



C-1

5022



THE OUTLINE HISTORY OF NAGASAKI CITY

Prepared by:

Shinso Kiuchi & Motoki Sonbiki
Geographic Institute,
Faculty of Science,
Imperial University of Tokyo.

1. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS:

The purpose of this report is to present a general topographical description of the City of Nagasaki which has become more world famous since it was made the second targets, next to Hiroshima City, of the atomic bomb, and to give chiefly foreigners who are not so familiar with Japan some idea of the City.

In preparing this report, the following books were used for reference:

1. (The Kaizo-Sha)
THE OUTLINE OF THE JAPANESE GEOGRAPHY
Vol. 9 The Kyushu District (1930 Edition)
2. (The Railway Ministry)
A GUIDE-BOOK OF JAPAN
Vol. for the Kyushu District (1935 Edition)

2. HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF NAGASAKI CITY

Situated at the northwest corner of Kyushu Island, the Nagasaki Prefecture has a longer coast-line than any other prefecture. Thanks to the excessive indentation of the coast-line, there are a great many deep inlets with possibilities everywhere for the development of small-scaled good ports. Especially the western coast, facing the open sea, is convenient for the obtention of abundant marine products. Nagasaki City, too,

14 f (23) (h-1)

is a good fishing port bordering on one of the bays on the western coast and there from olden days a modest fishing village prospered. and due to some accidental happenings, too, Nagasaki came to thrive most of all the other fishing villages in this region.

Looking at a map of the Far East, one will realise that not only because of its location and nearness but also due to favourable current and winds the western coast of the Nagasaki Prefecture provided the most appropriate and natural points of arrival for ships from the Chinese Continent, Formosa, and the Philippines. In fact, many foreigners came from these zones not only to Nagasaki but also to various fishing ports on the western coast, sometimes for the purpose of trading with the theretofore "closed" feudal Japan, that is, Japan with no ports open for foreign trade, or for propagating Christianity in Japan, or sometimes because of shipwrecks or accidental drifting of their ships, and very often the arrival of foreigners was talked about among the Japanese as a curious and great incident.

Among such incidents what gave Nagasaki an opportunity for future development as a prosperous city was the arrival of Portuguese ships in 1570. Curiosity for foreign made things overcoming the prevailing exclusiveness based upon anti-foreign sentiments especially against the Europeans and the Americans, the open-minded Feudal Lord of the Nagasaki Region Omura in the following year opened Nagasaki as a trade port.

Lord Omura who stood in awe of the west European goods and civilization which were yearly brought into Japan by the incoming Portuguese and which far surpassed those in Japan was also deeply impressed by Catholicism and encouraged its diffusion among the citizens.

Consequently, the City of Nagasaki from 1570 to 1587 prospered as the only base for the Portuguese to propagate Catholicism among the Japanese, and with the ornaments, so to speak, of exotic ships, residences, and the material civilization of foreign countries producing an atmosphere unique among Japanese cities, Nagasaki looked like a Portuguese colony, " a Macao in Japan." It was, in fact, called a Japanese Rome.

But soon afterwards, when the Toyotomis, succeeding the Oda family, assumed the reins of the government, Toyotomi's personality asserted itself in the new foreign policy, resulting in the oppression of Christianity. (The Japanese at that time used to call both Christianity and the Christians "Kirishitan.") As some of the present day historians assert, it is said that Toyotomi thought the Portuguese were propagating Christianity simply as a means for fulfilling their territorial ambition against Japan.

A little later, in 1603, the Tokugawas in Yedo, or Tokyo as it is now called, came into power and followed the national isolation policy for 300 years of feudalistic administration. The order in 1611

for the over-all suppression of Christianity not only prohibited the propagation but also demanded the conversion of the Christians; those refusing to be converted were thoroughly hunted for and put to death.

In the southwestern parts of Kyushu, including Nagasaki where there were a greatest number of Christians, this policy gave rise to a civil war, the Shimabara Uprising, lasting from 1637 to 1638, which proved to be additional fuel to the suppression policy. Finally in 1639, such circumstances led to the "shutting out" of the Portuguese who were most closely related with the propagation of Christianity, as well as other western Europeans, except the Dutch who were credited as having no connection with the propagation and allowed to go on trading with Japan only at the port of Nagasaki. It goes without saying that the Chinese, too, were permitted to do the same. Prior to this, in 1634, all the Portuguese, their residences, piers, as well as the liaison agencies of the Japanese Government had been transferred to a newly reclaimed 4,000 tsubo or 3.27 acres "Dejima" in the hope of separating the Portuguese from the general Japanese residents; with the "shutting out" of the Portuguese in 1639, however, the Dutch succeeding to the extraterritorial rights of the "Dejima", they and the Chinese monopolised for 200 years thereafter the trading with Japan, although it is not improbable that certain other

western Europeans were also permitted to reside in this foreign settlement. In such a way, Nagasaki as the only access to Japan of foreign civilization came to play an important role in the cultural history of Japan.

Dutch interpreters, as well as the Japanese officials qualified to frequent the "Dejima," were the mediators of the west European civilization and it was through those that the west European medicine, physics, chemics, natural history, languages, astronomy, and so on were introduced to the Japanese. Thirsty for knowledge, the Japanese gathered at Nagasaki as interpreters or as some other officials and strove to absorb west European civilization and learning. With their insufficient knowledge of languages, they worked hard at copying or translating thousands of pages of original text-books.

On the other hand, the Chinese who from ancient times had been the importers of civilization into Japan continued to enjoy freedom; resorting to and living in Nagasaki, they introduced Chinese religion, technique, and various goods. Even now we can see on the slopes of hills surrounding Nagasaki some Buddhist temples, especially of the Obaku Sect, built by the Chinese. The "Megane-Bashi" or the Bridge of Spectacles made by heaping up stones according to the imported Chinese technique is still existing.

Maruyama, the Geisha-Girl Quarters, established in 1642 and prized by the Chinese and the "Dejima" Dutch as their only place of entertainments was filled with international episodes, and the then prevalent customs are still perceivable today. Too, in order to counteract the citizens' admiration for the "Kirishitan," the Japanese Government instituted in 1634 the Suwa Shrine in the hope of attracting their attention to the gorgeous annual festivals. Even now in the various functions, customs, and special products of Nagasaki we clearly notice the Chinese and west European influence. The well-known Nagasaki "Kasutera" or sponge-cake was produced in 1618 for the first time according to the west European cuisine.

Almost throughout the Tokugawa Era Japan stubbornly refused to trade with European powers; however, by 1859 changes in the states of affairs in the world as well as within Japan made it necessary to open the three ports of Nagasaki, Yokohama, and Hakodate for foreign trade, putting an end to the 250 years of national isolation, and very soon in 1868 the Meiji Restoration took place. Meanwhile, it gradually came to pass that Yokohama, because of its closeness to Yedo or Tokyo, and Kobe, because of its being situated in the center of Japan Proper deprived Nagasaki in Kyushu of its theretofore monopolistic position.

In 1864, not many years after the opening of the three ports, the Government gave permission to the construction of the Oura

Church for the worshipping by the foreigners, and at last in 1873 the religious suppression was removed after nearly 300 years, and the Japanese became free to believe in "Kirishitan."

In Uragami, to the north of Nagasaki, it is said that 80 percent of the villagers had secretly kept on believing in Catholicism throughout the 300 years of oppression, a proof of how deeply-rooted Catholicism was among the Japanese around Nagasaki. The French missionaries and the Japanese Christians in Uragami built a church there, spending as much as 34 years, that is from 1881 to 1914, for its construction. (The church was not really completed till 1925.) Around the Oura Church, too, many mission schools were instituted for the propagation of Christianity among the Japanese. Even today Nagasaki has more than 50,000 Christians, over 30 percent of the whole citizens.

3. PRESENT-DAY NAGASAKI

a. In recent days, after the opening of ports in various parts of Japan, Nagasaki lost its former shine, and the port that flourished in the Tokugawa Era as the only place for foreign trade has now been reduced to a mere local harbour trading less than one percent of the total amount in Japan. Nagasaki exports coal, marine products, cotton stuff, and so on and imports chiefly ginned cotton and mineral oil, and various other goods from China, importation however, far exceeding exportation. There are scheduled

5,000 ton ferry boats connecting Kobe, Nagasaki, and Shanghai. The City of Nagasaki is also the terminus of the Nagasaki Main Railway Line.

Nagasaki, however, found a new opening for prosperity in the Mitsubishi Dock-Yard on the west coast of the Nagasaki Bay, that is, opposite the main part of the city. This dock-yard, run by the Mitsubishi moneyed interests which reigns over the heavy industries and the enterprises of Japan, has kept on expanding especially since the Manchurian Incident, in company with the expansion of munition industries and shipping. And by and by the Mitsubishi built three additional factories near Uragami to the north of Nagasaki City. Even prior to the Chinese Incident, there were 30,000 workers in the dock-yard and those workers and their family constituted over 50 percent of the 200,000 Nagasaki population. Under such circumstances, it would not be an exaggeration to assert that the enterprises of the Mitsubishi moneyed interests have been the greatest influence over the life of the Nagasaki citizens today. With the opening of the Nagasaki Port in 1859, the "Dejime" had become chiefly a Chinese settlement. Later, however, more land was reclaimed and in the newly enlarged Nagasaki Harbour, ships even as large as 8,000 tons were able to come to anchor.

b. As the affixed map shows, the City of Nagasaki with newly annexed Uragami is a "L"- or "V"-shaped level ground, separated from the hinterland by means of hills about 200 metres high. These hillocks of agglomerate, andesite, dacite, and so on are covered with typical temperate zone ever-greens. The busiest quarters of Nagasaki City in the righthand side of the "V", namely, in the widest part of the low ground extends to the hillside, which has been cut into steps and been made a residential section. On this gravel stairway, so to speak, there are also Chinese temples, churches, foreign-style buildings, and so on, and the whole view is quite exotic. On the lefthand side of the "V", is Nagasaki Station, the terminus of the railway running southwards along the level land. Around Uragami, the next station, the city gradually passes into agricultural villages, though more recently the residential section of the city has been extended also into this part, comprising also the aforementioned three factories.

The population of Nagasaki which numbered 270,000 in 1944 was cut down to 140,000 as of November 1, 1945. It has been ascertained that the atomic bomb was dropped even farther north to Uragami Station, and thanks to the intervening farms around there and thanks to the fact that in the east and west were hillocks with but few houses, the Nagasaki citizens suffered less than the citizens of Hiroshima. The 200 metre hillocks in between

neutralising the blast of the bomb and checking the spread of the fire, the original Nagasaki City has survived, though not perfectly intact. Supposing the atomic bomb had aimed at the destruction of Nagasaki City, it ought to have hit "Dejima"; and accordingly it may be that the choice of spot on August 9, 1945, was a failure. If, however, the purpose of the bomb was to wipe out the munition industries in Nagasaki, the hit was a grand success completely destroying the three factories; in the oldest part of the City there were no factories whatever. The Mitsubishi Dock-Yard had been demolished by air-raids a few days before.

4. CONCLUSION

Whatever may have been the original object, the atomic bomb has absolutely deprived the City of the Mitsubishi enterprises which used to turn out 90 percent of the total production in Nagasaki and on which 50 percent of the population had depended for their living. And Nagasaki has now been reduced to a maimed, consumptive city only retaining some cultural value, exotic environment, and privileges of abundant marine products.

In such a way, the descendents of the Uragami villagers, who from the 17th to the 19th Century, in spite of 300 long years of persecution and prejudice, remained faithful Christians, gave up 30,000 of their lives together with the Uragami Church and their houses numbering several thousands, for the atonement of crimes by the Japanese militarists.

Even supposing the bombing was aimed at the neutralization of munition industries and not at the wiping out of citizens' life and lives, the Uragami villagers had all the same been doomed to be involved in the disaster.

Recourse to the atomic bomb was exceptional measures for the establishment of a lasting peace in the world. No more war should break out. And no more atomic bombs should be used. For only under such a moral agreement will the deceased Uragami "Kirishitan" be able to go to glory, submitting to their fate as victims.