

Father de Rotz

A brief biography

Marc Marie de Rotz (1840–1914) was born the second son of a French aristocratic family in 1840. After graduating from the theological Bayeux Seminary in 1865, he briefly worked as an assistant priest. One year later he joined the Paris Foreign Missions Society to leave for the East as a missionary.

After running a lithography office for 10 years at Oura Church and working in Yokohama, he was appointed head priest at Sotome. Here he devoted himself to the people of Sotome, establishing the Shitsu Aid Center and many other facilities where he could use his expertise in construction work, medicine, farming, and food production acquired in France.

In total he invested around 240,000 francs, sent from his parents in the Aid Center. After founding two churches, improving roads, and offering medical aid for the people of Sotome, de Rotz passed away at 74 years of age. He was buried in the Shitsu Public Cemetery, which he had designed and constructed himself. Fully dedicated to his projects in Shitsu, de Rotz never traveled back to France.

1840 Born in Vaux-sur-Aure in the Calvados Department in Normandy, France

1865 Graduated from Bayeux Seminary and ordained as a priest

1866 Becomes Assistant Priest at Julian Church

1867 Joins the Paris Foreign Missions Society

1868 Arrives in Nagasaki. Establishes lithography office at Oura Church

1871 Transferred to Yokohama, where he works as a chaplain at the chapel of Yokosuka shipyard and operates a lithography office

1873–1879 Assigned Priest of Oura Church. Runs a printing business

1875 Leads the construction of Oura Seminary

1879 Moves to Sotome and becomes Head Priest of Shitsu Church

1881 Sets up Youth Education Center

1882 Leads the construction of Shitsu Church

1883 Establishes the Shitsu Aid Center. Production of somen (noodles) and bread, along with the textile business, starts. Also establishes a citadel.

1884 Cultivates fields in the Mount Hendake. Engages in relief work of famine.

1885 Sets up a sardine net workshop, nursery school, and a mill for grinding flour by water wheel in Watase river in Makino. Also constructs a sea wall in Toishizaki and operates a pharmacy for the treatment of typhoid during an epidemic. The construction of a sardine net workshop is completed.

1886 Assists the residents of Himosashi in their move to cultivate the Tabira and Hirado area.

1887 Purchases land in Takematsu-go, Omura for relief of the poor

1891 Organizes a youth relief corps during an outbreak of dysentery

1893 Leads the construction of Ono Church

1895 Reconstruction and improvement of the prefectural highways, providing food and wages for impoverished villagers suffering from a drought

1896 Expansion of Shitsu Church. (Second phase, from 1893 to 1896)

1898 Establishes a public cemetery in Nomichi, Shitsu

1899 Construction of a macaroni factory is completed

1901 Set up farms and a tea plantation in the mountains of Hendake to promote farming

1904 Renovates the mill into the aid center

1910 The Aid Center is renamed “Shifu Bokusha.” Develops and supervises the construction of the Archbishop’s residence at Oura, Nagasaki

1914 Passes away on November 7 in Minamiyamate, Nagasaki at 74 years old. Buried at the public cemetery (present-day Shitsu Public Cemetery) in Nomichi, Shitsu.