

My recent two-day trip to Nagasaki was a journey through both the natural and historical events that have shaped the region. The itinerary included visits to Gamadasu Dome, Shimabara Castle, the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum, and a cruise to Gunkanjima Island. Each location offered a unique perspective on the area's history, from volcanic eruptions to the impact of the atomic bomb. The trip was also enriched by the wonderful experiences of relaxing in hot springs, enjoying scenic sea cruises, and tasting delicious local cuisine, all in the company of my classmates and under the guidance of our dedicated teacher.

The first day began with a visit to Gamadasu Dome, an interactive facility dedicated to the volcanic activities that occurred between 1990 and 1995. The dome provided an immersive experience, simulating the eruptions of Mount Unzen and their aftermath. I learned about the catastrophic consequences of these eruptions, which included pyroclastic flows and mudslides that devastated the surrounding areas. The facility also emphasized the importance of disaster preparation, highlighting how the region has adapted to its volatile environment. This experience underscored the resilience of the local population and their ongoing efforts to mitigate the impact of future eruptions.

After exploring the volcanic activities at Gamadasu Dome, we visited Shimabara Castle, a historic site that offers a window into the region's rich past. The castle is a symbol of the power and culture of the feudal lords who ruled the area. Inside, the exhibits are dedicated to the history and development of Christianity in Japan, particularly in the Shimabara region, which was a significant center for early Christian missionaries. The castle's museum showcases artifacts related to the Shimabara Rebellion (1637–1638), a major uprising influenced by religious persecution. The displays provided insights into the challenges faced by early Christians and the impact of the rebellion on the region's history. Visiting Shimabara Castle was a captivating experience, offering a deeper understanding of the religious and social dynamics that have shaped the area.

After a day filled with exploration, I had the opportunity to unwind in a traditional Japanese hot spring, or onsen. The relaxing soak in the mineral-rich waters was a perfect way to rejuvenate after a day of learning and discovery. The day concluded with a delicious meal featuring local specialties, offering a taste of Nagasaki's rich culinary heritage.

The second day of the trip was devoted to exploring the tragic yet significant history of the atomic bombing of Nagasaki. The Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum offered a poignant and educational experience, focusing on the events of August 9, 1945, when the city was devastated by an atomic

bomb. The museum's exhibits, including personal items, photographs, and survivor accounts, vividly depicted the horrors of nuclear warfare and its long-term effects on the city and its inhabitants. The visit served as a powerful reminder of the importance of peace and the global efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

The day continued with a scenic sea cruise to Gunkanjima Island, also known as Battleship Island due to its distinctive shape. The deep blue waters surrounding the island provided a breathtaking backdrop to this unique experience. Once a bustling coal mining facility, Gunkanjima is now an abandoned ghost town, symbolizing Japan's rapid industrialization and the harsh conditions faced by workers during that era. The cruise offered a unique perspective on Japan's industrial heritage, giving us a glimpse into the lives of the workers who once inhabited the island. The stark contrast between Gunkanjima's past and present serves as a reminder of the impermanence of human endeavors and the profound changes that have shaped Japan's economy and society.

This two-day trip to Nagasaki was not only an educational journey through the region's natural disasters, history, and man-made disasters but also a deeply enjoyable experience filled with moments of relaxation and camaraderie. The opportunity to spend time with my classmates, coupled with the valuable guidance and kindness of our teacher, Kataoka-sensei, and the support of Orihara-san and Uehara-san, made this trip truly memorable. From the volcanic activities simulated at Gamadasu Dome to the historical insights gained at Shimabara Castle, and from the sobering realities presented at the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum to the serene beauty of the sea cruise to Gunkanjima Island, each aspect of the journey added a unique dimension to my understanding of Nagasaki. This experience highlighted the resilience and adaptability of the people of Nagasaki, the richness of its culture and history, and the importance of learning and growing together.