

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



World Cultural Heritage  
Hidden Christian Sites  
in the Nagasaki Region

5

# Shitsu Village in Sotome

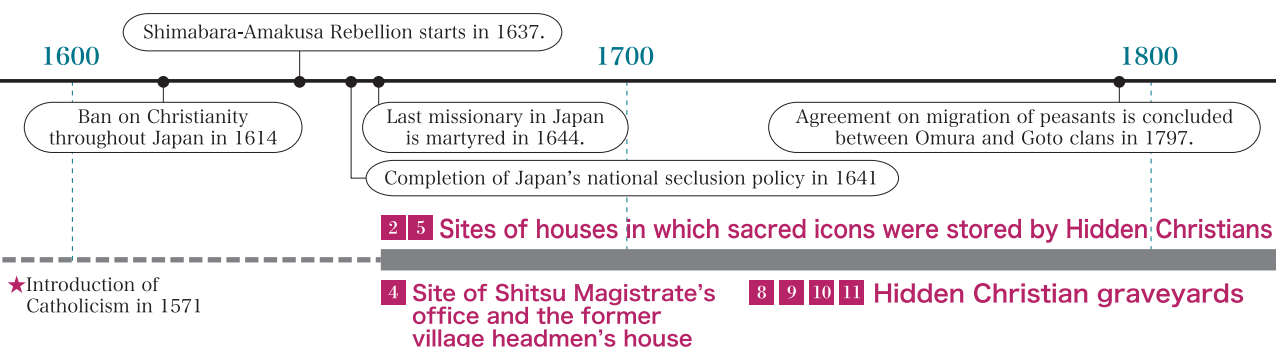
Guide Map



# Significance of Shitsu Village in Sotome

## 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'

- ◎ Shitsu Village in Sotome bears testimony to what Hidden Christians venerated to practise their religious faith.
- ◎ Hidden Christian villagers in Shitsu practised their religious faith by secretly revering sacred icons.

#### 《Basic information》

Designation title as cultural assets	Former Shitsu Aid Centre	Shitsu Church	Landscape with Terraces Retained by Stonework of Sotome in Nagasaki
Designation category	Important Cultural Property designated by the national government	Important Cultural Property designated by the national government	Important Cultural Landscape selected by the national government
Year of designation	2003	2011	2012
Location	Nishishitsu-machi, Nagasaki City	Nishishitsu-machi, Nagasaki City	Nagasaki 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.

#### Give prior notice before visiting the churches

When you wish to visit Shitsu 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/>

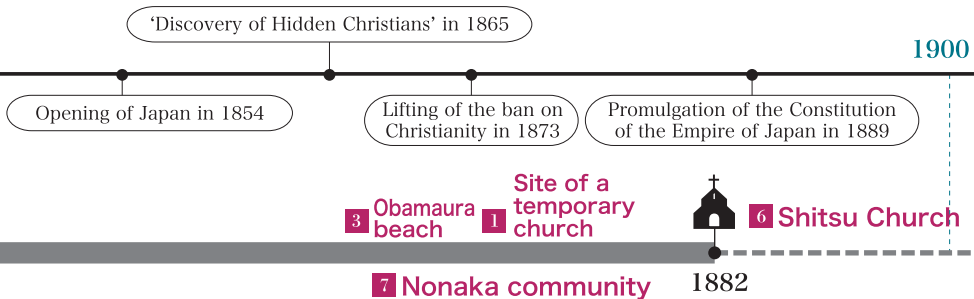
Hidden Christian Sites Information Centre

Search



### 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



## History

- ◎ The Sotome area is on the western coast of the Nishisonogi Peninsula facing the East China Sea. Once Catholicism was introduced into this area in 1571, the missionary work progressed so well that a residence for missionaries was established.
- ◎ After Christianity was banned nationwide, Shitsu Village was ruled by the magistrate of the Saga clan. Hidden Christian villagers outwardly belonged to a Buddhist temple under the administration of the magistrate's office, but they maintained their own religious structure centred on local leaders who compensated for the absence of missionaries.
- ◎ The Hidden Christian structure in the village was composed of several small units called *Kumi*, each of which kept the Catholic liturgical calendar that had been introduced in the early stages of the ban. These units were represented by a few leaders of the village who conducted baptisms and funerals.
- ◎ Hidden Christians maintained the catechism printed before the ban on Christianity, and they passed down a specific prayer (the *Oratio*) by word of mouth.
- ◎ The Hidden Christian villagers possessed several secret icons: a large bronze medal known as the '*Plaquette of the Immaculate Conception*' brought from Europe, a copper statue called '*Inassho-sama*' (4) that originally represented a hermit but was likened to Ignatius of Loyola, and several Christian images (2 and 5) created by Japanese artists in the early stages of the ban.
- ◎ After the 'Discovery of Hidden Christians', the Hidden Christian villagers in Shitsu contacted missionaries and gradually rejoined the Catholic Church. In 1873, they built a temporary church 1 next to the house of an adherent in which one of the Hidden Christian icons had been secretly kept during the ban.
- ◎ In 1882, the present Shitsu Church 6 was built on a hill overlooking the village.



*Plaquette of the Immaculate Conception*  
(Housed in the Father de Rotz Memorial)

# Wide-area map around Shitsu Village in Sotome

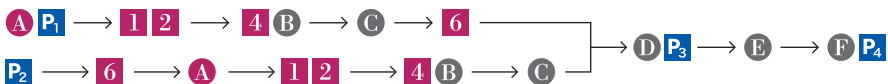




# Enlarged map of Shitsu Village in Sotome



《Recommended route》



.....	Boundaries of the component	0	Important spot	P	Parking space	🏪	Exhibition	🏠	Community	🏡	Remains of related buildings
-----	On foot	A	Other spot	🚻	Toilets	🛒	Shop	👁️	Viewing spot	🏛️	Church
————	On foot or by car, etc.	Ⓜ️	Guidance facility	🛖	Rest space	🍴	Restaurant	🪦	Tomb or graveyard	🏛️	Remains of church

# Introduction to important spots in Shitsu Village in Sotome

## 1 Site of the temporary church

※As this site is private property, please do not enter it.



This is the site where Father Pélu built a temporary church on a follower's land shortly after the lifting of the ban on Christianity in 1873. One can see it at the lower left (near a house with a thatched roof) of an old picture on the left, which clearly demonstrates the location of the church. This location adjoins the site of the house [2](#) in which a sacred icon 'Saint Michael' was kept during the ban.

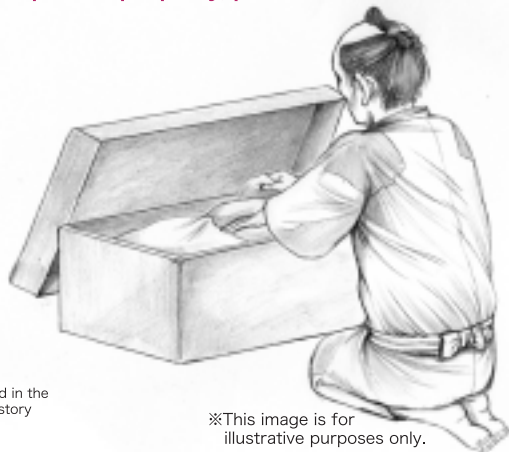


## 2 Site of the house in which a sacred icon 'Saint Michael' was stored by Hidden Christians

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Copy of the icon, housed in the Nagasaki Museum of History and Culture.



※This image is for illustrative purposes only.

At this site, Hidden Christians kept the icon of Saint Michael that had been created in the early stages of the ban on Christianity. In 1867, Hidden Christians developed different opinions as to whether they should return to the Catholic Church. They confronted each other about which group should keep the icon. This event is known as Nonaka Tumult ([7](#)) and the icon was at the heart of the tumult.



## 3 Obamaura beach

※Please see Obamaura beach from viewing spots.



Obamaura is where Father Petitjean landed to secretly visit Sotome six months after the Discovery of Hidden Christians at Oura Cathedral. Obamaura and its location were recorded on a map of 1862. The topography of the beach remains the same as in the period of the ban on Christianity.



4

## Site of Shitsu Magistrate's Office and the former village headmen's house



※This site is located in the precincts of the Former Shitsu Aid Centre (E).



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'Inassho-sama'  
(Housed and displayed in the  
Setome Historical Folklore  
Archive Centre (A).)

The Shitsu Magistrate's Office here managed Shitsu Village during the ban on Christianity. The house of

village headmen also stood in the precincts. In 1872, government officials from the Shitsu Magistrate's Office investigated the religious belief of the villagers, but gave them tacit approval to worship Christianity if they paid their taxes without delay. The village headmen were also Hidden Christians, and *Inassho-sama*, an icon of the secret faith, was stored in their house for generations.

5

## Site of the house in which a sacred icon 'the Fifteen Mysteries of the Rosary' was stored by Hidden Christians



※As this site is private property, please do not enter it.



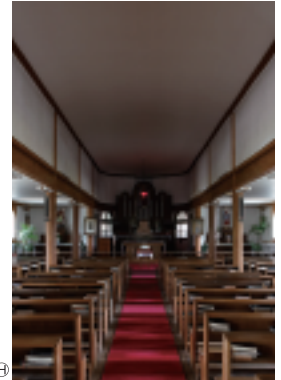
Here, Hidden Christians kept the sacred icon 'the Fifteen Mysteries of the Rosary' painted at the beginning of the ban on Christianity. In 1867, Hidden Christians developed different opinions as to whether they should return to the Catholic Church. They confronted each other about which group should keep their sacred icons. The ownership of 'the Fifteen Mysteries of the Rosary' was also the cause of this Nonaka Tumult (7).

Copy of the icon, housed in the Nagasaki Museum of History and Culture.



※This image is for illustrative purposes only.

## 6 Shitsu Church



After the lifting of the ban on Christianity, Hidden Christians in Shitsu gradually returned to the Catholic Church. Father de Rotz built Shitsu Church on a hill in the centre of Shitsu Village in 1882, marking the end of 'hiding' of the newly baptised villagers. The church was extended in 1891 and 1909 to accommodate an increase in followers, and finally adopted the current design with two belfries in the front and back.

### 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.



## 7 Nonaka community

※As it is private property, please do not enter it.



Nonaka was a key community for the Hidden Christians in Shitsu, and the Christian catechism and other religious items were handed down in the house of the leaders of this community for generations. Nonaka community was where the Nonaka Tumult occurred, in which the Hidden Christians debated whether or not to return to the Catholic Church, confronting each other regarding the ownership of sacred icons such as *'Saint Michael'* (2) and *'the Fifteen Mysteries of the Rosary'* (5). After this tumult, some villagers finally returned to the Catholic Church while others elected to practise their faith in their own way.



## Hidden Christian graveyards



According to a map of 1862, one graveyard was created for each community in Shitsu Village. There were no stone monuments used for marking graves during the period of the ban on Christianity. Many graves were made by piling up crystalline schist, which was gathered locally. Legend has it that the burial method for Hidden Christians at that time was to 'place the head toward the south and to lower the body into the coffin with bended knees'. Archaeological excavation at Nonaka Graveyard has revealed that the burial method was just like that legend.

8

### Kotabira graveyard

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please do not enter it.



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Hidden Christian villagers of Kotabira community used this graveyard, and it is described in the map of 1862. Inside the graveyard, there are several graves that were made by piling up crystalline schist and have no stone monuments. However, many of these graves were moved to other graveyards managed by the Catholic church or Buddhist temples after the lifting of the ban on Christianity.

9

### Shobuda graveyard

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Hidden Christian villagers of Shiroyi community used this graveyard, and it is described in the map of 1862. The graves were made by piling up crystalline schist and these old graves have no stone monuments. A survey on the layout of the graveyard and the style of the graves was conducted in 2016, and ornaments dating back to the period of the religious ban were confirmed within the precincts.

10

### Nonaka graveyard

※As it is private property,  
please do not enter it.



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Nonaka graveyard has been used by Nonaka community since the period of the religious ban, as depicted in the map of 1862. The graves were made by piling up crystalline schist and these old graves have no stone monuments. Archaeological excavation was conducted here, and it revealed that the corpse was buried in line with the burial method used for the Hidden Christians at that time, which was to place the head to the south and lay the body down into the coffin with the knees bent, according to local legends.

11

### Hatakui graveyard

※As it is private property,  
please do not enter it.



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Hidden Christian villagers of Hatakui community used this graveyard, and it is described in the map of 1862. The graves were made by piling up crystalline schist and these old graves have no stone monuments. One of these graves belongs to a Catholic who died in 1871, according to its epitaph, attesting to the existence of Hidden Christians in the community at that time.

# Introduction to other spots in Shitsu Village in Sotome

## A Sotome Historical Folklore Archive Centre



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This archive centre displays historical and cultural documents regarding Christianity and Shitsu Village. It also houses various other materials related to Christianity.

- Address: 2800 Nishishitsu-machi, Nagasaki City TEL: +81-959-25-1188
- Opening hours: 9:00 to 17:00
- Closed from 29th Dec. to 3rd Jan.
- Entry fee: adults (300 JPY), students of high school/ junior high school/ elementary school (100 JPY)  
Group tours (10 or more people): adults (240 JPY), students of high school/ junior high school/ elementary school (60 JPY)
- [Website] <http://www.city.nagasaki.lg.jp/kanko/820000/828000/p000837.html>

## B Former Shitsu Aid Centre



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The exhibition inside illustrates the transition period to the end of 'hiding' when Hidden Christians rejoined the Catholic Church and learnt new production techniques brought by Father de Rotz.

- Address: 2696-1 Nishishitsu-machi, Nagasaki City TEL: +81-959-25-1002
- Opening hours: 9:00 to 17:00 on Tuesday to Saturday, and 11:00 to 17:00 on Sunday (last admission at 16:30)
- Closed on every Monday (or the following day instead if Monday is a national holiday), also from 29th Dec. to 3rd Jan.
- Entry fee: adults (400 JPY), students of high school/ junior high school (250 JPY), elementary school students or younger (200 JPY)  
Group tours (10 or more people): adults (350 JPY), students of high school/ junior high school (200 JPY), elementary school students or younger (150 JPY)
- [Website] <http://shitsu-kyujoin.com/en/>

## C Father de Rotz Memorial



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This memorial houses various materials associated with a French missionary, Marc Marie de Rotz, who contributed to the development of religion, culture, industry and medical service in the Sotome area.

- Address: 2633 Nishishitsu-machi, Nagasaki City TEL: +81-959-25-1081
- Opening hours: 9:00 to 17:00
- Closed from 29th Dec. to 3rd Jan.
- Entry fee: adults (300 JPY), students of high school/ junior high school/ elementary school (100 JPY)  
Group tours (10 or more people): adults (240 JPY), students of high school/ junior high school/ elementary school (60 JPY)
- [Website] <http://www.city.nagasaki.lg.jp/kanko/820000/828000/p000827.html>

## D Yuhigaoka Sotome Service Station



This service station sells local agricultural, forest and fishery specialties. Visitors can enjoy dishes made from local ingredients at the restaurant.

- Address: 149-2 Higashishitsu-machi, Nagasaki City TEL: +81-959-25-1430
- Shops are closed from 1st to 3rd Jan., but the restaurant is open through the year.
- [Website] <http://www.yuhigaoka-sotome.com/>

## E Viewing spot facing Shitsu Village

※Located within the pre-cincts of Yuhigaoka Sotome Service Station (D).



This spot commands a panoramic view of Shitsu Village.

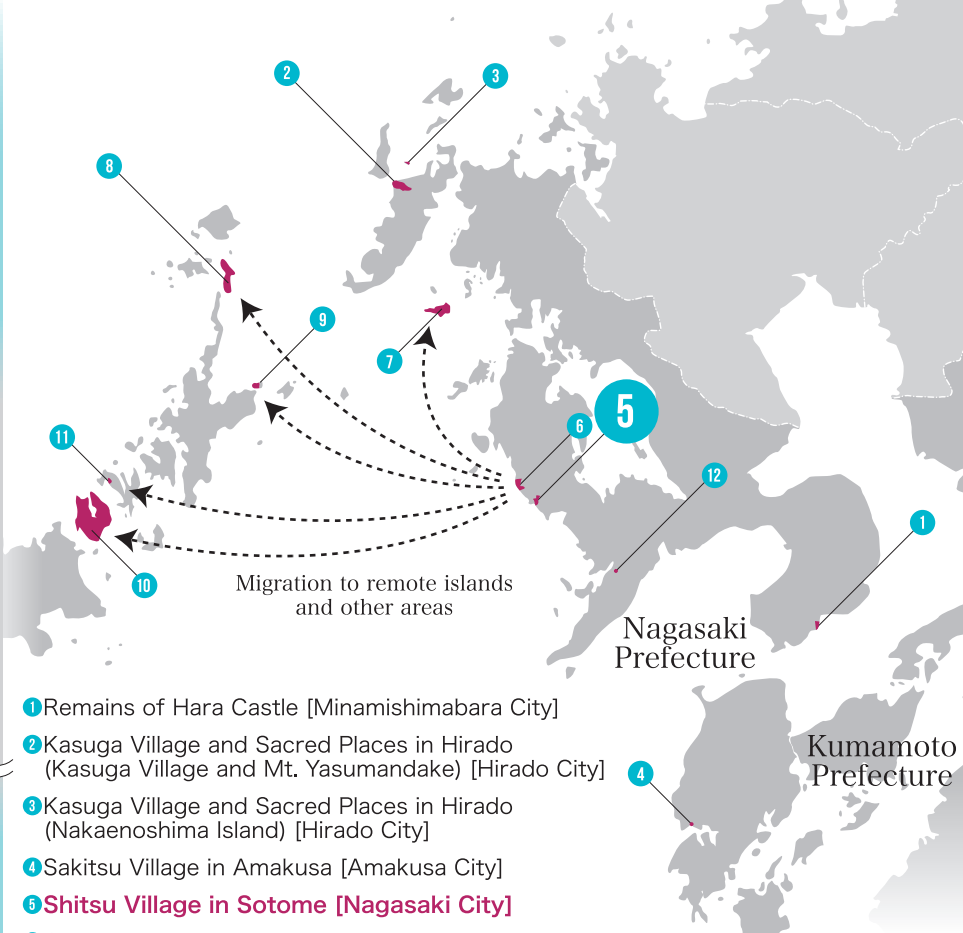
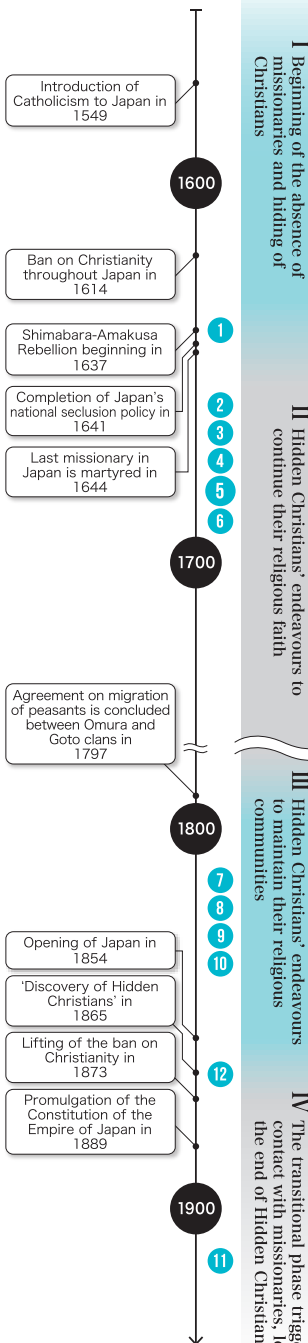
## F Shusaku Endo Literature Museum



A variety of rare materials relating to Shusaku Endo are on display here, including personal effects, original manuscripts, and books.

- Address: 77 Higashishitsu-machi, Nagasaki City TEL: +81-959-37-6011
- Opening hours: 9:00 to 17:00 (last admission at 16:30)
- Closed from 29th Dec. to 3rd Jan.
- Entry fee: adults (360 JPY), students of high school/ junior high school/ elementary school (200 JPY)  
Group tours (10 or more people): adults (250 JPY), students of high school/ junior high school/ elementary school (100 JPY)
- [Website] <http://www.city.nagasaki.lg.jp/endou/facility/>

# 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 Shitsu Village in Sotome:**  
**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/>  
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United Nations  
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