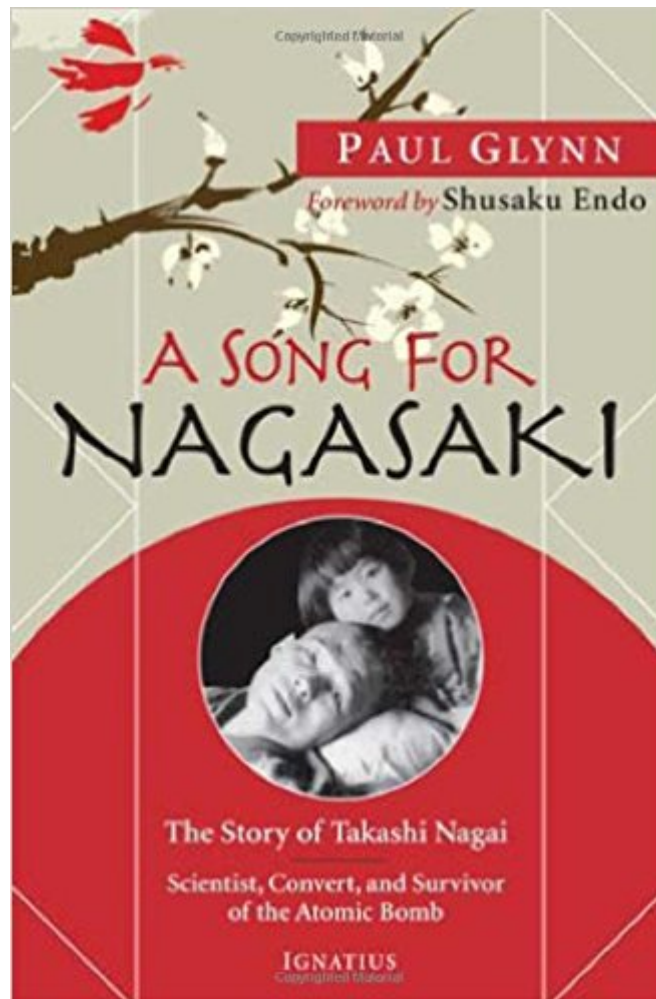


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A Song For Nagasaki: The Story Of Takashi Nagai-Scientist, Convert, And Survivor Of The Atomic Bomb



Synopsis

On August 9, 1945, an American B-29 dropped an atomic bomb on Nagasaki, Japan, killing tens of thousands of people in the blink of an eye, while fatally injuring and poisoning thousands more. Among the survivors was Takashi Nagai, a pioneer in radiology research and a convert to the Catholic Faith. Living in the rubble of the ruined city and suffering from leukemia caused by over-exposure to radiation, Nagai lived out the remainder of his remarkable life by bringing physical and spiritual healing to his war-weary people. A Song for Nagasaki tells the moving story of this extraordinary man, beginning with his boyhood and the heroic tales and stoic virtues of his family's Shinto religion. It reveals the inspiring story of Nagai's remarkable spiritual journey from Shintoism to atheism to Catholicism. Mixed with interesting details about Japanese history and culture, the biography traces Nagai's spiritual quest as he studied medicine at Nagasaki University, served as a medic with the Japanese army during its occupation of Manchuria, and returned to Nagasaki to dedicate himself to the science of radiology. The historic Catholic district of the city, where Nagai became a Catholic and began a family, was ground zero for the atomic bomb. After the bomb disaster that killed thousands, including Nagai's beloved wife, Nagai, then Dean of Radiology at Nagasaki University, threw himself into service to the countless victims of the bomb explosion, even though it meant deadly exposure to the radiation which eventually would cause his own death. While dying, he also wrote powerful books that became best-sellers in Japan. These included *The Bells of Nagasaki*, which resonated deeply with the Japanese people in their great suffering as it explores the Christian message of love and forgiveness. Nagai became a highly revered man and is considered a saint by many Japanese people. "Christians and non-Christians alike were deeply moved by Nagai's faith in Christ that made him like Job of the Scriptures: in the midst of the nuclear wilderness he kept his heart in tranquility and peace, neither bearing resentment against any man nor cursing God." Shusaku Endo, from the Foreword

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Customer Reviews

This is the uplifting story of Dr. Takashi Nagai, a brilliant Japanese scientist who lived in the first half of the 20th century, became an unlikely convert to Catholic Christianity, became a war hero in the war with China in the 1930s, survived the nuclear bombing of Nagasaki but suffering the death of his wife, university colleagues, and decimation of the Christian community in that city, and towards the end of his life, terminally ill with leukemia (contracted before the nuclear attack because of his work as a radiologist) he was dedicated to providing spiritual comfort to the people of Nagasaki and Japan, both through his writings and his example, and by the time of his death had become a much admired and revered person in Japan and the world. The story of Nagai itself follows important parallels with that of many great saints within Christianity: somebody who is an independent spirit, perhaps a bit rebellious but also very sensitive, highly accomplished in what they do, goes through difficult times which hasten a spiritual conversion (in Nagai's case the death of his mother), after which even harder times lead to growth and strengthening of faith, culminating, or I should say blossoming, in radiance and fulfillment through service and love to their fellow human beings. But the way the story is written by author Paul Glynn, providing the reader with the full historic and geographic context, make it all the more engaging and compelling.

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