

Site of the Battle of Okitanawate

This stone pillar marks the site of the Battle of Okitanawate. In 1582, Ryuzoji Takanobu (1530–1584), the daimyo of Hizen Province (modern-day Nagasaki and Saga prefectures) invaded Shimabara in an attempt to expand his territory. Arima Harunobu (1567–1612), daimyo of Shimabara, turned to Shimazu Yoshihisa (1533–1611), daimyo of Satsuma Province, for help. In 1584, Shimazu put his younger brother Shimazu Iehisa (1547–1587) in charge of the army. Although Ryuzoji's army of 25,000 men enjoyed a huge numerical advantage, the Arima-Shimazu force was more familiar with the difficult terrain. They were also equipped with Portuguese weapons that Arima, who had converted to Christianity in 1579, had acquired from the Jesuits. In the battle, fought on May 4, 1584, Ryuzoji Takanobu was killed and his army defeated. To thank the Jesuits for the decisive role they (or at least their materiel) had played in his victory, Arima ceded the Urakami region to them. Urakami has now been subsumed into northern Nagasaki, but remains a bastion of Christianity to this day.