

IN THE SHADOW OF THE BOMB: NAGASAKI'S
PLACE IN ATOMIC MEMORY

by

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DEDICATION

For my two younger brothers and fiancé, who inspire me to do my best and reach for the stars.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
LIST OF FIGURES	vii
ABSTRACT.....	viii
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. ATOMIC LITERATURE.....	14
III. MEMORIALIZED PLACES.....	21
IV. ART AND ATOMIC STRUCTUES	29
V. MOVING FORWARD	42
ILLUSTRATIONS BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	48
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	50

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. World Map of Nagasaki.....	8
2. Display of both cities' nuclear destruction	12
3. Hiroshima National Peace Memorial Hall for the Atomic Bomb Victims.....	23
4. Hiroshima's Monument Dedicated to Korean Victims and Survivors	26
5. Nagasaki Korean Atomic Bomb Victims' Memorial.....	27
6. Pillar of Urakami Catholic Church	29
7. <i>Genbaku Dōmu</i> in 2018	31
8. Urakami Catholic Church Ruins in 1949.....	33
9. Peace Statue	35
10. "Monument of Hatakeyama Shigetada" by Kitamaru Seibou (Date Unknown)	37
11. Collection of Kitamaru Seibou's Sculptures at the Seibo Memorial Hall	38
12. 50 th Anniversary Commemorative Project Monument.....	40
13. Beta Decay 5	45

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the unique memory of Nagasaki formed after the atomic attack by the United States. Nagasaki's Peace and Atomic Bomb Museum and the city's narrative of the attacks are overshadowed by the narrative presented in Hiroshima and the Hiroshima Peace Memorial. While Hiroshima has encapsulated its identity in nuclear disarmament and peace, Nagasaki's memory encompasses the wide experiences of those impacted by the nuclear bomb and how their identities have grown. The relative lack of attention regarding Nagasaki's experience with the atomic bomb has allowed its survivors to explore their memory of the bomb unhindered by a globalized or unified memory. Part of Nagasaki's unique memoryscape is due to its position as a city of otherness. It is a city of people, culture, and religion foreign to Japan. This otherness opens the city up to broader memorialization. My thesis discusses Nagasaki's atomic literature, the differences between the two cities' museums, and the memorialized objects in Nagasaki's landscape.

I. INTRODUCTION

“He just changed the words ‘Hiroshima’ to ‘Nagasaki’.”¹ Koichi Kawano, head of a *hibakusha* liaison council in Nagasaki, voiced his outrage about Prime Minister Abe Shinzo’s 75th anniversary speech of the atomic bombing of Nagasaki.² Once again, the former Prime Minister had failed to meet the expectations of the *hibakusha*, the Japanese name for those affected by the atomic bombing in 1945. For more than half a century, the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki have held a peace ceremony on the anniversary of their nuclear attacks. Hiroshima began to officially hold a peace ceremony in 1947, and Nagasaki began theirs in 1948.³ Both ceremonies include speeches by their respective mayors and the Prime Minister, accounts from *hibakusha*, and other solemn ceremonies such as Hiroshima’s lantern lighting ceremony. Every year on August 6th, the day Hiroshima was bombed, the Prime Minister makes an appearance and gives a heartfelt speech about the havoc and destruction of nuclear warfare and the city’s pursuit of peace. Then on August 9th, the Prime Minister visits Nagasaki to give a heartfelt speech about the havoc and destruction of nuclear warfare and the city’s pursuit of peace. The Prime Minister set this notorious precedent to simply reuse speeches for the two cities in the last few years. Hiroshima, being the first city to suffer a nuclear attack, gets the better version of the speech. Koichi Kawano made his incriminating statement after an unspecified plagiarism detection app concluded former Prime Minister Abe’s speeches for Hiroshima

¹ Justin McCurry, “Japan PM sparks anger with near-identical speeches in Hiroshima and Nagasaki,” *The Guardian*. August 12, 2020. Last Accessed November 6, 2020.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/aug/12/japan-pm-sparks-anger-with-near-identical-speeches-in-hiroshima-and-nagasaki>

² McCurry, “Japan PM sparks anger with near-identical speeches in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.”

³ To further read about the creation of these ceremonies see, Chad R. Diehl, *Resurrecting Nagasaki: Reconstruction and the Formation of Atomic Narratives*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2018, 27-30.

and Nagasaki were 93% similar. Though Abe noted each cities' unique reconstruction, he used identical closing statements.⁴ Despite it being an insult to all *hibakusha* to have their experiences diminished in cookie-cutter speeches, the *hibakusha* of Nagasaki were especially upset.

The Nagasaki *hibakusha* have long hoped to emerge from the shadow of Hiroshima. For many years they begged Abe to visit the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum, as he made a point to visit the Hiroshima Peace Memorial every year. Despite the encouragement from Nagasaki *hibakusha*, he has never made the effort on his yearly visits. One local atomic bomb survivor wondered why Abe even bothered to travel “all the way to Nagasaki” if he would never visit their Atomic Bomb Museum and deliver an original speech for the city.⁵ Both cities suffered nuclear attacks, yet their struggles and recovery share few similarities. Still the two cities are often lumped together into a blanketed memory. Abe's neglect of Nagasaki is only the surface of a larger silencing of the city's atomic memory, but it is in its silence that this memory has quietly flourished. What this article will discuss is not Nagasaki's lack of recognition, but what the lack of recognition has fostered. The spotlight's neglect of Nagasaki has allowed for the city and its survivors to freely experiment with the memory of the atomic bomb in contrast to Hiroshima. While in Hiroshima atomic memory was scrutinized over and over to insure it conveyed a narrative of peace, Nagasaki was exempt from those restrictive parameters. Nagasaki's unique memory is most evident in its atomic literature, museum narrative, and its memoryscape. This article will examine a selection of examples in each category to

⁴ McCurry, “Japan PM sparks anger with near-identical speeches in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.”

⁵ Ibid.

both shed light on the city's quiet discourse and to encourage further Western study of the last city to feel the traumatic impacts of the atomic bomb.

Chad Diehl, a professor of East Asian studies at the University of Virginia published *Resurrecting Nagasaki: Reconstruction and the Formation of Atomic Narratives* in 2018, which stands out as one of the few scholarly monographs discussing Nagasaki and its atomic memory from a scholarly as opposed to journalistic prospective.⁶ There are a select number of books that solely focus on Nagasaki, and until Diehl's monograph, they did not analyze Nagasaki critically.⁷ Diehl's book offers a rare, deep analysis of the city's revival by charting the formation of Nagasaki's early atomic memories and describing the many policies, quarrels, and voices within the city. Sprouting from Diehl's scholarly work there has been a notable surge of articles solely discussing Nagasaki within the last five years. "Silences: The Catholics, the Untouchables and the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb" by Gwyn McClelland & David Chapman and the article "Reinventing Nagasaki: The Christianization of Nagasaki and the Revival of an Imperial Legacy in Postwar Japan" by Tomoe Otsuki are two recent works diving into the relationship between Nagasaki and the atomic bomb. As their names suggest, both articles focus on the Christian population of Nagasaki and their experiences with the bomb. McClelland and Chapman discuss the shared history of Nagasaki's Christian and *burakumin*, or "untouchable," communities and how the atomic bomb affected them.⁸ Otsuki analyzes how Nagasaki reinvented itself in the aftermath of the bomb's

⁶ Chad R. Diehl, *Resurrecting Nagasaki: Reconstruction and the Formation of Atomic Narratives*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2018, 11.

⁷ Diehl, *Resurrecting Nagasaki: Reconstruction and the Formation of Atomic Narratives*, 178.

⁸ Gwyn McClelland & David Chapman, "Silences: The Catholics, the Untouchables and the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb," *Asian Studies Review* 44:3, (2020).

destruction.⁹ A slow, but growing, movement is forming to research the unsung history of Nagasaki, but none of these scholarly works focus on memory studies.

Within the field of memory studies, my work builds off the theories and framework of three scholars. The first is Pierre Nora, who produced foundational work for the study of sites of memory, or *lieux de memoire*. Nora discusses how organic memory differs from constructed history and how easily valuable elements of memory are lost when attempts are made to put them in a communal form. He states that memory is “life borne from living societies,” and history is “a reconstruction....and incomplete.”¹⁰ Memory is very individualistic and vast, while history claims a universal authority over the narrative, and thus favors some memories over others.¹¹ While in his work he is specifically discussing the creation of a national history in France that favored some memories and ostracized others, this same framework can still be applied to Nagasaki. As my research here will demonstrate, Hiroshima is the example of static history and Nagasaki is the example of living memory. For Hiroshima to become the peace city, it had to create a broad history that could be relatable across the globe. This caused ideas that did not fit this narrative to stagnate. On the other hand, Nagasaki’s international memory pushed their atomic memory to the fringe of history. Though Nora critiques this situation, it allowed their atomic memory to freely adapt and evolve. Nagasaki’s memory and sites of memory about the atomic bomb were able to grow freely, while those in Hiroshima were forced into a uniform filter.

⁹ Tomoe Otsuki, “Reinventing Nagasaki: The Christianization of Nagasaki and the Revival of an Imperial Legacy in Postwar Japan,” *Inter-Asia Culture Studies* 17:3, 2016.

¹⁰ Pierre Nora, “Between History and Memory: Les Lieux de Memoire,” *Representations* 26, Special Issue: Memory and Counter-Memory (Spring, 1989), 8.

¹¹ Nora, “Between History and Memory: Les Lieux de Memoire,” 9.

The second scholar whose work I build from is Lisa Yoneyama who provides extensive detail on the uniformity of memory creation in Hiroshima. Yoneyama examines the creation of the peace park and many other parts of Hiroshima's memoryscape. She shows the effects of a uniform creation of memory by government officials and survivors. Her book *Hiroshima Traces* is critical to understanding how global society regards the atomic bomb. Yoneyama's work is crucial when comparing Hiroshima's memory spaces to Nagasaki's and creating a framework for analyzing Nagasaki's memory sites. From *hibakusha* testimonies to monuments, she brings to light the rise of Hiroshima's memory. I will use her research on the iconic atomic structures in Hiroshima, like the *Genbaku dōmu* and the Korean Victim's Memorial, to show the parallels or lack thereof in Nagasaki.

Hillary Jenks is the last scholar whose research contributes to my framework. Her article, "Politics in Preservation," discusses the memoryscape of Little Tokyo in Los Angeles. Jenks sheds light on the contesting memories surrounding the neighborhood's Japanese American and Black American residents. The presented and marketed memory for the neighborhood focuses on Japanese Americans, their involvement in the creation of the area, and the effects on them and the neighborhood caused by internment camps in World War Two. The area's identity centers on Japanese American immigration and perseverance after their forced imprisonment.¹² Jenks points out the underlying history of Black Americans who migrated to the neighborhood during Japanese internment and then

¹² Hillary Jenks, "The Politics of Preservation: Power, Memory, and Identity in Los Angeles's Little Tokyo," in *Cultural Landscapes: Balancing Nature and Heritage in Preservation Practice*, edited by Richard Longstreth, University of Minnesota Press, 2008, Kindle Edition, Part I, Chapter 2.

added their own history, tagging on the name Bronzeville to Little Tokyo's title.¹³

Despite numerous attempts, Little Tokyo has never embraced the other side of its history and its reconstruction and preservation is focused on Japanese American history. This caused Bronzeville to be forgotten and also sparked the neighborhood to become presented as foreign and exotic. Many of the original structures were average brick buildings, but during reconstruction campaigns these buildings were transformed into a "Japanese town."¹⁴ City preservation ignored the authentic history and created a Japanese – rather than a Japanese American – landscape, omitting Black Americans' connection to Little Tokyo in the process. Her work shows how government organizations can pick and piece together memories to better market themselves. Nagasaki faces a similar situation, as they focus on their history as a city of foreign influence rather than that of an atomic bombed city. Jenks' article recognizes that contesting memoryscapes are still a modern issue and are important to note when looking at Nagasaki's history.

Like Nora and Yoneyama, Jenks focuses on the formation of memory and the fate of lesser-known memories, acknowledging the memory performed by governments and communities. Nagasaki shares similarities with Little Tokyo in the creation and preservation of their memoryscapes. Nagasaki's international identity dominated its atomic memory for both personal and marketing reasons. While Little Tokyo has the unsung narratives of Bronzeville and exotified, commercialized reconstruction, Nagasaki quietly mentions its atomic history and dedicates itself to prewar sites like *Dejima*, a man-made island that served as Japan's sole port of foreign exchange, and the Glover

¹³ Jenks, "The Politics of Preservation: Power, Memory, and Identity in Los Angeles's Little Tokyo," Kindle Edition, Part I, Chapter 2.

¹⁴ Ibid.

House and Garden, an area where foreign residents in Nagasaki lived after Japan ended its seclusion.¹⁵ It is important to note that while these works focus mostly on the negative side effects of memory creation and preservation, in some cases a lack of oversight produces a malleable memory that encompasses a multitude of experiences. I will use these sources to show and strengthen my arguments on memory creation.

While Western academia has been dedicated to analyzing the public memory of Hiroshima, its museum, and its peace park, scholarship has only just begun to touch on the isolated memory of Nagasaki. The city's demographics, terrain, and history all set it apart from Hiroshima and add up to a diverse memorial site. Since Nagasaki has been overshadowed by Hiroshima, it is important to analyze the perspective specific to Nagasaki before their history is lost. Like the voices of the survivors of the Holocaust, the *hibakushas*' voices are declining as the years wear on. Soon it will be too late to have firsthand accounts and opinions regarding the last nuclear weapon used against a civilian population. While the *hibakusha* are still here, it is vital that scholarship engages with them to preserve their stories and discusses the memoryscape they helped to create. Though it would be ideal to travel to Japan and examine the museum and peace park in detail, the novel Coronavirus has halted any in-person study for the time being. This study will rely on what is available on the English and Japanese museum websites as well as within previous English-language scholarship.

Even abroad, Nagasaki is not at the forefront of atomic memory. Throughout the city, its past as a nuclear victim is diminutive, overshadowed by its history as a site for

¹⁵ For more information on Dejima and Glover House and Garden see, "Dejima," Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO), accessed June 24, 2021, <https://www.japan.travel/en/spot/754/> and "Glover Garden," japan-guide.com, accessed June 24, 2021, <https://www.japan-guide.com/e/e4406.html>

collisions of global culture. The international port city Nagasaki and the nuclear survivor Nagasaki are difficult images to bridge. The iconic image of the Dutch port *Dejima*, bustling with foreign goods and Western thought, exists in stark contrast to pictures of the hollowed husk of the Urakami Catholic Church, a symbol of martyrdom. The images practically exist in separate realities from each other. Why are these pieces of Nagasaki's memory so divided?

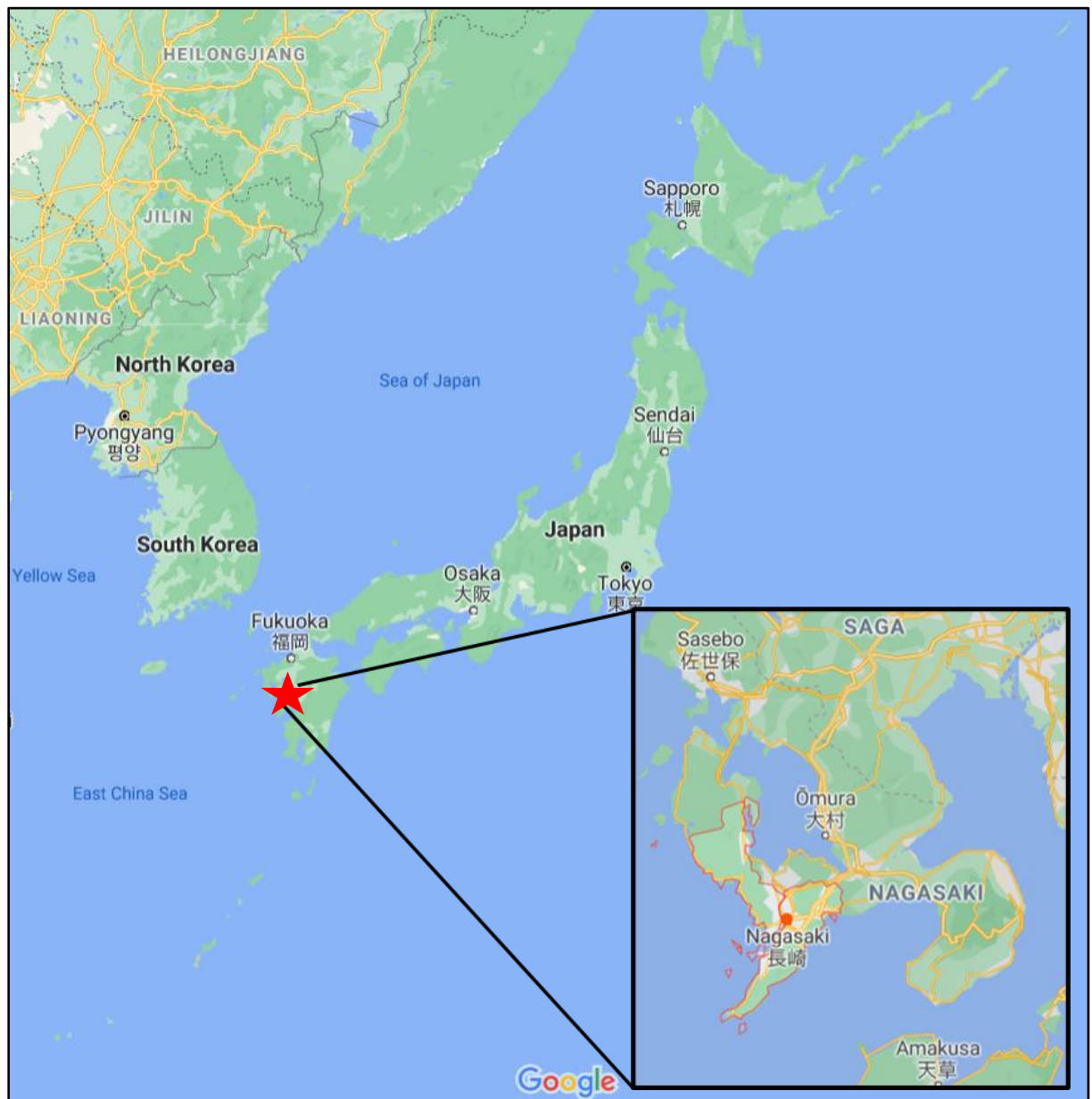


Figure 1: World Map of Nagasaki

To understand how Nagasaki's memory of the atomic bomb became the way it is today, it is important to trace its history all the way back to the 1600s. Nagasaki is located on the Western edge of Kyushu, one of Japan's four main islands. Starting in the 1600s, the Japanese government began to close off the country from the rest of the world. Fear of outside influences led government leaders to isolate their subjects and control their loyalty.¹⁶ Over the course of forty years, European traders were expelled and restricted in visiting the archipelago, and Japanese citizens were secluded from not only the West, but much of the Eastern hemisphere. The sole exception to his rule was the port city of Nagasaki.

Nagasaki's position as the only port in Japan accessible to the West turned it into a hub of international culture. Western knowledge, like medicine and literature, flowed in from Dejima, an artificial island where Dutch traders were isolated from the rest of the city.¹⁷ The government's good relations with the Dutch and the fact that foreign information could reach Japan through them led Dejima to be called a place of "Dutch learning." Nagasaki's symbolism as a port of foreign knowledge and culture has continued into the present day. If a Western guidebook or travel site mentions the city at all, it does so by emphasizing the city's foreignness. The first thing JNTO, a popular Japanese travel website, shows viewers is the quote, "Nagasaki: Japan's gateway to the West," along with a wide-angle picture of the city from above.¹⁸ While this description is accurate, it monopolizes the overall narrative of the city. To find any information on

¹⁶ Andrew Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan: From Tokugawa Times to the Present*, Third Ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014, 19.

¹⁷ Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan: From Tokugawa Times to the Present*, 45.

¹⁸ "Nagasaki," Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO), accessed May 8, 2021, <https://www.japan.travel/en/destinations/kyushu/nagasaki/>

Nagasaki's atomic history, viewers must scroll half-way down the page to the "Trending Attractions" section. In contrast, JNTO introduces Hiroshima's page with a picture of only the *Genbaku Dōmu*, one of the few significant structures to survive the bombing, and the phrase, "A prefecture defined by peace."¹⁹ JNTO makes it clear that Hiroshima's identity is peace and the city serves to retell the aftermath of the atomic bomb. Other tourist resources fare no better. *Fodor's Travel's* most recent edition of *Essential Japan* spares little attention for the atomic history in Nagasaki, while at the same time dedicating pages to Hiroshima's atomic experiences.²⁰ The book chooses to focus on Dejima and Glover Mansion, each a site of Nagasaki's foreignness. Nagasaki's identity as a foreign port is so strong that it has overshadowed the trauma of a nuclear attack.

Another dominating narrative in Nagasaki is that of Christianity, which has been reiterated in travel guides. While Western information continued to flow through the harbor, the government was sure to forbid the Dutch from importing anything to do with Christianity.²¹ Christianity had a turbulent beginning in Japan. Beginning in the 1540's, Christianity entered Japan with European traders. Jesuit missionary Francis Xavier landed in Kagoshima, also located in Southern Kyushu, in 1549 and is credited with the spread of Christianity throughout the Nagasaki region and Japan.²² In spite of Christianity's weak foothold in Japan overall, traders and missionaries had managed to

¹⁹ "Hiroshima," Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO), accessed May 8, 2021, <https://www.japan.travel/en/destinations/chugoku/hiroshima/>

²⁰ Judith Clancy, Jay Farris, Rob Goss, and et al, *Fodor's Essential Japan*, edited by Rachael Roth, Internet Brands Inc., 2019.

²¹ Gordon, 45.

²² Simon Hull, "Discovering Nagasaki's Secret Christian Past," *TheJapanTimes*, Published January 20, 2016, Last Accessed November 15, 2020, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2016/01/20/business/discovering-nagasaki-secret-christian-past/>

convert 300,000 Japanese within forty years.²³ During this time, Nagasaki was known as “Little Rome” due to its significant Catholic population.²⁴ This cultural intrusion did not please government leaders, who felt that the new religion was splitting Japanese loyalties. The 1590s marked the beginning of restrictions and the prohibition of Christianity. Japanese citizens who openly practiced their Christian faith could be exiled, tortured, or killed. After the government enacted the ban on Christianity, the many Christians within the city were forced to either renounce their faith or practice their religion secretly. These prejudices continued long after the Meiji Restoration of 1868, a revolution that ended the previous military government and reinstated the emperor, rescinded the anti-Christian laws, and promoted Western thought again.²⁵ Today much of this prejudice has diminished and has served as another marketable aspect of Nagasaki over the atomic bomb. JNTO is quick to note the city’s Christian roots, and Fodor also emphasizes this part of Nagasaki’s past.

All these factors created Nagasaki’s image of internationality – an image that continued to persevere after the destruction caused by the atomic bomb and one that overtook the atomic narrative. Like what Jenks described in Little Tokyo with Japanese history overshadowing Black history, Nagasaki’s foreign and Christian influences overtook their atomic history. Hundreds of years of being the sole gateway to the foreign world created an unshakeable identity for the city. It also marked Nagasaki as the center of Christianity in Japan. These parts of Nagasaki’s history, the foreign and Christian, would become a key to their recovery in the aftermath of the atomic bomb. The

²³ Gordon, 6.

²⁴ Simon Hull, “Discovering Nagasaki’s Secret Christian Past.”

²⁵ For more information on the Meiji Restoration of 1868 see, “Meiji Restoration,” Britannica, accessed June 24, 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Meiji-Restoration>

unprecedented destruction caused by the atomic bombs required Nagasaki and Hiroshima to seek specialized reconstruction laws to recover from the damage. Previous laws had lumped the two irradiated cities together with other cities that had suffered firebombing. This aid was allocated based on the level of damage to the city. Though Hiroshima was in the top ten to receive aid, Nagasaki fell near the bottom of the list.²⁶ This aid was not enough to rebuild either of them. A few years later, in 1949, the cities and the Japanese government began to see the horrific long-term impacts of the bomb, like radiation, which led them to finally discuss new funding. Instead of relying on the destruction of the atomic bomb to get government officials to fund the reconstruction of the city, Nagasaki fell back on its history, though it was not entirely by choice.

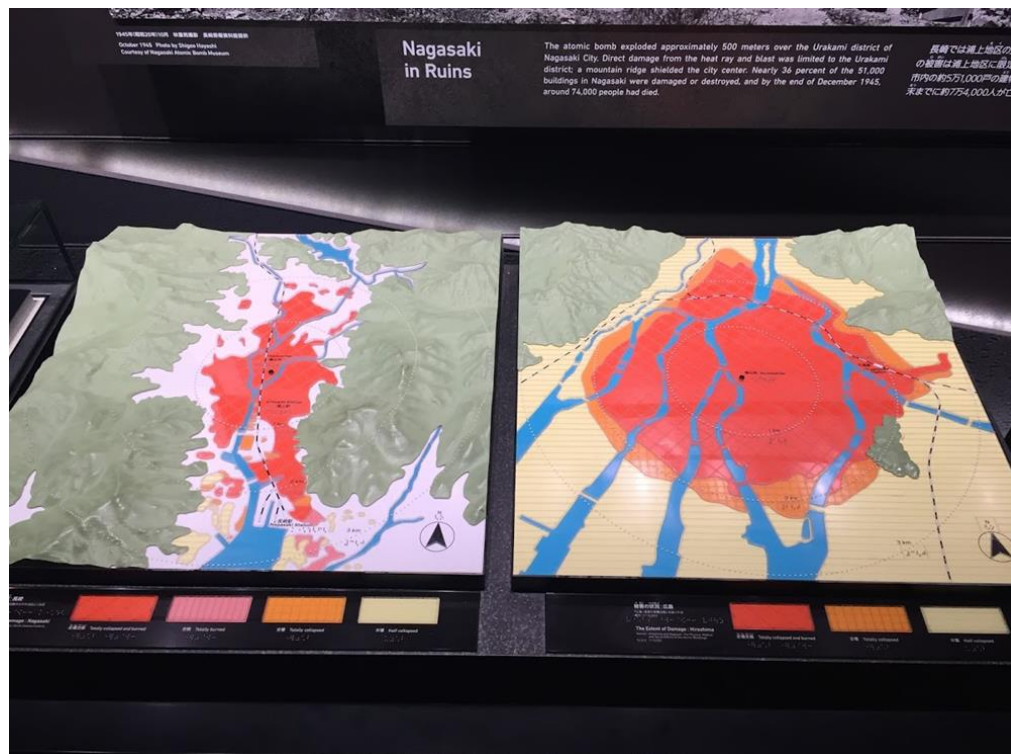


Figure 2: Display of both cities' nuclear destruction

²⁶ Diehl, 14.

Grasping to rebuild, Hiroshima rushed to claim the title of the “peace city,” which it did with the help of reconstruction laws. Hiroshima officials argued that they needed a monopoly on the title “peace city” because unlike Nagasaki, they did not have a rich past to draw on to rebuild their city.²⁷ While Nagasaki was already well known as a city of international culture and as the Japanese hub for Christianity, Hiroshima was a relatively inconspicuous town before the war and only drew attention during the war due to its military bases. In the National Diet on May 10, 1949, Hiroshima sought the ratification of a new reconstruction law, the Hiroshima Peace Commemoration City Construction Law.²⁸ Nagasaki had its own path for reconstruction, and the city’s government felt betrayed that Hiroshima had chosen to exclude them from consideration. Some also felt Nagasaki was entitled to be recognized as a city uniquely impacted by the atomic bombs.²⁹ Diehl poetically points out how, if Hiroshima became a site of remembrance because it was the first city to be attacked by a nuclear weapon, then by the same logic, so should Nagasaki as the last city.³⁰ Despite Nagasaki officials’ efforts, Hiroshima won the claim to “peace city” and thus the right to reconstruct themselves around the atomic narrative. Nagasaki left the proceedings with a tailored reconstruction law, but one that did not mention their plights as a site of nuclear disaster. The Nagasaki International Cultural City Construction Law gave them important funding to rebuild the city, but it permanently solidified their image as a hub of culture instead of a target of the atomic bomb.³¹

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Diehl, 31.

²⁹ Diehl, 32.

³⁰ Diehl, 2.

³¹ Ibid

II. ATOMIC LITERATURE

As the immediate peril began to subside, the *hibakusha* of Hiroshima and Nagasaki put pen to paper to document the aftermath of the bomb. The survivors created a wealth of written works and art documenting the desolation and hardship they faced. Despite Nagasaki's quietness in comparison to Hiroshima, its memory space facilitated a diverse interpretation of the atomic bomb and openly discussed life and trauma after the attack. Though their voices were drowned out by the those of Hiroshima, Nagasaki *hibakusha* were spared from the pressure to form a single, universal memory as described by Nora. Nagasaki's survivors were free to recount their experiences and traumas without the filter of a global memory. Nagasaki's otherness is key to their free expression and helps their *hibakusha* freely navigate their trauma in written works, but their freedom has also caused their writings to be overlooked.

Few scholars have delved into the literature surrounding the atomic bomb used on Nagasaki. John Whittier Treat confirms in *Writing Ground Zero* that the atomic literature around Nagasaki occupies a unique memory space. He reiterates how Nagasaki occupies a unique position in Japan's history and imagination.³² Nagasaki's identity as a place of foreign influence and its secret Christians shaped the formation of memory and how its citizens processed trauma. The famous biography of Nagai Takashi and the lesser-known biography by Tatsuichiro Akizuki further illustrate this point.

³² John Whittier Treat, "Nagasaki and the Human Future," in *Writing Ground Zero: Japanese Literature and the Atomic Bomb*, University of Chicago Press, 1995, 303.

One aspect Treat highlights is the women's voices in Nagasaki's atomic literature. Treat notes that Nagasaki produced more women writers than its counterpart.³³ Women survivors recorded the fears of physical ailments and risks caused by the atomic bomb's radiation. Many wrote about the fear of contaminated blood. Treat points out that women documented their worries about what effects the radiation would have on their fertility, the viability of their future children, and the possible cancers and disabilities they could pass on.³⁴ Nagasaki is unique in this aspect of atomic discourse because it not only has more women writers compared to Hiroshima, but because these authors openly discuss topics that were not socially acceptable at the time. Treat focuses on the works of Kyōko Hayashi, an atomic survivor who wrote many fictional accounts based on her life experiences and who he describes as being more famous than Nagai and Minako Gotō.³⁵ Hayashi was a very prolific writer and used her personal experiences from the atomic bomb to create stories that show how it impacted women. Her stories predominately center around women and discuss topics like survivor's guilt and fertility. Many of her works describe the feelings of women *hibakusha* who fear the impacts of radiation on their bodies and their children's bodies.³⁶ Not only did radiation increase survivors' risks for cancer and illness, it also decreased women's fertility and increased the chances for their children to have physical and mental health issues. Hayashi's work is one of many that explains the worries women felt over what they perceived as the sole source of their womanhood – creating life. The bomb had possibly stripped or altered their ability to do so, and it was virtually unpreventable. Hayashi herself decided to not get married or have

³³ Treat, "Nagasaki and the Human Future," 308.

³⁴ Treat, 324.

³⁵ Treat, 315.

³⁶ Treat, 323-324.

children due to these concerns.³⁷ Gotō writes about the same concerns. Some of her work comes from the viewpoints of family members who feared they would suffer the same fates as their dying or mentally ill family members. This discourse can all be attributed to Nagasaki's relaxed atomic memory. There is no pressure to conform or uphold the label of peace, and writers can freely document their experiences without an overbearing filter. Treat is quick to point out that storytellers are "free of the burden of having to describe the first atomic attack."³⁸

This freedom to craft their own memory also encouraged survivors to place blame for the atomic attack. Though it is commonly said that Nagasaki represents prayer and Hiroshima anger, Nagasaki writers were more ready to lay blame for the nuclear attack.³⁹ Whether they looked back in disgust at their own government's military actions or condemned the justification for the United States dropping the bomb on their city center, Nagasaki's *hibakusha* did not shy away from pointing out the flaws of both countries. Takashi Nagai, one of the most internationally famous atomic writers, shifted the focus of blame to a pre-ordained cause for the bomb. It was Nagai's belief that Nagasaki was chosen as a sacrificial lamb to atone for Japan's war atrocities.⁴⁰ Though he did not address America's role in the destruction, he articulated Nagasaki's role as a martyr for peace. Nagai's interpretation of the bomb, with its emphasis on martyrdom and peace fits well within atomic global memory, but Tatsuichiro Akizuki's work is more aligned with the ambitious literature of Nagasaki. Working in a hospital across the city, Akizuki was a

³⁷ Treat, 323.

³⁸ Treat, 328.

³⁹ Lisa Yoneyama, *Hiroshima Traces: Time, Space, and the Dialectics of Memory*, Twentieth-Century Japan, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999, 61.

⁴⁰ Takashi Nagai, *The Bells of Nagasaki*, translated by William Johnston, 1st ed. Kodansha International, 1985, 108-109.

doctor like Nagai, and he was treating tuberculosis patients at the time of the attack. Dr. Akizuki's account stretches far longer than Nagai's and those of many others. He describes his experiences nearly a month after the bomb exploded and the afterword by the translator revisits him thirty-five years later.

But more important than the scope of his account is his perception of blame. Dr. Akizuki struggles throughout the biography with blame and forgiveness. As a Buddhist he did not share many survivors' views on Nagasaki as a sacrificial lamb. After seeing the Catholic sisters of a local convent dying of radiation and burns, he asked how God could allow such a fate for his followers.⁴¹ He shifted back and forth between blaming the American government for the destruction and blaming the Japanese government, whose refusal to surrender led to untold suffering.⁴² When Allied forces landed in Nagasaki, he even considered protesting and demanding American forces take responsibility for the trauma they had caused.⁴³ Akizuki's discussion of blame is rarely seen in the global memory of the bomb. Hiroshima feigns forgetfulness over Japan's actions in World War Two and focuses on America's role as the nuclear attacker. In opposition to these memories, Akizuki clearly and ambitiously, as Treat describes it, assigns blame – another example of how Nagasaki's place away from the spotlight allows its citizens to explore their memory of the bomb.

The last notable aspect of Nagasaki's atomic literature is its scope. Whether it is carried out by *hibakusha* themselves or those documenting them, there is significant

⁴¹ Tatsuiichiro, Akizuki, *Nagasaki 1945*, translated by Keiichi Nagata. Quartet Books Limited: London, 1981, 120.

⁴² Akizuki, *Nagasaki 1945*, 121.

⁴³ Akizuki, 129.

literature that describes the full lives of *hibakusha*. These accounts extend past the immediate trauma of the bomb and uncover how many *hibakusha* accepted their new label and “moved on” from the bomb. They show that survivors live long and fulfilling lives and that they are not defined by the ticking clock of their health. In the 1960s many third parties who described the lives of *hibakusha* such as Kenzaburō Ōe, a famous contemporary Japanese writer who wrote *Hiroshima Notes*, received critiques from *hibakusha*. A portion of one letter addressed to Ōe reads:

I have long wondered why virtually all of the “A-bomb literature” consists of stories of the miserable people who have not recovered their health, as well as descriptions of radiation symptoms and the psychology of A-bomb survivors. Why are there no stories, for example, of families who endured hard times but recovered their health and now live as normal human beings? Must all surviving A-bomb victims eventually meet a tragic death caused by radiation after-effects? Is it not possible for the victims to overcome their illnesses, and their psychological anxiety and inferiority complexes, and thus die a natural death like other people? Must we instead, all face tragic deaths cursed by radiation after-effects; and must our deaths then be used as data for opposing atomic bombs?... A-bomb survivors prefer to be ordinary people....⁴⁴

The writer of this letter offers a valid criticism of how third parties interpret atomic survivors. They are often relegated to a role that sees them as pitiable and always at the mercy of the lasting effects of radiation. There is little discussion of how they have overcome and moved past the trauma of the bomb. *Nagasaki: Life After Nuclear War* is a detailed look into the complete lives of the *hibakusha* living in Nagasaki. The author, Susan Southard, uses her expertise in creative writing and interview skills to artfully recount the lives of five survivors and describe how they readjusted to daily life after the

⁴⁴ Kenzaburō Ōe, *Hiroshima Notes*, translated by David L. Swain and Toshi Yonezawa, New York: Marion Boyars Publishers, 1995, 21.

bomb. One remarkable story she retells is that of Mineko Dō-oh. Dō-oh was sixteen years old when the bomb exploded over Nagasaki. She suffered physical, emotional, and mental scars from the bomb and encountered societal prejudices. Already a very hardworking and driven woman, Dō-oh forwent marriage and climbed to the top of the cosmetics company she worked at.⁴⁵ She became one of the three woman CEOs in her industry during the 1970s and represented the extremely small women work force in Japan.⁴⁶ Much of her drive sprang from resolve to overcome her outlook as a *hibakusha*.⁴⁷ It was not until later in her retirement that she decided to retell her story for educational purposes.

Dō-oh is an inspirational woman in both her breaking of gender norms and her strength as an atomic survivor. Though she faced hardships and prejudice, it was never the focal point of her life, and her story is not unique. There are many *hibakusha* who went on to live successful lives and move beyond their label. The critical letter addressed to Ōe is another example of that. Yet most popular literature about or from *hibakusha* centers around the lasting impacts of the bomb. For Hiroshima, this focus is used to emphasize peace and the call for de-proliferation. Survivors' intersectional lives do not necessarily serve this image. For Nagasaki, there is no pressure to uphold the image of peace. *Hibakusha* can contribute to or move on from the topics of peace and nuclear warfare. They have greater freedom to expand their identities. Southard's book shows Western audiences a broader definition of *hibakusha* and it should not be overlooked that

⁴⁵ Susan Southard, *Nagasaki: Life After Nuclear War*, New York: Penguin Books, 2015, 229-231.

⁴⁶ Southard, *Nagasaki: Life After Nuclear War*, 230-231.

⁴⁷ Southard, 202.

this work centers around Nagasaki. Treat's point that Nagasaki's literature is consistently more ambitious than Hiroshima's can be applied to Western scholarship as well.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Treat, 328.

III. MEMORIALIZED PLACES

Having examined the personal memories of Nagasaki's *hibakusha*, we move outwards toward the spaces that have memorialized the bomb. There have been copious studies examining the memoryscape of Hiroshima, especially the peace park. The Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park is on an island and is roughly 120,000 square meters.⁴⁹ The park includes a museum, which is divided into two buildings and multiple floors, the Atomic Bomb Dome or *Genbaku Dōmu*, the cenotaph, and various other installations and statues. The area is massive and warrants multiple days of viewing. Travel guides heavily influence the routes visitors take through the park, and even then, things are easily missed.

In contrast, Nagasaki's peace park is quite small. The peace park and the Atomic Bomb Museum are near each other but not connected, like the peace site in Hiroshima. Nagasaki's peace park is broken up by city infrastructure, while Hiroshima's Peace Park is interconnected throughout. Some of these differences in infrastructure are due to geographic features. Hiroshima constructed its peace park under the hypocenter of the bomb, which was over an island. The Nagasaki peace park, including its Atomic Bomb Museum, measures only 15,391 square meters, a fraction of Hiroshima.

To my knowledge no work of English has analyzed the memory site of Nagasaki, as has Yoneyama done in her previous work. For this section I am examining how Nagasaki's museum has interpreted blame, and how it has honored atomic survivors. As Yoneyama has analyzed Hiroshima's atomic landscape, I will do the same for Nagasaki.

⁴⁹ "Peace Memorial Park," *Japan-Guide*, Last updated August 1, 2020, Accessed December 11, 2020, <https://www.japan-guide.com/e/e3400.html>

While other authors like Diehl have examined Nagasaki's history around the bomb, none have examined its memoryscape as I do in this article. Due to the travel limitations imposed by Covid-19, I will only be able to analyze information about Nagasaki's museum through their website and compare it to what I saw during my last visit to Hiroshima in 2018 and the Hiroshima Peace Park's website.

Understandings of Hiroshima's experience and the general global memory of the atomic bomb place little blame on the involved parties. Yoneyama calls it "phantasmic innocence," when Japan seemingly forgets its role in the Pacific War.⁵⁰ Japan's memory of the war focuses on its experience as a victim of a nuclear attack and not its stance as a victimizer to their neighboring countries. In 1986, the newly appointed minister of education quickly turned heads when he confidently claimed Korea was at fault for their own colonization and years later in 1994, another official claimed the Nanjing Massacre was fabricated.⁵¹ Even as recently as 2014, government officials have continued to deny their war atrocities.⁵² There is also surprisingly little blame placed on the United States for dropping the atomic bombs on Japan. When I visited Hiroshima's Peace Park in 2018, displays danced around the topic of who dropped the bomb and referred to the bomb as if there was no actor, that it simply fell on the cities. In Hiroshima National Peace Memorial Hall for the Atomic Bomb Victims, there is little acknowledgment of Japan's actions during the war, and it is never specified who dropped the bombs. The hall consists of a descending, circular hallway that leads to a minimalistic memorial space. Spaced along the walls of the hallway are plaques that describe the events leading up to

⁵⁰ Yoneyama, *Hiroshima Traces: Time, Space, and the Dialectics of Memory*, 5.

⁵¹ Yoneyama, 6.

⁵² See "Nanjing Massacre," *Wikipedia*, accessed May 10, 2021.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nanjing_Massacre

the nuclear attack and its impacts. Plaques that retell the effects of the bomb only explain it as being “dropped.” There is no discussion of the United States’ agency as an attacker and Japan’s role as an aggressive national power is mentioned in passing.⁵³



Figure 3: Hiroshima National Peace Memorial Hall for the Atomic Bomb Victims

Though Nagasaki is not free from a degree of forgetfulness, there does seem to be more inclusive discussion, more than in the Hiroshima case, about Japan’s imperialist actions during World War Two in its museum exhibits. Located toward the end of the museum displays in the “A World Without Nuclear Weapons” exhibit, a wall is dedicated to depicting the Pacific War in Japan.⁵⁴ Though the exhibit picture on the museum’s website is too small to analyze the display’s contents, its existence already does more than the Hiroshima National Peace Memorial Hall for the Atomic Bomb Victims regarding blame and accountability. There were no comparable displays at Hiroshima’s Memorial Hall in 2018, and the Park and museum continued the hall’s theme of only

⁵³ Taylor Moles, “Personal Notes,” (Hiroshima Peace Park, July 5, 2018).

⁵⁴ “A World Without Nuclear Weapons,” Nagasaki Atomic Museum. Exhibit. <https://nabmuseum.jp/genbaku/tenji/kakuheiki/>

acknowledging that the war happened but not going into detail concerning its events. This Nagasaki exhibit serves as a testament to the open dialogue that surrounds atomic memory there. While Hiroshima, as a center of atomic memory, has received the brunt of revisionist backlash, Nagasaki has remained just outside of the revisionists' field of attention. Similarly to Akizuki's bibliographical work, blame can be more openly discussed in Nagasaki both in literature and in public spaces. This open discourse has also allowed a more inclusive memory than Hiroshima.

Inclusion comes second to optics in Hiroshima. To the northwest of Hiroshima's Peace Park, far removed from the route most visitors take to enter the park, is the memorial for the Korean Atomic Bomb Victims. Unless a visitor knows about it beforehand, there is little chance to stumble upon it. No tourist guides to my knowledge point visitors to its location. On my own trip to Hiroshima, nothing guided me toward this memorial. In fact, I walked quite close to it without even realizing it was there. It was only after reading Yoneyama's *Hiroshima Traces* that I learned of it. The memorial stands right next to a public restroom, depicting a turtle carrying a large stone pillar atop its shell.⁵⁵ The front of the pillar is inscribed with Chinese calligraphy and below this is an English translation of the monuments name.⁵⁶ A memorial text inscribed in Korean resides on a stone epitaph nearby. Despite memorializing a marginalized population affected by the atomic bomb and WWII, the memorial does not reside within the Peace Memorial Park and seems poised to remain seldom visited. Though efforts have been made to move it closer to the museum and peace park to show greater visibility for

⁵⁵ Description from Yoneyama, 155.

⁵⁶ Yoneyama, 155.

Korean victims, no agreements have been successful.⁵⁷ In fact, its original placement was not even on the island. Significant protest had to take place to move it to its current position. This gap in Hiroshima's memory shows how singular its atomic memory is. It is an example of the overbearing and erasing effects of public memory that Nora critiques in his work. Other narratives and groups affected by the bomb were an afterthought.

It is important to recognize the necessity for including the narratives of non-Japanese survivors of the atomic bomb. For Korea, World War Two was an especially dark and dangerous time in their history with Japan. In 1910 Korea was officially annexed by Japan after years of increasing restrictions and the Korean monarchy's forced resignation.⁵⁸ From 1910 to 1945, Japan's colonial administration held military, judicial, legislative, and civil power in Korea.⁵⁹ Korean citizens and immigrants suffered many physical and cultural atrocities. In the 1920s Japan began to force cultural assimilation onto Korea.⁶⁰ Learning Japanese became compulsory in schools and Korean was entirely banned in the late 1930s.⁶¹ Intermarriage was encouraged so Korean citizens would be more likely to assimilate and in 1939 social stigma required Koreans to change their surnames to Japanese ones so they could be considered for jobs or even receive mail.⁶² As Japan was erasing Korean culture, they were also taking advantage of Korean labor and natural resources. Japan, being a rocky island, had limited room and people to produce goods. As Japanese imperial power grew, they relied on the resources of their

⁵⁷ Yoneyama, 164-186.

⁵⁸ Gordon, 120.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Gordon, 178.

⁶¹ Gordon, 191.

⁶² Erin Blakemore, "How Japan Took Control of Korea," History.com, A&E Television Networks, February 28, 2018, accessed June 24, 2021. <https://www.history.com/news/japan-colonization-korea>

colonies. To fuel Japan's military economy, Korea was forced to prioritize crops like cotton rather than their own needs.⁶³ As the war grew more serious in the 1940s, Japan forced Korean workers to labor in Japan.⁶⁴ This is only a sample of the many injustices Koreans faced. Forced prostitution was also a fear for many Korean women. Many of these workers found themselves in Hiroshima and Nagasaki laboring for an oppressive government in a war that they were not willing participants in. And it was here that many died or were injured from the nuclear bombs dropped by the United States. Leaving Korean victims and survivors of the atomic bombs out of the "official" narrative is a double insult. Not only were Koreans forced to work for Japan's military government, but their experiences from the atomic bomb were neglected in the official narrative. Hiroshima has offered no satisfactory solutions to this silence in the memorial narrative, but Nagasaki has shown more awareness in its narrative.



Figure 4: Hiroshima's Monument Dedicated to Korean Victims and Survivors

⁶³ Gordon, 190.

⁶⁴ Gordon, 208.

Nagasaki continues to be more inclusive with its memory of those impacted by the atomic bomb by having an easily accessible memorial to Korean victims of the bomb. Though it is unclear what dialogue exists within the museum without visiting, outside the museum is a small memorial to Korean victims. Just across the street from the museum sits the black stone monument within the Zone of Prayers or the Hypocenter Area. The monument is a simple stone pillar with the name of the monument inscribed on the front in Japanese and another inscription written in Japanese on the back that dedicates the monument to Korean families who were forced into labor by the Japanese government.⁶⁵ Though the memorial notably lacks Korean, it acknowledges Japan's war crimes, is easy to locate, and has a definite place within the memoryscape of Nagasaki's peace park. Without a domineering voice to push for a concise atomic memory in Nagasaki, the multitude of narratives in Nagasaki are able to flow freely. As Nora points out, history or in this case a global memory can become too generalized for the public palate and lose



Figure 5: Nagasaki Korean Atomic Bomb Victims' Memorial

⁶⁵ “追悼長崎原爆朝鮮人犠牲者,” Nagasaki City-Peace and Atomic Bomb, Accessed May 10, 2021. https://nagasakipeace.jp/japanese/map/zone_inori/tsuito_chosenjin_giseisha.html

much of its uniqueness.⁶⁶ As Nagasaki fell to the wayside of the global memory, its atomic memory could continue to be “multiple but specific; collective, plural, yet individual.”⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Nora, 9.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

IV. ART AND ATOMIC STRUCTURES

Nagasaki's many sculptures, memorials, and art installations represent different sides of the atomic memory in comparison to the carefully constructed memoryscape of Hiroshima. A notable difference is the lack of buildings scarred by atomic bomb in Nagasaki. There are little remnants of the scarred city, and while *Fodor's Essential Japan* would say it is because there was nothing left behind, that is far from the truth.⁶⁸ Not far from the famous Peace Statue in Nagasaki's Peace Park stands the last damaged pillar of the Urakami Catholic church. For years, the Urakami Church ruins stood as a symbol of nuclear weapons and the devastation of the Urakami Catholic community. The church was near the hypocenter, and despite the catastrophic heat and winds, significant parts of it withstood the disaster. However, today only a pillar remains of the church's sturdy walls.



Figure 6: Pillar of Urakami Catholic Church

⁶⁸ Judith Clancy, Jay Farris, Rob Goss, and et al, *Fodor's Essential Japan*, 613.

The Urakami Catholics petitioned for a new cathedral to take the place of the church in 1958. Memory activists fought with pro-reconstruction *hibakusha* over the removal of the ruins.⁶⁹ Though some recognized it as a site equal to the *Genbaku dōmu* in Hiroshima, government officials' desire for modernity and the *hibakusha*'s desire to forget the trauma of the bomb overpowered any symbolism it had. In comparison, Hiroshima has gone to great lengths to preserve the *Genbaku dōmu* in its original condition as a testament to the horrors of war. It stands today as a focal point for promotional material about the Hiroshima Peace Park and as an UNESCO World Heritage site. For both nationals and foreigners, the *Genbaku dōmu* serves as a reminder of the horrors of nuclear weaponry. Despite the opportunity to do the same with the Urakami Catholic church, Nagasaki chose to forgo iconography pointing toward nuclear responsibility.

Yoneyama discusses the painstaking work that went into the construction of Hiroshima's memorial and the stabilization of the *Genbaku dōmu*. To construct Hiroshima's "bright new memory," as she says, many architectural remnants, like buildings, were torn down to make way for a newly revitalized city.⁷⁰ This was all a result of the Hiroshima Peace Commemoration City Construction Law enacted in 1949. Hiroshima jumped to create and fill the role of a "peace city," seeing it as a duty from being the first city in history to suffer a nuclear attack in history.⁷¹ Hiroshima also had little identity to build off of after the bomb. Before the war, it was a military city, and this

⁶⁹ Diehl, 145.

⁷⁰ Yoneyama, 66.

⁷¹ Diehl, 31.

image would not be enough to rebuild the city after the attack.⁷² And the *Genbaku dōmu* was not immediately safe from the efforts to recultivate the landscape. Survivors and citizens were divided on whether to preserve the ruins as proof of the past or destroy them to step forward into the future. Until 1968, there was little interest from survivors in preserving the ruins. Many saw it as a painful reminder and others claimed that the act of memorialization was a Western ideal and grossly inappropriate to use at a site ravaged by the West.⁷³ Strangely enough, city officials were pushing to preserve the ruins because they saw them as an iconic symbol.⁷⁴ It was only in the 1980s that the general public latched onto the ruins and noted them as an important part of the city's mnemonic images.⁷⁵ Now the site serves as proof that Hiroshima was the victim of a nuclear attack and the severity of its destruction.



Figure 7: *Genbaku Dōmu* in 2018

⁷² Diehl, 32.

⁷³ Yoneyama, 70.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

Meanwhile, Nagasaki missed the opportunity to reform itself as a “peace city.” This is not to say that citizens and officials did not try to steer Nagasaki in that direction. As Hiroshima was developing its reconstruction laws, so was Nagasaki, and both desired to claim the title of “peace city.” However, Hiroshima wanted the sole rights to that title and pointed to the differences in the cities’ histories.⁷⁶ Hiroshima officials claimed that Nagasaki did not need the title because they were not the first city bombed and already had such a rich history to draw from to rebuild, unlike Hiroshima. In the end, Hiroshima won the right to the title and to rebuild itself as a city of peace against nuclear weapons. Nagasaki passed the International Cultural City Construction Law which locked it into its archetype as a “foreign” city. This marked the fork in two cities’ paths and foreshadowed Nagasaki’s preservation of its landscape.

After years of debate, Nagasaki’s mayor gave approval for the Cathedral ruins to be torn down in 1958. For many survivors, the ruins had served as a mnemonic site to convey the tragedy and reality of the atomic blast on the Urakami community.⁷⁷ Some even thought the ruins helped Nagasaki keep equal footing with Hiroshima’s narrative.⁷⁸ With their removal a valuable icon was permanently lost. In its place a new cathedral was constructed. For other Catholic *hibakusha*, the ruins served as a traumatic reminder of the destruction focused on the largest Christian community in Japan. The skeletal walls reminded them of the new “other” irradiated label they were given, and for them it was

⁷⁶ Diehl, 32.

⁷⁷ Diehl, 146.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

best to move on.⁷⁹ For city officials, the reconstruction of the cathedral paved the way for their image as a modern “foreign” city. Now re-located in the hypocenter – the designated zone of prayers – a lone pillar of the church quietly remains. Its presence is not nearly as impactful as the full cathedral ruins. The story of its preservation is not at the forefront of the city’s memory as the *Genbaku dōmu* is in Hiroshima.



Figure 8: Urakami Catholic Church Ruins in 1949

Though the new cathedral’s presence can be disheartening, the salvaged pillar represents an important point in memory studies. While Hiroshima did demolish and rebuild over many atomic ruins, it still preserved enough structures to make an impact. Nagasaki stands out on the stage of memory for making the decision to let go of their mnemonic icon. Whether this was for the best is debatable, but it does represent how Nagasaki is not bound by atomic memory and navigated its memorialization of the bomb under a less scrutinizing set of eyes.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

Despite the solemn story of the lost cathedral ruins, there are notable instances of thought-provoking art that could only be created in Nagasaki. Various displays and events showcase how the city's space is used to challenge uniform atomic memory in a way that cannot be done in Hiroshima. Because Nagasaki is not the "peace city," it is able to engage with the memory of the bomb unhindered by stereotypes. Hiroshima has so thoroughly tied itself to this image that it has difficulty breaking away. Since Nagasaki's experience is not at the forefront of the atomic memory discourse it can challenge it and reshape it. Though, as can be inferred from the destruction of the Urakami Catholic Church ruins, this is not always for the best. Some of Nagasaki's more experimental interpretations of atomic memorialization range from bizarre to contradictory.

"Prayer for Peace," or "Peace Statue," is arguably the most notable statue in Nagasaki. It is a 9.7 meter tall bronze statue located in Nagasaki's Peace Park. The Peace Park marks the hypocenter and its surrounding area and is divided into three zones: the zone of prayer, the zone of hope, and the zone of study.⁸⁰ The "Peace Statue," erected in 1955, is in the zone of hope and is the site of many ceremonies and events for the city and *hibakusha*. It is prominently featured in guidebooks for foreign travelers as well. It was in this area that Abe gave his infamous speech. The statue is intended to represent Buddha, who holds his right hand to the sky to signify the threat of atomic weapons and his left-hand outward to symbolize a wish for peace.⁸¹ Onlookers will find little resemblance to Buddha, however, when gazing at the statue. The metallic man with his Western features would look more appropriate in the Greek Pantheon rather than the solemn site of a

⁸⁰Otsuki, "Reinventing Nagasaki: The Christianization of Nagasaki and the Revival of an Imperial Legacy in Postwar Japan," 396.

⁸¹ Ibid.

nuclear attack. The statue was created to showcase Nagasaki's wish for peace and Buddha's love and mercy, but its Western face and muscular body do little to evoke that message.⁸² Few visitors can relate any of its features to divine love or peace or to the figure of Buddha.⁸³ As scholar Tomoe Otsuki comments, "It looks more like a Western warrior triumphantly showing his muscular body with little sign of damage inflicted by the atomic bombing."⁸⁴ It is curious how such a vague and gaudy statue ended up as one of Nagasaki's most iconic symbols of peace.



Figure 9: Peace Statue

Its sculptor, Kitamaru Seibou, was one of the most renowned Japanese artists of the time. He preferred to make masculine and muscular statues and had previously created many masculine statues of military figures.⁸⁵ In 1950, Nagasaki was deciding on a memorial for the peace park that would exemplify the intercultural city.⁸⁶ As a famous

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Otsuki, 409.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

artist, Kitamaru attended the discussions and presented his idea for a bronze statue that conveyed the horrors of the bomb through its representation of power.⁸⁷ At this point, the council was perplexed at the idea. Their original plan was to construct a memorial tower, not a grandiose sculpture. It took Nagasaki's designation as the best sightseeing city a year later for city officials to accept Kitamaru's plans. Officials agreed that Kitamaru's statue would promote the greatness and resilience of the new Nagasaki.⁸⁸ Officials seemed to have forgotten the original intent of the statue to honor the atomic victims when making this decision.

Kitamaru saw his statue less as an opportunity to proclaim peace or promote Nagasaki, and more as a way to preserve his disappearing work. In the post-war years, militaristic statues were removed, and future statues of that subject matter were banned.⁸⁹ This included Kitamaru's statues, which consisted of hyper-masculine, militaristic men. Though his works of art were simply moved to less public locations like museums, the fact that his work was deemed inappropriate for public places was embarrassing for him.⁹⁰ He took even more offense to some of his statues being replaced by art that emphasized femininity. A statue of his that depicted a military figure was used for scrap during the war and then replaced by three nude women figures after the war's conclusion.⁹¹ Like many statues of women popping up over Japan, they represented peace and freedom from political ideologies. After World War Two, women's bodies representing peace became popular and directly opposed Kitamaru's preferred style.⁹²

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

Kitamaru commented, “Goddess statues can be seen everywhere in the world and thus have gone stale.”⁹³ For him the “Peace Statue” was a protest of the goddess statues that were replacing his work and a statement that the masculine could invoke peace just as well. What was intended as a representation of the international city became an artist’s act of spiteful defiance.



Figure 10: "Monument of Hatakeyama Shigetada" by Kitamaru Seibou
(Date Unknown)

⁹³ Mayumi Suehiro 末廣真由美, 2008, “長崎平和公園——慰霊と平和祈念のはざままで,” [Nagasaki peace park: the space between commemoration and the prayer for peace.] 死生学 [thanatology] 4: 219, in Ibid.



Figure 11: Collection of Kitamaru Seibou's Sculptures at the Seibo Memorial Hall

This work of masculine defiance is unique to Nagasaki. There are no hyper-masculine statues in Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park that represent peace through mass and power like the Peace Statue does.⁹⁴ The few masculine statues in Hiroshima depict men praying with their families or men of scholarship. There are no massive statues of warriors with bulging muscles akin to Greek gods. Male statues in Hiroshima uphold the narrative of demilitarization and prosperity prevalent throughout the memorial park. The Peace Statue's narrative is not as simple to define. While government officials may see the Peace Statue as an icon of Nagasaki, its place in the memoryscape of Nagasaki is highly contested.

Kitamaru's statue still stands today despite the opposition of *hibakusha*. After its completion in 1955, survivors were quick to point out the statue's excessive budget. The final price tag was over 50 million yen, double the original expense. More than half of the budget, 30 million yen, was raised through donations in Japan and abroad. For the

⁹⁴ Ibid.

survivors begging for medical aid from the city, this flamboyant spending provoked a deep disgust of the statue.⁹⁵ The statue was too obscure and overpriced and served as an ego boost to a fading artist. Kitamaru admitted later that he had no hope for perpetual peace, citing humanity's "avarice." As Otsuki laments, the Peace Statue's "left arm signifies nothing."⁹⁶

Due to Kitamaru's poor treatment of Nagasaki's atomic memory, his protégé, Tominaga Naoki, was met with immense opposition when the city commissioned a statue from him. Simply called "50th Anniversary Commemorative Project Monument" by the museum, it is a large statue of a woman holding an infant, cast once again in bronze. She resides in the prayer zone of the Peace Park, wears a dress with golden flowers, and seems to be bowing her head. The museum's website says it is a symbol of mothers and children impacted by the bomb, and of peace and mercy.⁹⁷ The statue was erected in 1997 and sparked another flurry of protest from *hibakusha*. Tominaga's statue was intended to replace the cenotaph column at ground zero, but the *hibakusha* protested the cenotaph's removal by forming a "human chain," and the statue was instead placed in its current location.⁹⁸ The *hibakusha* felt the statue was another waste of money and that it did not represent the horrors of the atomic bomb.⁹⁹ They may have worried Tominaga, like Kitamaru, was using the peace park only as a gallery and not taking the message of peace

⁹⁵ Otsuki, 410.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ "被爆 50 周年記念事業碑." Nagasaki City-Peace and Atomic Bomb. Accessed December 11, 2020.

https://nagasakipeace.jp/japanese/map/zone_inori/hibaku_50year.html

⁹⁸ Diehl, 124.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

seriously. The *hibakusha*'s protest and the conflict's resolution differ from similar instances in Hiroshima.



Figure 12: 50th Anniversary Commemorative Project Monument

As mentioned previously, the memorial for Korean Atomic Bomb Victims in Hiroshima's Peace Park is placed in an unassuming spot. There was a decades long debate over the placement of the memorial. While other monuments lay on the periphery of the park, they are still within the path of most visitors. In the late 1980s, Korean immigrants, or *zainichi*, began to protest and petition for the monument to be moved within the park.¹⁰⁰ However, the city of Hiroshima responded by citing a 1967 regulation to prohibit the construction of more monuments in the Peace Park and stated that placing the memorial in the park would disrupt the universal nature of the site's memory.¹⁰¹ For Hiroshima, the memory of the atomic bomb is concrete and must fit a universal image. The same cannot be said for Nagasaki. The *hibakusha* protest of the 50th Anniversary Commemorative Project shows that Nagasaki's memory of the bomb is more pliable.

¹⁰⁰ Yoneyama, 158.

¹⁰¹ Yoneyama, 159.

Though Hiroshima's situation could be attributed to racism against Korea, it is also clear that things like monument regulations make it so that the memory surrounding Hiroshima and the atomic bomb is not up for reinterpretation. Even as Japan has become more apologetic toward its atrocities in Korea during World War Two, no mention of monument revision or movement has arisen. The movement of statues in Nagasaki attests to its openness to reinterpretation.

V. MOVING FORWARD

Though Nagasaki's malleable memoryscape is not intentional, it has drawn individuals with intention to disrupt stagnated memories. Shinpei Takeda, a visual artist and filmmaker, and Ryuta Imafuku, a cultural anthropologist, created an art installation and a walking tour for Nagasaki's seventieth anniversary of the atomic attack in 2015. The "Monument to Antimonument" walking tour and Takeda's sculpture *Beta Decay 5* demonstrate how Nagasaki's memoryscape encourages free expression and is open to challenging the "accepted" memory space. Takeda's and Imafuku's work is important because they are challenging the static state of public memories and encouraging participants to challenge how they view monuments and memorialization. Some of their other work includes an art installation featuring a cardboard monument that sheltered a speaking event with two atomic survivors in Mexico, and a documentary, *Hiroshima Nagasaki Download*, which interviewed eight atomic survivors now living in North America.¹⁰² Though it is not clear why Nagasaki was their chosen space for the walking tour and installation and Hiroshima was not, Nagasaki's draw as a malleable center of atomic memory should not be overlooked as a reason. Hiroshima's atomic narrative is set in stone, while Nagasaki's leaves room for thought.

Takeda describes the tour as a parallel event to the art exhibit.¹⁰³ The tour was held on August 13, 2015 and included thirty-three Japanese and American participants.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² Alison Fields, *Discordant Memories: Atomic Age Narratives and Visual Culture*, Ed. 1, University of Oklahoma Press: February 6, 2020, Kindle Edition, Introduction: Remembering the Atomic Bomb Across Space and Time.

¹⁰³ Shinpei Takeda, "Antimonument: A Short Reflection on Writings by Marcela Quiroz and Ryuta Imafuku," in *Reimagining Hiroshima and Nagasaki: Nuclear Humanities in the Post-Cold War*, edited by N. A. J. Taylor and Robert Jacobs, Routledge, 2020, Kindle Edition, Chapter 13: Antimonument: A Short Reflection on Writings by Marcela Quiroz and Ryuta Imafuku.

¹⁰⁴ Fields, *Discordant Memories: Atomic Age Narratives and Visual Culture*, Introduction.

It was meant to represent a physical movement from monument to antimonument.¹⁰⁵ The tour began at the Nagasaki National Peace Memorial Hall for the Atomic Bomb Victims, a literal monument, progressed to the hypocenter, the Urakami Catholic Cathedral, and the Peace Park, and ended at Takeda's *Antimonument* exhibition at the Nagasaki Prefectural Art Museum, which symbolized antimonument.¹⁰⁶ Takeda and Imafuku provided little guidance for the participants, encouraging them to form their own reflection on the memories of the spaces they visited.¹⁰⁷ Scholar Alison Fields documents the walking tour in detail in her book *Discordant Memories*. There were only two emphasized stops. One was the former home of Ms. Moto Watanabe, where participants experienced a very personal memory of the aftermath of the atomic bomb.¹⁰⁸ The focus of the visit was the artifacts recovered from the Urakami Catholic Church in the late Ms. Watanabe's storage room.¹⁰⁹ This visit emphasized the destruction of the nuclear blast on the church and pointed out its connection to the citizens of Nagasaki. It made the reality of the bomb more personal for viewers. Instead of looking at artifacts behind glass and grandiose monuments, participants saw a humble house that anyone could imagine themselves living in. It reminded participants that history happens to everyone. The next site was the Nagasaki University School of Medicine. Here participants examined specimen jars containing the organs of atomic bomb victims.¹¹⁰ This abstracted the narrative. The memory surrounding Watanabe's house seemed more personal and tangible because it is the remnant of a single person's life. The School of Medicine's

¹⁰⁵ Takeda, "Antimonument: A Short Reflection on Writings by Marcela Quiroz and Ryuta Imafuku," Chapter 13.

¹⁰⁶ Fields, Introduction.

¹⁰⁷ Takeda, Chapter 13.

¹⁰⁸ Fields, Introduction.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

artifacts, including preserved body parts, were harder to connect to real people, but were nonetheless memorialized as a symbol of the impacts of the bomb. Though these locations were emphasized, the point of the tour was not the places participants visited. Rather, Takeda used the movement from place to place to bring the participants from real to abstract forms of memory.¹¹¹ By doing so, he showed participants how to see past the monuments frozen in 1945 and bring those memories to the present.¹¹²

The final stop for the tour was Takeda's *Antimonument* exhibition, which had opened earlier that month on August 1st. It continued to call for people to move beyond stagnant representations of the past and engage with traumatic histories in the current day.¹¹³ The exhibition included Takeda's 2011 documentary *Hiroshima Nagasaki Download*, his *Alpha Decay* Series, and his large visual piece *Beta Decay 5*.¹¹⁴ Takeda's work was some of the first at the museum that addressed the challenges of the stagnating memories of the bomb over time.¹¹⁵ Takeda opened his catalogue for the event by calling to attention the problem of memorialization and forgetfulness.¹¹⁶ He asks visitors, "By hoping and praying to monuments, are we not avoiding having to really look at ourselves and our actions?"¹¹⁷ Takeda calls for visitors to let the memories of *hibakusha* reverberate through them and breathe life back into the atomic memoryscape.¹¹⁸ The installation is a warning against complacency and a call to action to depart from previous practices.

¹¹¹ Takeda, Chapter 13.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Fields, Introduction.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Takeda, Chapter 13.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.



Figure 13: *Beta Decay 5*

The focal point of the exhibition is Takeda's art piece *Beta Decay 5*, which represents the atomic experience coming together through interwoven fibers.¹¹⁹ *Beta Decay 5* also conveys the unraveling of atomic memory to take on a new narrative.¹²⁰

Even the creation of the piece was symbolic. To weave the long fibers required continuous and repetitive labor.¹²¹ The woven fibers are an abstract representation of the waveforms of Takeda's interviews with atomic survivors.¹²² It represents the process of continuously unraveling and raveling not only atomic but all public memory.¹²³ Takeda continues these ideals throughout his other works in the *Alpha Decay* series. A part of the series states, "Individual memories become intermingled, changing into new colors and forms. We must interpret this process not as the contamination of memory, but as the

¹¹⁹ Fields, *Personal Testimonies: Creating Archives of Memory*, Chapter 4.

¹²⁰ Fields, Chapter 4.

¹²¹ Takeda, Chapter 13.

¹²² Ryuta Imafuku, "Witnessing Nagasaki for the second time," in *Reimagining Hiroshima and Nagasaki: Nuclear Humanities in the Post-Cold War*, edited by N. A. J. Taylor and Robert Jacobs, Routledge, 2020, Kindle Edition, Chapter 12: Witnessing Nagasaki for the second time.

¹²³ Imafuku, "Witnessing Nagasaki for the second time", Chapter 12.

evolution of memory,”¹²⁴ – a statement Pierre Nora would agree with and that should be explored further in Nagasaki.

Since 2015, Takeda has continued to build upon the *Decay* and *Antimonument* series, and Nagasaki has continued to be a place for relaxed memory interpretation, while Hiroshima, in their effort to be the forefront of atomic memory, has remained much the same. Nagasaki has shown a sharp divergence with its memoryscape in comparison. The two statues and Takeda’s and Imafuku’s walking tour represent a different and challenging take on the memory of the atomic bomb. The fact that they all converge in Nagasaki highlights the openness of the city’s atomic memory and the freedoms that living in Hiroshima’s shadow has allowed it. It holds a wealth of atomic history and memory that is distinctly different from Hiroshima and that scholars have only scratched the surface of.

It is my hope that this research sparks further interest in Nagasaki and its people’s perceptions of the atomic bomb, both in the West and Japan. Abe Shinzo’s speech will not be the last time a government official neglects the memory of the atomic bomb. Prime Ministers past and present have downplayed the extent of the devastation of World War Two both by foreign powers and themselves. After Abe resigned from his government position for personal health reasons in late 2020, Japan welcomed a new prime minister, Suga Yoshihide. Suga has already sparked controversy by sending an offering to the Yasukuni Shrine, a ceremonial burial site that holds Japan’s war criminals from World

¹²⁴ Imafuku, Chapter 12.

War Two.¹²⁵ He continues a questionable practice observed by many Japanese government officials. It is unclear if he will continue to carry Abe's ignorance of the war and the nuclear attacks, but his actions with the Yasukuni Shrine give *hibakusha* little to hope for. Even so, perhaps Prime Minister Suga or his successor will see works like this and realize that Nagasaki is not just a copy of Hiroshima, but a diverse site of atomic memory. The two cities are unique in their interpretation and deserve recognition of their memory sites. As Diehl said, while Hiroshima was the first city to suffer an atomic attack, Nagasaki was the last, and both hold equal footing in their significance as bombed cities.¹²⁶ Without Nagasaki's memory there would be little experimentation. As August 9th approaches, Suga has the chance to not repeat Abe's mistakes and create a speech that is as unique as they are.

¹²⁵ Reuters Staff, "Japan PM Suga sends offering to Yasukuni Shrine for war dead: NHK," *Reuters*, October 16, 2020. Last Accessed November 6, 2020. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-japan-yasukuni-suga-idUSKBN27134C>

¹²⁶ Diehl, 2.

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