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The Original Manuscript of Takashi Nagai’s Funeral Address at a Mass for the victims of the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb

Tetsuro KONISHI

永井隆の「原子爆弾死者合同葬弔辞」手稿

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概要
「原爆は神の摂理」という物議をかもした永井隆の思想は、被爆死者合同慰霊祭（1945年11月23日、浦上天主堂）での彼の弔辞ではじめて公にされた。この弔辞の手稿は長崎市上野町の長崎市永井隆記念館に保存・展示されている。この弔辞は修正の後、彼の主著『長崎の鐘』（1949年）に再録されたが、手稿と『長崎の鐘』に再録されたものとは、弔辞の内容にちがいがある。本論ではこの手稿の全文を英語訳をそえて公開し、その『長崎の鐘』版とのちがいをあきらかにする。

Keywords:
Takashi Nagai, Funeral Address, The Bells of Nagasaki

Three months after the atomic bombing of Nagasaki in August 1945 a memorial mass for the victims of the bombing was held at the ruined Urakami Cathedral. It took place on 23rd November, and was celebrated by Bishop Wasaburo Urakawa in the presence of about 600 local Catholics who had survived the bombing and who were holding about 8,000 small white crosses that represented the victims. At the end of the mass Takashi Nagai, whose head was bandaged and who was dressed in rags, delivered a funeral address as a representative for the congregation in a tearful voice. The touching speech so moved the congregation that all of them cried bitterly.¹

The funeral address was modified and included in Nagasaki no Kane (The Bells of Nagasaki, hereafter The Bells) published in 1949, forming a significant chapter entitled Gosha no Kyaku (Visitors to My Hut), where Nagai expresses his unique and controversial view that the atomic bombing of Urakami was an act of divine providence. After the publication of the book, Nagai’s views on the atomic bombing of Nagasaki went on to have a considerable influence on the anti-nuclear movement in Nagasaki. They have also been the subject of vigorous discussion over several decades.

The funeral address as it appears in The Bells differs from Nagai’s original manuscript in various ways. Shinji Takahashi, Nagai’s sharpest critic, makes reference to this fact in his 1994 work Death and Life in the Nuclear Age: Philosophizing in Nagasaki:

I could check the manuscript of the funeral address ... handwritten with a pencil by Takashi Nagai himself. Though I found a considerable amount of difference between the original and the printed work,
I cannot describe it in detail now because there is no room for discussion here./repos

These differences remain undisputed, however, and little attention has been given to them until now. There has been no study on them until today. As a result, discussions of Nagai’s ideas have taken as their starting point Nagai’s remarks in his published work, not those in his original manuscript.

It is important to go back to the original and to be aware of the differences so that this information may inform future research. The original manuscript of this address, which is housed at the Nagai Takashi Memorial Museum in Nagasaki, has never appeared either in print or online before now. This article reproduces the original manuscript in full and provides an accompanying English translation. It then examines the differences between the original manuscript and the version which appeared in Nagai’s famous work The Bells. Through this comparison, the following conclusions were drawn:

1) About half of the original funeral address was included in The Bells.
2) The part derived from the original funeral address accounts for about three-fifths of the funeral address in The Bells.
3) Though Nagai changed the original funeral address to make it appropriate for the book, his main ideas on the atomic bombing of Nagasaki have been preserved.

I. Photocopies of Nagai’s original manuscript together with transcripts

In the following eight figures, Nagai’s original manuscript is shown in photocopies which have subsequently been transcribed by the author as accurately as possible. The manuscript is handwritten in pen on four sheets, and has been preserved in its entirety.
昭和二十年八月九日午前十時二十分カラ大本営二於テ戦争最高指導

原子爆弾死者合同葬弔辞

原爆戦争計画ソソレクトモ人類ヲ二於テ戦争ニ於ケルカ

二於テ戦争ニ於ケルカ

Figure 1.1. The first sheet of Nagai’s manuscript

Figure 1.2. The first sheet of Nagai’s manuscript in type
Figure 1.3. The second sheet of Nagai’s manuscript

Figure 1.4. The second sheet of Nagai’s manuscript in type
2. English translation of Nagai’s original manuscript

The following is the English translation of Nagai’s original manuscript. The vocabularies of the translation are taken from the English translation of The Bells of Nagasaki by William Johnston as far as possible.

Funeral Address for the Victims of the Atomic Bomb

On August 9, 1945, from 10:30 A.M. a meeting of the Supreme Council of War was held at the Imperial Headquarters to decide whether Japan should continue to wage war or put an end to war. The destiny not only of Japan but of the world depended upon this meeting. At that moment the world was at a crossroads. A decision was being made that would either bring about a new and lasting peace or throw the human family into further cruel bloodshed and carnage.

And just at that same time, at two minutes past eleven in the morning, an atomic bomb exploded over the centre of our district of Urakami in Nagasaki. In an instant, eight thousand Christians were called into the hands of God, while in a moment the fierce flames reduced to ashes this sacred territory of the East.

At midnight of that same night the Urakami cathedral suddenly burst into flames and was burned to the ground. And exactly at that time in the Imperial Palace, His Majesty the Emperor, resisting the strong opposition of the military authorities who insisted upon waging war, made known his sacred decision to bring the war to an end in the cause of world peace.

On August 15, the Imperial Rescript which put an end to the fighting was formally promulgated, and the whole world welcomed a day of peace. This day was indeed the great feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary also. It is significant to reflect that Japan is a country dedicated to the Virgin Mary and our Urakami Cathedral was especially dedicated to her also. And we must ask if this convergence of events --- the ending of the war and the celebration of her feast ---- was merely coincidental or if there was here some mysterious providence of God.

You can realize that there was a profound relationship between the destruction of Urakami and the end of the war if you take account of the following things: the atomic bomb was originally destined for the prefectural offices at the centre of Nagasaki. But because of weather conditions, wind carried the plane north to Urakami and the bomb exploded above the cathedral there. Moreover, after the bombing of Nagasaki no more battles took place anywhere in the world. In other words, we want to believe that Urakami church was chosen not as a victim but as a pure lamb, to be slaughtered and burned on the altar of sacrifice to expiate the sins committed by humanity in the Second World War.

The human family has inherited the sin of Adam and Eve who ate the fruit of the forbidden tree; we have inherited the sin of Cain who struck his younger brother to death; we have forgotten that we are children of God during this Second World War; we have disobeyed the law of love. We have hated one another; we have killed one another. And now at last we have brought this war to an end, which has lasted fifteen years since the Mukden Incident in 1931. But in order to restore peace to the world it was not sufficient to repent deeply for the actions of humanity. We had to obtain God’s pardon through the offering of
a great sacrifice.

Before this moment there were many opportunities to end the war. Many cities had been totally destroyed by bombings. But these were not suitable sacrifices; nor did God accept them. Only when the whole church of Urakami was destroyed did God accept the sacrifice gladly. Hearing the cry of the human family, He must have inspired the Emperor to issue the sacred decree by which the war was brought to an end. To put the matter in a different way, we want to believe that only the sacrificial victim of Urakami could bring the war to an end; by this sacrifice billions who would otherwise have fallen victim to the ravages of war have been saved.

The church of Urakami kept the true faith during four hundred years of persecution when religion was proscribed in our country and the blood of many martyrs flowed freely. The church survived persecutions under both Toyotomi and the Tokugawa shogunate. It has also endured oppression by the military and the government as well as by ordinary citizens since the Meiji era. Were the Christians in Urakami not, then, chosen from all over the world, unblemished lambs that had to be offered on the altar of God?

How noble, how splendid was that holocaust of August 9th, when flames soared up from the cathedral, dispelling the darkness of war and bringing the light of peace? In the very depth of our grief we reverently saw here something beautiful, something pure, something good.

I remember all of you, the dead: Father Nishida, Father Tamaya, the Sisters of Junshin convent and Josai convent, elders, teachers, the Sisters of Jujiikai convent, our relatives, our friends and our family... All without exception were good people whom we deeply mourn. Furthermore, because all eight thousand of you had finished your confession and examination of conscience already in preparation for the Assumption of Mary, you should have gone up to heaven on board the clouds all together.

We may say that you who left this world without knowing the defeat of your country are happier than we. Compared with you, the pure lambs who rest in the bosom of God, what a pitiful and miserable people we who have survived are! Japan is conquered. Urakami is totally destroyed. A waste of ash and rubble alone lies everywhere before our eyes. We have no houses to live in, no clothes to wear. Our potato fields are devastated without anyone to plough them. Only we, remnants who lost you, our breadwinners, have survived. We offer our prayers standing in the midst of the ruins, looking blankly at the snowy sky changing its appearance.

Why could we not die with you on that day, at that time? Why must we alone continue this miserable existence?

Now indeed I have been forced to see the enormity of my sins. It is because we have not made expiation for our sins that we are left behind. We were so deeply rooted in sin that we were likely not offered to God.

We, a vanquished people, must now walk along a path that will be full of suffering and pain. The reparations imposed by the Potsdam Declaration are a heavy burden. But this painful path along which we walk carrying our burden --- is it not also the path of hope which gives to us sinners an opportunity to expiate our sins?

"Blessed are those that mourn for they shall be comforted." We believe these words. We hope that we will go joyfully to heaven someday. Until that day we would like to walk this painful way of expiation
faithfully and sincerely. And as we walk carrying the burden of our reparations in hunger and thirst, ridiculed, penalized, scourged, pouring with sweat and covered with blood, let us remember how our Lord Jesus Christ carried His cross to the hill of Calvary. He will give us courage. Please ask God to give us great courage in our weakness through the intercession of the Virgin Mary.

Today we have attended the funeral mass for you the victims under the sponsorship of Nagasaki Archdiocese here at the ruined Urakami Cathedral. The mass cantata and the absolution ad tumbam were celebrated by Bishop Wasaburo Urakawa of the Diocese of Sendai. Bishops, Parish Priests and Sisters who are from Nagasaki have come back here from all over Japan and have been praying with us to God for mercy. Together with these two thousand members of the victims’ families, who hold eight thousand small white crosses, we pray that through God’s mercy and by the merits obtained through this mass, you will be purified by purgatorial fire and quickly go to heaven.

Praise God Almighty for every work He has done! Let us give thanks that Urakami church was chosen from throughout the world to be a sacrifice burned whole on the altar. Let us give thanks that through this sacrifice of Urakami peace was restored in the world and freedom of religion was given to Japan.

May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

3. Nagai's funeral address in The Bells compared to the original manuscript

The following is Nagai's funeral address as it appears in the first edition of The Bells published in 1949. Shaded sections indicate the part in common with the original manuscript. Although a different Japanese writing system is being used by Nagai, this is not counted as a difference. I have added small roman numerals at the start of each sentence.
し 北方に偏って 天主堂の正面に流れて落ちたのだろうという話をききました。もしこれが事実であれば、米軍の飛行士は浦上を犯したのではなく、神の祀利によって爆弾がこの地点にもち来られたものと解釈されないこともあります。

終戦と浦上攻撃との間に深い関係がありはしないか。世界大戦争という人類の罪悪の償いとして 日本唯一の聖地 浦上が犠牲の祭壇に屠られ燃やさるべき 祭り祭として選ばれたのではないでしょうか。

智恵の本の実を盗んだアダムの 罪と、弟を殺したカインの血とを承く伝えられた人類が同じ 神の子でありながら 偶像を信じ愛の逆にそむき、互に憎み互に殺しあつて喜んでいた此の大罪悪を 始末し、平和を迎える為には ただ単に後悔するのみでなく、適当な犠牲を献げて 神にお詫びをせねばならないでしょう。これまで幾度も 終戦の機会は訪れたし、全滅した都市も 少くありませんでしたが、それは人類としてふさわしくなかったから、神は未だこれを 善しと容れ給わなかったのであります。然に被上が居られた瞬間 始めて 神はこれを 受け納め給い、人類の詫びをきき、忽ち天皇陛下に天啓を垂れ終戦の誓約を下さされ給ったのであります。

信仰の自由なき 日に於て迫害の下 四百年殉教の血にみみつれつ 信仰を守り通し、戦争中も永遠の平和に対する祈りを朝夕絶やさなかった わが浦上教会こそ 神の祭壇に戴けるべき 唯一の 濡き荒ではなかったでしょうか。この穂の 犠牲に於て、今後更に 戦禍を蒙る苦しみ あった幾千万の人々が戴わられたのであります。戦乱の間を経て 平和の光 さし出づる 八月九日、此の天王堂の大前に 火をあげたる 鳴呼大いなる燔祭より！ 悲しみの極みのうちにも私はそれを があな美し、あなた 深し、あなた尊し 仰ぎたるまででございます。汚れなき烟と燃えて 天国に昇りゆき給いし主任司祭をはじめ 八千の霊魂！ 皆を見い出ししても善い人ばかり。

敗戦を知らず世を去り給いし人の幸よ。 濡き荒として 神の御胸にやすらる雲魂の幸よ。これに くらべて 生残った私た らの みじめさ。日本は負けました。浦上は全ての廃墟です。みゆる限りは灰と瓦。家なく衣なく 食なく、 煙は 贪れ人は砂なし。ほんやり焼跡に立つ 空を眺めている二人は人ktorの群。

あの日あの時 この家で、なぜ一緒に死 なかったのでしょうか。 なぜ私たのみ、異様な悲惨な 生活をせねばならぬのでしょうか。私たちは 罪人だからでした。 今こそみんな自己の深きを知らられます。私は償いを果たしていなかったから残されたのです。 余りにも 罪の汚れの多き者のみが、神の祭壇に供えられる資格なしとして 還し遺されたのであります。

日本人が これから歩まればならぬ戦後の国民の道は苦難 と 悲惨にみちたものであり、ポツダム宣言によって 課せられる 賠償は 誠に 大きな重荷であります。この重荷を負い行くこの苦難の道こそ 罪人平等に 優れも 果たす 機会を与える希望への道ではありますまいか。

福なるかな泣く人、彼等は慰められるべきであります。私たちはこの 賠償の道を正直に、 ごまかさずに歩みゆかねばなりません。嘲られ、罵られ、鞭打たれ、汗流し、血にまみれ、飢え渴きつつこの道をゆくとき、カルウリオの丘に十字架を 担ぎ登り給いしキリス トは私共に 勇気をつけて下さいましょう。
While the original manuscript of the address consists of 2,502 characters, the address in *The Bells* consists of 1,992 not including punctuation marks. The characters common to both amount to 1,238. Thus, roughly speaking, half of the original manuscript was included in *The Bells*. The common part consists three fifths of the address as it appears in *The Bells*. Therefore we can say that the address in *The Bells* differs significantly from the address in the original manuscript. This is shown via the following diagram:

![Diagram showing the comparison between the original manuscript and the address in *The Bells*.](image)

### 3. Changes in *The Bells*

As you can see from part two of this essay, there are many variations in the funeral address of *The Bells* excluding the prayer for the victims at the end of the address. In this final section I take a closer look at the changes in the text.

The reasons for the changes may be categorized as follows:

1) Political reasons
2) Theological reasons
3) Modifications
4) Corrections

Now let us take a look at each category individually.

### 3.1 Political reasons

*The Bells* was published in January 1949 while Japan was still under American occupation. Between September 1945 and October 1949, published material was subject to strict censorship. Publications which contained information concerning military matters were especially tightly controlled.
In this category something like emphasis on the victory of allied forces or removal of the active role of Japanese emperor in the decision of ending war are included. For example, “whether Japan should continue to wage war or put an end to war” in the sentence i was replaced by “whether Japan should capitulate or continue to wage war.” It is notable that the word “capitulation”, which might give a sense of superiority of the winner, that is the occupation army, was used instead of “putting an end to war”, which have little sense of being conquered.

The deletion of the following sentence that had been after the sentence i is also one of the case: “The destiny not only of Japan but of the world depended upon this meeting.” One of the reason of this deletion seems to modify the rather exaggerated way of speaking. However by this deletion the description of the positive role of the Japanese military leaders in the decision of ending war was likely to be removed.

The deletion “in the cause of world peace, resisting the strong opposition of the military authorities who insisted to wage war” from the sentence iii seems to be made by the same reason.

3.2 Theological reasons

Some changes have been introduced for theological reasons. For example, the insertion “have believed in idols” to sentence xii. This addition gives the address a more explicitly religious tone by putting stress on the sin of human beings. The insertion of sentence xxxi, “It is because we are sinners” also has the same effect.

The sentence xl, “The Lord has given: the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord!” is another case which can be categorized here. By including these lines from Job 1.21, Nagai strengthens his argument that the atomic bombing was an act of divine providence. It was God, not human beings, who dropped the bomb, according to Nagai. This is therefore a significant addition, because it lends theological weight to Nagai’s argument.

3.3 Modifications

There are some changes in the funeral address in The Bells that seem like modifications. Because the original funeral address was delivered before a particular audience, i.e. the victims’ families, priests and nuns, as well as the wider Catholic community of Nagasaki, it contains some details that were meant especially for this audience. Such details are not important when published to be read by general readers, many of whom were non-Christians assumed to be, so Nagai seems to delete these details. For example, the deletion of sentences xix, xx, and after xxxix, where he refers to local people or things specific to Catholics in Nagasaki, can be categorized here.

In passing, let us point out that “kashikokumo”, a supreme honorific generally used before the names of the Emperor and his family, was deleted from the sentence iii. In other words, it was deleted from before “Tennō-heika” (His Majesty the Emperor). This change might reflect the situation after “Ningen-sengen” (Humanity Declaration) on 1 January 1946 issued by Emperor Hirohito, where he denied the idea that he was a living god.
3.4 Corrections

We can say that some corrections were made because of simple mistakes. For example, the sentences viii-x, where Nagai explained how the bomb was dropped on Nagasaki, were changed greatly. Nagai might later have heard the details of how the bomb was dropped and got other information about how the war ended. It is well known today that there was a limited battle in Okinawa and on some southern islands sporadically after 15th August 1945, when Emperor Hirohito made a declaration of defeat via radio across the Empire of Japan. Nagai seems to have corrected the original manuscript in an effort to ensure historical accuracy. What is more, it is notable that he made sure that these corrections still fitted with his idea that the bomb was an act of divine providence.

The deletion of “Japan was a country dedicated to the Virgin Mary” from the beginning of sentence v could also be categorized here.

From what has been discussed above, we can draw the following conclusions:
1) The funeral address in the original manuscript has slightly different emphases to the address in The Bells.
2) Though Nagai modified the original funeral address when preparing it for publication, his main ideas on the atomic bombing on Nagasaki have been preserved. In The Bells, we can witness the development and refinement of these ideas.

Notes

1 Catholic Urakami Church, 1983. Although Nagai claims in his funeral address that the number of attendants was two thousand, this website states that it was only 600.
2 Takahashi 1994, 198. This book was the first critique of Nagai’s work to receive serious scholarly attention.
3 Acknowledgement: By the courtesy of Tokusaburo Nagai, the director of Nagai Takashi's Memorial Museum, the author is permitted to use the photocopies of the manuscript. The author also thanks him for helping him decipher the handwriting of the manuscript.

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