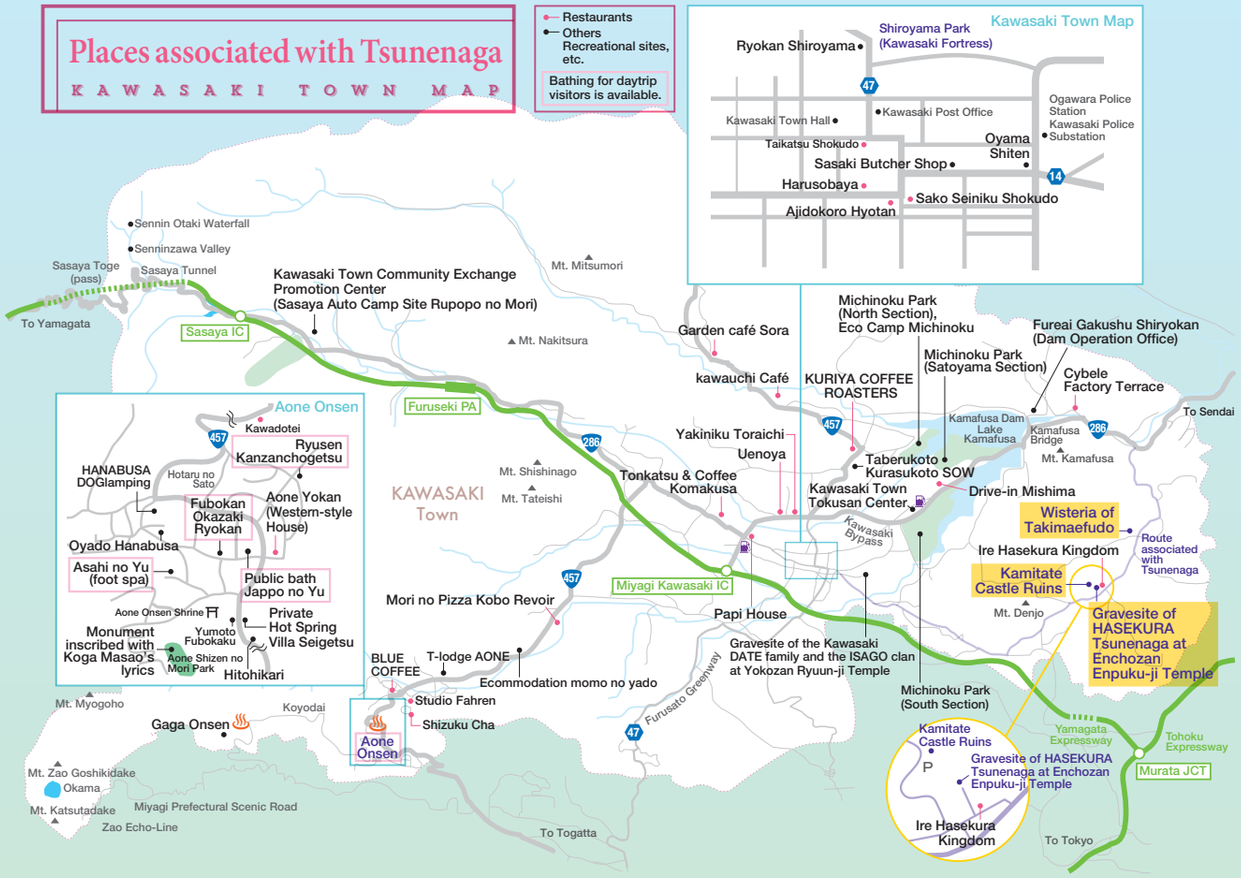
Places associated with Tsunenaga

KAWASAKI TOWN MAP

Restaurants
Others
Recreational sites, etc.

Bathing for daytrip visitors is available.



HASEKURA Tsunenaga Festival

Held on a Sunday in early June

In Kawasaki Town, the HASEKURA Tsunenaga Festival is held every year in June. It is a grand celebration featuring a parade that recreates the historic 1613 mission to Europe, led by a float of the *San Juan Bautista*. Visitors can also enjoy a vibrant samurai procession, live stage shows, and delicious local specialties. We warmly welcome you to come and join us!





The HASEKURA Tsunenaga PR Team

Working alongside the town mascot Chocoemon, the Miyagi Kawasaki HASEKURA Tsunenaga PR Team actively promotes Kawasaki Town and shares the legacy of the diplomatic mission. Don't miss the team members clad in impressive samurai armor and traditional *haori* coats, bringing history back to life!



Kawasaki Town Character Merchandise



Pin badges
(HASEKURA Tsunenaga and Chocoemon)



Rubber charms with straps
(HASEKURA Tsunenaga and Chocoemon)

[Available at] Kawasaki Town Tourism Association Inquiries: +81-224-84-6681
Tomioka Branch Inquiries: +81-224-86-2011
Ire Hasekura Kingdom Inquiries: +81-224-51-9131



Come visit us in Kawasaki Town!

Inquiries
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TEL: +81-224-84-2117
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(2026.11)

常長と川崎町

Tsunenaga & Kawasaki Town

The story of SAMURAI diplomat

Four hundred years ago, a man who survived the battlefields of Japan departed from Miyagi and set sail across the ocean. This is the remarkable story of HASEKURA Tsunenaga.



Portrait of Tsunenaga Hasekura (national treasure) housed in Sendai City Museum



HASEKURA Tsunenaga　Childhood and youth

Tsunenaga, a boy from Kamitate Castle, grew up among nature's bounty in Kawasaki and demonstrated his remarkable talents as he grew.

Four hundred years ago, serving as an envoy for Lord DATE Masamune, one man crossed both the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans to pioneer Japan's first trade and diplomacy on the global stage—his name was HASEKURA Tsunenaga. Kawasaki is the proud hometown of Tsunenaga, a samurai diplomat who etched his name into world history.

HASEKURA Yoichi (Later Tsunenaga) Relocates to Hasekura, Miyagi

In 1570*, HASEKURA Tsunenaga was born in Tateishi Village, Okitama County, Dewa Province (present-day Tateishi, Yonezawa City, Yamagata) as the son of HASEKURA Tsunenari, a mid-ranking samurai serving the Yonezawa DATE clan. During this turbulent Warring States period, just two years after Tsunenaga's birth, ODA Nobunaga overthrew the Muromachi Shogunate.

Known as Yoichi in his childhood (and later taking the names Gorozaemon and Rokuemon), Tsunenaga was the son of Tsunenari, who served Lord DATE Terumune—the father of Lord DATE Masamune. When Tsunenaga was born, Lord DATE Masamune was five years old.

Since Tsunenari's elder brother, HASEKURA Kiinokami Tokimasa, had no heirs, Tsunenari placed Tsunenaga for adoption with Tokimasa when Tsunenaga was around eight years old. Soon after, Tokimasa's domain was transferred to Hasekura Village, and Tsunenaga moved to Kamitate Castle in what is now the Hasekura district of Kawasaki Town. Thus, Tsunenaga spent his youth immersed in the rich, beautiful nature of Hasekura.

Fought His First Battle Under MONIWA Tsunamoto and Soon Distinguished Himself on the Battlefield

Kamitate Castle is a mountain castle in the Renkaku style (where the main, second, and third compounds are aligned in a straight line), built in 1545 by HASEKURA Tsunemasa, Tsunenaga's adoptive grandfather. The ruins of its earthwork fortifications and dry moat still remain today. Surrounded by Kawasaki's rich nature, young Tsunenaga undoubtedly grew up as an energetic child roaming the fields and mountains.

When Tsunenaga was 12 years old, ODA Nobunaga perished during the Honno-ji Incident, and five years later, TOYOTOMI Hideyoshi unified western Japan under his control.

Tsunenaga fought his first battle at around 15 years of age. Serving under MONIWA Tsunamoto—a chief vassal of the DATE clan and one of the "Three Great DATE Warriors"—he fought against the SOMA army.

At age 22, Tsunenaga accompanied Lord DATE Masamune to join the army camp at Odawara. There, he successfully executed a vital route reconnaissance mission, demonstrating his outstanding intelligence-gathering abilities.



Aone Onsen Fubokaku
Fubokaku served as a private hot spring retreat for Lord Masamune. Tsunenaga, too, likely rested and recovered from the fatigues of war at Aone Onsen.
Location: 1-1 Aone Onsen, Kawasaki Town, Shibata District



Equestrian Statue of Lord DATE Masamune (Aone Onsen) This miniature equestrian statue at Aone Onsen Fubokaku is said to have served as the model for the iconic equestrian statue of Lord Masamune at Sendai Castle.







Kamitate Castle Ruins
(Main compound site [top], dry moat [middle], and earthwork fortification [bottom])
A Renkaku-style mountain castle built by Tsunenaga's adoptive grandfather and developed by his father. Tsunenaga spent his youth at this castle.
Location: Tateyama, Hasekura, Kawasaki Town, Shibata District



Wisteria of Takimaefudo
A wisteria tree over 400 years old (designated as a natural monument). Young Tsunenaga may have played here during his childhood.
Location: Takimae, Hasekura, Kawasaki Town, Shibata District



Enchozan Enpuku-ji Temple
Founded during the Heian period, this temple serves as the HASEKURA family temple and is widely considered the most likely location of Tsunenaga's grave.
Location: 154 Shuku, Hasekura, Kawasaki Town, Shibata District



Kawasaki Castle Ruins / Shiroyama Park
Originally the castle of the ISAGO clan. After the ISAGO line ended, the Kawasaki DATE clan established it as their residence.
Location: 5 Tateyamanishi, Maekawa, Kawasaki Town, Shibata District

Recognized by Lord DATE Masamune, He Served with Distinction in the Korean Campaign

Tsunenaga continued to serve as an envoy for Lord Masamune during the siege of Miyazaki Castle in the Kasai-Osaki Uprising.

In 1592, TOYOTOMI Hideyoshi dispatched a 140,000-strong allied force of warlords under his command to the Korean Peninsula (the Bunroku Campaign). Lord Masamune also departed for Korea at the head of 3,000 troops. Tsunenaga joined the expedition alongside his adoptive father and was appointed as one of the 20 *Oteakishu* (a special taskforce selected directly by Lord Masamune), despite being a mid-ranking samurai.

Among the allied forces, Lord Masamune's troops captivated observers with their striking and flamboyant attire, which is said to be the origin of the term *datemono* (meaning a stylish or flamboyant person). In Korea, Tsunenaga was active primarily in gathering military intelligence.

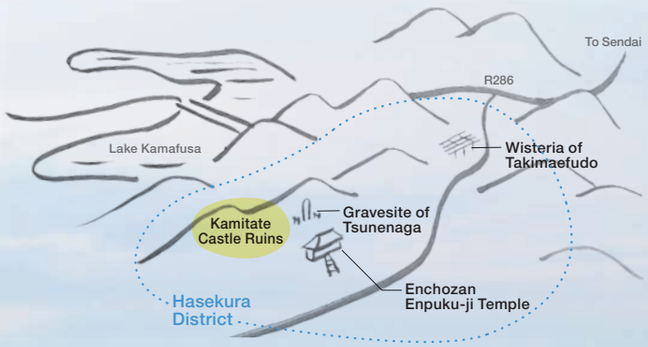
In 1596, after a biological heir was born to his adoptive father, HASEKURA Tokimasa, Tsunenaga was granted permission by Lord Masamune to establish a branch family with equal status to the head line. However, his biological father, HASEKURA Tsunenari, was later ordered to commit *seppuku* (ritual suicide) due to the Nabemaru Incident (a territorial dispute against the ISAGO clan of Kawasaki Castle). Held guilty by association, Tsunenaga was temporarily banished.



Sendai Castle (Restored CG Model)
In 1601, Lord Masamune moved his seat from Iwadeyama to Sendai, nearly completing Sendai Castle by 1610. Pictured here is a digital recreation of the main compound.
(CG image courtesy of Aoba Castle Honmaru Museum)



Equestrian Statue of Lord DATE Masamune (Sendai Castle)
This iconic statue symbolizing Sendai City was created by sculptor KOMURO Toru and recreated in 1964.





Distant view of the Hasekura District

* Another theory states that Tsunenaga was born in 1571.



Sant Juan Bautista, the ship that carried the Keicho Mission to Europe
(Housed in Miyagi Sant Juan Bautista Museum)

HASEKURA Tsunenaga　Appointed as an envoy to travel abroad

HASEKURA Rokuemon Tsunenaga crossed the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans on a secret mission for Lord DATE Masamune.

There are various theories why Tsunenaga was chosen as an envoy to Europe. Regardless of the reasons, his journey to Europe and trade negotiations with Spain—a global superpower with colonies across the world—stand as a monumental achievement in world history.

The *San Juan Bautista* and Ambassador HASEKURA Tsunenaga

On October 28, 1613, the *San Juan Bautista* (meaning "St. John the Baptist") set sail from Tsukinoura in Oshika District (present-day Ishinomaki City). It was one of Japan's largest sailing vessels at the time, boasting an overall length of approximately 55 meters, a beam of 11 meters, and a displacement of 500 tons.

The ship carried over 180 passengers and crew. Among them were Spanish officer Sebastián Vizcaíno, who directed the construction and navigation of the vessel; Father Luis Sotelo, the Franciscan missionary who had proposed the European delegation to Lord DATE Masamune and served as co-ambassador; the Japanese delegation leader HASEKURA Rokuemon Tsunenaga; retainers from both the Tokugawa Shogunate and the DATE clan; as well as Spanish sailors and merchants. Tsunenaga was 44 years old at the time.

Why was Tsunenaga, a mid-ranking samurai, selected to lead this monumental project of the century? Some theories suggest the DATE clan sought to avoid accountability in the event of failure. However, official records of the DATE clan indicate that Lord Masamune held Tsunenaga's capabilities in exceptionally high regard.

Ambition to Conquer Japan or a Tsunami Recovery Effort?

The primary objectives of this historic diplomatic mission (known as the Keicho Mission) were to request the dispatch of Catholic missionaries and establish direct trade relations with Spanish Mexico. Although the mission was undertaken with the approval of the Edo Shogunate, one theory suggests that Lord Masamune harbored ambitions to conquer the country. According to this view, he sought an alliance with powerful Spain, intending to overthrow the shogunate with Spanish military support when the opportunity arose.

More recently, however, scholars suggest the expedition was primarily a disaster recovery project following the devastating 1611 Keicho Sanriku Earthquake and Tsunami. That major earthquake struck in late 1611, triggering a massive tsunami along the Sendai coast that claimed an estimated 5,000 lives. Constructing the ship for the mission served as an emergency relief program, generating 3,000 jobs and sourcing timber from surrounding communities. The ultimate goal was long-term economic revitalization through international trade—a grand endeavor undertaken in circumstances remarkably similar to modern disaster recovery efforts.

Roughly 90 days after departing Japan, the delegation arrived in Mexico. While most of the merchants chose to remain there, a core group of about 30 individuals, including Tsunenaga, boarded a Spanish fleet four and a half months later to continue their journey toward Europe.



Recreation of HASEKURA Tsunenaga in Spain
(Courtesy of Miyagi San Juan Bautista Museum)



Recreation of the Construction Site of the San Juan Bautista
(Courtesy of Miyagi San Juan Bautista Museum)

HASEKURA Tsunenaga (left)
As Lord Masamune's representative, he led the Japanese delegation.

Luis Sotelo (center right)
A Spanish missionary who promoted Christianity in Japan. Fluent in languages, he is said to have proposed the diplomatic mission to Europe to Lord DATE Masamune.

Sebastián Vizcaíno (right)
A Spanish envoy who came to Japan to explore rumored "gold and silver islands" off the east coast. Spanish seafaring expertise and navigation skills were indispensable for crossing the Pacific Ocean.



Portrait of HASEKURA Tsunenaga
A portrait of Tsunenaga that he brought back from Europe. Dressed in black robes, he prays to a crucifix with a rosary in hand. This is considered the oldest existing oil painting depicting a named Japanese individual.
(National Treasure, Sendai City Museum)

Audience with the King of Spain and the Pope on Behalf of Lord Masamune

Arriving in Spain on October 5, 1614, the delegation stopped in Seville, Father Luis Sotelo's hometown, before continuing to Madrid. On January 30 of the following year, they were finally granted an audience with King Felipe III of Spain. There, Tsunenaga presented Lord Masamune's letter requesting the dispatch of missionaries and the establishment of trade with Mexico. However, the delegation remained in Madrid for eight months without receiving the King's approval.

During their stay, Tsunenaga was baptized to gain the King's trust. He received the Christian name "Don Felipe Francisco Faxicura Rokuemon," incorporating the names of both the King and a saint.

To advance the negotiations, Tsunenaga traveled onward to Italy. On October 29, he made a grand ceremonial entry into Rome, and on November 3, he attended the official audience with Pope Paul V. The delegation was received with great enthusiasm; Tsunenaga was awarded a title of nobility, and Roman citizenship was conferred upon eight members of the mission.

After the Pope agreed to send missionaries, Tsunenaga returned to Madrid to resume trade negotiations with King Felipe III.

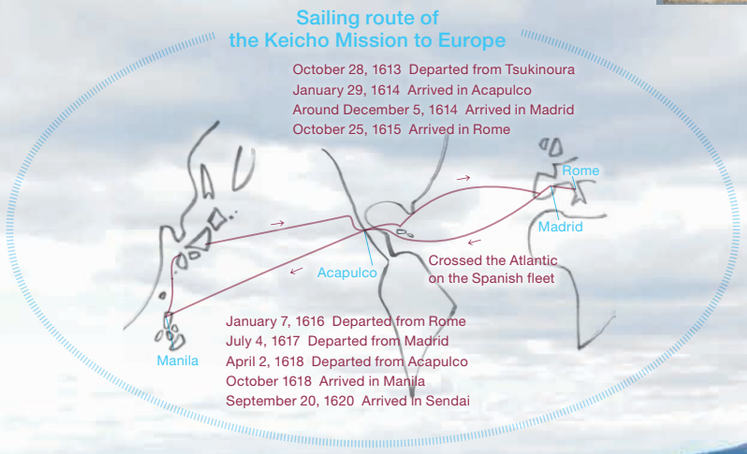


Portrait of Pope Paul V
A portrait brought back by the delegation along with that of Tsunenaga.
(National Treasure, Sendai City Museum)



Certificate of Roman Citizenship
Crafted on parchment, this document features seven coats of arms framing the top and sides, with the HASEKURA clan crest featuring a *manji* (reverse swastika) and crossed arrows displayed at the top left. Written in Latin with gold lettering, it grants Roman citizenship to Tsunenaga and admits him to the Roman nobility—testifying to the grand and enthusiastic reception the delegation received.
(National Treasure, Sendai City Museum)

Sailing route of the Keicho Mission to Europe





Tsukinoura Port from which the delegation departed



Don Felipe Francisco Faxicura Rokuemon Comes Home

Tsunenaga's remarkable achievements should have earned him a hero's welcome. Instead, swept up in the changing tides of history, he returned to Japan with a heavy heart, unable to secure the trade agreement. Yet, the timeless nature of Kawasaki Town welcomed him home, unchanged as ever.

A Resolute Baptism, Yet Trade Negotiations Failed

King Felipe III ultimately refused to approve the trade agreement. He was influenced by unfavorable reports from the Council of the Indies and the Society of Jesus (who were at odds with Sotelo's Franciscan order), which highlighted Japan's Anti-Christian Edicts, the persecution of Christians, exaggerations in Sotelo's reports, and the fact that Lord DATE Masamune was merely a local feudal lord.

Because Spain required conversion to Christianity as a condition for trade, HASEKURA Tsunenaga underwent baptism in a resolute attempt to ensure the mission's success. One can only fathom his profound sorrow when, despite his immense personal sacrifice, he was ordered to return home empty-handed.

Finally, on July 4, 1617, Tsunenaga left Europe. He traveled through Mexico to Acapulco, where he boarded the *San Juan Bautista*—which had sailed from Japan to retrieve the delegation—and crossed the Pacific to the Philippines. Father Sotelo remained in Manila, leaving Tsunenaga to make the final journey back to Japan alone.

Tragic Later Years The Mystery of Tsunenaga's Grave

On September 22, 1620, Tsunenaga returned to Sendai—seven years after his departure. Bound by the Shogunate's strict Anti-Christian edicts, Lord Masamune was forced to place Tsunenaga under house arrest, and the valuable items and documents he brought back were confiscated.

The achievements of this historic mission were forgotten for the next 250 years, until they finally saw the light of day after the Meiji Restoration, when the IWAKURA Tomomi Embassy was shown historical records of the mission in Venice.

Given the complex global geopolitics of the era, the mission to Europe may have been destined to fail. Even so, Tsunenaga's dignified negotiations with Spain—then the world's premier superpower, actively colonizing parts of Asia—stand as an undeniable historic achievement.

Tsunenaga is said to have succumbed to illness after returning to Hasekura in present-day Kawasaki Town. However, several potential grave sites exist across Miyagi and Iwate prefectures, including Enpuku-ji Temple in Kawasaki Town, Komyo-ji Temple in Sendai City, Memorial Park in Osato Town, Yoshioka in Taiwa Town, Ishimori in Wakuya Town, and Mizusawa Ward in Oshu City, Iwate. Monuments at Enpuku-ji and Komyo-ji note that he died at age 52, while the monument in Osato Town states age 84. Which grave is his true resting place—and how he spent his final days—remains shrouded in mystery.



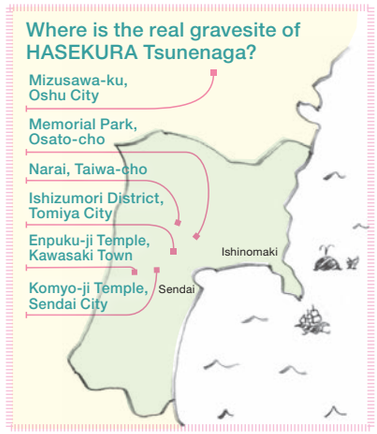




Maria Kannon (upper left)
Enshrined alongside the main Buddhist image at Enpuku-ji Temple, this statue is considered historical evidence of a Kakure Kirishitan (crypto-Christian) presence in the area.

Enchozan Enpuku-ji Temple (bottom left)
Destroyed by fire during the Meiji period, this temple was later rebuilt at its current location. Its principal image, *Enmei Jizo* (Life-Prolonging Jizo), is of such exceptional craftsmanship that it might have been designated a National Treasure had it not suffered damage in the blaze.

Grave of HASEKURA Tsunenaga (right)
Within the temple grounds stands a stone monument bearing an anchor mark—a hidden symbol used by early Christians. This site is widely regarded as one of the most compelling locations for the grave of HASEKURA Tsunenaga.
Location: 154 Shuku, Hasekura, Kawasaki Town, Shibata District



The Chronicle of HASEKURA Tsunenaga

Year (A.D.)	Life of HASEKURA Tsunenaga & Related Historical Events
1567	August: Lord DATE Masamune is born.
1570	HASEKURA Tsunenaga is born in Tateishi, Yonezawa City, Yamagata Prefecture, as the son of HASEKURA Tsunenari. (Childhood name: Yoichi).
1573	ODA Nobunaga overthrows the Muromachi Shogunate.
1577	Adopted by his uncle, HASEKURA Kiinokami Tokimasa (Gorozaemon).
1579	HASEKURA Tokimasa relocates from Yonezawa to Hasekura Village.
1582	ODA Nobunaga perishes during the Honno-ji Incident.
1587	TOYOTOMI Hideyoshi unifies western Japan under his control as *Taiko* (retired regent).
1588	Fights his first battle against the Soma army under the command of MONIWA Tsunamoto.
1590	• Tsunenaga: Accompanies MONIWA Tsunamoto to join the army camp at Odawara. • Lord DATE Masamune: Joins the army camp at Odawara.
1591	• The Kasai-Osaki Uprising breaks out; Tsunenaga serves on a mission for Lord DATE Masamune. • Lord DATE Masamune moves his seat to Iwadeyama.
1592	• Lord DATE Masamune departs from Nagoya Port for Korea (Bunroku Campaign). • Tsunenaga Rokuemon is appointed to the *Oteakishu* and accompanies the troops to Korea.
1596	A biological heir is born to his adoptive father, Tokimasa. Tsunenaga establishes a branch family with a 600-*koku* stipend. *Koku: A measure of rice used to express a samurai's wealth and status.
1600	• Lord DATE Masamune renames Chiyo to Sendai and begins construction of Sendai Castle. • TOKUGAWA Ieyasu: The Battle of Sekigahara.
1603	TOKUGAWA Ieyasu is appointed Shogun and establishes the Edo Shogunate.
1610	• Sendai Castle is nearly completed. • The ISAGO clan constructs Kawasaki Castle.
1611	Late 1611: The Keicho Sanriku Earthquake and devastating tsunami strike the Sendai coast.
1612	• Anti-Christian Edicts are enforced throughout Shogunate territories. • Tsunenaga's biological father, HASEKURA Tsunenari, is ordered to commit *seppuku*.
1613	• August: Summoned to Sendai Castle alongside Franciscan missionary Father Luis Sotelo. • October 28: Sets sail from Tsukinoura, Oshika District (present-day Ishinomaki City) aboard the *San Juan Bautista*.
1614	• January 28: Arrives in Acapulco, Mexico. • June: Crosses the Atlantic Ocean aboard a Spanish fleet. • October: Lands in Spain. • December: Enters the capital city of Madrid.
1615	• January 30: Granted an audience with King Felipe III of Spain. • February 17: Baptized at Monasterio de las Descalzas Reales (receives the name Don Felipe Francisco Faxicura Rokuemon). • August 22: Departs for Rome (lands in Saint-Tropez, France, en route). • November 3: Granted an audience with Pope Paul V in Rome.
1617	Returns to Madrid and continues prolonged trade negotiations with King Felipe III alongside Sotelo. Ordered to return to Japan; departs Madrid on July 4.
1620	Returns to Japan via Acapulco and Manila, arriving at Nagasaki Port, then returning to Sendai on September 22.
1621	HASEKURA Tsunenaga passes away.
1636	Lord DATE Masamune passes away.

Photo courtesy: Sendai City Museum, Aoba Castle and Honmaru Museum, Miyagi Sant Juan Bautista Museum
References: "History of Sendai" Hobundo, "HASEKURA Tsunenaga in Rome and Western Culture" Sendai City Museum, "The Story of HASEKURA Tsunenaga" Kawasaki Town Education Board　Responsible for this article: Kawasaki Town
SASAKI Toru. "The Keicho Mission to Europe: The International Diplomacy Dreamed of by DATE Masamune" Yoshikawa Kobunkan

Get "Chocolata" as the Perfect Souvenir from Kawasaki Town!



During HASEKURA Tsunenaga's stay in Europe, chocolate was enjoying immense popularity. In Spain at the time, it was primarily consumed as a liquid nutritional supplement. Having been served chocolate during a welcome reception in Spain, HASEKURA Tsunenaga is believed to be the very first Japanese person to have ever tasted it. Inspired by this historic episode, "Chocolata" is a rich, dense chocolate cake crafted with premium almond powder and zesty orange peel. It makes the ideal souvenir from Kawasaki Town.
Available at the Kawasaki Town Tourism Association and select local retailers.

Manga *Hometown Hero: HASEKURA Tsunenaga*

Read it for free on the Kawasaki Town website!
(Japanese version only)





Chocoemon: Kawasaki Town's Official Mascot Carrying On Tsunenaga's Legacy

The mascot's name blends "Chocolate"—honoring HASEKURA Tsunenaga as the first Japanese person to taste it—with "-emon" from his name, Rokuemon. A loyal dog is depicted alongside Tsunenaga in a famous portrait brought back from Europe. Embodying that same loyalty and enduring spirit, Chocoemon works hard to promote tourism in Kawasaki Town while spreading the delicious appeal of chocolate!

★Chocoemon Instagram
https://instagram.com/chocoemonkawasaki

★Chocoemon X (formerly Twitter)
https://twitter.com/chocoemon_kawa

★Chocoemon Facebook
You can access from the QR code to the right.