

OPERA INOCHI

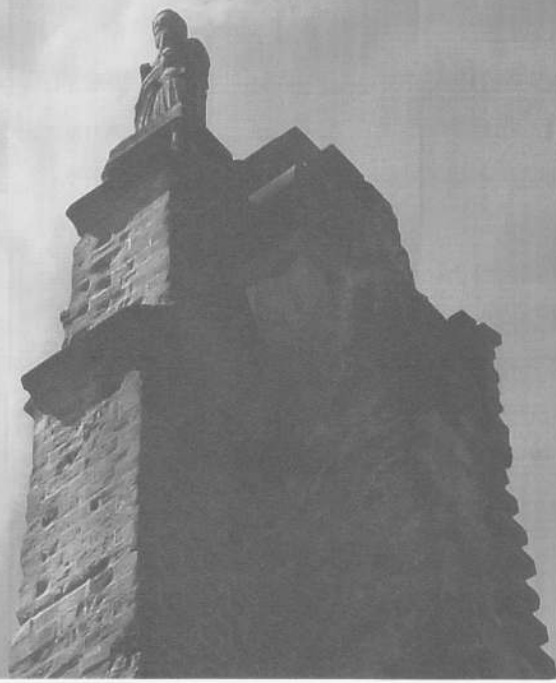
Libretto: Yutaka HOSHIIDE

Music: Kayoko NISHIKI

English translation: Fuyuko FUKUNAKA

Characters

Natsuko NAKAZAWA (sop.)	a nurse
Kunio MATSUO (ten.)	a doctor
Noboru YAMADA (bar.)	a doctor
Toshi YAMADA (sop.)	a doctor, Yamada's wife
Dr. IWAMURA (sop.)	Natsuko's physician who was exposed to the radiation
Nanako (sop.)	a girl exposed to the radiation
Osaki (mezzo sop.)	a townswoman exposed to the radiation
Nobuo (ten.)	a townsman exposed to the radiation
Takeo (bar.)	a townsman exposed to the radiation
Kouji (bar.)	an atomic bomb victim and former inpatient
Tome (mezzo sop.)	an atomic bomb victim and former inpatient
Nurse (sop.)	a nurse
Teru (mezzo sop.)	a crypto-Christian
Kichizō (ten.)	a crypto-Christian
Bureaucrat (bass)	a public functionary of Nagasaki
Monk (muted role)	a monk
Visible and invisible choruses	townspeople of Nagasaki
Children's chorus	children of Nagasaki



Introduction

Prayers

As the church and temple bells toll, the dhāraṇī chant resonates with monks' prayers for the repose of the deceased and to the peace of the world. Matsuo, on his way home from visiting the grave of Natsuko, meets a monk, who gives him the azalea flowers, which Natsuko was fond of.

Act I, scene 1

On the square near the Anaguhōji temple, in the proximity of Kōmpira mountain.
In 1998 (Matsuo is 68 years old).

Children are seen playing on the square.

Children We hop! We skip!
 Pee-pah! Pee-pi, pee-pi, pee-pah!
Matsuo Children shine as always. It's been 28 years since Natsuko's death.
 So much time has passed and Nagasaki has prospered. Yet the tragedy the people in Nagasaki have
 suffered still lingers on.

Children, bored of the game, approach Matsuo, singing.

Children *(still playing in a circle)* Lotus flowers blossom, blossom beautifully this year. Better plucked than left
 there. Watch out for your ears! Tat-poh-poh! Tat-poh-poh!

Matsuo, placing carefully the azalea flowers on the ground, joins the children.

Matsuo Well, I will catch you, so run!
Children Wow! He is going to catch us!
Matsuo Yes, yes!
Children Let's begin!

All start to dance in a circle, singing.

Children Lotus flowers blossom, blossom beautifully this year. Better plucked than left
 there. Watch out for your ears! Tat-poh-poh! Tat-poh-poh!
Matsuo You are full of energy. I take a rest.
Child 1 Sir, tell us a tale!
Child 2 Yes, we all want to hear?
Children Good idea! Good idea!
Child 1 Sir, you had azalea flowers?
Child 2 Meant for someone dear?
Matsuo *(Laughing)* You think? It is a nice guess...
Children Sir, your azalea flowers. Tell us, who is going to have them?
Matsuo The port looks like a crane? Nagasaki is embraced by the crane, yet has gone
 through difficult times. Those who passed away made it a beautiful city.
Child 1 ...and what does it have to do with the Azalea flowers?
Matsuo Well, just wait.

Lifting and swinging one child gently, he sings a traditional song of Nagasaki.

Matsuo Ebb and flow. Hold tight, or you fall in the water.

He places her down.

Matsuo Do you see the Uragami Tenshudō chapel there?
Children Of course, we do!
Matsuo There are stories with it that you don't know...
 These azalea flowers are called Unzen azalea... so many stories....

Matsuo wipes his tears.

Children Sir, what is the matter?
Matsuo Nothing...well, want to come to my house for more stories?
Children Good idea! We go to his house!
 Good idea! We hear his stories!
 Stories about his azalea flowers!

Children draw their faces near the flowers in hand. Happy and singing on, they walk away leading Matsuo.

Act I, scene 2 (based on the 1867 Uragami persecution ¹)

In Uragami, in 1867 (played out behind the gauze curtain, as if in a nightmare).

Teru What did I do wrong?
Functionary You know, Christianity is banned!
Chorus Have mercy on us. Please spare us. We didn't do anything wrong. Why such cruelty? Why?
Functionary Christianity is an enemy religion!
Chorus Why? What is wrong with it? Why?

Their screams subside, leading into singing.

Chorus Kyrie, eleison, Christe eleison, Kyrie eleison.

Their prayers continue for a while.

Functionary Look who is there!
Teru That is Kichizō!
Chorus Kichizō! Kichizō!
Teru It was I who brought him out of Seitokuji temple. Such a gentle heart now under so much pain because of me. (*Frantically*) Forgive me! Please! Why such cruelty to him whom everyone loves and who is so good to everyone? (*To the functionary*) Please, take me instead!
Functionary Why want to rush into death? Your turn comes soon.
Teru (*Sobbing*) Kichizō, please, forgive me.
 They are killing him! What could I do?

Soft singing is heard.

Kichizō Don't worry about me. Take care of Teru. The greater my sufferings are, the nearer I could come to our Lord, to the Heaven, which I hear is beautiful. Be good to yourself, Teru.
Teru We tried so hard, so hard together to be good here in Uragami.... It is all my fault that they go through so much pain.... Dear Lord, our Virgin Mary, please protect Kichizō...
Chorus *Kyrie eleison... Christe eleison...*
Kichizō (*With the chorus*) Look, Virgin Mary is smiling at me...
Functionary Kichizō will be dead at high tide. Ha-ha.

Light goes off.

Act I, scene 3

In the hospital room of Dr. Yamada.

In 1957, Yamada is 52 years old, Matsuo 33 years old, Natsuko 32 years old.

Natsuko, tidying up the room, arranges the Azalea flowers into a vase.

Natsuko (*Singing*) These white flowers carry happiness, red flowers love. La-la.
Yamada Ms. Natsuko, thank you as always.
Natsuko You awake?
Yamada I was listening to your beautiful singing...
Natsuko Don't tease me.
 I could not find Unzen azalea flowers today.
Yamada Beautiful red-purple azaleas...
Natsuko You look better today, but had a nightmare again?
Yamada You know, the usual one...
Natsuko Of bullied Christians?
Yamada That happened only less than 100 years ago. People killing other people.
Natsuko You mean the Uragami incidents you have related to me often?
Yamada Yes, Nagasaki has embraced foreign cultures, at times to its own sufferings.
Natsuko I like Nagasaki's festivals, with foreign colors. We have adopted them as our own.
Yamada I want people to know more about Nagasaki and its history.
Natsuko Doc, my great-grandmother, a Christian, martyred in Nagasaki.
Yamada Then you have your own share of the painful history of Nagasaki, full of wounds, not only of the last world war, but also of killing each other long ago...

Yamada then stands up and looks out to the sea from the window, talking to himself.

Yamada (*To himself*) Nagasaki flattened by air raids, suffering from the atomic bomb. Its people still suffering. I pray for them.

Crossing himself, praying silently, he walks to the window.

¹= The 1867 Uragami persecution refers to a large-scale persecution of Japanese Christians conducted by the Edo government.

Yamada The crane-shaped port looks peaceful as though knowing nothing. It looks fully recovered.

Dr. Matsuo, who has stopped by for a routine checkup on Yamada, hesitates to enter, talking to himself.

Matsuo (*To himself*) Every time I hear these stories...

Yamada (*To himself*) Lives, precious lives...

Matsuo (*Louder*) I feel as though I am a stranger.

Yamada Why? Stranger?

Natsuko Calm down, doc.

Yamada What a nonsense.

Natsuko Well...

Matsuo I remain a stranger.

Natsuko Dr. Matsuo...

Yamada Aren't you a doctor?

Matsuo Of course, I mean to be.

Yamada Then, why...?

Matsuo I try hard to care for our patients, yet I cannot feel their pain, the awful pain inflicted by the atomic bomb. I can only try to feel their sadness.

Yamada Feel their sadness? How arrogant! Do you think we doctors can relate to the patients' feelings?

Matsuo I want to.

Yamada No, you can't.

Matsuo Even to you?

Yamada That is enough.

Matsuo To the feelings of other survivors...

Yamada It is easier said than done.

Matsuo I understand.

Yamada You are still young.

Matsuo But...

Yamada (*Trying to calm down Matsuo*) Your youth, our city needs it...

Matsuo I keep thinking why it had to be Nagasaki...The atomic bomb...

Yamada Cut it out. No point in saying such a thing. We doctors need to focus on what we should do.

Matsuo Atomic bomb dropped in Nagasaki has caused leukemia, keloid, and...

Yamada Stop it. Your agony does not console anyone, even me...

Matsuo I know.

Natsuko (*To Matsuo*) You work hard for the people of Nagasaki, the people here...

Yamada Yes, you proudly belong to Nagasaki. I live here, yet feel ashamed of myself.

Natsuko What do you mean...?

Yamada (*Loudly*) Ashamed of my helplessness. On that day, I left the people of Nagasaki behind, in order to find my wife.

Natsuko Please, don't say that.

Yamada (*More calmly*) I remember medical students devoting all their energy to attend to those injured by the bomb, some of them fatally wounded themselves. I feel ashamed of myself.

Natsuko I was in Fukuoka, so only heard of it.

Yamada Of course, you have to live your own life.

Matsuo I am not entitled to work here.

Yamada Stop it. I was in town that morning, but.... I, as a doctor, was useless.

Natsuko That is wrong. You tried hard.

Natsuko Survivors try hard to live their lives, so should I.

I will not be defeated. Never.

Matsuo Survivors, always strong-minded, live for tomorrow, for future, with so much agony buried deep within their hearts.

Yamada Young people of Nagasaki, having embraced different cultures, enjoyed festivals, then moved on to new worlds. Out of this port, ambitiously. Looking up at the moon over the Hikosan mountain.

Three The Tamanoura bay has seen everything. Joy and Sorrow.

Matsuo (*To Yamada*) We seize the day situated in the history. I hear you had so much hardship, doc.

Yamada Mine is nothing, compared to the many who patiently overcame greater hardship. They lived everyday, quietly, only praying for their children and grand children.

Natsuko I lost my father to the bomb. Mother and I cremated his body in our backyard. It took 3 days to burn all his viscera.

Matsuo What....!

Yamada There were so many with similar experience.

Matsuo You...so much agony...though I knew you were there. How could I possibly face people with such sufferings? (*He turns to Yamada.*)

Natsuko We didn't even cry. Just watched my father's body burning...

Yamada We all have agony of our own, to live with. To overcome.

Natsuko We have agony to live with, to overcome.

Matsuo I know, I try to understand, but...

Yamada But what? Sympathy alone does nothing. They, we, all cope with so much sadness, so much pain. At least you know that. We all live under the same sky.

Natsuko Ah...

Beyond the window, the sun is seen setting.

Nurse It stopped raining. Let's get fresh air.
 (From the open windows, the voices of the playing children are heard.)

Children *(Singing a traditional game song)* If you can come out, you come out, but you cannot come out,
 then don't come out!

Yamada We make sure they won't go through what we have gone through.

Natsuko They are always together, playing like that...

Children If you come out, you come out,

Yamada gets up slowly from the bed, looking at the Nagasaki port out of the window.

Yamada Children said, "Atomic bomb is bad, painful. No more of it."
 "Painful, no more of it!"

Three Why, why such a tragedy. So many lives, children's lives lost, precious lives...

Yamada That morning, my wife and I parted on the hill, that was the last time I saw her.
 I kept searching for her, without attending to so many people lying on streets.
 Without fulfilling my duty, the bomb destroying everyone's dignity...
 I regret, but the regret does no good to me. I wanted you to know that.

He quietly lies down on the bed.

Matsuo Are you tired?

Yamada *(Shaking his head)* I guess I will finally see my wife again...

Matsuo / Natsuko Oh, don't say that.

Yamada I want you to live your lives as devoted medical professionals.

Matsuo You mean you could have done otherwise?

Natsuko I hear you tried to resuscitate those who were covered black with ashes, no hair left. God knows if they
 were men or women,

Matsuo I too know that you were trying to save people, holding tight their arteries cut open, from which blood
 was gushing out...

Yamada I couldn't do that much. I was just helpless on that hot day. When reborn, I want to be a doctor, a real
 doctor.

Act II

August 9, 1945, 11:02 am; the atomic bomb was dropped a few moments ago.

Near the Anaguhōji temple.

Yamada is 40 years old, his wife, also a doctor, 36, Natsuko, 20. Matsuo, 25, was in Fukuoka studying to become a doctor.

Chorus Help! We cannot breathe! Too hot, too hot! Mother!
 Help! Water, I need water. I am too hot!
 Something like the sun exploded. Look at our skin burning, melting away.... Water! Water! We all are
 going to die? I cannot see! Cannot see my legs that don't move! What did we do wrong? Why such pain,
 cruelty? Why? We need to drink water! Water...!

Yamada, who was exposed to the radiation on his business trip to a hospital in Nagasaki, is on his way back to his own hospital with his doctor wife.

Yamada Hey, don't drink water!

Wife Drinking water makes you suffer and die!

Yamada Don't drink! Terrible, horrible. Is it what a hell looks like?

Wife I haven't see anything like this. What can we do?

Yamada Don't know. It is beyond our knowledge! A flash of purple light, and they all now burn to ashes.
 There is no one around to save...

Nobuo runs out with something in his arms that looks like part of a Christ statue.

Nobuo I just picked up one leg of our Lord...Something must be done.

Wife No time wasted on that! And what is that anyway...?

Yamada No, I cannot let it go...

Wife You got terrible burns...Can you walk?

Nobuo No I cannot at all.

Yamada There is nothing to be done here. We have to find survivors and bring them somewhere safer.
 But what can we do! Hospitals, the town, disappeared instantly!

Wife You yourself are badly injured.

Yamada You too. Don't worry about me. Take him somewhere safer.

Wife Yes, but where?
 Yamada Maybe on the other side of the mountain...
 Wife I see.
 Nobuo Water. I need water.
 Wife Hold me tight. Let's go. Leave that here, I know it is important but...
 Nobuo No, no...
 Yamada What a non-sense! Go somewhere safer!

Nobuo weeps.

Wife Your life and the statue, which is more important?

She drags him away.

Yamada See you later, Toshi.
 Wife Yes, you take care too.
 Yamada I cannot do anything by myself. I need help, but Uragami, with its hospitals gone, is beyond salvation. What should I do? What happened here? Damage is too grave...

He bumps into Osaki rushing in.

Yamada You ok?
 Osaki The roofs were blown away! I got burns, but my kids are at home waiting for me. I need to get them!
 Yamada Be careful.

Yamada exits. Nanako, injured in the legs, rushes in.

Nanako Mother! Mother! I...

She grabs Osaki, holding her tight. Osaki tries to free herself, to run home.

Osaki I am not your mother. Let me go! Hey!
 Nanako Our house burnt down. My family is all dead. Help me, please?
 Osaki There is nowhere to run to. Stay here. Someone will help you.
 Nanako No, no, I will be killed here. Take me, please, away from here.
 Osaki (*Embracing Nanako*) Sorry, my kids are waiting for me. I know it is very hard for you. Me too. Please take care of yourself. It is due all to the war! We will meet again soon. Be good. Be careful.
 Chorus Ugh...so much pain, so much. It is due all to the war!

Osaki leaves as if running away.

Nanako What happens to them all? They were all nice people but now...
 What can I do? Please, my Lord, tell me.

Takeo, his clothes torn to pieces, struggling to get up from the crowd, comes to Nanako.

Takeo How have you survived? Have water?
 Nanako I was in the dugout. (*Passing a flask to him*) Do you want this?
 Takeo (*Snatching it away*) Thank you. Are you with someone?
 Nanako They are all dead. Out of the dugout, I saw them all black and dead. Those who had survived eventually died. Nothing was left at home. My family is all dead.
 Takeo What now, then?
 Nanako Don't know. What should I do?
 Takeo I saw Americans dropping a big bomb. I was watching parachutes, counting them. One, two, three... then something flashed tremendously. I don't remember anything afterward.
 Nanako (*Weeping*) My family is dead...
 Takeo Well, you will meet your ma again in the heaven.
 Nanako In the heaven? That is too far.
 Takeo Don't need to hurry. You will see her.
 Water...Can you give me more water?
 Nanako Please...

Nanako gives the flask to Takeo, who gulps it down, then collapses.

Takeo Thank you. Live, live well...
 Nanako Sir, you will die too? No, no, he is dead! Because of the water?
 Did I kill him with the water? No, no, why...

Wife Yes, but where?
 Yamada Maybe on the other side of the mountain...
 Wife I see.
 Nobuo Water. I need water.
 Wife Hold me tight. Let's go. Leave that here, I know it is important but...
 Nobuo No, no...
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 Did I kill him with the water? No, no, why...

Tourist 1 Bravo! So nice to hear *Madama Butterfly*!

Tourist 2 You don't know anything about it.

Tourist 1 It is from *Madama Butterfly*, I know.

Tourist 2 You know what the opera is about?

Tourist 1 Well...

Matsuo This opera depicts the tragedy of a Nagasaki girl with beautiful music.

Tourist Oh...

Tourist 2 Excuse us. We shall go.

Matsuo Enjoy yourselves in Nagasaki.

Natsuko hums a tune from Madama Butterfly.

Matsuo Such a wonderful opera. Nagasaki women must be very passionate.

Natsuko Its Japanese premiere was given in Dejima, though in the Dutch translation.

Matsuo You know so much.

Natsuko So many people come here on Sunday.

Matsuo Thanks to Nagasaki people, the city is back on its feet again.

Natsuko Nagasaki seems full of hopes. I love this city.

Former inpatients find the two and run toward them.

Kouji You too are here? Every year, we lose our friends, one by one.

Tome Ms. Natsuko, how are you?

Natsuko You look good, Tome.

Tome Doc, how truly awful the atomic bomb was. We are still suffering...

Natsuko Let's stop there. We now need to work hard for a world without wars.

Matsuo Yes, it is our duty to tell of the atomic bomb, its reality.

Kouji Yes, that is the duty of us survivors. For the sake of the deceased.

Our world is one, our universe is one round life, no more wars.

Tome No more wars.

Kouji/Tome We need to cover this world with flowers of peace and tell all we should not lose our lives to wars.

Natsuko Yes, this tragedy should not repeat. We must work hard toward a world without wars. Together.

Tome But there is so little we could do. Who would give us a hand?

Kouji Am not sure, but we just need to speak on.

Matsuo Yes, our universe is one round life. You survivors need to speak on. We count on you.

Natsuko You should go before tiring yourselves.

Matsuo Look at those first evening stars. Already shining.

Kouji So long, doc.

Tome Miss Natsuko...

Natsuko Take care.

Kouji/Tome Yes.

Matsuo (*Looking at them leaving*) Dr. Yamada devoted himself to treating them. Great man. He himself was ill, his life complicated by the war, yet cared a lot for other people. I would have run off for my beloved, have done anything for my beloved.

Natsuko Dr. Yamada struggled between ideal and reality. Difficult problem.

Matsuo He suffered and struggled, but never made excuses.

Natsuko No.

Matsuo Not like myself. What a great man he was.

Natsuko Doc, there is a beautiful duet in *Madama Butterfly*.

Matsuo Well, Puccini didn't even imagine a world with atomic bombs. Just composed for the joy of life.

Natsuko A song of love.

Matsuo Yes, perfect song for our evening.

Natsuko "Quietly, the darkness embraces us."

Matsuo "Us alone."

Natsuko All my relatives renounced me, but I am happy.

Matsuo "Evening is falling..."

Natsuko "With shadows, quietly..."

Matsuo "You are here alone..."

Natsuko "Renounced and alone but I am happy..."

Beautiful. I am so happy.

Matsuo So am I. The Japan now is the fruit of so many people's endeavor.

Well, Miss Natsuko, we always talk half way through our marriage. Why is that?

Natsuko Yes, no...I... I have so much respect for you.

Matsuo Then, what is your answer?

Natsuko Doc, thank you!

Natsuko is about to leave.

Natsuko (*To herself*) Should I tell him? (*To him*) Good-bye.

Matsuo Miss Natsuko...

Natsuko turns around, to face Matsuo

Natsuko Kunio, I am a Hibakusha².
Matsuo Yes, I know you are, but what is the matter with that?
Natsuko I cannot make you happy.
Matsuo What a non-sense. No one knows when our lives fade away.
Natsuko Thank you...When we cremated my father's body, I could not cry. Mother lived hard.
 When our mother died of radiation-caused cancer, I cried and cried for the first time.
 Thinking of how precious, how fragile humans are, I cried out until the moment her life expired.
 I want to marry you, but I cannot bear the thought of you crying over my death.

Natsuko runs off. Matsuo, trying to follow, stops.

Matsuo I know everything about you. That you were exposed to the radiation. But I love you. To live. To let ourselves live. The tears of Nagasaki people are too heavy for me. Why do you run away from me? Why can't you trust me?

There is sudden commotion at the entrance.

Matsuo What happened? Another person dying? I cannot bear the reality.

He is about to go when bumping into Kouji.

Kouji Doc, come! Miss Natsuko has just...
Matsuo What happened to her?
Kouji *(Crying and barely able to talk)* She collapsed and the ambulance has just...
Matsuo No! Is she Ok?
Kouji I think so. Come, quickly! Quick! Quick!

Matsuo and Kōuji exit.

The gauze curtain is lowered.

Act III, scene 2

In the hospital yard (in front of the gauze curtain), Matsuo and Iwamura are walking.

Iwamura Doctor, Natsuko asked me not to tell you anything about it. Never.
Matsuo Dr. Iwamura, I knew it, but is her condition that bad?
Iwamura For a year, I have been treating Miss Natsuko, but she made me promise not to tell you about it.
Matsuo Why, why not me?
Iwamura You don't understand women's feelings. No women would want to show their keloid scars to their loved ones. I, too as a *Hibakusha*, gave up my love—someone so dear to me. Having survived the bomb, yet we women have let our happiness slip away.
 You have no idea how *really* dreadful the atomic bombs are.
 What is happiness? Agony as an act of love, love as an act of agony.
 We love the ocean, love flowers, yet all flee us except for grief and sorrow.
 Maybe it is all human life is about. We fight and fight on, but there stands
 a thick, tall wall in front of me.
 Please stop by later to check her medical records.

Matsuo is left alone on the stage.

Matsuo I am again a stranger to their agony. I could not see what is hidden below Natsuko's tears. But I will talk to her, talk her into a marriage.

Matsuo exits.

Act III, Scene 3

In Natsuko's hospital room.

Matsuo is visiting Natsuko.

Natsuko Mr. Kunio, excuse me...
Matsuo You are awake.
Natsuko How long have you been here?
Matsuo Natsuko, I know everything about you.
Natsuko Forgive me for not having told you about that.
Matsuo I wouldn't either, if I were you. How are you?
Natsuko Ok. Can you open the window?

² = "Hibakusha" is a word that denotes those who have been exposed to the radiation of the atomic bomb.

Matsuo opens the window; from outside a traditional Nagasaki festival song is heard.

Natsuko I may not see that festival next year...
Matsuo You have to live long. I will support you.
Natsuko I love you, as a doctor and as a man, but it needs to be over.
Matsuo You cannot give up. Your words carry so much weight because you yourself have gone through a lot.
We need to tell the world this tragedy, we do...
I will be with you.
Natsuko Mr. Kunio. Time goes by no matter how sorrowful and resentful we are.
Yet we all know that it is no use to cry over spilt milk. We, born and growing up in Nagasaki, need to
look to the future, to try to live well.
Matsuo What the radiation could do to us humans!
Natsuko, I want to marry you.
Natsuko We never know when my life will expire but that is all right with you...
Matsuo You are alive this moment. That is you. We are together until the very last moment.

Natsuko nods. The tolling bells are heard.

Natsuko Do you know this song?
"We should not repeat the sorrow of the children in Nagasaki
Who cried over the body of the dead mothers, under the mushroom cloud.
No more artillery sound, no more.
And may the sun shine over the children all over the world.
Always and ever."
Matsuo Of course. "May the sun shine, always and ever."
We need to make the world hear it.
Natsuko I know.
I see light. In the darkness, light is approaching toward me.
Happiness...

The deceased, including Nanako, are seen like phantoms. With Nanako singing, Natsuko and Matsuo join in.

Natsuko "We should not repeat the sorrow of the children in Nagasaki
Who cried over the body of the dead mother, under the mushroom cloud."
Nana, you too passed away contrary to what I gathered?
You, lonesome girl, poor girl.
"No more artillery sound, no more.
And may the sun shine over the children all over the world. Always and ever."
Nana, I, with Kunio, try to live well.
Try very hard, to live well.
Matsuo Japan shall someday lead the world into peace.
Nanako When azalea flowers blossom, I will see you again.
When azalea flowers blossom, you two will be happy.
When azalea flowers blossom, happiness visits us all.

Natsuko and Matsuo are seen walking among the deceased, peacefully:

"In 1959, Natsuko married Matsuo and in the following year, she passed away."

As the bells of the churches and temples toll, the prayer of a monk is heard.

Curtain

*The word *Inochi* in the title means "life" in Japanese. We have retained the original Japanese title in the hope of turning it into a global term.