

Long, long ago Nanban ships tossed by a storm drifted ashore on a bay here in Kawaura, Amakusa.

Kawaura - Amakusa the birthplace of Amakusa's unique history and culture.

Knowing the history of that time, feeling the emotions of those people - maybe you will discover something new.

This map was made by the people of Kawaura who would like you to learn about this town and fall in love.

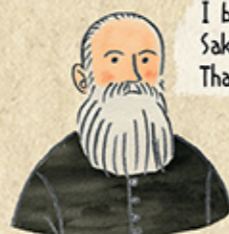


We love Kawaura Amakusa Kawaura History & Culture Discovery Map

The Kawaura region of Amakusa surrounds a horn-shaped bay in a corner of Shimoshima Island. About 450 years ago, Nanban ships came from far-away western lands carrying new cultures...



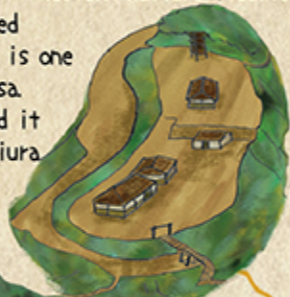
A shrine that split off from Aso Shrine in Higo in 1705. A crackdown on Imatomi village's hidden Christians took place here.



Father Ferriér rented a local home to care for orphans. In 1887 he cleared Mt. Nebiki to open a new orphanage.

I built the former Sakitsu Church. That was in 1888.

A Pure Land Buddhist Temple founded by Shigenari Suzuki in 1645, this is one of the four main temples in Amakusa. The temple grounds and hill behind it are the site of the former Kawachiura Castle. The Lords Amakusa shared meals with Father Valignano and members of the Tensho Embassy at the nearby Collegio.

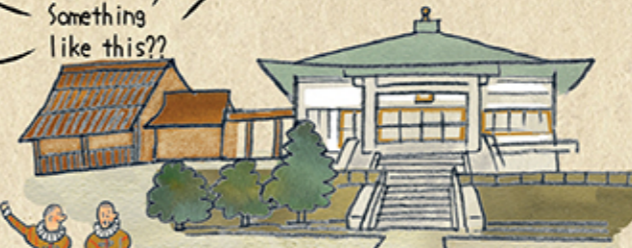


Lords Shigehisa and Hisatane Amakusa ruled from Kawachiura Castle on Shimoshima Island in the middle ages, a time when Christian traditions and western culture flourished in Amakusa.

I was called Miguel.



(City-Designated Building) Tawoyama Kannon Stele



Thought to be the site of a missionary academy. Luis Frois's "History of Japan" describes the Collegio as "built linked to a house." Other churches in Amakusa are built on the site of old temples. It's very likely that the Collegio stood here.



Amakusa

I crossed the mountains to visit the churches in both Sakitsu and Ooe villages.



- Ooe Church
- Amakusa Rosario Hall

Father Garnier worked at Ooe Church, in the next town over. The mountain pass he traveled became known as "Priest Road."

Priest Road



Tatami-floored churches are unusual even in Japan.

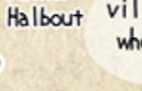
Designed by Yosuke Tetsukawa



I built the church at the village headman's house, where efumi took place in the Edo period.



Kawaura's special sweet, Sugi-Yokan, originated here.



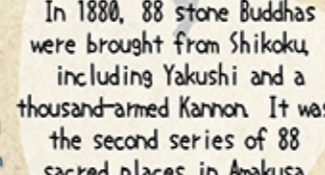
I was the first to bring Christianity to Amakusa.



Almeida Landing Point

(City Intangible Folklore Asset) Ichioda Hachimangu Mushiol Festival

In 1880, 88 stone Buddhas were brought from Shikoku, including Yakushi and a thousand-armed Kannon. It was the second series of 88 sacred places in Amakusa.



A replica of a printing press invented by Gutenberg in the 15th century is exhibited here.



I was inspired by a wine press.



This is a shrine to a matchmaking god.

On full moons, there was a festival for men and women to pray together.

How nice

Sakitsu Suwa Shrine

(National Cultural Landscape) Sakitsu and Imatomi, Amakusa

Statue of the Virgin Mary

Take a boat to come see me!

Ryukyu Kingdom Envoy Landing Point

A shrine that demonstrates a unique cultural heritage of traditional Japanese religions and hidden Christianity coexisting.

(City-Designated Ruins) Onitsuka Kofun

Safe journey!

Father Valignano Jesuit Missionary

Safe journey!

Safe journey!

Safe journey!

Safe journey!

Safe journey!

Safe journey!

Safe journey!

Safe journey!

Safe journey!

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Safe journey!

The Tensho Embassy  
Four boys from various seminaries were selected to travel to Europe at the young ages of 12-13, carrying letters from the Christian Lord Otomo. They were warmly welcomed by Pope Gregory XIII in Rome. They visited churches all over Europe, studied western printing techniques in Lisbon, and brought a Gutenberg press back to Amakusa. Later the four boys studied at the Collegio. Excepting only Miguel Chijiwa, who renounced Christianity, the boys were ordained as Jesuit priests and comforted believers during the period of banned Christianity.

TIMELINE

1569	Luis de Almeida introduces Christianity to Amakusa	1637	Amakusa-Shimabara Rebellion
1582	Tensho Embassy is sent to Rome	1805	Amakusa Kuzure crackdown
1587	Toyotomi Hideyoshi expels Jesuits from Japan	1873	Christianity ban is lifted
1591	Collegio and monastery moved to Amakusa from Kazusa, Nagasaki	1984	Current Sakitsu Church is built
1597			
1614	Tokugawa Ieyasu bans Christianity in Japan		

A western breeze in Kawaura as European culture flourishes

21~30 Many more cultural properties are located around Kawaura.

Stone Monuments at Yakushi Hall

Based on some characteristics of the pagodas, it is thought they were carved in the 15th to 16th centuries.

Memorial to Believers

A memorial to Christians executed during the Christian ban. The memorial seems to float quietly on the ocean at high tide.

Miyano-Kawachi PO

(Prefectural Natural Monument) Numulite Fossil

Ubushima Hachimangu Shrine

(City Intangible Folklore Asset) Tree Fern Habitat Ubushima Hachimangu Festival

Ubushima Bungalows

I gave birth to a prince here, on Ubushima in Miyano-Kawachi village.



Empress Jingū

Dragon King God

Some say the dragon is actually an eel.

Headless Jizo Statue

Now my head's made of wood.

Kukai and the Seven Oni

This thing??

Shingo PO

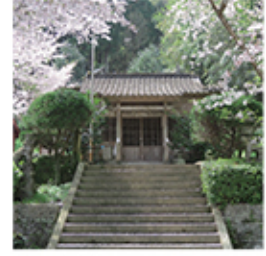
Tachihara no Sato Shop & Café

Some say the dragon is actually an eel.



# 1 Sakitsu Church

This Gothic-style church was designed by Nagasaki architect Yosuke Tetsukawa and built in 1934. It was Father Halbout's fervent desire that the church be built on the site of Yoshida Shoya's residence, where Christians were forced to step on an image of a holy figure. It is said that the current altar is located where this *efumi* ritual, a symbol of Christian suppression, took place. The floor of the church is covered with tatami mats, which is quite rare in Japan.



# 2 Sakitsu Suwa Shrine

Suwa Shrine became the stage of the Amakusa Kuzure crackdown in 1805, when 70% of the people of Sakitsu Village were discovered to be hidden Christians. Officials instructed people to dispose of religious items into a box placed in the shrine precincts for the investigation of false Buddhist materials. Despite their oppression, Sakitsu believers chanted "Anmenriyusu," a bastardization of "Amen Deus," wherever they went on pilgrimage.

# Watercress Introduced

In the early years of the Meiji era, missionary priests brought watercress, a plant originating in France, to Amakusa. It was called *Paterazeri*, from the words *padre* (priest) and *zeri* (a wildflower in the dropwort family).



# Fig Introduced

Figs, also called Nanban persimmon, were introduced to Kawachiura by Father Mesquita when he returned from Europe to Japan in 1590.



# 3 Imatomi Shrine

Branched off from Aso Shrine in Higo Province in 1705, Imatomi Shrine was the site of the crackdown on hidden Christians living in Imatomi. During the Edo period, the shrine was called Fifteen Shrine, as it was dedicated to the 12 Gods of Aso and the three major gods Hachiman, Amaterasu, and Kasuga Daimyojin. In Imatomi, many of the hidden Christians did not return to Catholicism even after the ban was lifted, saying that they believed in the Hidden Christian rituals passed down from their ancestors. There are no hidden Christians here presently, as they have all converted to Shintoism and Buddhism.



# 4 Nebiki Orphanage

In 1883, Father Ferriér rented a local home to care for orphans. In 1887, he cleared land on Mt. Nebiki and established a children's home, which operated until 1917. The Station of the Cross and a cabin were built here on the remains. It is now a pilgrimage destination for Catholics.



# 5 Priest Road

The Amakusa Islands Sakitsu Area Port and Coastal Map (property of Kyushu University), painted in 1823, depicts this road as Ooe Road. It is also depicted in the Amakusa District Chronicle of Land and Feudal Lords, which shows these paths linking different villages. So-called *meoainai* peddlers from Sakitsu used this mountain pass to haul goods.



# 6 Watchtower Ruins

Following the Amakusa-Shimabara Rebellion, local governor Shigenari Suzuki built three watchtowers in Tomioka, Ooe, and Onikizaki in 1641. In 1717, the governor Shichirozaemon built additional watchtowers in Ushibuka and Sakitsu in anticipation of the pirate ships that sometimes appeared off the west coast of Amakusa. At the Sakitsu watchtower, there was a lookout post at the headland overlooking the mouth of the Sakitsu Bay, with a beacon fire on the mountain above. However, the area is currently vacant.



# 7 Statue of the Virgin Mary

This statue of the Virgin Mary stands on a cape near Sakitsu Church, praying as she gazes towards the sea. The statue was built with the cooperation of many people, with the wish that she would be a guiding light to sailors and fishermen who pass by on calm days and in stormy weather.



# 8 Ryukyu Kingdom Envoy Landing Point

In 1790, as an envoy from King Chuza'n'o of the Ryukyu Kingdom was heading to Satsuma Province in celebration, the ship encountered bad weather and washed ashore on this beach. It is said that the envoy's party taught the people of Sakitsu how to make *sugi yokan* in appreciation of their help.



# 9 Father Almeida Landing Point

Following the example of Higo Province's Lord Sorin Otomo, Lord of Kawachiura Castle Shigehisa Amakusa (Don Miguel) opened an anchorage for Nanban ships and invited Luis de Almeida to come to Amakusa. Almeida was the first person to bring Christianity here, beginning missionary work in Kawachiura in 1569.



# 10 Amakusa Collegio Museum

The exhibition room on the first floor of the Collegio exhibits Nanban culture, passed down in Kawaura since the 16th century. Don't miss the reproductions of the Amakusa Books, the first books printed in Japan, and the reproduction of the Gutenberg printing press brought back to Amakusa by the Tensho Embassy. There is also a model of a Nanban ship, reproductions of old European musical instruments, and the ESOPPO Treasure Box dolls by gau, a local artist, based on the Amakusa printing of Aesop's Fables. The second floor is home to the Dolls for Peace Museum, where dolls dressed in the traditional costumes of 57 countries are displayed in a wish for world peace.



\*There are also exhibits introducing local celebrities such as Amakusa's coal mine king Eizo Tanaka and Amakusa-born politician Sunao Sonoda.

# 11 Furue Grand Shrine

Next to this shrine is the Amakudari Stone, an enormous stone about which is said, "During the eras of Shotoku and Kyoho, the sword of Ise Shrine fell down here as a golden paper streamer." The god enshrined at Furue is the god of meetings and matchmaking. Until the 1940s, there was a festival for men and women to come and pray together on the night of a full moon.



# 12 Ubushima Hachiman Shrine

There are various legends about Ubushima, said to be the island where Empress Jingū gave birth to Emperor Ojin when she was dispatched to Korea, or the island where Emperor Keiko's lady in waiting gave birth when he came to Kyushu to conquer the Kumaso people. The spring water welling up on this island was used to give the baby his first bath. Even today, the spring water is said to ensure a safe birth.



# 13 Kawachiura Castle Ruins

This was the castle of the Amakusa clan, who ruled southern Shimoshima in the middle ages when Nanban culture and Christianity flourished here in Amakusa. The exact date of construction is unknown, but it is estimated to date from the late 15th to mid 16th century, based on the fragments of pottery from China and Southeast Asia. In Luis Frois's *History of Japan*, the record shows that missionaries proselytized to the Amakusa clan.



# 14 Annoji Temple

In 1615, as a retainer of Hizen Province's Hirota Terazawa and Kawachiura local magistrate Iuemon Kawasaki invited the noted priest Eimen from Karatsu to establish this True Pure Land temple. Honoring the parishioners from 42 villages across southern Amakusa, the temple led the resurgence of Buddhism in Amakusa. In Luis Frois's *History of Japan*, it is described that the Collegio was built linked to a house. As churches were built at other temples in Amakusa as well, it is thought that this temple was the location of the Amakusa Collegio, a missionary training school.



# 15 Shinpukuji Temple

In 1313, this temple was founded as a Tendai Buddhist temple that served the Amakusa clan as a prayer room. However, in 1569 it was destroyed amid the infighting of the Amakusa clan due to the introduction of Christianity. The stone Jizo (a bodhisattva) brought here by Shigehisa Amakusa's wife were beheaded at that time. Currently, their heads have been replaced with wooden ones. The temple later opened under Pure Land Buddhism in 1612. An estate of 5 *koku* was granted to the temple in 1648.



# 16 Shimoda Castle Ruins Amakusa Clan Graveyard

According to the Year 1233 Shiki Document, the Amakusa clan lived in Kawachiura, the central part of their domain, which stretched from Hondo to southeast Shimoshima Island. It is thought the castle was built in the first half of the 13th century. There is a group of stone pagodas, including five-ring pagodas, remaining near the ruins. The area is still called Shiroyama, or "castle mountain."

The remains of the Amakusa clan graveyard are thought to be near the Amakusa clan's headquarters in the Shimoda Castle Honmaru, located on a flat area of the slopes north of present-day Sugawara Shrine. In the early Showa period, 26 five-ring pagodas and three *hokyointo*-style pagodas were confirmed. Later, the graveyard was converted to farmland. It is currently a forested mountainside, with five or six pagodas remaining.



# 17 Kukai and the Seven Oni

Along the mountain pass behind the temple stand 88 stone statues, including of Yakushi and the thousand-armed Kannon. The statues were brought from Kukai Hall in Kiyoragi during the Kyoho era (1716-1735). Seven *oni* (ogres), said to ward off evil, are enshrined next to the hall.



# 18 Dragon King God

The stone statue enshrining the Dragon King God is carrying a dragon on his back. However, locals say that what he is carrying is an eel, not a dragon. Long ago, a giant eel appeared in a nearby river bed, often scaring passersby. This statue was erected to appease the eel as a god. On the base of the statue, is written that it was built in 1700 by Hizen Masonry for the purpose of granting wishes.



# 19 Stone Monuments at Yakushi Hall

At the Yakushi Temple Hall on a small hill, called Castle Mountain or Castle Neck by locals, old stone pagodas thought to be from the 15th-16th centuries still stand. Shigehisa Amakusa controlled Nagashima Island in Kagoshima and profited from the trade. He built a house for the sailors' magistrate and monitored the ships that went in and out of Kuranoura, the gateway to Nagashima. Currently, the ferry to Nagashima leaves from Kuranomoto Port.



# 20 Memorial to Believers

The story of this monument is a sad one. It is said that locals built this stone monument in mourning of the bodies of Christians who were executed and washed ashore here. It may only be a remnant, but even now at high tide the monument seems to float on the bay of the Medake region in Miyano-Kawachi.



**Access Kawaura**

Kawaura = Amakusa City Hall / Kawaura Branch

**Amakusa Airlines**  
 Fukuoka Airport → Amakusa City: 35 min  
 Amakusa City → Fukuoka Airport: 35 min

**Kyushu Shinkansen**  
 Hakata Station → Kumamoto Station: 33 min  
 Kumamoto Station → Amakusa City: 40 min

**Treasure Island Line**  
 Amakusa City → Amakusa Airport: 20 min  
 Amakusa Airport → Amakusa City: 20 min

**Sanwa Ferry**  
 Amakusa City → Ushibuka: 30 min  
 Ushibuka → Amakusa City: 30 min

**High Speed Ferry**  
 Amakusa City → Tomioka: 45 min  
 Tomioka → Amakusa City: 45 min

**Sanwa Ferry**  
 Amakusa City → Misumi: 35 min  
 Misumi → Amakusa City: 35 min

**Amakusa Treasure Island Assoc.**  
 Tel: 0969-22-2243  
 http://www.t-island.jp/access

Published by Kawaura Town Development Council TEL: 0969-76-1111