



## Q-3 Nagasaki Sunset Highway

Matsuura, Hirado, Sasebo, Saikai, Nagasaki City, and SasaTown (Nagasaki Pref.)  
 —Hidden Christian, Sunset Road, and World Culture Heritage—

From the 17th to the 19th century (Edo period), the Shogunate issued the Edict of National Isolation, and banned foreign travel and trade. Under these circumstances, trade with the Netherlands and China was officially approved only at Nagasaki Port. As a result, the Nagasaki region has developed an exotic regional civilization.

The scenic spots of "Nagasaki Sunset Highway" have been proposed by utilizing these local resources. As shown on the map, this scenic route extends from Matsuura and Hirado in the

northern part of Nagasaki Prefecture to the southern part of Nagasaki City via the Nishisonogi Peninsula, and the entire region consists of remote islands and peninsulas.

The total length of the main route is 280 km, which is the longest of the 15 scenic routes in Kyushu, and is connected by the national roads No.204, 202 and 499.

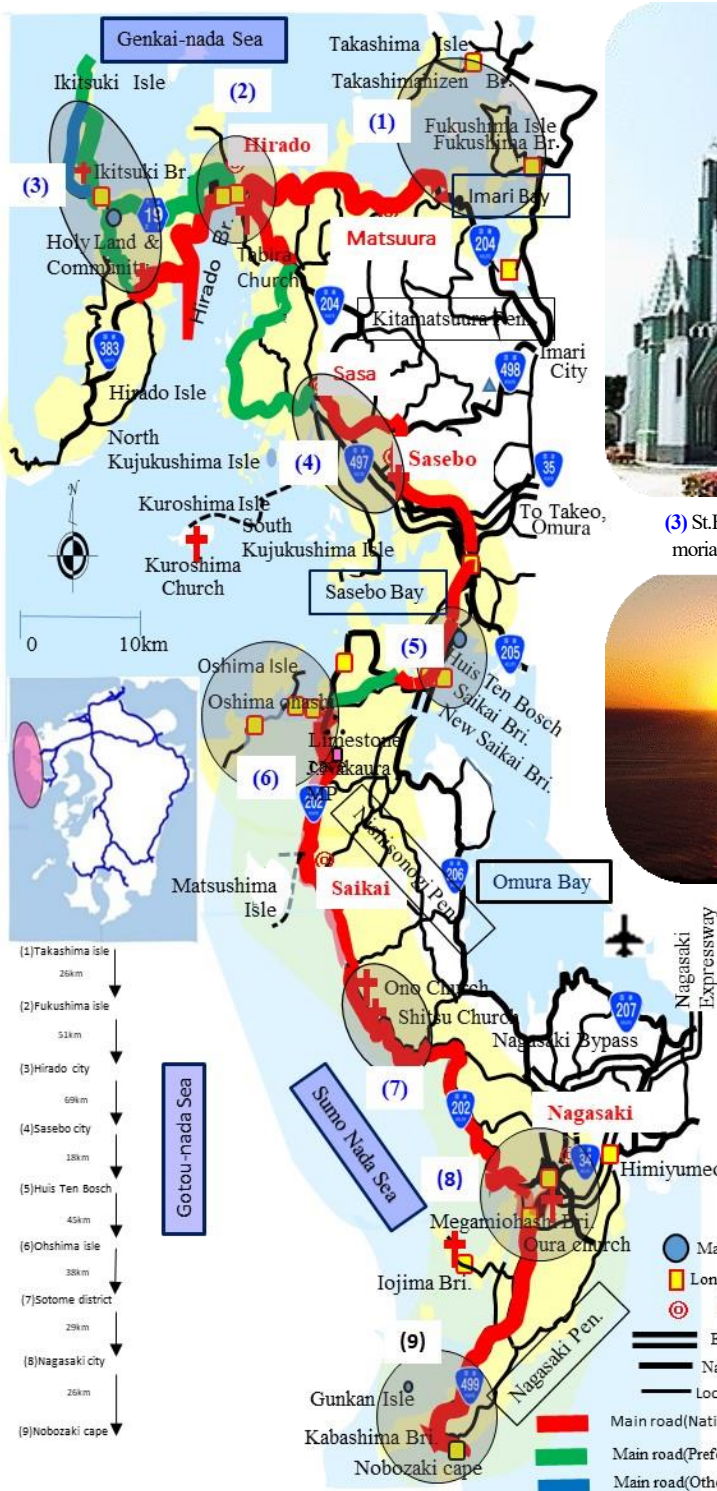
**(Access).** The main access points are Nagasaki Airport, Nagasaki Station on the Nagasaki Main Line, and Sasebo Station on the

Sasebo Line. Nagasaki Expressway and Nishikyushu Expressway are also available.

**(Scenic Resources).** The area of Nagasaki Sunset Highway extends from the north to the south of Saikai National Park. Although the region's landscape resources are abundant, you can list up three main items: (a) Sunset over the East China Sea, (b) History of Hidden Christians, and (c) World Industrial Heritage. They are interesting and important to all visitors.

Christianity was introduced to Hirado Island in the 16th century and spread throughout the region. However, the Edo Shogunate promulgated a Christian ban, stepped on Christ's paintings, and tortured them to abandon Christianity in some cases. Therefore, their religion has been kept secret for about 300 years in the Edo period, and we call them "hidden Christians".

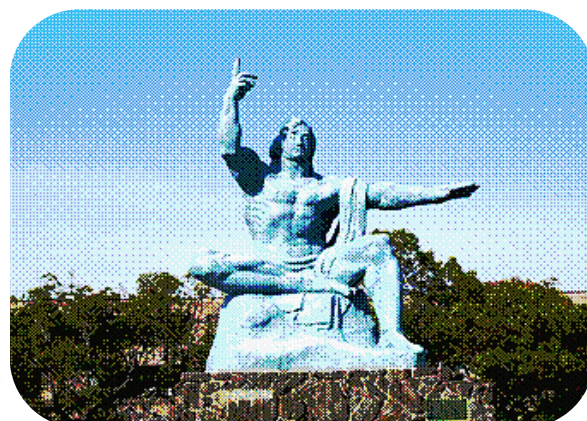
In the Meiji era (1873), the Christian ban was officially lifted, Christianity was revived, and many churches were built. **The history of hidden Christians, and related assets in the Edo period** are an important heritage of this route, and many



(3) St. Francisco de Xavier Memorial Church. (Hirado City)



(7) Sunset of West Sea in Sotome District. Nagasaki.



(8) Peace Statue of Nagasaki Peace Park in Ground Zero. (Nagasaki City).





(1) Samurai Navy of Matsuura Party in 15th century.



(2) Hirado Castle for Matsuura Clan.



(2) Hirado Harbor which flourished in Foreign Trade in 16<sup>th</sup> century, and CBD.

places in this area were registered as World Culture Heritage Sites in 2018.

Another scenic resource is **the sunset over the west coast ocean**. In the evening, you can see the wonderful red sunset over the western most horizon of the Japanese archipelago.

The third is "**Japan's Meiji Industrial Revolution Heritage**" of coal mines, shipbuilding and steel-making, which were actively carried out from the 1850s to the 1910s. The eight assets registered as world heritage sites are in the Nagasaki area, and account for more than one-third of the 23 properties in Japan.

By allocating these local resources, the scenic spots of "Nagasaki Sunset Highway" can be divided into five blocks: Matsuura, Hirado, Sasebo, Saikai, and Nagasaki. Based on them, you can track the landscape spots as follows (see map and photos):

#### (1) Matsuura Area facing with Genkai Nada Sea

The Matsuura area consists of a peninsula facing Imari Bay and many islands. Therefore, there are many regional resources related to the sea, but here we will introduce the following two islands that can be crossed from National Route 204 by bridge.

In the island of Takashima, there was a tragic battle in the 13th century due to the invasion of Mongolian army. In other words, the Samurai navy (Matsuura Party) desperately fought the Mongolian forces in this area, and many Mongolian warships were sunk in



(2) Reconstruction Building of Hirado-Netherlands Trading Post.

Imari Bay due to the typhoon, and were not occupied. In modern times, as evidence of this, remnants and relics of the ships of that time were discovered and salvaged from the seabed. They are exhibited at the Takashima History and Folklore Museum and you can see them.

Another interesting island is Fukushima. The island has terraced paddy fields (Tanada) and wild camelia trees. On the coast, magma (black basalt), which has solidified through the sandstone layer, can be found in the shape of funnel or wall.



(3) Rock Columns in Ikitsuki Isle. (Hirado City)



(3) Houki Kyokai Church. (Hirado City)



(2) Tabira Tenshudo Church. (Hirado City).



(4) Kujyuku Shima which gather more than 200. (Sasebo City).



(5) Theme Park "Huis Ten Bosch". (Sasebo City)



## (2) & (3) Hirado Islands Block.

The Hirado area was ruled by the Matsuura clan in the Edo period, and the base was Hirado Castle. Christianity was introduced to the Hirado region by Francisco de Xavier in 1594, and many people became Christians. However, in the Edo period, they suffered for the prohibition of Christianity.

As mentioned earlier, Christianity revived at the end of the 19th century, most people returned to Catholicism and built churches, but some believers did not. There were Christians worshiping nature without being able to obtain a leader under the Christian ban, but they did not return. Christians living in Ikitsukijima Island and in the Kasugamura of Hiradojima Island still worship Nakanoshima, Mount Amman, or the graves of martyrs, while retaining the 16th-century Christian form.

In addition, there are many interesting sceneries such as the Shitawara Cliff, Kawauchi Pass, Hirado Castle and the site where a Dutch trading house was restored.

## (4) Sasebo City, and (5) Theme Park of "Huis Ten Bosch".

Sasebo City is a naval town. Warships of Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force and US Navy enter and leave Sasebo Port. The Sasebo Heavy Industries Group, which is attached to the harbor, promotes technological innovation of vessels while maintaining its industrial heritage. Please enjoy the sightseeing at Sasebo Port.

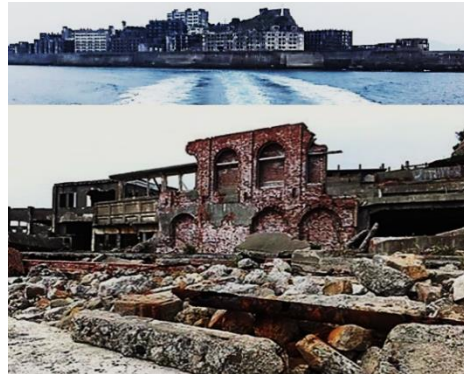
On the other hand, About 200 small islands floating in the Goto Sea are collectively called "Kujukushima". You can see these magnificent views from the hills.



(7) Shitsu Kyoukai Church. (Nagasaki City).



(7) Oono Kyoukaido Church. (Nagasaki City)



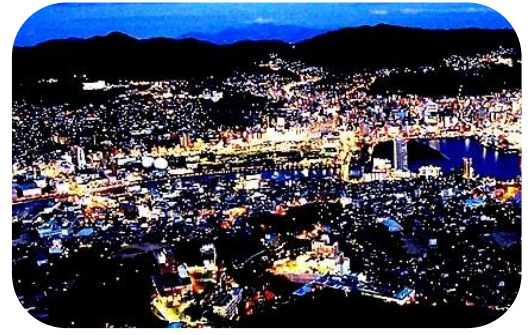
(9) World Heritage of Hashima Coal Mine (Hashima Isle, Nagasaki).



(8) Glover House (World Heritage. Nagasaki)



(8) Nagasaki City just after Atomic Bombing.



(8) Night View of current Nagasaki City which has revived.



(8) "Meganebashi" (Stone Bridge with two Arches in Nagasaki City)



(8) Monument for 26 Saints on the Hill of Nishizaka. (Nagasaki City)

If you go south from Kujukushima, the popular theme park with the image of a Dutch town, "Huis Ten Bosch", can be found. Due to the large size and number of shows, a careful tour for the theme park may take more than a day.

## (6) Saikai City in Nishi Sonogi Peninsula.



(8) Nagasaki Harbor which is surrounded by many Sites of World Industrial Heritage.



(8) Lanthanum Festival in the Chinatown. (February. Nagasaki City)



(8) Jya-Odori (Snake-Dance) in Nagasaki-Kunchi Festival. (October. Nagasaki City)



In this area, coal mines were operating on the seabed, but they were abolished in the 1970s. In such a difficult situation, Oshima in Saikai City was reborn as a island of shipbuilding. As a result, the island becomes more active in fishery and shipbuilding, and you can see its recovery as you cross Oshima Bridge.

Nakaura Julian Memorial Park in Saikai City is another attraction. In the 16th century, Julian Nakaura visited Europe on behalf of the Mission of Youths to the West in the Tensho Era. After returning home, he supported the hidden Christians as a priest, but was executed in 1633 at Nishizaka Hill, Nagasaki City.

#### (7) Sotome Area in Nishi-Sonogi Peninsula.

The coastal area of the Nishi-sonogi Peninsula is a poor Christian village with seaside hills and sunsets. In other words, this area is the stage of the Christian historical novel "silence" written by Endo Shusaku. Hidden Christians experienced many difficulties because of their faith, in addition to poor land. Jesus spoke to the suffering Christians and gave them salvation. "I wasn't silent. I was suffering with you".

Indeed, the French missionary, Marc-Marie de Rotz (Father De Lo), did a great deal of effort to help them in the late Edo period. Rescue facility and churches were built in areas of Shitsu and Oono areas. People gratefully thanked him for his dedication and built his statue. You can see it on the hillside.

#### (8) Nagasaki City

Since the Edo period, the Nagasaki region has developed a unique culture that fuses the civilizations of Japan, China and the Netherlands. However, in World War II, Nagasaki was destroyed by the atomic bomb and lost everything. Nagasaki City has overcome the misery after the war and revived as an exotic city.

Therefore, in addition to local nature and history, it is very important to visit the Nagasaki region and understand the town that has recovered from the big damage caused by atomic bomb.

Peace Park of Ground Zero and Nishizaka Hill for 26 Saints are worth visiting aside. In addition, Nagasaki is a "World Industrial Heritage in the Meiji era" and has many historical heritage.

The artificial island "Dejima" that was built for trade in the Edo period has been rebuilt as a theme park to the present day. An old arched stone bridge is in the city centre. Also, as shown in the photo, the colorful lantern festival is held in Chinatown every February, and the harvest festival "kunchi" at Suwa Shrine is held every October. The tourist city of Nagasaki is full of attractions, so please enjoy yourself.

#### (9) Southern Area of Nagasaki Peninsula

Takashima and Hashima for submarine coal mines are located off the Nagasaki Peninsula and are designated as World Industrial Heritage Sites. Especially Hashima is called "Gunkanjima (warship island)" (see photo). Many of the mining facilities remain after the closure, and the process of disappearance can be observed, and many people can understand the transition and importance of modern industry. In this sense, these heritage sites are unique scenic spots not found on any other route and are well worth a visit.

#### (Notes) Long-span Bridges in Nagasaki Sunset Highway.

The route of "Nagasaki Sunset Road" consists of remote islands and peninsulas. For this reason, in Nagassaki Prefecture, many bridges were built to facilitate transportation during the post-war economic growth period. They are bridges across the straits, not river bridges. While gaining technology from the world, various types of bridges were built and as the result, eight bridges with a length of 500 meters or more were created. The typical bridges are

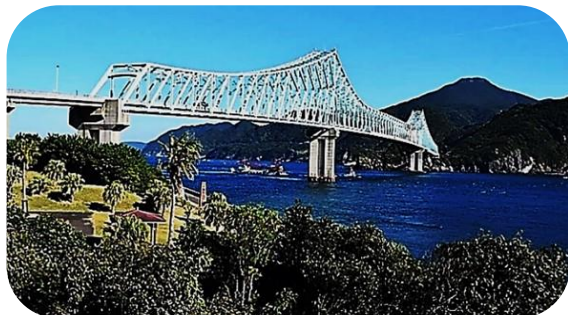
shown in the photo. We also recommend visiting various long bridges.



(5) Saikai Bridges (1955, 2006. Sasebo City and Saikai City)



(2) Hirado Bridge (1977. Hirado City)



(3) Ikitsuki Bridge (1991, Hirado City)



(1) Hizen-Takashima Bridge (2009, Matsuura City)



(8) Ioujima Bridge (2011, Nagasaki City)