

Christianity Spreads in Hirado, Nagasaki and Arima

Xavier made his way up from Kagoshima, where he had landed, to the capital, Kyō (modern-day Kyoto). On his way, he preached at Hirado and Yamaguchi, winning over many believers to his cause. A stream of missionaries were to follow him to Japan, leading to the spread of Christianity.

Trade between Japan and Portugal—sometimes referred to as the *nanban* trade—got underway when a Portuguese vessel dropped anchor in Hirado in 1550. As the Nagasaki region served as Japan's gateway to trade with East Asia, Portuguese ships started to arrive in increasing numbers, often bringing Jesuit missionaries along with their cargo. It was from the trading ports like Hirado, Nagasaki, and Arima that Christianity spread to other areas of Japan.

The Japanese showed a keen interest in Western culture, which was so different from anything they had known before. As they learned more about Christian doctrines, they also developed a deeper grasp of the religion.