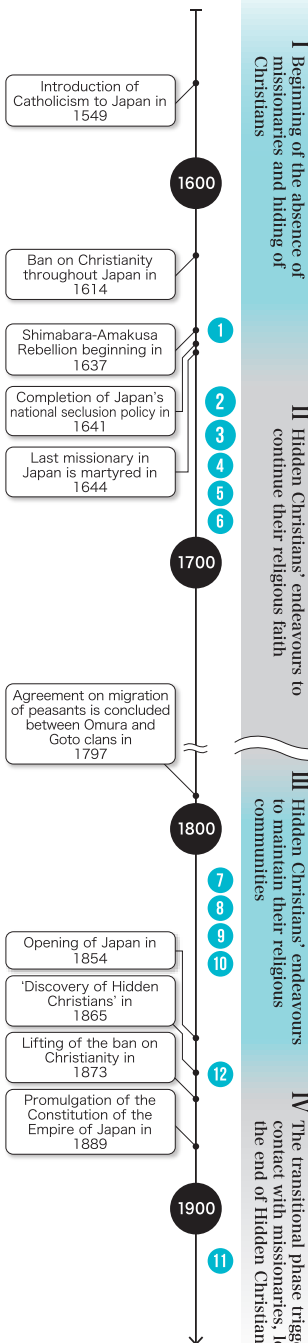
※*Nandogami* icons are exhibited here.



Features include displays illustrating the whaling activities of the Masutomi family, which ran the largest whaling operation in Japan during the Edo period, as well as profiling the beliefs of the *Kakure Kirishitan* and the fishing activities they pursued in their bountiful natural environment.

- Address: 4289-1 Minami-men, Ikitsuki-cho, Hirado City
- Opening hours: 9:00 to 17:00 (last admission at 16:30)
- Closed on 1st and 2nd Jan.
- Entry fee: adults (510 JPY), high school students (300 JPY), students of junior high school/ elementary school (200 JPY)
Group tours (15 or more people): adults (460 JPY), high school students (270 JPY), students of junior high school/ elementary school (180 JPY)
- [Website] <http://www.hira-shin.jp/shimanoyakata/>

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



- 1 Remains of Hara Castle [Minamishimabara City]
- 2 Kasuga Village and Sacred Places in Hirado (Kasuga Village and Mt. Yasumandake) [Hirado City]
- 3 Kasuga Village and Sacred Places in Hirado (Nakaenoshima Island) [Hirado City]
- 4 Sakitsu Village in Amakusa [Amakusa City]
- 5 Shitsu Village in Sotome [Nagasaki City]
- 6 Ono Village in Sotome [Nagasaki City]
- 7 Villages on Kuroshima Island [Sasebo City]
- 8 Remains of Villages on Nozaki Island [Ojika Town]
- 9 Villages on Kashiragashima Island [Shinkamigoto Town]
- 10 Villages on Hisaka Island [Goto City]
- 11 Egami Village on Naru Island (Egami Church and its Surroundings) [Goto City]
- 12 Oura Cathedral [Nagasaki City]



Inquiries regarding Kasuga Village and Sacred Places in Hirado:
Culture and Exchange Division, Department of Culture, Tourism and Commerce and Industry, Hirado City
 1508-3 Iwanoue-cho, Hirado City, Nagasaki Prefecture 859-5192 JAPAN
 TEL: +81-950-22-4111
 [Website] <https://www.city.hirado.nagasaki.jp/>
 [Email] sekaiisan@city.minamishimabara.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 Search <http://kirishitan.jp/en>

Photographers/ ㊦ Ikeda Tsutomu, ㊦ Higurashi Yuichi
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 Educational, Scientific and
 Cultural Organization



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