

Establishment of an Aid Center (1879–)

Father de Rotz arrives in Sotome

The Aid Center

Uniformed Women of the Aid Center

Father de Rotz (age 38)

In 1879, the French missionary Marc Marie de Rotz (1840–1914) was assigned Head Priest of Sotome by Father Petitjean (1829–1884). In 1883, concerned about the poor living conditions of the farmers, de Rotz established the Shitsu Aid Center using money borrowed from his family. The objective of the Aid Center was to teach women to be independent and to provide for themselves. It was used for the production of pasta, Japanese somen noodles, and textiles among other things. In addition, the women learned about Christianity, reading and writing, mathematics, agriculture, flour milling, and bread making. The Center gradually expanded through the 1880s to include a fishing-net workshop, a nursery school, and a medical center. In addition to the Aid Center, Father de Rotz established churches, private schools, farms, and many other facilities in the surrounding areas. After his death in 1914, the Aid Center developed further and became a convent for women. However, in the four decades of its existence, many women had benefited from its facilities and had become independent, realizing Father de Rotz's objectives.