

## **Nagasaki Museum of History and Culture**

The Nagasaki Museum of History and Culture opened in November 2005. It was built on the former site of the Nagasaki Prefectural Art Museum. Even earlier, the site hosted the eastern branch of the Nagasaki Magistrate's Office, its history reflected in the museum's traditional façade of white-plaster walls on a robust stone base.

The Portuguese, Spanish, Chinese, and Dutch all came to Nagasaki, as international trade transformed the place from a small village into a major city. During the centuries of national seclusion (1639–1853), the island of Dejima remained Japan's only point of contact with Europe. The museum examines how the people and cultures of the countries trading through Nagasaki influenced Japan, and vice-versa.

One section of the museum showcases panels giving a thorough overview of the history of Christianity in Japan alongside items related to the Hidden Christians. Another section of the museum is a faithful recreation of the Nagasaki Magistrate's Office, which once stood on this site, including reenactments of trials conducted in its courtroom.

Other sections deal with the Namban trade (trade with the Portuguese prior to the policy of national seclusion), Japan's relationship with the Dutch, the influence of the Chinese, and all the Western know-how—from the telegraph to photography—that made its way into Japan via Nagasaki from the mid-nineteenth century.