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Prison and the Pure Land: A Buddhist Chaplain in Occupied Japan

Melissa Anne-Marie Curley¹

Abstract

In November 1945, the United States military took over the use of Tokyo's Sugamo Prison in order to house those charged by the Allied Powers with war crimes. For close to three years, Hanayama Shinshō served as the prison's volunteer Buddhist chaplain, attending thirty-six executions. Hanayama did not protest the imposition of the death penalty but this essay argues that in his work as chaplain he nonetheless resisted the carceral logic shaping life and death inside Sugamo by mobilizing the ritual and narrative repertoire of Pure Land Buddhism. In Hanayama's framing, Sugamo was a site of liberation as well as confinement, affording the condemned a unique oppor-

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tunity to reflect upon the past and commit themselves to a different future, even in death. As Hanayama tells it, the peace discovered by the dead was an absolute peace, transcending politics; he also insists, however, on a connection between this absolute peace and the ordinary peace that the living might hope to secure. The article concludes with a consideration of the political and ethical implications of Hanayama's reading of the dead as having "found peace" in light of larger conversations about how best to remember—or forget—the nation's dark past, and what it means to share responsibility for crimes against humanity.

Introduction

The Sunshine 60 building, at the heart of Tokyo's Sunshine City commercial complex, once had the distinction of being the tallest skyscraper in Asia; it still boasts one of Asia's fastest elevators, whisking visitors from the shops on the tower's ground floors to the sixtieth floor observation deck. Tucked away in a park behind the tower is a stone engraved with the message "Pray for eternal peace" (*Eikyū heiwa o negatte*). This stone marks the history that the name "Sunshine City" obscures: the shopping mall was built on what had been the site of Sugamo Prison. In the years before and during the war, Sugamo was famous for housing Japanese political prisoners, those charged by the Japanese government with violating the rules governing the press, the Libel Law, and the Peace Preservation Law. In the years following Japan's surrender, the American military

used it to hold Japanese war criminals.² The high-profile military and political leaders sentenced to death at the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal were executed on the grounds of Sugamo at midnight, December 23, 1948.³

From early 1946 through the end of 1948, Hanayama Shinshō served as Sugamo's volunteer Buddhist chaplain. In 1949, Hanayama published a book about this period in his life, entitled *Finding Peace: Records of Life and Death in Sugamo* (*Heiwa no hakken: Sugamo no sei to shi no kiroku*). Neither quite a memoir nor a conventional piece of journalism, *Finding Peace* includes Hanayama's recollections of his first months in the prison; transcriptions of letters, poetry, and diary entries written by the prisoners themselves; detailed accounts of his conversations with the seven high profile prisoners executed on December 23; records of his final interviews with these seven men; and a sketch of events as they unfolded the night of the executions.⁴

² The irony of this repurposing was not lost on those who were imprisoned there after the war, who joked amongst themselves about how fortunate it was "that we built such a splendid prison" (Hanayama 48).

³ Six of these seven were indicted for crimes against peace (categorized as "Class A" crimes) in addition to crimes against humanity ("Class B") and war crimes ("Class C"); the seventh, Iwane Matsui, was indicted for Class B and Class C crimes. Others indicted as Class B/C criminals were also executed at Sugamo. John L. Ginn, who was stationed at Sugamo from early 1948 through 1950, writes that between 1946 and 1950, 52 death sentences were carried out at Sugamo and one off-site at Camp Drake; Bill Barrette, drawing on papers compiled by Lieutenant Colonel Lee Vincent, prison security officer at Sugamo, gives the total number as 63 (Ginn 192–93; Barrette). Hanayama was present for 34 executions (Hanayama 15).

⁴ An English translation by Hideo Suzuki, Eiichi Noda, James K. Sasaki, and Harrison Collins appeared in 1950, under the title *The Way of Deliverance: Three Years with the Condemned Japanese War Criminals*. As the two titles might suggest, the English version of the book is somewhat different from the Japanese, with the translators seemingly closely attuned to the concerns of the Christian reader. The translations of Hanayama in this essay are my own.

Hanayama was an unconventional choice for chaplain. Jōdo Shinshū institutions had for decades been training and posting chaplains to Japanese prisons, but Hanayama was not part of this professional network; although he was a Shin priest, he made his living as a scholar, holding a full-time appointment as a faculty member in Buddhist Studies at Tokyo Imperial University.⁵ His attitude toward the executions was also perhaps not what a contemporary reader might expect: although in *Finding Peace* he occasionally alludes to public protests against the imposition of the death penalty and notes that he himself signed a petition requesting a stay of execution, he never rallies against the executions in the name of non-violence.⁶ On the contrary, he asserts that the executions might serve the cause of non-violence: if those who are to be executed “feel responsible for having led the world into war and wasting the lives of many innocent people,” they should die willingly for the sake of peace, “resolutely casting off their own finite bodies and finite lives” (23). Even as he makes this assertion, however, he positions himself on the

⁵ Adam Lyons remarks that Hanayama’s appointment at Sugamo represents a kind of turning point in the history of Japanese prison chaplaincy, marking the end of an era of compulsory service and the beginning of an era of voluntary service (3).

⁶ Capital punishment is still practiced in Japan. Ugo Dessì notes that, as of 2010, 56% of lay Shinshū followers and just 41.6% of ordained Shinshū priests considered the death penalty justifiable, as compared to 81.4% of the general Japanese population; these data, he suggests, “confirm the importance of the idea of nonviolence for the overall Shin Buddhist community, even when a delicate issue such as the death penalty, which generally encounters little criticism among the general public, is at stake” (Dessì 361–62). The Shinshū Honganji-ha, the denomination to which Hanayama belonged, has officially declared that it supports abolishing capital punishment and scholars Ishizuka Shinichi and Hamai Koichi of Honganji-ha’s Ryūkoku University are leading scholarly voices in the debate around abolition (<http://www.higashihonganji.or.jp/news/declaration/13526/>). For a Buddhist argument against capital punishment, see Martin Kovan, “Capital Punishment: a Buddhist Critique” (2017).

side of the prisoners, casting himself as a “voluntary captive” (*shiganshū*) of Sugamo (24).

This article explores the ways that Hanayama draws upon the Pure Land Buddhist repertoire in order to frame the prison—the site of captivity—as a site of liberation, and to transform the executions into voluntary deaths. I suggest that Hanayama’s efforts on this front represent a form of resistance to the carceral logic that underlies the executions, even though they do not prevent the executions from being carried out. I try to make the case that although Hanayama does not save anyone’s life, his work with the condemned prisoners is nonetheless expressive of a compassionate wish that the dead might be liberated from the cycle of *samsara*. For Hanayama, the possibility of achieving this kind of liberation in death does not depend upon one’s having been a good or virtuous person in life; he can thus evade reckoning with the central question of whether or not the condemned “deserve” liberation, and is not drawn into a larger, more radical critique of the nation-state. I argue, however, that insofar as Hanayama draws a connection between the absolute peace that the condemned discover in death and the political peace that the living are charged with making a reality, his work represents a concerted engagement with the ethical question of war responsibility.

Clean and Bright: Hanayama’s Vision of Prison as Pure Land

Buddhists have long entertained contradictory images of confinement. On the one hand, *samsara* is imagined as a snare or a trap, and hell as a prison below the earth (*jigoku*) in which the punishments demanded by the law of karma are meted out, set in contrast to the liberation of *nirvana*. On the other hand, practices of cloistering and reclusion are valued: in images like those of Bodhidharma’s nine years spent in silence

facing a cave wall and Kamo no Chōmei's ten-foot hut hidden in the mountains, voluntary self-confinement seems to be synonymous with liberation. In the Pure Land tradition, the images of the prison and the cloister specifically overlap. The *Contemplation Sutra* opens with Prince Ajātaśatru having locked his mother, Queen Vaidehī, inside the palace's inner chambers; when Śākyamuni hears her cries, he manifests inside her cell, whereupon she demands an accounting of the karmic causes and conditions that have given rise to her miserable circumstances and the revelation of "a land of no sorrow and no affliction where I can be reborn" (Inagaki 67). Śākyamuni instructs her in the contemplation of Amida Buddha and his Western Paradise; having visualized the Buddha and his land, Vaidehī attains "great awakening with clarity of mind and insight into the non-arising of all *dharma*s" (86), circumventing karma and securing her liberation. The promise of the *Contemplation Sutra* is that diligent practitioners will be able to achieve the same thing: by visualizing the Pure Land, all the karma that would otherwise bind them in an endless cycle of birth and death is overcome (74-75); by visualizing Amida, their own minds become the Buddha's mind (74) and their future buddhahood is guaranteed (76). Thus, the sutra tells us, "all who are mindful of that buddha are like white lotus flowers among humankind. . . . They will sit in the seat of enlightenment and be born into the family of the buddhas" (86). By developing eyes that can discern the Pure Land in the midst of samsara, a space of confinement becomes the site of liberation.

The Pure Land sutras also suggest another location where one might productively rehearse this transformation of confinement into liberation: the deathbed. Under ordinary circumstances, the deathbed is the site in which the law of karma is enforced—it is at death that one reaps the reward of a good rebirth or the punishment of a bad one. But the *Contemplation Sutra* tells us that the deathbed can instead be a site of clemency: however evil or immoral, "when he is about to die," a fool des-

tined for hell might meet a good friend (*kalyāṇamitra*, *zenchishiki*) “who consoles him in various ways, teaching him the wonderful Dharma and urging him to be mindful of the Buddha”; if the dying lack the concentration for contemplation, they can at least call the Buddha’s name; “with each repetition, the evil karma that would bind [them] to birth and death. . . is extinguished,” so that they too will be reborn in Amida’s Pure Land (85).

In premodern Japan, this possibility informs the understanding of the deathbed as a world unto itself—a “realm of unique liberative potential, radically discontinuous with society’s values [and] ordinary moral codes” (Stone, “Power,” 94–95). In order to take advantage of this possibility, the deathbed is sometimes constructed as a model Pure Land; attendants, called “good friends” (*zenchishiki*), are tasked with seeing to the cleanliness of the space, the comfort of the dying person, and the uninterrupted recitation of Amida’s name (Stone, “Secret” 152–156). In principle, Jōdo Shinshū preserves the notion of the *zenchishiki* as the good teacher through whom one encounters the Pure Land teachings, but dispenses with funeral attendants and deathbed rites, in keeping with the founder Shinran’s assertion that “At the time *shinjin* [faith] becomes settled, birth too becomes settled; there is no need for the deathbed rites that prepare one for Amida’s coming” (Hirota 161; see also Stone, “Friends” 82). In practice, like other Japanese Buddhist sects, Shinshū develops a complex set of mortuary rites that draw upon this understanding of death as a moment of special possibility (Blum; Tanabe 338–340).

Hanayama mobilizes this imaginary in presenting Sugamo—a site of both imprisonment and death—as like the Pure Land. His readers, he says, probably assume that the prison is a miserable, unhappy place, but this is not the case: far from being dark (*ankoku*) and gloomy (*insan*), it is brighter (*akarui*) than one could possibly imagine (Hanayama 163). In-

deed, if one were to compare it to Japan's own prisoner of war camps, one would surely call it "a window into heaven" (*tengoku no mado*) (163). The defining feature of the prison is its cleanliness (*seiketsu*): under American administration, "there is not a speck of dust in the hallways, on the window sills, or in the restrooms, and the brass doorknobs shine like gold" (163–164). It is astonishing, Hanayama writes, "that a prison should give one such a clean feeling" (164).

This material cleanliness is explicitly linked to the moral virtue of the people running it. On one occasion, Hanayama recalls, he noticed the prison's Catholic chaplain, John Ryan, taking care to tuck a bit of paper left over from a cigarette in his pocket rather than dropping it on the ground, so as not to trouble the enlisted men with picking up his trash (164–165). The cleanliness of Sugamo, Hanayama explains, should be understood as the effect of many such small instances of conscientiousness, or what he calls an ongoing "accumulation of finely tuned public morals (*komakai kōshū dōtoku*)" (165). He sees the same kind of conscientiousness at work in the way the Americans treat the prisoners:

Once, when a certain condemned prisoner was walking to the gallows, he took off his wooden sandals and put on a pair of shoes. . . . Of course, he had on shackles, so the G.I. who was with him sat him down in a chair to tie one of his shoes for him; as I looked on, one of the officers stepped forward and tied the other shoe. There were five or six other G.I.s there, of course, but that didn't trouble the officer at all. And there was another time when, at the gallows, an officer cut a prisoner's hair himself, using a pair of clippers. These are little things, but I admired their unpretentious attitude and their strong, sincere sense of responsibility—if there was something they were responsible for doing, they did it. . . . I see now that this was the

invisible foundation of the orderliness and brightness of
life at Sugamo. (166–167)

What the chaplain, the soldier, and the officers here all have in common is a self-effacing inattention to hierarchy.⁷ The gestures Hanayama describes cannot be rooted merely in a sense of duty, for it is surely not an officer's duty to tie a prisoner's shoe; rather, they seem to Hanayama to reflect an uncalculating sense of responsibility for others. These efforts to ensure that the prison is clean and the prisoners are comfortable matter insofar as they ultimately serve to create the conditions in which a good death is possible. By drawing our attention to the moments in which the Americans take care of the prison and its prisoners, especially in the moments before death, Hanayama casts them in the role not of captors but of deathbed attendants, or good friends.

The condemned, meanwhile, are cast as practitioners whose diligence and concentration becomes exceptionally intense in the face of imminent death. When he first started to offer services at Sugamo, he writes, the prisoners came half-dressed and listened halfheartedly, but as time passed, he saw that they had begun dressing as formally as they could, putting on heavy winter uniforms and morning jackets in the heat of summer:

⁷ Bending down to tie the prisoner's shoes has special significance in a context in which social hierarchies can be given concrete expression in terms of relative height. Hanayama gives us an indication of this early in *Finding Peace* when he describes an embarrassing incident that occurred during his first weeks at Sugamo—as he tells it, he happened to be standing in the pulpit of the prison's chapel room when the prison's commanding officer, Colonel Hardy, entered the room to introduce himself; when Hardy offered his hand to Hanayama, “there was no way around it—from the higher position, I extended my hand to the high-ranking officer standing on the floor. I was embarrassed but it all happened so fast; there was no way to prevent it” (9).

I could see very well the drops of sweat streaming down their faces. But they did not lift their fans, nor wipe their faces with their handkerchiefs. . . . I too, drawn along (*hikizurarete*) by their commitment, continued to deliver my sermon, sweat pouring down my face, not wiping it off. From that point, I made the following resolution: in the university, there are summer vacations, winter vacations, Sundays off, holidays off. But faced with death, there is absolutely no such leisure. . . . So I decided I would take no vacation from Sugamo either. (13)

Notice that here, Hanayama is not presenting himself as the virtuous chaplain who turns bad into good. Rather, he describes the prisoners as naturally motivated by their circumstances, and his own efforts as a sympathetic response to the efforts of the prisoners: his body falls into alignment with their bodies (sweat pouring down their faces); his schedule falls into alignment with their schedules (no leisure, no vacation); and his level of commitment falls into alignment with their own. Just as the accumulation of small gestures works to clean up the space of the prison, the accumulation of small gestures works to purify the persons living within that space. Without requiring a heroic moral exemplar to exert his will upon others, everyone becomes good together. That this occurs within the walls of the prison is evidence that Sugamo is working as a model Pure Land: in other words, it is working to liberate its prisoners. We can therefore expect the deaths that take place in Sugamo to be good deaths—deaths that lead to liberation from the repetitive cycle of *samsara*.

Attending to the Dead: Hanayama as Ritual Specialist

Although Hanayama asks the reader to consider the compassionate gestures of the American military even in the shadow of the gallows, he remains aware of the prison's basic function as, in Maeda Ai's terms, "a device for quarantine and punishment" (22). He emphasizes the respect that the Americans show to the bodies of the dead—looking in a casket, he notes that the body inside has been "wrapped head to foot in beautiful pure white cotton" (Hanayama 70); watching the GIs after an execution, he remarks that they seemed to be quietly praying for the deceased and that when they carried the body, they carried it carefully (142). But he also records the ways in which the prison subjects the dead and dying to dehumanizing exposure. One of the prisoners awaiting execution remarks that a hundred-watt bulb is kept burning in his cell day and night, to the point that it might well cause a nervous breakdown (*shinkei suijaku*) (309); bidding farewell to men being marched to the gallows, Hanayama notes that "in the courtyard, electric lights shone like a baseball field at night" (104); in attendance at the execution off-site—carried out not by hanging but by firing squad—he tells us that "the wide rifle range was illuminated by electric lights that shone bright as day"; afterward, the dead man's face is covered by a black hood but when Hanayama looks at the man's body, he sees on his white shirt "two vivid red spots of blood right above his heart—they were clearly illuminated in the strong electric light" (141). There is a sharp contrast between the brightness of Sugamo's shining brass doorknobs and gleaming hallways and this electric light that turns night into day. The latter is not simply associated with violence but seems indeed to do violence by exposing too much.

Finding Peace closes with Hanayama registering a public objection to such exposure, recalling that at the press conference following the executions of the seven high profile prisoners, "one of the foreign correspondents hounded me relentlessly as to the expressions on the faces of

the dead as they lay in their caskets. Without intending to, I rebuked him fiercely. . . . I was just so exhausted” (331). The struggle between concealing and revealing the corpse, I would suggest, represents a struggle over the humanity of the prisoners. Treating a dead body with respect—as something important—is in one sense to assert that it retains its human character. Philosopher Keta Masako suggests that we understand the impulse to conceal the corpse as an attempt to deny the reifying effects of death, making it possible to “continue to hold a place for the corpse within the world of the living” (Keta 223). This matters in a context in which the relation of the prison to the world of the living is in question. By describing the efforts the Americans make to conceal the bodies of the dead, Hanayama seems to mitigate some of the violence of the executions, implying that the Americans recognize the humanity of the dead, and so necessarily recognize also the humanity of their living prisoners and, by extension, of the Japanese living under occupation. But by acknowledging the ways in which the bodies of the dead are exposed within Sugamo, he acknowledges the basic fact of the prison as a dehumanizing place that works to isolate the prisoners, living and dead, from the human world. In his role as ritual specialist, Hanayama also actively attempts to mitigate some of this violence, suturing together the worlds inside and outside the prison.

Early in *Finding Peace*, Hanayama recalls preparing the body of prisoner Nakasai Matsujirō for cremation.⁸ It was winter and the deep snow made transporting the body impossible, so he was to be cremated on site. Nakasai’s father asked Hanayama to first cut his son’s hair and nails:

⁸ Nakasai was not executed; he died in prison of illness before his sentence had been handed down.

I cut the toenails of both feet. Holding those feet, colder than ice, in my hands, I cut his ten toenails. Even now I remember the powerful feeling (*kangai*) of those feet in my hands in that ice cold room—it's hard to forget, of course. This was a new experience (*taiken*) for me, and it guided me toward a feeling of religious gratitude (*shūkyōteki kansha*). (16)

Hanayama's description here invokes two bodies—Nakasai's and his own. Hanayama's body absorbs the coldness of the room and his hands absorb the coldness of Nakasai's icy feet; he registers this coldness in terms of both sensation and emotion. And by a kind of alchemy, he turns it into the warmth of gratitude. The hair and nails he takes from Nakasai to deliver later to Nakasai's father will function as a memorial talisman that maintains the connection between the living and the dead. Hanayama's own body likewise serves as a conduit between two worlds. As a priest, he is the medium positioned between the living and the dead; as a chaplain, he is the medium positioned between the world of the prison and the world outside. It is in this position that it is possible for him to affectively reincorporate Nakasai Matsujirō into the human world of warmth and feeling.

Later, Hanayama mentions a genial argument between himself and Sugamo's commanding officers. At issue was the matter of acquiring flowers for the prison's Buddhist altar: the Americans take the position that given the disastrous state of the city, it would waste both time and resources to buy flowers; Hanayama takes the position that the flowers are required regardless of how difficult or expensive it might be to get them. He wins the argument by invoking their ritual significance, asserting that, "from a religious standpoint," flowers are—like incense and candles in a Christian mass—an absolute necessity, and not merely decorative (35). To his readers, he offers a slightly different explanation:

flowers of the four seasons were offered to the Buddha and decorated the altar; as fresh (*ikiiki*) and fleeting things, they brought some small comfort to the cold senses of the prisoners. (36)

I read this remark as connected to Hanayama's earlier discussion of Nakasai. In contrasting the coldness or numbness of the prisoners' senses to the freshness of the flowers—in Japanese, literally something like their liveliness—Hanayama points to the way in which the prison functions to quarantine prisoners from the outside world. This outside world is a living world, a world of shared life. Earlier, Hanayama registered the coldness of the prison as a world of death in terms of his own senses; here, he attempts to bring some of the warmth of the living world into the prison, accessing the prisoners by way of feeling, or the senses. Again, this transferral is possible because of Hanayama's position as a ritual specialist, situated in between the worlds of the living and the dead; in this case, he takes advantage of his religious authority to get flowers that would otherwise be unavailable. His account of what those flowers meant to him, however, suggests that his motivation is best understood not in terms of ceremonial propriety but rather in terms of offering consolation to the condemned. This invests his ritual activity with ethical significance insofar as it both signals Hanayama's awareness of the deadening effects of imprisonment on the prisoners and represents a critical effort on his part to resist those effects, implying that the condemned merit consolation or sympathy, just as the dead merit the gestures by means of which they are reincorporated into the world of the living. In a small but concrete way, Hanayama resists the dehumanization of incarceration and makes a political claim, however muted, about the humanity of the prisoners.

But this ritual activity seems to represent a relatively small element of Hanayama's work as chaplain. What was he doing the rest of the time?

Good Friends: Hanayama as Conversation Partner

The evidence in *Finding Peace* suggests that Hanayama spent most of his time engaging the prisoners in conversation. He talks with the condemned about their hometowns, their parents, their wives and fiancées, their children; he talks with them about the news from outside, about the other prisoners, about the war, about Buddhist philosophy. When he is not talking with them himself, he encourages them to write—to write letters to their families or even to him, to write poetry, to keep diaries, to take notes on what they have been reading. And Hanayama too is writing, recording the conversations he has been having and transcribing letters, poetry, and diary entries.

Like Hanayama's ritual activity, this focus on conversation works against a carceral logic. As Foucault remarks, the prisoner under surveillance must be "the object of information, never a subject in communication" (200). It seems clear that from the point of view of the American administration, Hanayama served as part of a larger surveillance apparatus, the primary function of which was to prevent the high-profile prisoners from committing suicide before they could be executed, and by means of which prisoners were rendered as controllable objects.⁹ Ha-

⁹ That this was the primary function of surveillance in Sugamo is indicated by the fact that the years Hanayama spent there—the three years leading up to the December 23, 1948 executions—were the years in which the most heightened forms of surveillance were in place within the prison. Hanayama notes that the seven high-profile prisoners were guarded at all times, including in the lavatory (285); that when the highest profile prisoner, Tōjō Hideki—general of the Imperial Japanese Army and prime minister of Japan from 1941 to 1944—was found to have a set of prayer beads, the American staff

nayama's American supervisors explicitly assess his success as a chaplain in these terms, commending him both for the fact that there were no suicide attempts during his time in Sugamo and for the fact that the seven high-profile prisoners died "without causing any trouble" (17). One way the prisoners resist the surveillance system is by looking away. Former prisoner Kodama Yoshio writes in his *Sugamo Diary*, "When a person is sentenced to death, he appears so gloomy that we cannot help but avert our eyes from him because it seems so cruel even to look at

worried that he might use the string to attempt suicide (45); and likewise, that it was difficult to have a book delivered to Tōjō because "of worries about suicide" (256). The American military leadership was aware of the fact that Tōjō had indeed attempted suicide at the time of his arrest, and that in Nuremberg, Nazi war criminal Hermann Göring had successfully committed suicide in his cell at Spandau Prison the night before he was to be executed; Barrette notes that security at Sugamo was increased following the incident at Spandau. The American concern with ensuring that Japanese prisoners not evade a death sentence by killing themselves is indicative of the way in which the death penalty works not only—and perhaps not even primarily—as a form of punishment but as a display of state power. Achille Mbembé tells us that "the ultimate expression of sovereignty resides, to a large degree, in the power and the capacity to dictate who may live and who must die. Hence, to kill or to allow to live constitute the limits of sovereignty, its fundamental attributes. To exercise sovereignty is to exercise control over mortality" (Mbembé 11–12). In the context of surrender and occupation, both killing a small number of Japan's former leaders and allowing a large number to live was a way of claiming Allied sovereignty over occupied Japan; suicide, by contrast, represented a challenge to the sovereign's exclusive claim upon the right to kill (15) and an unacceptable revanchism on the part of the representatives of a vanquished sovereign. Once the executions of the seven high-profile prisoners were carried out—"completing one of the main aims of the occupation" (Bix, "Inventing," 355)—the surveillance measures in place at Sugamo quickly relaxed, and many sentences were commuted as the Allies began to work toward ending the occupation and restoring Japanese sovereignty. (See Barrette.) We might note that Tōjō was also at the center of a "prank" that might serve as an apt figure for the refusal of the prisoner's powers of communication. In 1947, two American Navy dentists tasked with making a denture plate for him engraved the phrase "Remember Pearl Harbor" on the plate, literally putting their own words in their patient's unknowing mouth.

him” (277).¹⁰ Here averting the gaze is an expression of sympathy, resonant with Hanayama’s objection to scrutinizing the faces of the dead. Like surveillance, however, this kind of sympathy also makes communication impossible, as Kodama acknowledges:

When we see from afar these men taking a stroll in gloomy silence, the words which we should speak fail to come out. Our feelings are expressed only by the deep sighs which we could not contain. Without intending to do so, I turned my eyes away from them. (278)

Hanayama is doing something different, resisting the effects of surveillance by insisting on the condemned as subjects in communication, serving himself both as an interlocutor and a conduit for bringing those prisoners into communication with others.

We see one instance of this in Hanayama’s presentation of the diary entries of prisoner Hirate Kaichi.¹¹ Hirate titled his prison diary “A Diary That Will Never Be Read”; Hanayama reproduces a number of entries from the diary in *Finding Peace*. Those entries speak to Hirate’s loneliness and longing for communication. In them, he describes being in solitary confinement while awaiting execution while gazing down at people walking in little groups in the yard below (92); screaming at the wall as he has no-one else to talk to (88); and discovering to his surprise that he is not alone in his cell after all:

A little round insect whose name I don’t know

¹⁰ Kodama was imprisoned as a Class A war criminal but never indicted; like the other eighteen Class A criminals not tried as part of the International Military Tribunal, he was released from prison on December 24, 1948 (Dower 454).

¹¹ Hirate was a Class C prisoner, charged with crimes in connection to atrocities committed against prisoners of war at the prison camp at Hakodate, including the deaths of four prisoners. He had been a librarian. He was executed at Sugamo on August 23, 1946.

crept out, crawled across the letter I was reading—
 Inside this room there are two living things.
 I feel this little insect is traveling with me:
 Step by step, it reaches the edge,
 and now it can't go any further. (88)

Hanayama repositions Hirate as a subject in communication, framing him as having developed a narrative in which his death itself will allow him to enter back into human relationships. As Hanayama tells it, Hirate comes to understand his death as both reuniting him with his deceased mother—"Such happiness today: going to see my mother, who has been waiting quite some time" (89)—and as making a contribution to future generations:

The country has been defeated. Begetting nothing but an enormous sacrifice (*gisei*), it has ended in defeat, but with this sacrifice as its foundation stone (*ishizue*), it sets out to build anew. The small pebbles now tossed away will become the supports of that one stone. . . . Pay heed to this sacrifice and steer toward a new, true course [for the country]. (99)

This is an example of what Dan McAdams refers to as a generativity script—"that part of the life story that concerns how the adult generates, creates, nurtures, or develops a positive legacy of the self, to be offered to subsequent generations" (309). Narrating his life story in this way re-establishes a sense of the self as a coherent subject following the crisis of defeat and allows Hirate to reorient himself toward the future even as he faces execution. Unlike the insect who reaches the edge of its world and then finds itself at an impasse, Hirate can be cast off from the world he knew (as a small pebble, now tossed away) and yet anticipate incorporation into a new world (as a support for the foundation stone). This is a happy ending—Hanayama remarks that although Hirate had never been

a person who smiled much, “when I visited his cell the day before the execution, he really smiled a lot” (Hanayama 89).

Hirate’s understanding of his execution as the inflection point at which war turns into peace is repeated again and again in *Finding Peace*. Itagaki Seishirō¹² tells Hanayama “For someone like me, to be transformed from this body of dirt and dung (*fundo*) into one of gold (*ōgon*) is really a blessing. If, in carrying out the Potsdam Declaration, I can become the foundation (*kisō*) for eternal peace, I would be truly happy—just so glad” (203); on the night of his execution he reiterates this narrative, saying that “according to the Potsdam Declaration,” the condemned are to be “sacrifices for ‘eternal peace’” (298). Doihara Kenji¹³ writes in one of his final poems,

What is the suffering of the eight freezing hells or the
eight burning hells to me? I am an offering (*nie*) to peace.
(191)

And Murakami Takuji¹⁴ writes in his last poem,

¹² Itagaki was a Class A prisoner, one of the seven high-profile prisoners executed on December 23, 1948. He had been a general in the Imperial Japanese Army and served as War Minister from 1938–1939. He was convicted of crimes connected to the escalation of the war, the occupation of Manchuria, and atrocities committed against prisoners of war.

¹³ Doihara was also a Class A prisoner. He too had been a general in the Imperial Japanese Army, a leader of the Japanese invasion of Manchuria, and is understood to have been at the center of a vast drug trafficking network designed to destabilize China and undermine resistance to the Japanese occupation. He was convicted of crimes connected to the illegal drug trade and atrocities committed against prisoners of war.

¹⁴ Murakami was charged with crimes in connection to atrocities committed against prisoners of war at the prison camp at Niihama. He was executed at Sugamo on August 21, 1948.

A human sacrifice (*hitobashira*),
 Firmly defending the foundation stone of the country,
 Taking refuge in the Buddha,
 I will leave tomorrow, smiling. (137)

Hanayama's role in constructing this self-narrative comes through most clearly when the prisoners put up some resistance to it. At two key moments, for instance, Hanayama directs Itagaki toward a specific understanding of what it means to live on after death. On one occasion, Itagaki tells Hanayama that he hopes to complete in the afterlife the work which he has not been able to finish in his lifetime, "becoming a nation-protecting *oni* (*gokoku no oni*)" (207). The term *oni* is ambiguous: it can refer to the spirit of a deceased person, but also to a demon, an ogre, or a hungry ghost; in general, it has a negative nuance, suggesting a harmful or unquiet spirit. Hanayama writes that he had to clarify this point:

You said nation-protecting *oni*, but what do you mean by *oni*? . . . You probably don't mean anything like causing harm to people or seeking revenge. Perhaps you mean 'protecting the nation' (*chingo kokka*) in the sense of protecting it spiritually (*seishintekini*). (207)

Later, Itagaki shares a poem in which he expresses a wish "to follow in the footsteps of the gods (*kamigami*) who guard our country"; Hanayama again suggests an emendation—"What about 'Buddha' rather than 'gods'? I wonder if that would better express your meaning?" (208). In both cases, Hanayama assures us, Itagaki is enthusiastic about these suggestions, agreeing that they capture his meaning much more precisely. We see here one way that Hanayama acts as confessor, seeing Itagaki's inner meaning more clearly than Itagaki can see it himself. But why do the details being corrected here matter?

It does not seem likely to me that Hanayama believed that Itagaki might literally return as a vengeful revenant. Rather, I would suggest that the language of *oni* and *kami* implies that the past is not yet done with—despite Japan’s surrender, Itagaki would appear to be committing to continuing to fight in the name of a divinized state. Hanayama emphatically rejected this version of the generativity script:

It is true that there were people who could not enter into the life of true faith (*shinkō*), who died with words like “The war begins now” on their lips, but only a few. Most left this world very peacefully (*yasurakani*) To speak of “war criminals” is to speak of the symbol of the sin (*tsumi*) of Japanese militarism. One would thus tend to imagine that they left this world with a spirit of undying patriotism (*shichishō hōkoku*).¹⁵ But in fact these men left the world not supporting [such militarism] but repudiating it most severely. (334–335)

The language of spiritual protection and becoming a Buddha, by contrast, signals a break with one’s past history. Why? Because in becoming a Buddha, as Hanayama understands it, one’s human personality is overcome as one merges with the absolute—this, he tells them, is the meaning of the name “Amida Buddha.” Thus “in the present world, you are each individuals and there are differences between you, but in the absolute world that you will ultimately attain, all will be one” (247). For Itagaki, getting his story straight with respect to what is to come in the next life is also a way of registering that for him the war really did end with Japan’s surrender. Hanayama serves as good friend here in the sense that he is the one ensuring that, before he dies, Itagaki has the op-

¹⁵ The expression used here suggests an intention to die and be reborn seven times, dying each time for the sake of one’s country.

portunity to rehearse his death as a moment of liberation rather than of repetition.

A letter from Michishita Masayoshi written just before Michishita's execution likewise points to Hanayama's active participation in the construction of the prisoner's self-narrative.¹⁶ Addressing Hanayama directly, Michishita writes,

Sensei, this human world is an accursed place, isn't it? . . . Or the part of the human world that's causing my death—I think it's an awfully sorry (*warui*) place. I was just acting like a human being, *sensei*—how am I supposed to feel sorry about that? Self-serving of me, right? That's why I'm happy to be leaving this human world. To leave the human world for the Buddha land—oh, that's a beautiful place, isn't it? . . . Scold me for going to my death not being sorry. No matter what, I can't think that way—please, *sensei*, scold me. (136–137)

We see the elements of the shared story in disorder here. Michishita affirms death as a kind of liberation from both the prison and the world of human suffering (“I'm happy to be leaving”) but does not frame his death as a voluntary sacrifice in which the individual prisoner's assumption of responsibility for the war makes possible a new age of peace. Instead, Michishita insists (correctly) that he is to be killed by the human world, while refusing responsibility for acting as a human in the human world himself. He cannot bring himself to apologize for his past actions (“No matter what, I can't”), and yet he exhorts Hanayama to compel him

¹⁶ Michishita was a Class C prisoner, charged with crimes in connection to atrocities committed against prisoners of war at the prison camp at Mitsushima, including the beating death of one prisoner and the deaths through maltreatment of forty-five. He had been a farmer. He was executed at Sugamo on March 18, 1948.

to do so (“Please, *sensei*, scold me”). The implication seems to be that he would collaborate with Hanayama in aligning himself with the normative narrative if only Hanayama would force him into it. Again, we have a sense of Hanayama acting as Foucauldian confessor here. On the one hand, Michishita insists that he cannot think himself a bad person; on the other hand, in asking Hanayama to scold him, he implies that the chaplain must be able to extract the real truth of his being from him by force, and that in having this truth revealed, he will in some way be unburdened.

One of the seven high profile prisoners, Hirota Kōki, likewise resisted incorporation into a shared story.¹⁷ Hanayama recalls Hirota as uniquely uncommunicative: “As for anything he might have said, there is nothing in my notes” (193); even at a meeting Hirota himself requested, “he was silent most of the time” (197). Itagaki too, Hanayama notes, characterized Hirota as “a quiet person” (205). On the night of the executions, Hanayama leaves Hirota alone for a time with pencil and paper to write a final letter. Upon returning to the cell, he finds that Hirota has written nothing. Asking if it is really the case that Hirota has no last letter to send, Hirota replies “No, I did not write anything—nothing much to say, it seems” (315). Even as they approach the gallows, Hanayama and Hirota are still having trouble communicating with one another. Hirota

¹⁷ Hirota was a Class A prisoner. He was a career diplomat, who served twice as Foreign Minister, and briefly as Prime Minister from 1936–1937. The military forced his retirement as Foreign Minister in 1938, in response to his opposition to Japan’s military aggression against China, but he returned to government service in 1945 in order to attempt to negotiate a continuing peace between Japan and the Soviet Union. Hirota was the only civilian sentenced to death by the International Military Tribunal. His indictment and sentencing were controversial and there was broad public sympathy for him (Brook 683).

is in the last group of men to enter the chapel on the night of the execution to chant the sutras and share some wine and cookies:

Our eyes met and Hirota-san asked, with a serious expression, “Did you do a *manzai* just now?”

“*Manzai?*” I answered. “No, we didn’t do anything like that. Perhaps you heard it coming from somewhere else—from the building next door?” . . .

After the sutra [chanting] was over, Hirota-san said again, “After this sutra, didn’t you do a *manzai?*”

It struck me: “Oh, *banzai!* Yes, we did a *banzai.*” I finally understood, *manzai* meant *banzai*. (328)¹⁸

On one occasion, Hirota offers an explanation for his silence. Having declined as usual to produce any poems or letters, he remarks, “Everything returns to nothingness (*mu*). . . . There’s nothing more to say—I lived naturally (*shizenni*), I die naturally” (198). Hanayama identifies this as a “Zen” attitude, reflecting Hirota’s early study of the Neo-Confucian philosopher Wang Yangming (198). But we should note that Hanayama takes pains to signal that Hirota is not in fact particularly religious, noting that although he recalled having received a posthumous Buddhist name jointly conferred by three temples in his hometown of Fukuoka, when Hanayama asked what that posthumous name might be, Hirota

¹⁸ At the end of the ceremony, at the prompting of one of the condemned prisoners, the group joined in a chant of “long live the emperor” (*tennō heika banzai*) and “long live the imperial land of Japan” (*dainippon teikoku banzai*) (Hanayama 326). Suzuki, Noda, and Sasaki offer a helpful note on this episode: “*Manzai*, in Hanayama’s dialect, meant ‘a gossipy social gathering’; in Fukuoka, where Hirota came from, it means *banzai*. Hence the confusion” (273).

could not recall it (200). Rather than characterizing Hirota's taciturn silence as insightful, Hanayama describes it as symptomatic of something like depression: "In fact, he gave no response [to anything], and he seemed somehow desolate (*samishii*)—it didn't feel as though there was any emotional life (*kangeki*) in him at all" (199). Here Hanayama presents Hirota as not just unwilling but unable to construct a meaningful self-narrative, having lost the inner depths of feeling out of which a self is constituted. In short, Hanayama is disturbed, rather than impressed, by Hirota's flatness of affect.

Nonetheless, even for Hirota the shared story ultimately triumphs. All seven men executed on the night of December 23, Hanayama promises the reader, died "seeking the radiance (*hikari*) of a higher truth that goes beyond victory or defeat in war, and beyond grudges and enmity" (334). Thus, Hanayama asks the reader to understand Hirota too as having made a decisive break with the past and so having achieved, like the others, a peaceful death, in which he discovered a peace beyond the merely human: "without victory or defeat, without dominating or being dominated, without the individual" (335).

There are two logics at work in the executions as Hanayama describes them: the carceral logic shaping the American understanding of the executions as a display of sovereign power and the Pure Land logic shaping Hanayama's shared narrative of the executions as the means through which those condemned to death escape the rounds of birth and death. On one level, these two logics rest on a shared understanding of these executions as the ultimate performance of Japan's surrender and so the end of a time of war and the beginning of a time of peace; they converge, too, in taking it to be a sign of success that those condemned did not resist their own executions. On another level, however, the two logics are at odds. Under the terms of the first, human prisoners are reduced to objects, first by means of surveillance and finally, decisively, by

being killed; only after they have been so reduced are they (partially) restored to the status of human beings, insofar as they are properly concealed and buried. Under the terms of the second, by contrast, the prison becomes a site in which to affirm one's connections with the human world, or the world of the living; this affirmation leads to the kind of peaceful death that enables those executed to transcend the human world finally and decisively. This is the transformation of dirt and dung into gold or, in Pure Land terms, complete absorption into the radiant light of the Tathāgata. The executions thus signal not a transformation from object back into subject, but from individual human subject to transcendent universal subject. Hanayama's work as a good friend involves both sustaining the connections that make the prisoners recognizable to themselves as belonging to the world of human beings and, ultimately, enabling them to let go of that world completely, discovering what Hanayama calls "absolute peace" (335).

The Prison and the World Outside

Because Hanayama has worked so hard to suture the world inside the prison to the world outside, it should not surprise us to find him asserting that what happens inside the prison has ramifications beyond the prison walls. He makes a strong claim about the specific connection between the peace discovered by the dead and what is possible for the living:

They left praying that—no, believing that—absolute peace could be realized in this world too. The quarrels and conflicts of this world are serious, but they left their bodies on the gallows . . . believing deeply in a world that exists beyond such quarrels and conflicts—a world of limitless

light and limitless life. They discovered that in the end,
there is but one world. . . . (335)

If it is in death that those executed find peace, it is “in the deaths of those people,” Hanayama writes, that “I discovered a will toward peace with the strength to extend across eternity. This is the strength of a peace that cannot be made to yield, neither by the power of violence nor by the power of authority; this is the height of faith” (336). The dead are here a “silent radiance (*mugon no hikari*)” guiding the living (335).

Again then, Hanayama serves as a medium—not in his role as ritual specialist or chaplain but as a witness and reporter. Peace, he writes, is possible, but “in order to establish a peaceful Japan and true world peace on earth, the records of these people must be read” (2). As the sole Japanese witness to these lives and deaths, it is thus his responsibility to share his records (3). *Finding Peace* is Hanayama’s contribution to the cause of world peace. In this final section of the article, I want to make a case for this view of the connection between peaceful death and political peace as both more pragmatic and more politically charged than it might seem.

Let me first acknowledge that if it might seem to some readers that Hanayama did not do enough to save the lives of the condemned, it has seemed to others that he did too much to excuse them. A review of *Finding Peace* in the May 8, 1949 edition of the *Nippon Times* notes archly that “apparently Rev. Hanayama wants to tell us in his book that we the Japanese people are after all not a bad people, having such fine criminals who would face death unflinchingly though of course it is highly problematical whether this is a compliment to the Japanese people or not” (Kida 4).

It is true that Hanayama praises the dead for their manner of death. This need not, however, imply any particular view as to the “fine-

ness” of these men when they were alive. As prisoner Kawate Harumi¹⁹ writes in a final poem,

A man who would not hesitate to kill other people
will be killed himself today.
The worst sinner, the utmost fool,
will become a buddha tomorrow.
What happiness! (132)

Kawate’s poem speaks to a standard Pure Land logic—the logic upon which, I have argued, Hanayama’s work as chaplain depends—according to which it is possible to understand the deathbed as a site in which liberation is available not as a reward for having been a good person, but through a transformation worked by death itself on an evil person. All of his Japanese readers, Hanayama suggests, ought now to reckon with the fact that they too are evil people. He demands self-reflection from all Japanese people, each of whom, he writes, has “neglected religion, and thus failed to respect human beings themselves, inviting our current fate” (19); from his fellow Buddhists, whose “lack of willpower and self-reflection was an important cause” leading to Japan’s fate (20); and from himself: “As a religious person (*isshūkyōka*), I can’t but feel great responsibility for having been swept up in the currents of the time, without willpower of my own” (20).

Those who have been arrested as “the ones responsible (*sekininsha*),” Hanayama writes, should be willing to forfeit their lives for peace (23), but those millions who have not been arrested bear responsibility for the war as well. He makes this point with particular sharpness in describing a letter he received following the death of Yuri Kei, the

¹⁹ Kawate was a Class C prisoner charged with crimes in connection to atrocities committed against prisoners of war at the prison camp at Mitsushima. He had been a farmer. He was executed at Sugamo on August 21, 1948.

first prisoner executed at Sugamo.²⁰ Yuri's mother, Tsuru, wrote hoping (in vain) that her letter might reach Kei before he was executed. In the letter, she explains that Kei had always loved toy swords and sabers, and she had allowed him to play at being a soldier when he was a child; thus, she writes, "Kei's having become a war criminal is entirely my fault (*tsu-mi*). I prostrate myself before the Buddha and apologize. I raised him for twenty-six years with his heart set on being a soldier and that's why Kei has committed such serious crimes (*daizai*). These crimes are truly the fault of his foolish mother" (71). From my own point of view, what would seem to be appropriate from a priest at this moment of mourning might be some words of consolation. As a single mother having lost her only child as a result of historical events far beyond her control, how can she be asked to bear total responsibility for his death? As an ordinary person who acted, as we all must, without full knowledge of what the consequences of her actions would be, how can she be asked to bear this kind of responsibility? But Hanayama flatly affirms her assessment of things: "in her understanding of the fate that befell her child as her own fault, we see an admirably sharp insight into the history of Japan" (71). Yuri Tsuru serves as a model for the kind of self-reflection that Hanayama thinks is required of all Japanese:

When we reflect upon our participation in the war, isn't it right to feel that [the prisoners] are being put on trial in place of us? Shouldn't each of us reflect deeply on our own past good and evil [deeds]? . . . As their fellow countrymen, deep self-reflection is necessary, I think. (43)

²⁰ Kei was a Class C prisoner, charged with crimes in connection to atrocities committed against prisoners of war at the prison camp at Omuta. He was executed at Sugamo on April 26, 1946.

In other words, the task assigned to those within the prison—assuming responsibility for the war—is also assigned to those outside the prison.

What Hanayama is asking for here is unusual. In the immediate aftermath of the war, some Japanese leaders had called for collective repentance (*ichioku sōzange*), but this quickly gave way to assertions that responsibility for the war lay with a small number of people whose punishments would be meted out by the Allies—as Herbert Bix puts it, “a few elites did it; leave the matter of their punishment to be dealt with by the foreigners” (“Showa,” 312).²¹ The circulation of this message served the interests of both the Allies and Japan’s political class by focusing national attention on the very small number of people called before the International Tribunal and minimizing discussion of the possibility of pursuing charges against, for example, the emperor (who was understood to be vital to restabilizing Japan) or the members of Unit 731, Japan’s covert biological and chemical warfare unit (whose data collected through human experimentation was traded to the Americans in exchange for immunity) (Bix, “Showa,” 310–312). The effect of this “memory strategy” (310) was to turn the question of war responsibility into “a problem to be evaded rather than seriously grappled with” (312). In this context, the

²¹ It was apparent to those imprisoned at Sugamo that the process of identifying and prosecuting Japanese war criminals was in some ways arbitrary. Hanayama reproduces a letter from Class C prisoner Muta Matsukichi to one of his commanding officers, in which Muta notes that he and another guard, named Takeda, are now in prison as war criminals while the officer is free: “We’re bearing the responsibility for your crimes, yours and the other soldiers and officers. Takeda and I bear a grudge (*urandeiru*) against you. We go to our deaths cursing (*noritsutsu*) your cowardice. . . . There were seventy of us at Camp 17, among whom fifty were guards, but just two of us came to be war criminals—what bad luck. I can’t help but think that we were sacrificed on behalf of everyone who worked at Camp 17” (113). Hanayama also assures us, however, that Muta died peacefully: “Having entered into [the way of] faith, when [Muta] died, he bore no grudge at all” (113).

common-sense view is that it is best to forget about the past: “the prevalent thought in post war Japan’s politics,” Yamaguchi Noriko writes, “was that before Japan could move on to a brighter future, the country needed to forget about the lost war and lost soldier” (69). Those inside Sugamo were implicitly grouped among the lost—“a negative existence to be erased from postwar history” (69); forgetting the war meant forgetting war criminals. A sense that moving forward required sharply separating past from future played out in terms of imagining a strict separation between the world of the prison—the world of the guilty—and the innocent world outside.

Hanayama embraces an idealistic vision of what the Tokyo Tribunal is for, characterizing the trials as the means by which “humanity must move toward eternal peace” (248). But he does not embrace the dominant memory strategy. Instead, in his role as chaplain and then public witness, he insists on the importance of remembering the past as part of cultivating the powerful will toward peace that he hopes will shape the future. He does this in part by enjoining his readers to take up the burden of responsibility for the war. The fact that those in prison “are not claiming innocence” means, for him, not that the question of guilt is closed but rather that those outside the prison too must recognize their guilt and make amends. We have seen above how impressed Hanayama was by Yuri Tsuru’s having assumed responsibility for her son’s having become a war criminal; at another point, he recalls telling Tōjō Hideki how moved he was by Tōjō’s having “assumed all the responsibility” for the war (253). It seems to me that Hanayama’s implication is that every Japanese person ought to likewise try to assume total responsibility. In so doing, they would, like Yuri Tsuru, gain a particular insight into history. I think that Hanayama understands this insight as doubly liberating. Every person’s life, Hanayama tells us, “is full of mistakes”; because “one does not realize this, one carries on troubling other people, piling sin upon sin” (332). Reckoning with one’s own past acts—

realizing oneself to be an evil person—is necessary in order to begin to live differently. Thus, for the individual, taking responsibility for the consequences of one’s past acts (regardless of whether or not one could have foreseen those consequences or chosen, at the time, to act differently) liberates one to act toward the future rather than repeat the past. In other words, taking responsibility liberates the individual from evil karma, allowing the individual to try to do good. If everyone were to develop this sense of responsibility and try to do good, this world of suffering would be transformed into a world of peace: a Pure Land on earth.

Hanayama believes that this transformation is achievable. Why? Because he has seen it happen. Recall what he admired about the Americans that he saw working at Sugamo: “their strong, sincere sense of responsibility—if there was something they were responsible for doing, they did it” (167). This sense of responsibility was expressed in small, even trivial, ways but the accumulation of those “finely-tuned public morals” produced a world more radiant, Hanayama promises, than we can imagine. If this radiance were to illuminate the world outside, we would have “true harmony and righteousness in the world” (337). It is with this promise that *Finding Peace* ends.

Conclusion

Hanayama hoped that the will to peace he discovered within Sugamo would spread. Had this happened, the prison would have become the epicenter of a movement toward world peace. What ended up happening, of course, was something quite different. As Bix has noted, the memory strategy developed by the Japanese state in the context of the Allied occupation enabled a certain kind of forgetting, making it difficult both to take responsibility for the past and to mourn the dead. One predictable result of this struggle to remember has been the appearance of reve-

nants. Sunshine 60, where the darkness of the past is covered over, is haunted: urban legend has it that every December 23rd, a ghost in military uniform appears on the observation deck. And not far from Sunshine 60, revenants likewise haunt Tokyo's Yasukuni Shrine, where the seven men executed on December 23, 1948 are now enshrined as national martyrs (*jun'nansha*). Yasukuni's putative religious function is one of pacification but it is mobilized by politicians in both the mainstream and at the fringes to produce powerful patriotic spirit(s). Japanese Prime Minister Shinzō Abe visited the shrine on December 26, 2013, the same month that he announced a plan to expand the Japanese military, characterizing this plan as “proactive pacifism” (Fackler). These are the kinds of unquiet spirits of militarism that Hanayama worked so hard to exorcise.

But there was, in fact, a moment when Hanayama's vision of Sugamo as the foundation stone of a peaceful world might have come to pass. Starting in 1948, with the arrival of a new American commander who imagined the prison as a model for democratic rule, prisoners were encouraged to run the prison as a cooperative enterprise: they grew their own food, organized study sessions, and published a prison newspaper and a variety of journals (Yamaguchi 55). Discipline at the prison was further relaxed when the Americans left at the end of the Occupation and the Japanese government took over command of the prison; in its final years of operation, prisoners commuted from Sugamo to work at regular jobs during the day (Wilson 175–176). Given the opportunity to educate themselves, organize themselves, and participate in the public sphere, a small circle of prisoners at Sugamo lent their voices to an emerging peace movement (Utsumi 150). As Utsumi Aiko has shown, members of the “peace group” urged their fellow citizens to refuse rearmament and insist upon a move away from totalitarianism, toward democratic independence (159). Although their motivations as activists were complicated, Utsumi argues that we should recognize their efforts

as motivated by sincere self-reflection and a genuine rejection of war-time nationalism: “Those who had participated in the war were able to shine a light on the criminal nature of [Japan’s] war of aggression and lend their power to the peace movement by talking about their own individual experiences as war criminals” (182). The prisoners offered themselves as proof that the war was a mistake; remembering them was a way of preventing it from happening again.

This resonates, I think, with what Hanayama was trying to accomplish in his work as a chaplain: to preserve a space for the dead in the memory of the living in order that the violence of war not be repeated. Insofar as *Finding Peace* serves as a record of the lives that ended at Sugamo, the book itself holds open the possibility of compassionately remembering the dead, and so perhaps rediscovering the will to peace that Hanayama describes. We might reflect, in this light, on the significance of Hanayama’s effort to copy Hirate Kaichi’s diary into his records. By doing so, he ensured that the “Diary That Will Never Be Read” would in fact be read, again and again, inviting readers around the world to recognize the lonely young Hirate in relation to themselves.

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