

The Age of Hiding

1669 (Kanbun 9)

Nagasaki Magistrate Kōno Gonemon Michisada gets bronze founder Hagiwara Yūsa to create 20 brass *fumi-e* reliefs.

1708 (Hōei 5)

Jesuit missionary Father Giovanni Sidotti infiltrates Japan.

1797 (Kansei 9) ~

The Ōmura and Gotō domains agree to move their surplus population; the Sotome Hidden Christians move to the Gotō Islands as a consequence.

IMAGE VII

Mukata no Hama Beach, where the Sotome Christians are said to have come ashore (Gotō City)

1790 (Kansei 2)

The First Urakami Crackdown (19 people who were arrested on charges made by the Yamazato village headman are acquitted for lack of evidence).

1805 (Bunka 2)

The Amakusa Crackdown (Over 5,000 people arrested for heresy misdemeanors are ultimately released).

1838 (Tenpō 9)

The Vatican entrusts missionary work in Japan to the Paris Foreign Missions Society.

1839 (Tenpō 10) or 1842 (Tenpō 13)

The Second Urakami Crackdown (*chōkata* [leaders] and others are arrested after being informed on but ultimately acquitted).

1846 (Kōka 3)

A French ship, with Father Théodore-Augustin Forcade of the Paris Foreign Missions Society on board, drops anchor off Nagasaki; Forcade is not permitted to land.

1853 (Kaei 6)

Commodore Matthew Perry of the United States of America East India Squadron arrives at Uraga and presses Japan to open up its ports to trade.

1854 (Kaei 7)

The shogunate signs a Treaty of Peace and Amity with the United States.

1856 (Ansei 3) ~

The Third Urakami Crackdown, in which *chōkata* Kichizō and other Christians are imprisoned and tortured, is dealt with as an isolated foreign-religion incident.

1858 (Ansei 4)

The Nagasaki magistrate orders an end to the *fumi-e* system.

1858 (Ansei 5)

The so-called Ansei treaties are signed with the five major world powers (US, UK, France, Netherlands and Russia).

1862 (Bunkyū 1)

Paris Foreign Missions Society priest Father Prudence Girard constructs a cathedral in Yokohama.

1862 (Bunkyū 2)

A Protestant church is built in the foreign settlement in Nagasaki.

The Twenty-Six Martyrs of Japan are canonized in Rome.

1863 (Bunkyū 2, 3)

Father Louis Furet, then Father Bernard Petitjean, both of the Paris Foreign Missions Society, arrive in Nagasaki.

1865 (Meiji 2)

Ōura Cathedral in Nagasaki is consecrated.

DISCOVERY OF THE HIDDEN CHRISTIANS

1865 (Genji 2)

The Hidden Christians of Urakami confess their faith at Ōura Cathedral. “Discovery of the Hidden Christians.”

IMAGE VIII: Portrait of Mary, the Mother of God (Ōura Cathedral)

1867 (Keiō 3) ~

The Fourth Urakami Crackdown (Nagasaki Magistrate Tokunaga Iwami no Kami Masayoshi raids secret churches in Urakami).

1868 (Meiji 1)

One hundred and fourteen leading Urakami Christians are banished to the three domains of Hagi, Tsuwano, and Fukuyama on the so-called journey (*tabi*).

1868 (Meiji 1) ~

The Gotō Crackdown gets underway on Hisaka Island with the *rōya no sako* incident.

1870 (Meiji 3)

A group of 3,394 Urakami Christians is exiled to 22 different locations in 20 domains. Ambassadors from the UK, US, France, and the German Confederation request that they be allowed back home.

1871 (Meiji 4)

The Iwakura mission sets out for the West and is pressed on the freedom-of-religion issue everywhere it goes.

1873 (Meiji 6)

Signboards proscribing Christianity are taken down.

With 613 of their number having died in exile, 2,911 Urakami Christians return home.

1889 (Meiji 22)

The Meiji Constitution (the Constitution of the Empire of Japan) permits freedom of religious belief.

1906 (Meiji 39)

Christian-related articles from the old storehouse of the Nagasaki magistrate's office go on display in the Tokyo Imperial Household Museum.

1930 (Shōwa 5)

Conventual Franciscan friar Maximilian Maria Kolbe comes to Nagasaki.

1945 (Shōwa 20)

Urakami Cathedral is destroyed by the atomic bomb.

1953 (Shōwa 28)

Ōura Cathedral is re-designated a National Treasure.

1962 (Shōwa 37)

The Twenty-Six Martyrs Museum and Monument opens.

1977 (Shōwa 52)

Artifacts from the former Nagasaki magistrate's office, many of them Christian-related, are designated important cultural properties.

1981 (Shōwa 56)

Pope John Paul II visits Nagasaki.

2008 (Heisei 20)

Japan's first-ever beatification ceremony is held in Nagasaki. (It is for 188 people martyred in the Edo period: 187 laypersons and Petro Kasui Kibe, the first Japanese to visit Jerusalem.)

2018 (Heisei 30)

Hidden Christian Sites in the Nagasaki Region are registered as UNESCO World Heritage properties.