

Sotome Museum of History and Folklore

This museum, which opened in 1982, showcases the history, people, and culture of the Sotome region. The exhibits are divided into three broad categories. The first consists of exhibits related to the traditional fishing and agricultural practices of the region and the improvements introduced by Father Marc de Rotz, the entrepreneurial French priest who helmed the parish in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In the second category are exhibits about the local Hidden Christians. As the community has declined in size, descendants of the Hidden Christians have donated items such as rosaries, prayer manuscripts, and Bastian church calendars to the museum. The third category is made up of exhibits related to the coal mine on the nearby island of Ikeshima. As a coal-producing powerhouse, Kyushu played a crucial role in Japan's industrialization, and Ikeshima mine, which closed in 2001, was the country's last operating mine. There is also a small section on local archaeological sites from the Jomon period (13,000–300 BCE) and the Yayoi period (300 BCE–250 CE).