

Nagasaki Masonic Lodge Gate

This gate once marked the front of the Nagasaki Masonic Lodge where local Freemasons held their meetings. The Freemasons are a fraternal society that is believed to trace back to the associations of professional stonemasons that were active in Europe during the Middle Ages. A symbol of the Masons, the Square and Compasses, has been carved into one of the pillars of this gate.

The Nagasaki Masonic Lodge was founded in 1885, and Scotsman John Calder (1847–1892) served as its first Master. Meetings were later held on the second floor of Arthur Norman's (1854–1897) newspaper office in Sagarimatsu. Most of the founding members of the lodge were British men employed at the Mitsubishi Nagasaki Shipyard. Despite much speculation, there is no evidence that either Thomas Glover (1838–1911) or Frederick Ringer (1838–1907) was ever a Freemason. However, masonic symbols can be seen on some of the graves in Nagasaki's international cemetery.

The Nagasaki Lodge disbanded in 1919, and the building was torn down sometime in the late fifties or early sixties, but the front gate was saved and moved to the lawn between the Former Glover House and the Former Ringer House. It was later moved again, this time next to the Former Ringer House. Like many other stone structures in the foreign settlement, the gate is made from Amakusa sandstone.