

**WIAS**Waseda Institute for Advanced Study
早稲田大学 高等研究所

Call for Papers and Fieldwork Participants

Unfamiliar Neighbours: Empowering Minority Heritage in East Asian Port Cities (Nagasaki–Hirado)

Venue: Nagasaki and Hirado | 24–28 January 2026

Conference Overview

Unfamiliar Neighbours: Empowering Minority Heritage in East Asian Port Cities re-centres the experiences of communities often placed at the margins—by ethnicity, religion, language, gender, class, or citizenship—within the cultural heritage of Asia’s port cities. Rather than treating heritage as a static inheritance curated by states or expert institutions, this conference foregrounds heritage-making as a living, negotiated practice. It asks how minorities create, safeguard, and reinterpret places, rituals, archives, and memories in ways that sustain pluralism, activate local agency, and re-connect port cities across the maritime world. Port cities such as Tokyo–Yokohama, Nagasaki, and Hirado have long been sites of encounter and improvisation. Guilds, clan associations, temple and church networks, burial societies, and trading houses stitched together dense cross-border relationships that both complemented and confounded imperial and national projects. Our recent collaborative research highlights how these ‘unfamiliar neighbours’ have acted as cultural brokers: foreign temples doubling as diplomatic nodes; cemeteries and ancestral halls of foreigners anchoring migrant belonging; religious sites of the ‘others’ negotiating visibility under alternating regimes of tolerance and surveillance. By tracing these practices, we move beyond extractive or celebratory heritage toward what we term participatory diversity—a pluralistic society form not from intellectual dialogue but engagement in daily life. The conference deliberately pairs academic debate with site-based inquiry.

The Nagasaki–Hirado program moves through multiple layered sites of heritage, tracing intersecting religious, cultural, and maritime histories. By beginning with on-site encounters and moving toward collective discussion, it encourages participants to think across temporalities, geographies, and faith traditions. The itinerary is designed to foster conceptual reflection on entangled heritages, mobility and exchange, and the politics of memory, leading into a concluding day of scholarly dialogue and debate. Interested parties from academia, heritage practitioners, community leaders, and those engaged in policy-related work are warmly invited to apply as speakers or participants. A parallel conference and field visit workshop will also be held from 16th to 18th January in Tokyo and Yokohama. Interested participants should apply separately.

Themes

We welcome contributions that address, but are not limited to, the following themes:

- Rituals and Intangible Heritage: religious festivals, ancestral rites, and intangible cultural practices.



- Transnational Networks and Maritime Exchange: minorities as cultural brokers in trade and migration.
- Pluralism and Participatory Diversity: Asian models of coexistence beyond Western-centric paradigms.
- Governance, Policy, and Heritage-Making: interactions between NGOs, governments, and UNESCO frameworks.
- Gender, Religion, and Identity: women and interfaith actors shaping resilience and community belonging.

Programme

- 24 Jan – Fieldtrip Day 1: Gathering at Nagasaki History & Culture Museum; Visits to Suwa Shrine, Sofuku-ji, Kofuku-ji, Fukusa-ji, Daion-ji
- 25 Jan – Fieldtrip Day 2: Visits to Twenty-Six Martyrs Museum and Monument, Nagasaki Confucius Temple and Historical Museum of China, Sofuku-ji, Fukusa-ji, Kofuku-ji, Shofuku-ji, Daion-ji
- 26 Jan – Fieldtrip Day 3: Transfer to Hirado; Visits to Hirado Castle, Matsura Historical Museum, Komyo-ji Temple
- 27 Jan – Visits to St. Francis Xavier Memorial Church, Koxinga Temple; Conference at Hirado Dutch Trading Post

Accommodation and transport arrangements

Two options are available for the Nagasaki edition.

1) Individual arrangements: Participants may arrange their own accommodation and transport and join activities directly at each venue.

2) Group-coordinated arrangements:

2.1 Participants may opt to join as part of a group organised by our designated travel agent. In this arrangement, participants pay a lump-sum (Presenters JPY 120,000, Non-presenters JPY 140,000) for:

- coach transportation from Fukuoka Station to Nagasaki on 24 Jan,
- accommodation in Nagasaki and Hirado (24-28 Jan),
- coach transportation from Nagasaki to Hirado (26 Jan), and
- coach transportation from Hirado Station to Fukuoka Station on 28 Jan.

2.2 Participants may opt to join the group for the coach transport (subject to availability) in and between Fukuoka, Nagasaki, and Hirado for JPY 25,000 for:

- coach transportation from Fukuoka Station to Nagasaki on 24 Jan,
- coach transportation from Nagasaki to Hirado (26 Jan), and
- coach transportation from Hirado Station to Fukuoka Station on 28 Jan.

Priority will be given to presenters at the Hirado conference.

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Publication Opportunities

Selected submissions will be considered for an edited conference proceeding. Subject to external support, additional outputs may include multilingual heritage booklets, policy briefs, and digital resources co-produced with local communities.

Submission Guidelines

- Abstract: 250–300 words, plus 3–5 keywords
- Language: English
- Submit to: hungtakwai@aoni.waseda.jp
- Application form: <https://forms.gle/NW5K6WX3SCKBcdFN6>
- Deadlines:
 - Abstracts due: 7th November 2025
 - Decisions: 14th November 2025
 - Full papers for publication review (optional): 1st March 2026

Contact

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