

RELIGIOUS RESPONSES TO THE ATOMIC BOMBING IN NAGASAKI

OKUYAMA Michiaki 奥山倫明

Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture

THE SECOND atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki three days after the Hiroshima bombing. Approximately 140,000 lives were lost in Hiroshima and 75,000 in Nagasaki.¹ Nearly half of the then Catholic population of Japan, around 50,000 of 110,000, lived in the Nagasaki parish, and they were especially concentrated in the area around ground zero, Urakami. The number of survivors of the Hiroshima or Nagasaki bombings has been decreasing due to natural attrition, but their testimony is becoming all the more valuable under the current situation, given the possible growth of radiation diffusion victims from Fukushima. While it is difficult for some survivors to express their memories of the atomic bomb, others actively share their experiences with others, hoping for nuclear disarmament and world peace. In the case of surviving Christians, their reflections could be even more complex because they cannot avoid a theodicean question: why did America finally drop the bomb on Nagasaki, the most Christian city in Japan?

This article will try to contextualize, against the religious backdrop of the city, two medical doctors (both Catholic converts) who devoted themselves to the medical treatment of the wounded in the devastated field after the bombing.

Nagasaki as a Christian City

John W. TREAT, a specialist in modern Japanese literature, devoted a book to the study of what he calls “the atomic-bomb literature” that has been produced in response to the atomic bombings on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In one chapter of his book (1995), TREAT discusses the cases related to Nagasaki. The first two paragraphs capture clearly the contemporary image and meaning of the bombing in Nagasaki as follows:

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1. The number is taken from John W. DOWER (2012, 146). The general population in Nagasaki in 1945 was approximately 240,000. See HIROSHIMASHI NAGASAKISHI GENBAKU SAIGAISHI HENSHŪ IINKAI 2005, 43.

“Ikari no Hiroshima, inori no Nagasaki”: Hiroshima rages, Nagasaki prays. This common characterization of the marked difference between the social and cultural responses of the number one and two cities to be subjected to a nuclear attack speaks a widespread prejudice: Nagasaki is the second city, the silent city, the city that, because of its earlier familiarity with the Western science that would one day facilitate its destruction, perhaps even invited that fate. The slogan frequently heard at protests throughout the world, “No more Hiroshimas!” makes no mention of Nagasaki. Whereas the place name “Hiroshima” is now the metonymy of all “Hiroshimas” past and future, Nagasaki remains just “Nagasaki,” conceivably better known around the world because of an Italian opera than because of an American air raid. There exists in the historiography of the nuclear age a hierarchy—Hiroshima and then, only sometimes, Nagasaki. The plutonium bomb exploded over Nagasaki was more powerful than the uranium one dropped on Hiroshima, yet its use is not accounted for even in the feeble apology offered for Hiroshima (“A demonstration had to be made”). Nagasaki seems less consequential and certainly less historic....

This is precisely why, however, the destruction of Nagasaki is so crucial in history. A redundant act within the logic of the Second World War, it represents the exercise of a technological and scientific capacity for curiosity’s sake, and the exercise of a postwar military capacity for power’s sake. If Hiroshima initiated the nuclear age, Nagasaki confirms it. This makes the event of Nagasaki perhaps more terrible, despite its lesser carnage: its annihilation converted what might have been a unique aberration in the history of warfare, had the atomic bomb been retired once its effects were known, into a pattern. It turned a strategy into a tactic, one more easily applied to our own cities today wherever they are. (TREAT 1995, 301–2)

Treat proceeds to notice that the atomic-bomb literature is dominated by Hiroshima writers and Hiroshima works, and that Nagasaki atomic-bomb literature is quantitatively smaller and critically less favored (TREAT 1995, 302). Why has this been the case? He does not directly answer this question, but instead points out distinctive features of the city of Nagasaki, which probably presents the atomic bombing in Nagasaki relatively less appealing among other characteristics that this city possesses. One general feature is its internationality. Since the late sixteenth century, Nagasaki has prospered with foreign trade, first mainly with Portugal (1571–1638), and then with the Netherlands during the period of national closure when Japan exclusively kept trade relations with the latter (approximately from 1641 to 1859). Alongside trading with these Western

nations, trade with China had continued until it was forbidden in 1641. After that, several thousand Chinese remained in an area of Nagasaki that was allocated by the Tokugawa shogunate. These historical backdrops explain the “foreignness” and “exoticism” that Treat points out.

Another feature is the concentration of the Christian population in Nagasaki. During the late sixteenth century, proselytization by the Jesuits progressed in the western part of Japan, bringing about around two hundred thousand converts, until the policy of suppression became even more severe around the turn of the seventeenth century. After 1614, when strict prohibition was promulgated, some Japanese Christians became apostates, others martyrs, and still others “hidden Christians.” These latter were those who pretended to have abandoned their Christian faith, but in reality preserved it under the guise of following Buddhist or other rituals and customs. They were dotted in small villages in the Nagasaki area. With the reopening of Japan toward the West in the late nineteenth century, the presence of those who had preserved their faith underground became known, with a northern area of Nagasaki, Urakami, being the center of those Christians. Christian proselytization became tacitly tolerated in 1873, but just before this, another persecution had occurred in Urakami in 1867.²

Treat pays attention to this specific feature of Nagasaki, stating that “this historical circumstance has led to the making of a number of tenuous connections with the city’s equally conspicuous status as the target of an atomic attack” (304). He takes some examples of the interpretations presented by Japanese in regard to the atomic bombing in the very Christian city of Nagasaki. One interpretation is to have a parallel view toward earlier Christian martyrs and toward victims of the atomic bomb. He explains:

Looming behind much of the discussion of Nagasaki’s atomic-bomb literature—and present in some of that literature itself—is a strange mythology: namely that in Nagasaki Christians themselves reconcile their fate as bomb victims with Christianity’s, and perhaps in particular Japanese Christianity’s, special regard for martyrs. (TREAT 1995, 304)

Another interpretation, especially from the Japanese outside of the Christian community, is a somehow mean and disgusting one. This may reflect the xenophobia and prejudice by some Japanese people against a minor religion. According to TREAT, “Other non-Christian Japanese, indulging prejudices long held, saw some sort of perversely just retribution in the fact that it was, after all, the foreign-tainted Japanese Christians who were bombed” (305). This retribu-

2. More than 3,300 Catholics in Urakami were captured and exiled to other parts of Japan, which brought about fierce criticism and opposition from the diplomats of the Western countries.

tion can be summarized as the Japanese gods' vengeance on heretics, that is, Christians in Nagasaki (306).

As to the "tenuous connections" between Christianity and the atomic bombing in Nagasaki, Treat keeps his reservations by observing that "religion of any sort is of less consequence in modern Japan than in most Western nations, and seems of especially little concern to writers" (306). He continues:

More explanatory, perhaps, would be the view that references to Christianity and its exotic overtones simply serve as a rhetorical shorthand for reiterating prejudices already inclined to sequester Nagasaki writing further within the already compromised genre of atomic-bomb literature throughout Japan. (TREAT 1995, 306)

That said, however, he proceeds to discuss several examples of Japanese writers of Nagasaki who have a consciousness of Christian elements in their literary works. Among them he will reflect on Nagai Takashi, whom we will also discuss below.

Growth and Damage among Nagasaki Christians

Statistics

Before going into the main topic of this article, here I would like to look back on the situation of Christianity in Nagasaki in the modern period, then briefly note the damages and losses caused by the atomic bombing on both Catholics and Protestants.

Government statistics on religions in Japan, published in 1916 present the following data. (This religious census was conducted in 1913.) For comparative reference, the census is easily available today and shows that the general population of Japan in 1920 was 55,963,000.³

Among Christian churches with a membership totalling 164,054, there were six denominations with over 10,000 members: Catholics (65,615), Nihon Kirisuto Kyōkai (Presbyterians, 21,018), Anglicans (16,215), Kumiai Kirisuto Kyōkai (Congregational, 15,847), Orthodox (14,206), and Methodists (13,356). Focusing on nationwide distribution, the results are shown in the chart on the following page, focussing on the prefectures with over 2,000 members in any one denomination mentioned above.

3. The statistics are from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, Statistics Bureau, Director-General for Policy Planning (Statistical Standards) & Statistical Research and Training Institute: <http://www.stat.go.jp/data/nihon/02.htm>.

	Hokkaidō	Miyagi	Tokyo	Kanagawa	Hyōgo	Fukuoka	Nagasaki	Kagoshima	Total
Catholics	2,200	1,342	4,816	1,717	947	2,661	37,277	3,915	65,615
Presbyterians	1,216	1,234	4,388	2,431	768	434	346	96	21,018
Anglicans	2,593	98	2,998	317	742	538	267	196	16,215
Congregations	1,076	230	1,374	364	2,166	205	77	–	15,847
Orthodox	1,542	2,192	1,843	528	211	67	–	85	14,206
Methodists	832	230	2,174	821	644	427	324	437	13,356

(Source: Ministry of Education, *Shūkyō yōran*, 1916)

Fifteen years or so after the publication of the above-mentioned governmental statistics, an encyclopedic overview of religions in Japan entitled *Shūkyō taikan* was published by Yomiuri Shinbunsha in 1932. Its chapters present historical backdrops of each religious tradition, its main teachings, and current status. Here I summarize the description related to the six denominations mentioned earlier. For comparative reference, the general population as of 1930 was 64,450,000, and according to the governmental statistics, the number of Christians in 1929 totaled 274,311.

- The Catholic Church presents the statistics as of 1929 that count 11,777 members in the Tokyo parish and 54,514 in the Nagasaki parish, from a total of 98,007, including 5,846 in Taiwan.
- Nihon Kirisuto Kyōkai presents the statistics as of 1930 that counts 45,324 members.
- Anglicans present the statistics that count 37,348 registered members, among which 24,926 are active.
- Kumiai Kirisuto Kyōkai (now renamed Nihon Kumiai Kirisuto Kyōkai) presents the statistics that count 31,167, among which 17,156 are active members.
- The Orthodox Church presents the statistics as of 1929 that count 13,564 (a decrease from the number in 1913)
- As for Methodists, there are several denominations mentioned in this volume, but Nihon Methodist Kyōkai can be regarded as the main group. The statistics as of 1931 count 37,451 members.

Considering these figures in the early twentieth century, we can understand for the moment the following: 1. Christians in Japan were a very tiny minority; 2. Catholics made up a substantial proportion of Christians in general, namely more than one-third of all the Christians; and 3. among Catholics, the number of those living in Nagasaki comprised more than half of the total membership.

Now let us turn our focus to Christianity in Nagasaki in the modern period. Catholicism has shown a conspicuous presence in Nagasaki, but Protestant missionaries as well have developed their own activities there and exerted significant influence in this Catholic-dominant city. Especially before the war years,

Christianity in Nagasaki presented the following picture.⁴ Some of the facilities were devastated by the atomic bomb, with a great number of casualties.

Catholicism

After the Treaties of Amity and Commerce between Japan and other Western nations, including the United States and France, were signed in 1858, the first Catholic cathedral was established in the Ōura area in 1865, first just for the French residence in Nagasaki. The responsibility for Catholic missionary activities in modern Japan was taken by the Paris Foreign Missions Society, and Catholicism in Nagasaki has maintained the strong influence of French Catholicism. With the increase in the number of Japanese reconverting from being former hidden Christians in addition to the new converts, another church named Nakamachi Church was founded in the center of the city in 1897. Urakami Cathedral was established in 1914, in the earlier center of hidden Christians, following the former temporal church.

Besides the activities at the parish level, some activities of the Catholic religious orders deserve to be mentioned. A women's community Urakami Jūjikai started their relief activities for the sick and orphans in 1874 under the guidance of a French Catholic priest. This community grew into a lay sorority in 1956, incorporating other communities of the same sort, and then into a women's religious order in 1975 as Otsuge no Maria Shūdōkai.

A French sorority, Congregation des Soeurs de l'Enfant-Jesus de Chauffailles, founded their convent in Nagasaki in 1880, after some other educational activities in other parts of Japan. In Nagasaki, they also established educational facilities, among which were a women's elementary school founded in Urakami in 1890 (which was replaced with another school and a kindergarten in 1908), and another at the middle school level founded in Ōura in 1891. The school in Ōura moved to Urakami in 1929, and all the facilities and people in Urakami (167 in total, including students and teachers) were completely annihilated by the atomic bombing. In 1949 the schools restarted their educational activities, mainly the kindergarten schools (Nagasaki Shin-ai kindergarten).

The Society of Mary, also from France, established a school near Ōura in 1892, after being active in the field of education in Tokyo. This school, Kaisei Gakkō, covered education from elementary to middle school levels, and the middle school is still active today.

In 1934, a Japanese sister and the first Japanese bishop in Japan founded a sorority, which in turn established a women's school, Junshin Jogakuin, in the following year in the center of Nagasaki. In 1937 they moved to the north of

4. The following description is based on NAGASAKI-KEN KYŌIKUKAI 1976; SAKAI 2005; and NAGASAKI BUNKENSHA 2006, among others.

Urakami, where 214 students were to be killed by the atomic bomb. After the war they restarted the school that would develop into an educational complex that manages facilities from kindergartens to universities.

Catholics started the seminary in Ōura in 1875, and it moved to the north of Urakami temporarily in 1925, but returned to Ōura later. The school building in Urakami became a Canadian Franciscan seminary in 1931. With the outbreak of the Pacific War, the foreign priests and brothers were taken into custody in 1941. The order wanted to maintain the facility and founded a sanatorium, Urakami Daiichi Byōin [The First Hospital of Urakami] on the premises in 1943.

The atomic bombing destroyed the sanatorium, but the surviving medical staff continued to treat the original seventy inpatients and those gathering survivors under the leadership of Dr. Akizuki Tatsuichirō. In the Urakami area, it is said that 8,500 died among 12,000 Catholic parishioners.⁵ After Urakami Cathedral was destroyed, the surviving Catholics gathered in the skeletal ruins of the First Hospital of Urakami for a while to celebrate mass. In 1948 the management of the hospital was taken over by the Hospital Sisters of St. Francis who were originally from Germany, and they reopened the hospital as St. Francis Sanatorium, which is active today as St. Francis Hospital.

Protestantism

Just after the reopening of Japan, several Protestant missionaries, namely, Episcopalians and Presbyterians, visited Nagasaki in 1859. Other denominations also sent their missionaries. The first Protestant church was established in 1862 near Ōura, which was mainly supported by British residents, and accordingly called “the English Church.” It preceded the establishment of the first Catholic church. After Christian proselytization was recognized in 1873, missionaries became more active. In 1875 Anglicans established another church, this time especially for Japanese participants, closer to the downtown of Nagasaki. They temporarily managed a seminary and schools.

Among other Protestant denominations, two have been very active and influential in Nagasaki. One is the Reformed Church and Presbyterians, and the other is the Methodists.

The Reformed missionaries established their first church in 1874. In 1877 an ecumenical organization was formed at the national level, and accordingly this church became more ecumenical in character. The Reformed missionaries founded a school together with the theological seminary, Higashiyama Gakuin, near Ōura in 1887, which was closed in 1932. They also temporarily managed a women’s school from 1887 to 1914, when it moved out of Nagasaki and merged with another women’s school to establish the third one in another location.

5. See, for example, TAKAHARA and YOKOTE 2010, v.

The Methodists established their first church in 1875. They have also been active in education, and also established schools. They first established a school near Ōura in 1881, which was renamed Chinzei Gakkan in 1889, and further renamed Chinzei Gakuin in 1906. This school offered theological education for some time. In 1930 the school moved closer to Urakami, and was to be severely damaged by the atomic bombing in which they lost 102 students and 7 staff members. They moved out of Nagasaki city after the war, and have been managing their schools, including a kindergarten and a university. One anecdote related to this school is that the original story of Puccini's opera, *Madam Butterfly*, was written in 1898 by a brother-in-law of a principal of Chinzei Gakkan.

Methodist missionaries also established Kwassui Women's School near Ōura in 1879. They reorganized the curriculum in 1887 and 1911, and maintained women's education from middle school on up, keeping the theology course for some time alongside the general education. After the war, they reorganized the school system and have been active in women's education from middle school and higher.

Two Catholic Doctors

A well-known religious response to the atomic bombing in Nagasaki is the one presented by Nagai Takashi (1908–1951), who is mentioned by John Treat. John Dower introduces Nagai's profile as follows:

Nagai, ironically enough, had been a medical researcher specializing in radiology and was a devout Catholic. His wife had been killed outright in the Nagasaki blast. He lived in a tiny hut in the ruins of Nagasaki with his young son and daughter—reflecting on the meaning of his city's fate, writing furiously before death caught him (which it did on April 30, 1951 [the correct date being May 1], killing him with heart failure caused by leukemia). Nagai was extraordinarily charismatic in his prolonged death agony and captured popular imagination to a degree unsurpassed by any other Japanese writer about the bombs until the mid-1960s, when the distinguished elderly novelist Ibuse Masuji [1898–1993], a native son of Hiroshima prefecture, published *Kuroi Ame* (Black Rain). (DOWER 2012, 149)

Dower looks back on Nagai's interpretation of the atomic bombing in Nagasaki. This interpretation was elaborated in Nagai's own Christian way, which actually has been discussed and sometimes criticized by Japanese scholars and writers. Dower summarizes:

Nagai's interpretation of the nuclear holocaust was apocalyptically Christian. The bombs were part of God's providence, a divine act of suffering and death out of which world redemption would arise.⁶ And in his view, it was not mere happenstance that the second and last nuclear weapon fell on Nagasaki, a city with a long Christian tradition—exploded, indeed, above the great cathedral at Urakami. “Was not Nagasaki the chosen victim,” Nagai wrote in a typically passionate passage, “the lamb without blemish, slain as a whole-burnt offering on an altar of sacrifice, atoning for the sins of all the nations during World War II?”
(DOWER 2012, 149)

The citation of Nagai's passage was taken from his *Nagasaki no Kane* [The bells of Nagasaki].⁷ The words are originally written as the “Funeral Address for the Victims of the Atomic Bomb” to be delivered by Nagai as a representative of lay parishioners at the Urakami Cathedral on 23 November 1945 during a Mass to pray for the souls of the atomic bomb victims (TAKAHARA and YOKOTE 2010, 75).

Nagai's idea of the atomic bombing as God's providence, that God must have chosen Nagasaki as the sacrificial victim, has invited a number of criticisms.⁸ Recently Takahashi Shinji, a philosopher, has been critical of this idea of Nagai, which the former categorizes as “the idea of Nagasaki as a holocaust.” According to Takahashi, this idea will after all only justify the atomic bombing in Nagasaki. A couple of scholars in religious studies have also joined in the arguments surrounding Nagai's idea. Most recently Nishimura Akira tries to contextualize Nagai's thought in the latter's life history (NISHIMURA 2012).

Here I will not participate in the discussion on Nagai's thought, but instead introduce another medical doctor's case. Akizuki Tatsuichirō (1916–2005) was a doctor working in the First Hospital in Urakami.⁹ Prior to working there, he was an assistant in the Radiology Department of the Medical University of Nagasaki (present-day School of Medicine of Nagasaki University) from 1940 to 1941, where he met Nagai Takashi, then head of the department as an associate

6. Dower's argument here refers to two bombs, but Nagai seems to consider the Nagasaki case, and more specifically those victims in Urakami.

7. Dower translates the sentence by himself. William Johnston, a Jesuit priest and theologian, published his English translation of *Nagasaki no Kane* as *The Bells of Nagasaki*. Nagai's passage is seen on page 107.

8. Kataoka and Kataoka trace the critical arguments against Nagai. See KATAOKA and KATAOKA 1996. Yuki Miyamoto reflects on Nagai's Catholic interpretation and criticisms of it. See MIYAMOTO 2005. One example of these criticisms is that of Akizuki's (see below). Recently Fukuma Yoshiaki discussed Yamada Kan's criticism toward Nagai in a historical context. Yamada was a poet, baptized as an Anglican. See FUKUMA 2011.

9. The following description about Akizuki is based on YAMASHITA 2006, and the new edition of Akizuki's *Shi no dōshinen* (The concentric circle of death) published in 2010.

professor. Nagai had already been baptized in 1934, while Akizuki was a devout Buddhist with faith in the Pure Land. Working in the Medical University, Akizuki caught tuberculosis, and left the position. After recovering, he worked at a private hospital from 1941, and then in 1944 he started to work at the First Hospital of Urakami as the only medical doctor. Franciscan brothers and seminarians were also working there as medical staff, among others. After the atomic bombing and the following rescue and recovery activities, Akizuki left the hospital in March 1948 to retreat to a hut deep in the mountains to care for his own physically and mentally weakened condition. In 1952 Akizuki fell again to tuberculosis, and returned to the hospital, the one already restructured into St. Francis Hospital, where he would work and also receive treatment. He would convert and be baptized in 1953. What had been his religious ideas until then, and what brought him to conversion? Here I would like to review some of his ideas based on his book originally published in 1972 (AKIZUKI 2010).¹⁰

When Akizuki first met Nagai, he contrasted Nagai's open-minded, romantic, and extrovert character with his own feeble introverted one, and felt emotional incompatibility with the latter (AKIZUKI 2010, 29). After he started to work at the First Hospital of Urakami, as a Buddhist himself, he did not have any interest in Catholicism.

After the bombing, he devoted himself to the treatment for survivors, more than three hundred patients in the first three days for only one doctor. During the treatment then and thereafter he saw many injured Catholics, both the religious and the laity. He also saw the priests seeing off the dying in the sacrament. Akizuki could not sympathize with Catholics who said, "This is God's providence," which is the same idea as Nagai's (148). Although he respected the efforts of the foreign Franciscans who returned to Urakami, and those of other priests, he became skeptical and distrustful of people in general (182). He respects Nagai's accomplishments for his heroic medical activities and as the writer of the disastrous aftermath in Nagasaki, but nevertheless he held some reservations regarding Nagai's religious tone. Akizuki states:

Dr. Nagai has produced an enormous achievement in reporting widely the aftermath of the atomic bombing in Nagasaki. The images of "the atomic-bombed Nagasaki" and "Nagai in Nagasaki" have spread all over Japan. I could not but feel, however, that his appeal was too sentimental, and inclined to be too religious. And accordingly, the result

10. The title of this book, "the concentric circle of death," signifies the enlargement of the dead from ground zero. Those around the center died in a few days (all within a circle of five hundred meters radius died before August 15th). Then the concentric area where one was injured and radiation-affected, and later died as time passed, enlarged gradually. This concentric area of death enlarged into a circle of 1,500 meters radius by the end of September. See AKIZUKI 2010, 148.

has been as if Dr. Nagai has been the only witness to report the atomic bomb of Nagasaki. Exhausted physically for the double suffering from radiation sickness,¹¹ he could not have any other way of facing the atomic bombing but a religious way. (AKIZUKI 2010, 194)

One year after the bombing, there was a commemoration mass conducted at the Urakami Cathedral, where Catholics of the hospital attended, but Akizuki did not. He knew of Nagai's idea that Nagasaki was the chosen victim, but could not approve of it (213). Akizuki also honestly admitted his own envy and doubt when he saw that the Urakami Cathedral was under reconstruction whereas his hospital was still a small barracks (219). With the decision of Franciscans, the hospital itself was rebuilt first as a small wooden building in April 1947.

After several months, Akizuki decided to leave the hospital, and confided this decision to Nagai. Akizuki wanted to keep himself away from the survivors' very complex mentality, the one that had accustomed the survivors to the surrounding situations (233–5). While he was living in the mountains, the emperor visited Nagasaki in May 1949, and also came to see Nagai, who was seriously ill. According to Akizuki, after this event, the phrase "Hiroshima rages, Nagasaki prays" came to be emphasized (244). He praised Catholic spirituality, but criticized this spirituality for it having replaced the rage against cruelty and oppression during the war (246). In May-June 1949, special events were held at several places in Japan to commemorate the four hundredth anniversary of the visit of Francisco Xavier. It is said to have been the first international event after the war. In Urakami, an outdoor mass was celebrated. After this event, people in Nagasaki (except for communists) did not talk anymore about the atomic bomb. Akizuki deplors this situation (245). As mentioned above, he returned to Urakami in 1952.

In the meantime, Catholic colleagues and friends had seemingly been wishing for Akizuki's conversion. After all these experiences, he had gradually come to think that there is no significant difference between Buddhism and Catholicism, and that conversion to Catholicism or staying Buddhist would be the same. Although he felt it "a defeat," and was a little doubtful whether Christ would save him when devoured again by the atomic blazes at the second coming of hell, he finally converted in 1953 (250–1). He would continue to work at St. Francis Hospital until 1984.

11. Nagai had already suffered from leukemia even before the bomb, because of his radiology research. Translation by author.

Conclusion

Nagai died in 1951, two years before Akizuki became a Catholic. Thus they did not have a chance to talk over their shared faith. Akizuki kept his criticism toward Nagai, and then he himself launched his own activities against the atomic bomb. One was to write a document about his own experience to be published later.¹² Another was to join the anti-nuclear peace movement. In the movement, he also encouraged other atomic-bomb survivors to document their own war and survival experiences. He chose a path to object eloquently to the atomic bomb, not to submit silently to Nagai's interpretation of the Nagasaki bombing. He would later receive a number of honorary prizes for his activities both as a doctor and as a witness of the nuclear catastrophe, including one from the Vatican. In 1995, he was granted the newly established Nagai Takashi Award, as its first recipient.

Akizuki's response to the atomic bomb was different from Nagai's. Nagai's was a religious interpretation about the meaning of the bombing at the Catholic place of Urakami. We cannot conclude whether Akizuki's response was a religious one or not, but at least he became active in opposition to the atomic bomb after he became a Catholic.

Nagasaki, the second atomic bomb site, has been an exceptionally Christian city in Japan. The Christians there naturally faced the question as to the meaning of the nuclear disaster and its aftermath. The question probably cannot be answered in a decisive way, but here we have seen two contrasting examples of Catholic doctors.

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