

In some of the villages the people had preserved a few leaves of old missals, some crosses and other Christian relics. These were kept buried in boxes under the floor in the centre room of a house, and once a year at dead of night, after the house had been carefully shut up, the relics were opened and shown, the sign of the cross made, and the children told it was the prescribed religion of their ancestors. But they knew nothing more. When the country was opened, and religion proclaimed free, some of these villages declared themselves Christian, and at once received the Roman missionaries.

The people of Oyamada noticed that the conduct and life of the inhabitants of one of these villages was far superior to that of the Buddhists, and came to the conclusion that it must be a good religion which produced such fruits. Some of them went to the government office at the neighbouring town of Kurume, and talked to the officials there of their intention of inquiring into Christianity. They replied to them: 'If you want to be Christians, do not go to the old Christians, for they brought all the trouble to Japan many years ago by meddling in politics; go to the new Christians, for they never interfere with Japanese matters of state.' They were also told that if they went to Nagasaki, they would hear all about Christianity; so a deputation set out along with the head of the village on what was to them a very serious journey. Arrived at Nagasaki, they went to inquire, but the people there knew nothing about any Christians, when a