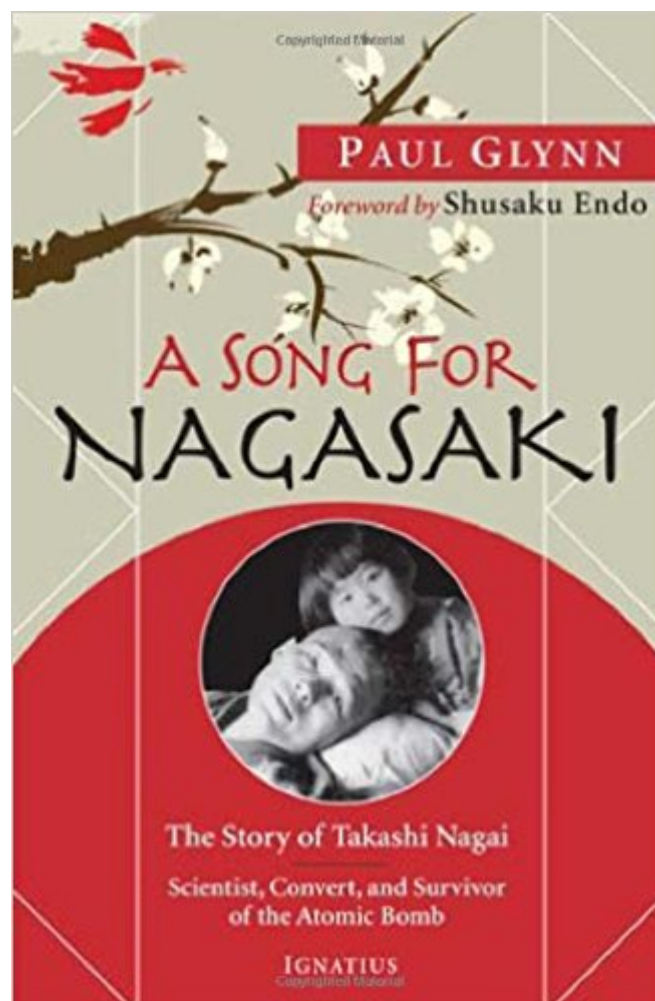




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A Song For Nagasaki: The Story Of Takashi Nagai-Scientist, Convert, And Survivor Of The Atomic Bomb



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

Fr. Paul Glynn

Once in a while, I find that I have read something so magnificent that it has a profound significance on my very soul. This is such a book. The story of Dr. Takashi Nagai is a story of a self made man who eventually meets that still small voice that has been calling to him all of his life. WWII brought a day of reckoning for thousands upon thousands of creatures just trying to survive the madness of war. As it has been said, "War brings out the worst in man---War brings out the best in man." This story brings real meaning to that statement. The Japanese are a proud people. They are also deeply rooted in their culture and their religions. Dr. Nagai struggles with tradition, heritage and his inner self; his purpose in life and his duty to his countrymen as well his enemies. He was a pioneer in the use of x-ray in the medical field. This new kind of energy would have a lasting affect on his young life. At the time, it was unknown just how much radiation a person could absorb before it became lethal. Knowing the danger, he continued on in his research as he sought to save lives by this new method of diagnosing . Already suffering from radiation exposure, he finds himself at ground zero when hell was unleashed on Nagasaki in August of 1945. He lost the love of his life that day, his wife. His story continues as he throws himself into his work amidst horrors too terrible to even try to understand. His spiritual journey from Japanese traditions, to atheism and agnosticism to finding God through his conversion to the Catholic faith is such a testimony to the power and grace of the one true God. Was Dr. Nagai a martyr? He certainly didn't think so, however his humble mannerisms and immeasurable faith brought many to the foot of the cross. "A Song For Nagasaki" is a masterpiece. I am so blessed to have been able to read and review this work. I encourage you to make this a 'must read' on your list for the near future.

This book is riveting, one that, once you begin, you cannot stop until you finish. The story of Takashi Nagai is amazing and inspirational, overcoming so many burdens and trials even just to arrive at "mere" belief. He learned what love was and used his gifts and talents for the glory of God, even in the face of pure sadness. I also appreciated that the book describes some history of Christianity in

Japan, a topic that I did not know much about. The events of August 9, 1945 are made even more tragic when you realize that not only was there an incredible loss of innocent human life, but the atomic bomb struck at the heart of Catholicism in a country where Christianity has always struggled to gain a foothold. As a Catholic myself, it wrenched my heart to read of the sufferings of so many, but Nagai's story is one of wisdom and hope.

I've had this on my Kindle for some time and decided to start this wonderful book and finished it in three days. It is a story of a mystic, lover, and a believer in the Cross of Jesus Christ. I cannot recommend this book, story, love story enough; it will make you tear and laugh and feel wonderful after you read it. From Atheism, materialism, to complete love for Jesus in one short life despite dying from leukemia and radiation poisoning, *A Song For Nagasaki* will leave you with a memory of a perfect life during a miserable point in Japanese history. Please read this book.

This book has touched my heart in a way that no other book has ever done before. I read "The bells of Nagasaki", before this, so I had some information on Nagai prior to reading. The book goes into extreme detail about his marriage and children. The love this man had for others around him cannot be described with words. This was a man that was well educated, a metacognitive thinker, and convert. I just finished my book with tears in my eyes. This man's final days were both sad and beautiful at the same time. You need to read this book if you are a Christian, a Japanophile, or are studying religion/philosophy. Thanks to this book, I want to go to Nagasaki so badly now.
BE WARNED: Like the "The bells of Nagasaki", there are some very depressing, graphic descriptions in this book when they talk about the Atomic Bombing. Once you have started reading the book, you need to continue reading, or you can become depressed.

"*A Song for Nagasaki*" is the kind of book that touches your heart, and you wish it would never end because it is so interesting. It is the story of the life of Takashi Nagai. The story of his spiritual journey from Shintoism (his family's religion), to atheism, to Catholicism is inspiring. It is also a first hand account of what it was like when the A-bomb was dropped on Nagasaki. While reading a first-hand account of what it was like when Nagasaki was bombed is almost incomprehensible, what is even more amazing is the way in which Dr. Nagai responded. Never would I expect anyone to have such strength, such peace, and to share and inspire others as he did. Although he was suffering from leukemia caused by over-exposure to radiation while working in radiology at the hospital, he did not let his illness stop him from helping others. When he was very ill and no longer

able to work he wrote several books and many articles and became well known throughout Japan and other parts of the world for promoting peace and bringing good out of disaster. He spent the final years of his life in a little hut where he received many important visitors including Helen Keller. He is known affectionately as "the saint of Urakami", and I would love to see the process of canonization by the Church started for this holy man. I highly recommend this book to everyone! It is the best book I have read in a long time.

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