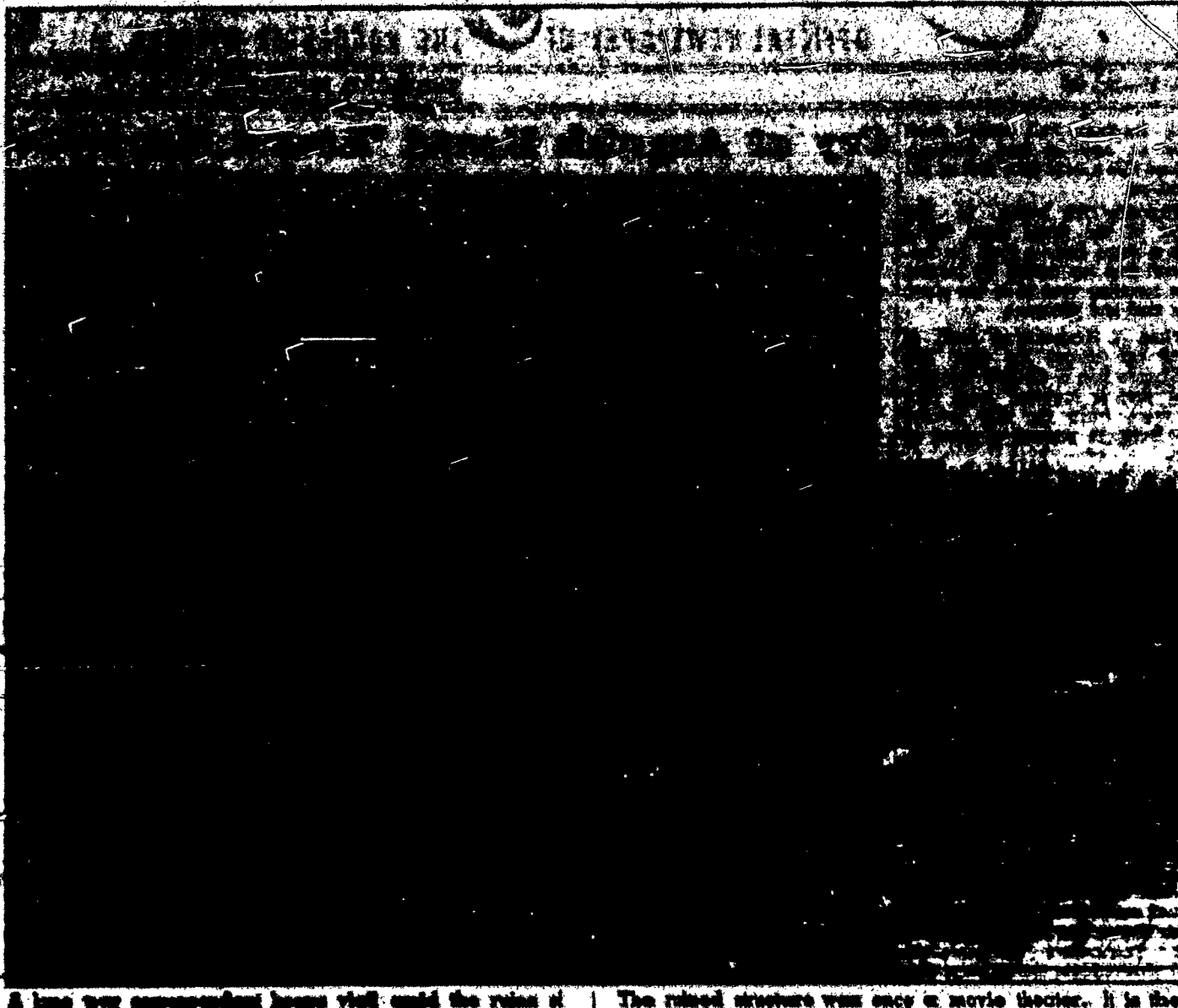


# Heroic Role of Jesuits at Hiroshima Vividly Described

## A Deserted City—After the Bomb Fell



A lone tree surrounded by ruins still stands the ruins of a once-bombarded Hiroshima several weeks after the blast.

The ruined structure was once a movie theater. It is the only structure still standing. (AP Wirephoto).

The turbulent tower of dust, heat and falling fragments that had already risen miles into the sky above Hiroshima.

Mr. Tanimoto turned away from the sight when he heard Mr. Matsuo call out to ask whether he was all right. Mr. Matsuo had been wily cautioner, while the falling bomb by the heading cleared in the front and had worried his way out. Mr. Tanimoto presently called. He had thought of his wife and baby, his Church, his school, his possessions, all of them down in three awful hours. One must be brave to run in fear—toward the city.

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and an old pair of gray trousers. He put them on and went outside.

A woman from next door ran up to him and shouted that her husband was buried under her house and the house was on fire; Father Kleinsorge must come and save him.

Father Kleinsorge, already growing apathetic and dazed in the presence of the cumulative distress, said, "We haven't much time." Houses all around were burning, and the wind was now blowing hard. "Do you know exactly which part of the house he is under?" he asked.

"Yes, yes," she said. "Come quickly."

They went around to the house, the remains of which blazed violently, but when they got there, it turned out that the woman had no idea where her husband was. Father Kleinsorge shouted several times, "Is anyone there?" There was no answer. Father Kleinsorge said to the woman, "We must get away or we will all die."

He went back to the Catholic compound and told the Father Superior that the fire was coming closer on the wind which had swung around and was now from the north; it was time for everybody to go.

Just then, the kindergarten teacher pointed out to the priests Mr. Fukui, the secretary of the diocese, who was standing in his window on the second floor of the mission house, facing in the direction of the explosion, weeping.

Father Kleinsorge, because he thought the stairs unsafe, ran around to the back of the mission house to look for a ladder. There he heard people crying for help under a nearby fallen roof. He called to passersby running away in the street to help him lift it, but nobody paid any attention, and he had to leave the buried ones to die.

Father Kleinsorge ran inside the mission house and scrambled up the stairs, which were awry and piled with plaster and falling debris, and called to Mr. Fukui from the doorway of his room. Mr. Fukui, a very short man of about fifty, turned around slowly, with a queer look and said, "Leave me here."

Father Kleinsorge went into the room and took Mr. Fukui by the collar of his coat and said, "Come with me or you'll die."

Mr. Fukui said, "Leave me here to die."

Father Kleinsorge began to shove and haul Mr. Fukui out of the room. Then the theological student came up and grabbed Mr. Fukui's feet, and Father Kleinsorge took his shoulders and together they carried him downstairs and outdoors. "I can't walk," Mr. Fukui cried. "Leave me here!"

Father Kleinsorge got his paper suitcase with the money in it and took Mr. Fukui up pickaback, and the party started for the East Parade Ground, their district's "safe area."

As they went out of the gate, Mr. Fukui, childlike now, began to cry. "I don't want to leave. I won't leave," he sobbed. Father Kleinsorge turned to Father LaSalle and said, "We have lost all our possessions but not our sense of humor."

The street was cluttered with debris of houses that had slid into it, and with fallen telephone poles and wires. From every second or third house came the voices of people buried and abandoned, who invariably screamed, with formal politeness, "Tasukete kure! Help, if you please!"

The priests recognized several ruins from which these cries came as the homes of friends, but because of the fire it was too late to help.

All the way Mr. Fukui whimpered, "Let me stay." The party turned right when they came to a block of fallen houses that was one flame.

At Sakai Bridge, which would take them across to the East Parade Ground, they saw that the whole community on the opposite side of the river was a sheet of fire; they dared not cross and decided to take refuge in Asano Park, off to their left.

Father Kleinsorge, who had been weakened for a couple of days by his bad case of diarrhea, began to stagger under his protesting burden, and as he tried to climb up over the wreckage of several houses that blocked their way to the park, he stumbled, dropped Mr. Fukui, and plunged down head over heels to the edge of the river.

When he picked himself up, he saw Mr. Fukui running away. Father Kleinsorge shouted to a dozen soldiers, who were standing by the bridge, to stop him. As Father Kleinsorge started back to get Mr. Fukui, Father LaSalle called out, "Hurry! Don't waste time!"

So Father Kleinsorge just requested the soldiers to take care of Mr. Fukui. They said the man would, but the little, broken man got away from them, and the last the priests could see of him, he was running back toward the fire.

Mr. Tanimoto, fearful for his family and church, at first ran toward them by the shortest route, along Koi Highway. He was the only person seeking his

way into the city; he met hundreds and hundreds who were fleeing, and every one of them seemed to be hurt in some way. The eyebrows of some were burned off and skin hung from their faces and hands. Others, because of pain, held their arms up as if carrying something in both hands. Some were vomiting as they walked.

Many were naked or in shreds of clothing. On some undressed bodies, the burns had made pasterns—of underwear straps and suspenders and, on the skin of some women (since white repelled the heat from the bomb and dark clothes absorbed it and conducted it to the skin); the shapes of flowers they had had on their kimonos.

Many, although injured themselves, supported relatives who were worn out. Almost all had their heads bowed, looked straight ahead, were silent, and showed no expression whatever.

After crossing Koi Bridge and Kannon Bridge, having run the whole way, Mr. Tanimoto saw, as he approached the center, that all the houses had been crushed and many were afire.

Here the trees were bare and their trunks were charred. He tried at several points to penetrate the ruins, but the flames always stopped him.

Under many houses, people screamed for help, but no one helped. In general, survivors that day assisted only their relatives or immediate neighbors, for they could not comprehend or tolerate a wider circle of misery.

The wounded limped past the screams, and Mr. Tanimoto ran past them. As a Christian he was filled with compassion for those who were trapped, and as a Japanese he was overwhelmed by the shame of being unhurt, and he prayed as he ran, "God help them and take them out of the fire."

He thought he would skirt the fire to the left. He ran back to Kannon Bridge and followed for a distance one of the rivers. He cried several cross streets, but all were blocked, so he turned, far left, and ran out to Yokogawa, a station on a railroad line that detoured the city in a wide semicircle, and he followed the rails until he came to a burning ruin.

So impressed was he by this time by the extent of the damage that he ran north two miles to Gion, a suburb in the foothills. All the way, he overtook dreadfully-burned and mangled people, and in his guilt he turned to right and left as he hurried and said to some of them, "Excuse me for having no burden like yours."

Near Gion, he began to meet country people going toward the city to help, and when they saw him, several exclaimed, "Look! There is one who is not wounded."

At Gion, he bore toward the right bank of the main river, the Ota, and ran down it until he reached fire again. There was no fire on the other side of the river, so he threw off his shirt and shoes and plunged into it. In midstream, where the current was fairly strong, exhaustion and fear snailly caught up with him—he had run nearly seven miles—and he became limp and drifted in the water.

He prayed, "Please, God, help me to cross. It would be nonsense for me to be drowned when I am the only uninjured one." He managed a few more strokes and fetched up on a spit of driftwood.

Mr. Tanimoto climbed up the bank and ran along it until, near a large Shinto shrine, he came to more fire, and as he turned left to get around it, he met, by incredible luck, his wife. She was carrying their infant son.

Mr. Tanimoto was now so emotionally worn out that nothing could surprise him. He did not embrace his wife; he simply said, "Oh, you are safe." She told him that she had got home from her night in Ushida just in time for the explosion; she had been buried under the parsonage with the baby in her arms.

She told how the wreckage had pressed down on her, how the baby had cried. She saw a chunk of light, and by reaching up with a hand, she worked the hole bigger bit by bit.

After about half an hour, she heard the crackling noise of wood burning. At last the opening was big enough for her to push the baby out, and afterward she crawled out herself. She said she was now going out to Ushida again. Mr. Tanimoto said he wanted to see his church and take care of the people of his Neighborhood Association. They parted as casually—as bewildered—as they had met.

Mr. Tanimoto's way around the fire took him across the East Parade Ground, which, being an evacuation area, was now the scene of a gruesome review: rank on rank of the burned and bleeding. Those who were burned mangled, "Mizu, mizu! Water, water!"

Mr. Tanimoto found a basin in a nearby street and located a water tap that still worked in the crushed shell of a house, and he began carrying water to the suffering strangers. When he had given drink to about thirty

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