

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



World Cultural Heritage
Hidden Christian Sites
in the Nagasaki Region

12

Oura Cathedral

Guide Map

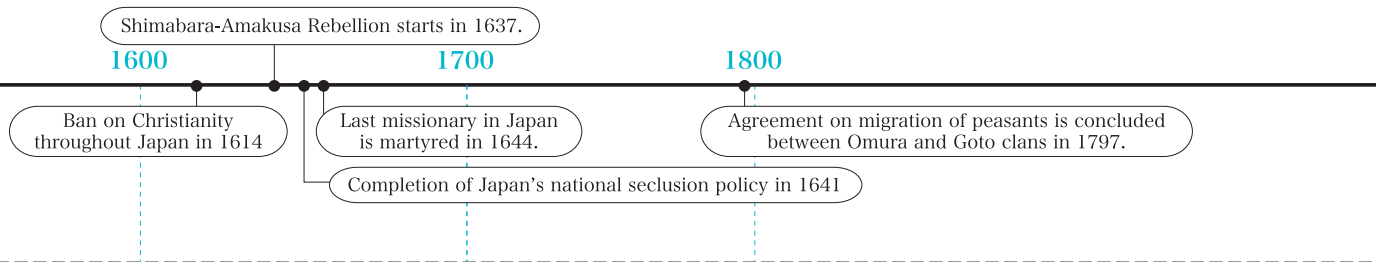


Significance of Oura Cathedral

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 community



★Martyrdom of Twenty-six Martyrs of Japan in 1597

Position in 'Hidden Christian Sites in the Nagasaki Region'

- ◎ Oura Cathedral is one of the components that bears testimony to what triggered the end of 'hiding' of Hidden Christians.
- ◎ Oura Cathedral is the site of the 'Discovery of Hidden Christians', an encounter with returned Catholic missionaries that led to the end of 'hiding'.

《Basic information》

Designation title as cultural assets	Oura Cathedral
Designation category	National Treasure
Year of designation	1933
Location	Minamiyamate-machi, Nagasaki City
Designation title as cultural assets	Former Latin Seminary
Designation category	Important Cultural Property designated by the national government
Year of designation	1972
Location	Minamiyamate-machi, Nagasaki City
Designation title as cultural assets	Minamiyamate Preservation District for Groups of Traditional Buildings
Designation category	Important Preservation District for Groups of Traditional Buildings selected by the national government
Year of designation	1991
Location	Minamiyamate-machi, Nagasaki City
Designation title as cultural assets	Precincts of Oura Cathedral
Designation category	Historic Site designated by the national government
Year of designation	2012
Location	Minamiyamate-machi, Nagasaki City

Visit information

Opening hours: 8:00 to 18:00 (last admission at 17:30) through the year
Entry fee: adults (1,000 JPY), students of high school/ junior high school (400 JPY), elementary school students (300 JPY)

*Group discounts (100 JPY per person) apply to groups of 20 or more. However, all school trip students are eligible, even in groups smaller than 20.

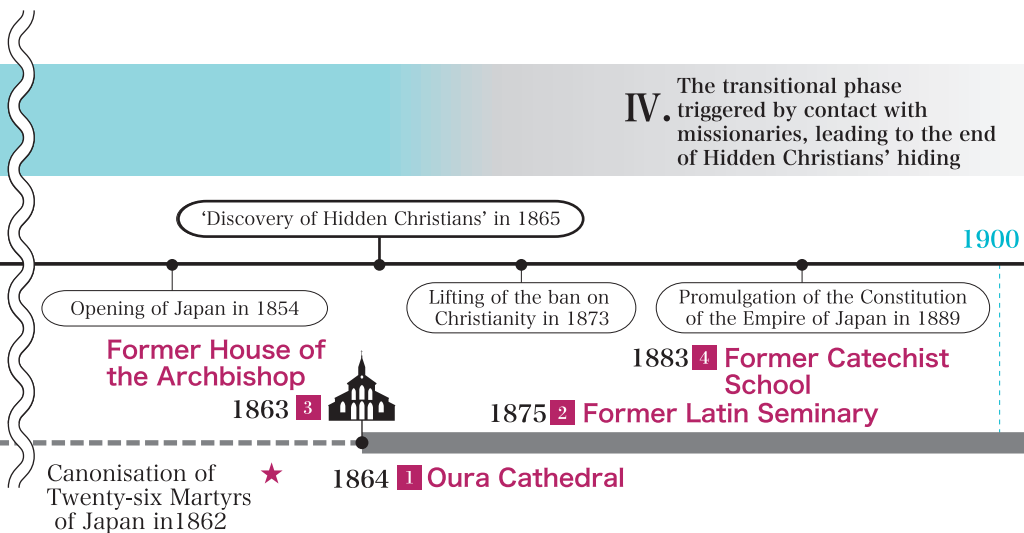
Oura Cathedral

5-3 Minamiyamate-machi, Nagasaki City

TEL: +81-95-823-2628

<http://www.city.nagasaki.lg.jp/>

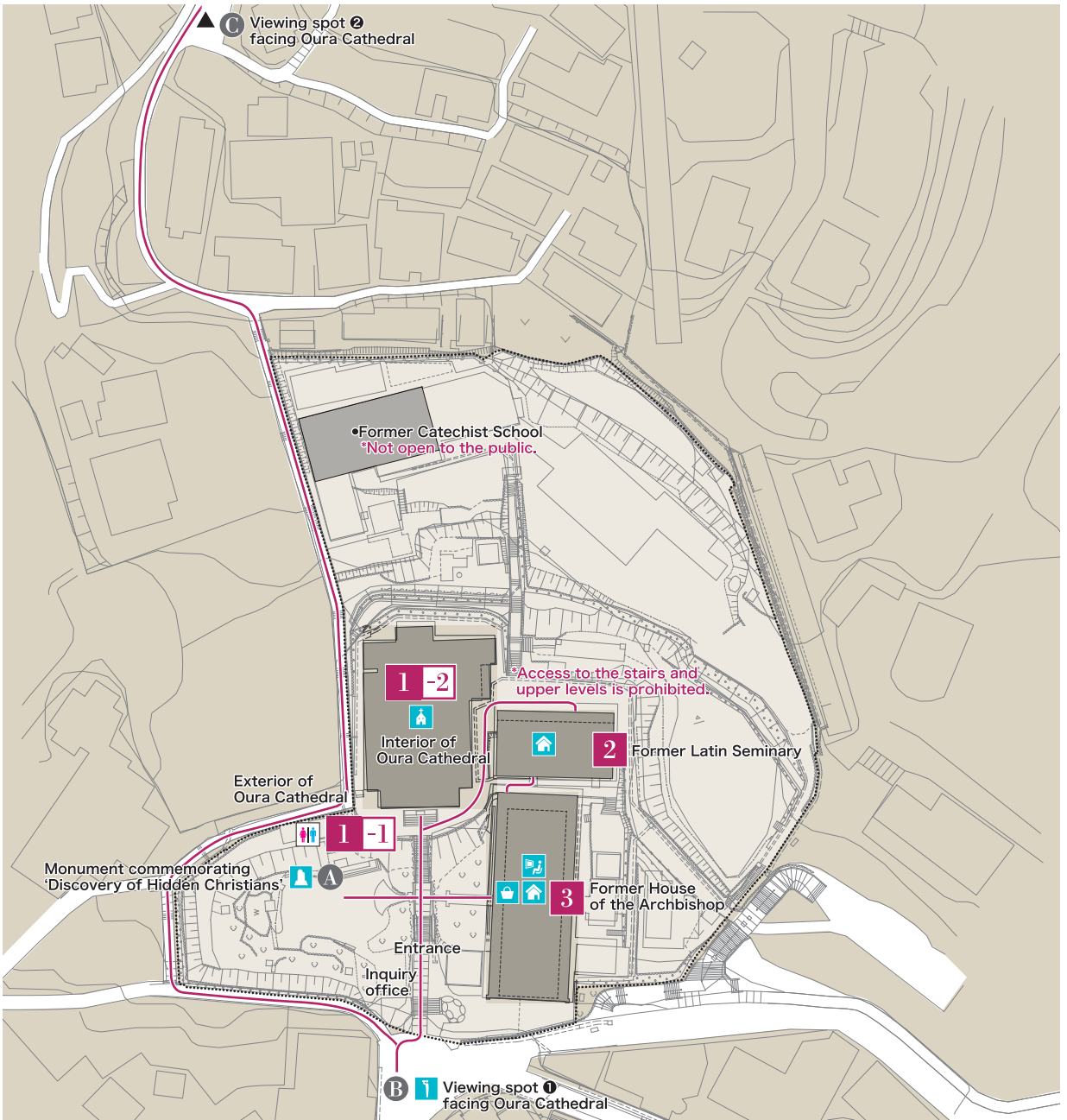
IV. The transitional phase triggered by contact with missionaries, leading to the end of Hidden Christians' hiding



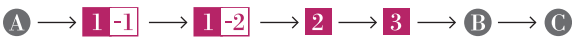
History

- ◎ French missionaries built Oura Cathedral **1** in 1864 for foreigners living in the Nagasaki Foreign Settlement which had been established following the opening of Japan to overseas trade in the middle of the 19th century.
- ◎ Within the precincts of the cathedral, a parish house **3** was built first in 1863.
- ◎ Oura Cathedral faces in the direction of a hill in Nagasaki where the 26 Catholics were martyred in the 16th century.
- ◎ Soon after the completion of the cathedral, Hidden Christians from suburbs of Nagasaki visited the church and revealed their secret faith.
- ◎ This encounter between the Hidden Christians and the missionaries for the first time in two centuries came to be called the 'Discovery of Hidden Christians'.
- ◎ News of this encounter immediately reached the Hidden Christian communities in the Nagasaki region, encouraging their leaders to visit the missionaries at the church as well.
- ◎ Such contact with the missionaries brought about a new phase in the religious identity of the Hidden Christian communities and prompted various reactions among them. Some Hidden Christians were captured and brutally persecuted by the authorities for professing their faith since the ban on Christianity had not yet been lifted.
- ◎ Due to increasing protests from Western countries, the Meiji Government officially lifted the ban on Christianity in 1873.
- ◎ Following the lifting of the ban, the Latin Seminary **2** and the Catechist School **4** were established within the precincts of Oura Cathedral, for the purpose of training Japanese clergy. Many catechists graduated from the school and were sent to the Nagasaki region to carry out their missionary work. The Latin Seminary and the Catechist School provided the driving forces encouraging Hidden Christians to rejoin the Catholic Church during the transitional phase.

Map around Oura Cathedral



《Recommended route》



.....	On foot or by car, etc.				
-----	0 Important spot				

Introduction to important spots in Oura Cathedral

1 -1 Exterior of Oura Cathedral



①



Oura Cathedral at the time of its construction.
(Photo kept by Ezaki Bekko-ten)

Oura Cathedral was built in 1864. Expansion work was carried out in 1875 and 1879 and it became what it is now. Although the external walls were of white plaster, the cathedral is made of brick. Its upper façade has a building plaque reading 'Tenshudo' in Japanese *kanji* characters, so that the Japanese people could understand. The missionaries expected there would be Hidden Christians who kept their faith secretly during the ban on Christianity.

1 -2 Interior of Oura Cathedral



①



Illustration of the 'Discovery of Hidden Christians'
(A. Villion, *Yamato Hijiiri Chishionokakioki*.)

The central section inside the cathedral is the original building. The 'Discovery of Hidden Christians' took place in front of a statue of the Virgin Mary on the side altar. The news of the discovery reached Hidden Christian communities in the Nagasaki region and encouraged their leaders to secretly visit Oura Cathedral, preparing them for an organised return to Catholicism.

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.



2 Former Latin Seminary



①

This seminary was established in 1875 with the purpose of training Japanese clergy who would succeed the French missionaries. The seminary turned out its first graduates in 1879, and, in 1882, the first Japanese priests since the lifting of the ban were ordained. In 1883, there were 70 seminary students. The Japanese graduates were sent to the remaining Hidden Christian communities in the Nagasaki region and the seminary provided the driving forces encouraging Hidden Christians to re-join the Catholic Church during the transitional phase. The building is used as Christian Museum, displaying materials related to the Discovery of Hidden Christians.

3 Former House of the Archbishop



②

On the site where this house now stands, the original parish house was first built in 1863. The original parish house was rebuilt due to deterioration and, in 1915, the current house was constructed. The building is used as Christian Museum, displaying materials related to the Discovery of Hidden Christians.

4 Former Catechist School



Nakashima Masatoshi, *Fukuin Dendosha-no Naedoko*.

This catechist school was established in 1883 in order to train Japanese catechists. The graduates gave catechistical instruction in the remaining Hidden Christian villages in place of foreign missionaries.

Introduction to other spots in Oura Cathedral

A Monument commemorating 'Discovery of Hidden Christians'



①

The monument depicts how Hidden Christians revealed their secret faith to a French missionary.

B Viewing spot ① facing Oura Cathedral



①

This spot commands a fine view of Oura Cathedral and the Former House of the Archbishop (both in the front of the right), as well as the Former Latin Seminary (in the back of the right).

C Viewing spot ② facing Oura Cathedral



①

Nagasaki Foreign Settlement was established on a hill facing Nagasaki Port. Oura Cathedral was built within the foreign settlement. The cathedral faces in the direction of the martyrdom site of Twenty-six Martyrs of Japan, who were executed in Nagasaki in 1597.

Martyrdom site of the Twenty-six Saints of Japan

In 1597, 26 Catholics, including missionaries, were crucified here for their religion. These Catholics were all canonised in 1862. Six foreigners and three teenagers were among the 26 martyrs. In memory of the martyrdom, Imai Kenji, an eminent Japanese architect, designed a church and Funakoshi Yasutake, a famous sculptor, created a monument.

《Basic information》

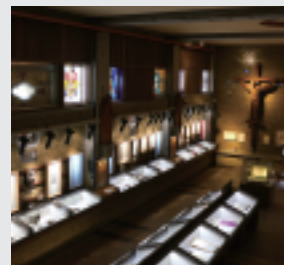
Designation title as cultural assets	Martyrdom site of the Twenty-six Saints of Japan
Designation category	Historic Site designated by Nagasaki Prefecture
Year of designation	1956
Location	Nishizaka-machi, Nagasaki City



②

Twenty-six Martyrs Museum

This museum introduces you to the Christian history of Japan from the missions of St. Francis Xavier, through persecution, martyrdom of the 26 Catholics and hiding of Christians, to the period following the lifting of the ban on Christianity in the mid-19th century. This museum collects precious materials from around the world, such as St. Francis Xavier's letter of 1546, Pietàs in the same style as the images used in the *Efumi* ceremony, and a sacred image 'Our Lady of the Snows' venerated by Hidden Christians.



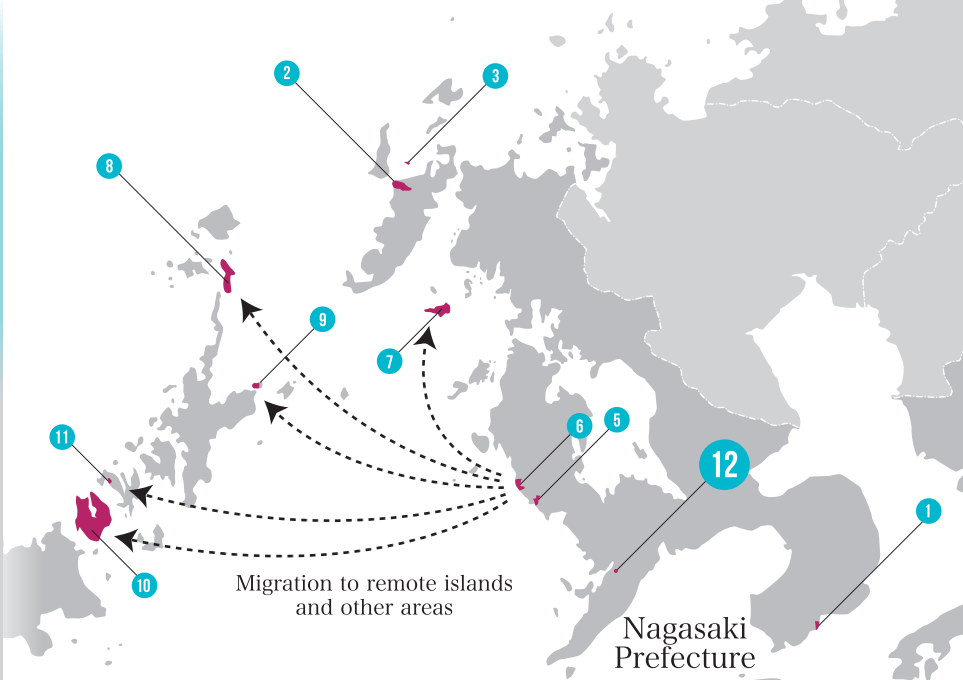
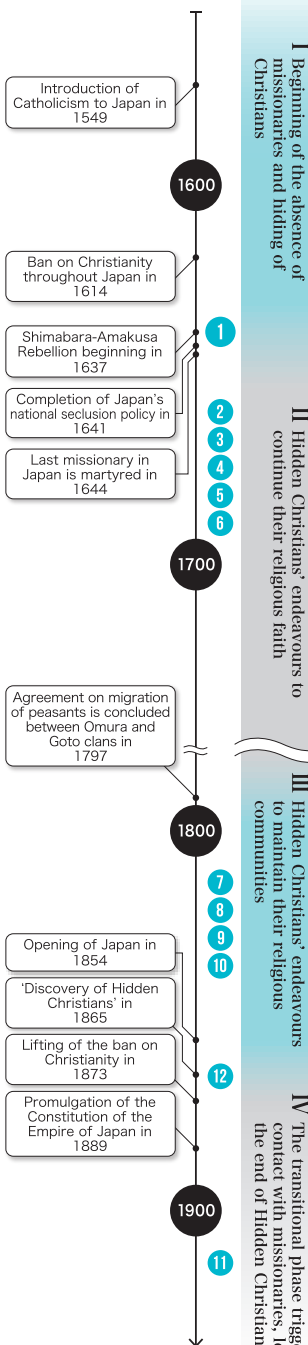
● Address: 7-8 Nishizaka-machi, Nagasaki City TEL: +81-95-822-6000

● Opening hours: 9:00 to 17:00

● Closed during year-end and new-year holidays.

● Entry fee: adults (500 JPY), students of high school/ junior high school (300 JPY), elementary school students (150 JPY)
Group tours (20 or more people): adults (400 JPY), students of high school/ junior high school (200 JPY), elementary school students (100 JPY)

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 Oura Cathedral:
Nagasaki City Ajisai Call Centre
 TEL: +81-95-822-8888, Opening hours: 8:00 to 20:00 (open 7 days a week)
 [Website] <http://city.nagasaki.ajisai-call.jp/>
 Ajisai Call is a one-stop call center handling all kinds of inquiries about systems, procedures, events, facilities, and other aspects of life in Nagasaki City.

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>

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 Issued in July 2018



United Nations
 Educational, Scientific and
 Cultural Organization



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