

Stone Markers Showing Foreign Settlement Lot Numbers and Boundaries

Beginning in 1641, the Japanese government closed the country to the outside world and expunged elements of foreign influence. This self-imposed isolation, referred to as the *sakoku* or “closed country” period, ended with the signing of the Ansei Treaties in 1858. The five treaties opened the country to international diplomacy and foreign trade, and they contained provisions effective the following year that opened select ports and allowed foreigners to live in designated areas of certain cities, including Nagasaki. These stone columns were used to designate the lots of the Nagasaki Foreign Settlement and indicate the boundaries with Japanese neighborhoods.

The Nagasaki Foreign Settlement was situated at the mouth of the Oura River and the adjacent hills. Residences were built on the eastern and southern hillsides, called Higashiyamate and Minamiyamate respectively, while commercial buildings and consulates clustered near the harbor.

Beginning in 1899, foreign residents were no longer constrained to living in the foreign settlements, and the markers became unnecessary. Some of the old markers were collected here as the neighborhood developed.