Prior reservation is required to visit Shitsu Church and Ono Church.

Please make a reservation from the Nagasaki Church Information Centre website (http://kyoukaigun.jp/en). TEL 095-823-7650

- No entry to visitors during mass and services.
- The churches would appreciate your kind support through donations in the donation boxes. Donations are used for church maintenance and management.

Tourist Information
Nagasaki City Call Center <daihousan>だいぼうさん</daihousan> TEL 095-825-5175 (For Foreign Travelers)

Nagasaki City Tourist Information Site
http://travel.at-nagasaki.jp/en/

Available in English, Chinese and Korean
8:00-20:00 / Open 365 Days

Publication: Tourism Promotion Division, Nagasaki City Hall
Supported by Kyushu District Transport Bureau
The history of Christianity in Nagasaki is a miraculous one, and is unique in the history of world religion. Christianity flourished after its introduction to Japan. However, it was immediately suppressed by the authorities, and Christians went into hiding. Then, after 250 years of concealment, the world was amazed at the revival of the religion in Nagasaki. This history itself is a heritage treasured by the world.

Christianity was introduced to Japan in 1549 by Christian missionaries who boarded trade ships, at a time when Western nations were pursuing international trade. The great wave of the Age of Discovery had reached Japan.

Despite steadily spreading throughout Japan, Christianity was banned and the government introduced a policy of national isolation. Then, at the end of the Edo Period, the West urged Japan to once again open to the world. Japan reopened its doors and Christianity was revived after 250 years. This revival is an exceptional event in world history.

During the years when Christianity was banned, unique culture and traditions were formed. After the revival of Christianity, churches and culture, which were a mixture between Japan and the West, appeared. The "Churches and Christian Sites in Nagasaki" is comprised of heritage sites which tell the story of this exchange of values between Japan and the West.

Why are we aiming to have these churches registered on the World Heritage List?

Be amazed at the "revival" of the Christian Faith after 250 years of concealment!

The history of Christianity in Nagasaki is a miraculous one, and is unique in the history of world religion. Christianity flourished after its introduction to Japan. However, it was immediately suppressed by the authorities, and Christians went into hiding. Then, after 250 years of concealment, the world was amazed at the revival of the religion in Nagasaki. This history itself is a heritage treasured by the world.

What’s the appeal?

Historical events and exchange between the East and West set the stage for Nagasaki’s churches

Christianity was introduced to Japan in 1549 by Christian missionaries who boarded trade ships, at a time when Western nations were pursuing international trade. The great wave of the Age of Discovery had reached Japan.

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During the years when Christianity was banned, unique culture and traditions were formed. After the revival of Christianity, churches and culture, which were a mixture between Japan and the West, appeared. The "Churches and Christian Sites in Nagasaki" is comprised of heritage sites which tell the story of this exchange of values between Japan and the West.

How long is 250 years?

Imagine taking a time trip 250 years into the past, to the middle of the Edo Period. You will arrive at a time when Christianity was still forbidden. 250 years is a long time; enough time to turn mechanical puppets into real robots.

Why are these small churches, established in Nagasaki City in the Meiji Period, now attracting attention as candidates for World Heritage status?

This is the story of Oura Cathedral, Shitsu Church, and Ono Church. The world is amazed by the history of these places.

This is why the churches in Nagasaki are amazing!

An internationally renowned event; The amazing "Discovery of Hidden Christians"!

At the end of Edo period, hidden Christians, who had withstood persecution for 250 years, visited Oura Cathedral and confessed their faith to Father Petitjean. This encounter is referred to as the "Discovery of Hidden Christians". As the news reached Europe, this "discovery" was praised as a miracle. Many foreigners still visit Oura Cathedral and consider it a place of sacred pilgrimage.

Still adored in Nagasaki! Father de Rotz is amazing!

A French priest named Father de Rotz lived in Shitsu (Sotome, Nagasaki City), an area in which there were many hidden Christians. Even today, more than 100 years after his death, he is still adored by the people of Shitsu. Father de Rotz made great contributions to the area at his own expense. The time he spent with the people of Shitsu is a valuable heritage.
The "Discovery of Hidden Christians": The first meeting between a priest and believers in 250 years

"Believers are welcome" The cathedral's doors remain open

During Japan’s prohibition of Christianity, Europe did not give up hope that there may yet be some Catholics in Japan. Some priests even risked their lives by trying to set foot in Japan in the hopes of finding such believers. Father Petitjean of Oura Cathedral was one such young priest with these high aspirations.

He arrived in Nagasaki in 1863 to join Father Furet. Father Petitjean toiled to build Oura Cathedral, also called the "French Temple", in the foreign settlement. After completion, he ensured that the doors of the cathedral were open every day.

Father Petitjean never stopped believing that fellow Japanese Christians would come to his church.

This may be the first time we have seen the statue of the Virgin Mary, but "We are of one heart with you"

No Christians came forward, and Father Furet returned to France. Father Petitjean inherited Father Furet's "dream", and remained in Nagasaki.

One month after its completion, Father Petitjean was praying in the cathedral when some women approached him and whispered, "We are of one heart with you". After disclosing that they were hidden Christians from the Urakami district, the women asked, "Where is the statue of the Virgin Mary?" Led by Father Petitjean, they looked up to see a genuine statue of the Virgin Mary for the first time in their lives.

This "Discovery of Hidden Christians" is considered a miracle. This is the moment when a light was shone on 250 years of concealment. This is also the moment when these Christians themselves discovered the priest they had been waiting for 250 years.

Keywords
1 The Statue of the Virgin from the "Discovery of Hidden Christians"
The same statue of the Virgin Mary that the hidden Christians saw, still watches over the cathedral with an affectionate gaze. People say that the Virgin Mary looks slightly different in every country, and the priests say that this statue has a French appearance.

2 Stained Glass
The stained glass at this cathedral contains styles from many different eras, beginning with its consecration to the post-war era.

3 Father Petitjean
Father Petitjean was born in 1829 in France. During the turbulent period following the "Discovery of Hidden Christians", he endured many hardships to help hidden Christians from all areas to return to Catholicism.

He passed away in Nagasaki at the age of 55.

4 Rib-vault Ceiling
The Gothic-style rib-vault ceiling looks like a bat spreading its wings.
**What sustained the faith of the hidden Christians for 250 years?**

The "Discovery of Hidden Christians" occurred 250 years after the law prohibiting the practice of Christianity was enacted. During this time, the Christian faith had been secretly passed down generations. It is said that, despite the hardship, people were determined to keep their faith alive out of respect for their ancestors. “We want to pass down our ancestor’s faith just as we protect the fields and houses that we inherited from our ancestors” - this respect and a sense of responsibility contributed to the long concealment.

**Leading a secret hidden life beyond the reach of the authorities**

The hidden Christians who confessed their faith, lived in the Urakami area of Nagasaki City. Urakami today is very vibrant, but in the past people were mostly engaged in agriculture. Being far away from the central area that was under the direct control of the Shogunate, the location allowed Christians to escape from the watchful eye of the authorities. Incidentally, since roads in Sotome were very steep, this inaccessible environment may have also helped hidden Christians avoid detection.

**Hidden Christians prayed in Buddhist temples?!**

Christians disguised their religion under a veneer of Buddhism. They visited temples and listened to sutras, all the while practicing Christianity in their homes. Some secret organizations that led Christian activities in different districts may have existed.

**The priest spoke fluent Japanese. He secretly studied it while in Okinawa!**

The 19th century was a time when Western nations were trying to spread their influence to the Far East. The Opium War broke out in China. France successfully made an agreement with defeated China that gave French missionaries greater freedom and protection. France, which was pursuing exchange with Japan, then sent its missionaries to Okinawa, where Father Petitjean spent two years from 1860.

**The action of the women led to the "Discovery of Hidden Christians"!**

Three women went to speak to Father Petitjean. Rumour has it that their neighbors tried to prevent them from visiting Oura Cathedral, claiming it was a trap made by the Tokugawa Shogunate. The action of these women changed history!

**Then what happened to the hidden Christians?**

Hidden Christians took many different paths after the ban on Christianity was lifted. Some returned to the Catholic Church. Others became parishioners of the temples that had protected them from persecution. There were also those who opted to maintain the unique style of faith cultivated by their ancestors during their 250 years in hiding. These people are known as "kakure kirishitan" in Japanese, and are academically differentiated from those individuals who practised the Christian faith in secret for 250 years ("sampo kirishitan" in Japanese).

**Making the first shrine visit of the year at Suwa Shrine & Oura Cathedral**

In Nagasaki, it seems that many people visit both Suwa Shrine and Oura Cathedral on New Year’s Day. Incidentally, there are shrines and temples located right next to Oura Cathedral. Co-existence of different religions is one of Nagasaki’s charms!
Father de Rotz came to Sotome and sowed the seeds of hope in an isolated land

Even today, the people admire Father de Rotz, who was so full of love

Under strong pressure from Western nations, the Meiji government finally lifted the ban on Christianity in 1873. Freedom was granted after 262 years! The priests at Oura Cathedral were energised for their work.

Six years later, a priest came to Sotome (Shitsu district, Nagasaki). This was Father Marc Marie de Rotz, whose spirit and teachings have been passed down to this day, and who is still adored by the people of Shitsu. Father de Rotz's arrival coincided with the revival of Christianity in Japan, and he began to pour his love into Sotome.

After his arrival, Father de Rotz designed and constructed Shitsu Church. The church standing atop steep terraced fields became the seed of hope for those who were struggling to survive. The location was chosen so that the church would be visible from all over Sotome.

Father de Rotz's love and kindness were poured into this humble structure

Visitors may be surprised by the simple appearance of Shitsu Church, which is the symbol of Shitsu. However, the sisters at the Former Shitsu Aid Centre will tell you that, “This simplicity is the representation of Father de Rotz’s love”. In those days, the Christians in Shitsu were living in extreme poverty. In order not to burden them with repair costs, Father de Rotz designed a simple yet solid building that could withstand strong winds from the sea.

Father de Rotz built the church at his own expense, while worshippers poured their efforts into the physical labor necessary for construction, such as cutting trees from the mountains. Shitsu Church symbolizes the cooperation between the local Christians of Shitsu and Father de Rotz.

Father de Rotz’s Walk

This path was walked by Father de Rotz daily. The small fields and stone-buildings are representative of Shitsu’s unspoilt landscape.

Father de Rotz's love and kindness were poured into this humble structure

Father Marc Marie de Rotz was born in Vaux-sur-Aure, Calvados, France, in 1840. He came to Japan at the age of 28 and moved to Shitsu (Sotome area) when he was 38. He dedicated his life to supporting local residents, and strove to improve their quality of life and education. In accordance with his will, he was laid to rest in Shitsu, where he is still respected and is called “The Sun of Sotome.”

Keywords

1. The Location of Shitsu Church
   The church was built on top of a hill so that it could be viewed from anywhere in the area. Father de Rotz purchased the site, and the church became a beacon of hope for the people.

2. Collaborative Work
   Worshippers devoted themselves to the physical labor of construction by cutting down trees from the mountain and creating the construction materials. Father de Rotz not only gave instructions, but also dedicated himself to the physical work, thus building trust between himself and the people of Shitsu.

3. Father de Rotz’s Walk
   This path was walked by Father de Rotz daily. The small fields and stone-buildings are representative of Shitsu’s unspoilt landscape.

4. Father de Rotz
   Father Marc Marie de Rotz was born in Vaux-sur-Aure, Calvados, France, in 1840. He came to Japan at the age of 28 and moved to Shitsu (Sotome area) when he was 38. He dedicated his life to supporting local residents, and strove to improve their quality of life and education. In accordance with his will, he was laid to rest in Shitsu, where he is still respected and is called “The Sun of Sotome.”
An explosion of Father de Rotz’s love and talent!

A breathtakingly beautiful landscape!

“Father de Rotz’s Walk” stretches from the Former Shitsu Aid Centre to Shitsu Church.

The outer walls of the 1st floor of the Former Shitsu Aid Centre’s vocational facility were made using the “Father de Rotz’s method”. In addition, the freestanding wall constructed at the south entrance with the same “Father de Rotz’s method” was built to shield from the strong winds blowing from the Sumo-nada Sea. The building, designed by the French priest, Father de Rotz, is simple yet stylish.

Father de Rotz lives on in the hearts of the people of Shitsu.

It has been over 100 years since Father de Rotz’s passed away, but still he lives on in the hearts of the people of Shitsu. For example, if the sun is shining on a school sports day, the locals say “Father de Rotz is watching over us”. Even children are said to feel the same way.

Ono Church

Situated on a hill overlooking the Sumo-nada Sea, Ono Church was built as a peripatetic church of Shitsu Church for those Christians who were unable to travel to the latter. Father de Rotz financed the construction of Ono Church himself. The church’s most distinctive features are its walls, which were constructed using the “Father de Rotz’s method”. Locally sourced stone was piled up and bonded with plaster which would not be washed away by the rain (made in the Western style with red soil, lime, and sand). Over 100 years on and it is still in excellent condition!

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Time spent with Father de Rotz changed Shitsu and its people

For the first time, a future of independence brought a sparkle to the young women’s eyes!

Father de Rotz launched many projects to help the people of Sorome escape poverty. He gathered the young women with free time, and taught them how to make bread and somen noodles at the Shitsu Aid Centre. Using the knowledge and skills Father de Rotz acquired in France, these women even produced tea and macaroni, which is said to have been very popular among the residents of the foreign settlement in central Nagasaki.

However, Father de Rotz did not consider making money to be the purpose of these projects. Instead, he wished to give independence to the people of Shitsu. In particular, he wanted to emancipate the young women by teaching them skills which would give them independence. He hoped that this would allow them to lead happier lives.

The time Father de Rotz spent devoted to ensuring the happiness of the people of Shitsu can surely be considered world heritage in its own right.

Father de Rotz’s teachings are passed down from mothers to children

A good speaker and quick to join the villagers in the fields, Father de Rotz also taught advanced agricultural methods. He was an architect and sometimes served as a doctor, and soon became a father figure to the people of Shitsu. Under his guidance, young women gained confidence and became independent. After marrying and becoming mothers, they passed on Father de Rotz’s spirit and wisdom to their children. Father de Rotz’s teachings were passed down to the present day, and today Shitsu produces a large number of clergymen. Shitsu is also known for its many kind-hearted people. As he is still in their hearts the people wonder, “Does Father de Rotz know how popular Shitsu has become?”

Keywords

1 The Women of Shitsu
   Surrounded by a harsh natural environment, many women lost their husbands and sons in accidents at sea and were living in extreme poverty. Father de Rotz’s teachings provided them with relief from their hardships.

2 Father de Rotz’s Tea Plantation
   The tea made from trees planted in the corner of a field gained much popularity and became a successful product. The plants are still thriving.

3 Father de Rotz’s Noodles
   Since the noodle recipe was lost during World War II, it had to be reproduced from scratch by groups engaged in improving the local community. The slightly thick noodles have a firm texture.

4 Odaira Workshop
   Father de Rotz spent 17 years cultivating this field. He gave guidance for cultivating crops. Locals pronounce Odaira as “Oo-deh-rah”.

[Former Shitsu Aid Centre]
The 1st floor has a workshop for making bread, macaroni and Japanese somen noodles. The 2nd floor houses a prayer room.

CFo Father de Rotz Memorial Hall
Originally a sardine net workshop, this building was later used for Japan’s first nursery school. It now houses a museum dedicated to Father de Rotz’s achievements.

12 Churches and Christian Sites in Nagasaki 13 Churches and Christian Sites in Nagasaki
14 Churches and Christian Sites in Nagasaki

“The idea of ‘Prayerful Nagasaki,’” says a sister at the Former Shitsu Aid Centre. “The people of Nagasaki do not turn to anger, but turn instead to quiet prayer. Would you care to say a silent prayer for yourself or someone dear?”

No matter what happens, the church is the “place for prayer” to the people of Shitsu. Shitsu Church is deeply rooted in the local community as a place of prayer. No matter how well-known it becomes, it is not a tourism facility. Therefore, please be considerate of those who are praying at the church when you visit.

A gentle and intelligent sister tells the story of “Shitsu from my perspective”

Sister Akasako was born on Goto island and came to Shitsu in 2015 after serving six years in the “Shitsu Culture Learning Program”. Much of the program focuses on Father de Rotz, in order to reestablish spiritual ties with him. If you ask “What did you do at school?”, they’ll answer “I made Father de Rotz’s somen noodles by hand.” or “I picked tea leaves at Father de Rotz’s fields (Odaira workshop) and made tea!”

Fun fact: the tea trees in the field are said to have been planted by Father de Rotz himself! In addition, when the students reach the sixth grade, they become “junior guides”, and distribute information about Shitsu. Holding handmade posters, they excitedly talk about Shitsu and are full of energy. We hope that you have the chance to meet these little guides from Shitsu!

The people of Shitsu, who have inherited the spirit and teaching of Father de Rotz, are warm and sincere. The gentle people and their smiling faces, which have been nurtured by this environment, are an important part of his legacy.

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Have you heard about the modern-day Lady de Rotz?

Sugino Hiu is the representative of a local revitalization group called “Ferme de Sotome”. She organizes events, such as “Countryside Experiences”, and runs a restaurant called “Vaux-sur-Aure”. Of course, she loves Father de Rotz! She has repaired an antique clock and an organ, both used by Father de Rotz, bringing their sounds back from the past for all to enjoy. Her volunteering activities and devotion to Shitsu have earned her the name “Lady de Rotz”.

The Church Watchmen in happy yellow jumpers!

Wearing yellow jumpers at Shitsu Church, these two men are rather eye-catching! With the goal of World Heritage registration in mind, Mr. Takahashi and Mr. Yamamoto have been acting as “Church Watchmen” since 2015. They are both Christians from Shitsu. However, unlike the older generation in Shitsu, which is welcoming but shy, these two like to mingle with others, and smilingly admit it. The role of “Church Watchmen” gives them the wonderful challenge of being tour guides for the first time. We’re rooting for them!

The students of Shitsu Elementary School spend six years in the “Shitsu Culture Learning Program”. Much of the program focuses on Father de Rotz, in order to reestablish spiritual ties with him. If you ask “What did you do at school?”, they’ll answer “I made Father de Rotz’s somen noodles by hand.” or “I picked tea leaves at Father de Rotz’s fields (Odaira workshop) and made tea!”

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This is an example tour for seeing Nagasaki’s churches.

**Day 1:** Enjoy food and the night view in the city center.

- **8:00 Nagasaki Station**
- **9:00** Start at the JR Nagasaki Station
- **9:10** Alight at TSUKI-MACHI
- **9:15** Lunchtime
- **9:30** Oura Cathedral
- **10:30** Glover Garden
- **11:30** Dinner in Shianbashi
- **13:00** Father de Rotz Memorial Museum
- **14:00** Endo Shusaku Aid Centre
- **15:00** Father de Rotz Memorial Museum
- **16:00** Return home

**Day 2:** Explore Sotome and immerse yourself in the world beloved by Father de Rotz.

- **9:00 Nagasaki City**
- **9:30** Start at the Nagasaki City
- **10:00** Ono Church
- **11:00** Former Shitsu Aid Centre
- **11:30** Visit the place where the women of Shitsu learned and worked. Enjoy buying specialty goods and souvenirs!
- **12:00** Shitsu Church
- **12:30** Lunch at the Roadside Station
- **13:00** Endo Shusaku Aid Centre
- **13:30** Visit the place where the women of Shitsu learned and worked. Enjoy buying specialty goods and souvenirs!
- **14:00** Endo Shusaku Aid Centre
- **15:00** Father de Rotz Memorial Museum
- **16:00** Depart Sotome area

**See all of Nagasaki!**

Nagasaki is a compact city which is easily accessible by streetcar, bus, and on foot.

**Day 1:**
- **11:00** Nagasaki Station
- **11:30** Lunch
- **12:30** Oura Cathedral
- **13:00** Glover Garden
- **15:30** Walking around Minami-yamate
- **17:00** Dinner in Shianbashi
- **20:00** Mt. Inasa night view
- **22:00** Stay in a Nagasaki hotel

**Day 2:**
- **9:00** Nagasaki City
- **10:30** Ono Church
- **11:00** Yuhi-ga-Oka Sotome Roadside Station
- **12:00** Shitsu Church
- **13:00** Father de Rotz Memorial Museum
- **14:00** Former Shitsu Aid Centre
- **15:00** Endo Shusaku Aid Centre
- **16:00** Depart Sotome area

**3 days & 2 nights tour**

- **First day:** Enjoy Nagasaki’s churches.
- **Second day:** Explore Sotome and immerse yourself in the world beloved by Father de Rotz.

**Let’s go to Sotome!!**

- **9:00** Nagasaki City
- **9:30** Start at the JR Nagasaki Station
- **9:50** Alight at SHIANBASHI
- **10:00** Dinner in Shianbashi
- **11:00** Endo Shusaku Literary Museum
- **11:30** Father de Rotz Memorial Museum
- **12:00** Father de Rotz Memorial Museum
- **12:30** Lunch at the Roadside Station
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- **15:00** Father de Rotz Memorial Museum
- **16:00** Depart Sotome area

**Mt. Inasa Night View**

10:30 min. by bus and streetcar

**Shitsu Church**

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- **9:30** Alight at SHIANBASHI
- **10:00** Dinner in Shianbashi
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- **15:00** Depart Sotome area

**Endo Shusaku Literary Museum**

- **9:00** Start at the Endo Shusaku Literary Museum
- **9:30** Alight at SHIANBASHI
- **10:00** Dinner in Shianbashi
- **11:00** Father de Rotz Memorial Museum
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- **15:00** Depart Sotome area
Like Italy, Nagasaki City has a boot-like shape. There are several World Heritage Sites from the "Sites of Japan's Meiji Industrial Revolution", as well as a number of churches, dotted around the heel of the "boot".

Sotome (Shitsu) is situated in the leg of the "boot", and faces the beautiful Sumo-nada Sea.