

## **Site of the Father de Rotz Odaira Workshop**

A French aristocrat born in Normandy, Father Marc de Rotz (1840–1914) was recruited to the Paris Foreign Missions Society by Father Bernard Petitjean. He came to Japan in 1868 and was put in charge of Sotome parish in 1879.

De Rotz's passion for spreading the word of God was matched by his passion for directly improving his parishioners' quality of life, and he devoted both his personal fortune and his talents as an architect and entrepreneur to that goal. With its steep wooded hills, the topography of the Sotome area was not fit for agriculture, and the village of Odaira was as poor as the rest of the region. Between 1884 and 1901, de Rotz got the villagers to clear the hillside and construct terraced fields for growing sweet potatoes, tea, and wheat. The villagers sold black tea and wheat-flour pasta and noodles to the residents of the Nagasaki foreign settlement.

Constructed primarily of stone, this building was primarily used as a barn for storing agricultural implements. It was designed by de Rotz, a talented amateur architect who also designed Shitsu Church and the Latin Seminary in Nagasaki, among other buildings. It features massive internal walls that give it the structural strength to resist the ferocious winds that blow in off the sea. Father de Rotz was in the habit of riding up from Shitsu to inspect the crops, and the tether ring for his horse still can be seen on the far side of the structure.

The Congregation of Our Lady of the Annunciation is an order founded in 1975 that evolved from the Jujikai women's service organization originally established by Iwanaga Maki under de Rotz's guidance. The organization is planning to farm the fields once again, and the barn is being restored to serve as a working space.