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Research Article

A Neglected Diary, A Forgotten Buddhist Couple: Tana Daishō's Internment Camp Diary as a Historical and Literary Text¹

Michihiro Ama, University of Alaska Anchorage

During four years of internment by the U.S. government, Tana Daishō, a Shin Buddhist minister, kept a diary in Japanese. After his death, his wife, Tana Tomoe, published it with the title, *Santa Fe Rōzubāgu senji tekikokujin yokuryūsho nikki* (*A Diary of An Enemy Alien in Santa Fe and Lordsburg Internment Camps*, hereafter *The Internment Camp Diary*) in four volumes between 1976 and 1989. The diary begins on December 7, 1941—the day Japanese Navy attacked Pearl Harbor, leading to Tana's arrest three months later by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and separation from his family—and ends on March 31, 1946—three days before his release by the Department of Justice.² Within the barbed wires of internment camps, Tana recorded his personal thoughts, interpersonal relationships, and transpersonal experiences. *The Internment Camp Diary* provides much information on a transnational history of Japanese Buddhism when anti-Japanese sentiment reached its peak in the United States.

Unfortunately, except for a few individuals such as Duncan R. Williams and Tetsuden Kashima who have referenced the diary primarily as a historical document, scholars have not paid much attention to it (Kashima, 2003: 104, 126, 204; Williams, 2003: 255,

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² The literal translation of the title of the diary is “Santa Fe, Lordsburg, Wartime Enemy Internment Place Diary” as Tetsuden Kashima renders it. The first volume of *The Internment Camp Diary* covers the period from December 7, 1941 to December 6, 1942; the second volume from December 7, 1942 to December 6, 1943; the third volume from December 7, 1943 to September 26, 1944; and the fourth volume from January 15, 1945 to March 31, 1946. According to Tomoe, a portion of the diary—between the end of September 1944 and January 14, 1945—was missing. It is unclear whether Tana did not write during that period or that that portion had simply been lost (preface to vol. 3). Volume Three includes an appendix, entitled *Senji tekikokujin yokuryūsho nikki tokubetsu furoku* (lit. Wartime Enemy Internment Place Diary Special Appendix) from June 1942 to March 1946, which is a collection of stories Tana heard from fellow internees.

257–258).³ The problem of language and the sheer size of the diary—more than 2,600 pages—have turned away Asian-American scholars who are more interested in the ethnic culture of the Nisei and contemporary Japanese American issues, while the Buddhist context has turned off Japanese scholars who are less interested in the internment experience of an individual than in the collective history of Japanese immigration to North America. In addition, the diarist himself is partly responsible for marginalizing his work. Critical remarks that Tana made in his diary about fellow ministers of the Buddhist Churches of America must have made it difficult for them to accept *The Internment Camp Diary*. Further, a dispute within the Palo Alto Buddhist Temple during the postwar period, in which Tana and his wife were involved, unfortunately generated a misunderstanding about the couple, possibly causing his diary to be neglected by the Shin Buddhist community in the United States.⁴

This paper approaches *The Internment Camp Diary* from an interdisciplinary perspective of history and literary studies and examines the diary as a textual device by which Tana sought a Buddhist identity and reconstructed his religion. It explores the place of Tomoe's poetry in *The Internment Camp Diary* and Tana's transformation regarding his conjugal commitment to her in his work as a Shin Buddhist minister.

In this connection to the studies of history and literature, Jochen Hellbeck's analysis of Russian intellectuals is instructive. Hellbeck investigates the diary of Iurii Olesha and discusses his efforts to historicize his selfhood vis-à-vis the socio-political conditions of the day. Reflecting on Stalin's "second revolution," Olesha attempted to develop his literary style by first keeping a diary to record facts. Doing so, however, led him to confront himself—a petty bourgeois wanting to become a man of great wealth and not experiencing self-transformation—and question the notion of self (Hellbeck: 2004, 624–626). Hellbeck concludes the emergence of a new subject:

...only in very specific circumstances does a diary narrative disclose a self that is both conceptual and corporeal, textual and extratextual, personal and historical. Yet it does not do this on account of being a diary. The decisive condition is not the diary as a formal literary type, but the emergence of a historically self-conscious type of selfhood that produces its own textual trace to validate its existence (Hellbeck: 2004, 627).

Sensibility to the currents of change redirected Olesha to reexamine his practice of writing and his past life. This process entailed documenting engagement with the time,

³ Records of internment by other Japanese ministers include, for instance, Fujimura Bunyū (a Shin Buddhist minister), *Though I Be Crushed: The Experience of a Wartime Buddhist Minister*; Bishop Fukuda Yoshiaki of Konkōkyō, *My Six Years of Internment: An Issei's Struggle for Justice*; and Lester E. Suzuki (a Christian minister), *Ministry in the Assembly and Relocation Centers of World War II*. The diary of Hashimoto Masaharu, Bishop of Tenrikyō in North America, is studied by Akihiro Yamakura (Yamakura, 2010: 141–163).

⁴ A misunderstanding arose when temple members began gambling at temple bazaars, which the couple opposed. The dispute eventually led the board members to terminate their relationship with the couple in September 1955, forcing the Tana family to leave the Palo Alto Buddhist Temple.

in which he lived, and verified the creation of a new self.

Tana began keeping his diary assuming Japan would win the Pacific War. He criticized the U.S. government, expressed support for Imperial Japan, believed in the revocation of his enemy alien status in the United States, wished for continuation of the eastward transmission of Japanese Buddhism after the war, and evaluated the internees, including fellow Buddhist ministers. He also included poems that Tomoe wrote to him from the Gila River War Relocation Center (Arizona) where she and their three children were incarcerated—which add an aesthetic and romantic quality to his diary.

His diary takes a different turn when he had a recurrence of tuberculosis. At the beginning of the internment, he was already weak and exempt from laborious duties. A year and a half after being incarcerated, even though he did not notice symptoms himself, Japanese doctors examined and transferred him to a sanatorium in the camp. While in a hospital, his level of self-introspection deepened. Tana expresses a desire to become more family-oriented but still values the work ethic needed for ministry, continues to view fellow ministers negatively though occasionally sympathizing with them, and reviews his marriage and seeks to reconnect with his wife by way of a letter-writing relationship. To put it differently, keeping a diary helped Tana realize the need for self-transformation, which was triggered by the inconvenience of imprisonment, his illness, his observation of fellow internees and correspondence with his wife, and the awareness of his role as husband and father. For Tana, “other power” (*tariki*) was not just the “spiritual other,” as represented by Amida Buddha, but included others, such as his wife and their children, fellow internees and ministers, as well as socio-political forces that shaped his state of being. Realization of his karmic conditions and the time and space in which he was living led him to reclaim Shin Buddhism in the United States in a personal, yet compelling way. Because the emphasis of this study is on this point, less attention is given to *The Internment Camp Diary* as a resource for studying the collective experience of people of Japanese ancestry during the Pacific War and more to Tana as an individual.

Before discussing *The Internment Camp Diary* further, it is necessary to review what a diary is. Diaries deal with a diarist’s identity and struggle at a given time, which s/he also observes, and provides a space for self-dialogue and self-analysis. Diaries are also subject to public consumption. When a diary is read, according to Marilyn Jeanne Miller,

...the author is equated in the mind of the reader with the narrative voice of the work, with at least one character within it (usually the main one), and with what is described, narrated, argued, expressed or stated in the work. The content is taken as the direct expression of the experiences, feelings, judgments, and values of the author/narrator. Moreover, the style of the work is also directly identified with the author/narrator and considered directly expressive of the character, personality and identity common to both (Miller, 1985: 293).

For some of the writers, dairies are more than private records. They anticipate their thoughts and private affairs to be exposed in public, while readers read them casually

as entertainment or carefully with a particular interest in mind.

For the most part, two kinds of scholars investigate diaries—historians and literary scholars. The study of diaries is, however, not without problems, because diaries are both fictional and non-fictional. While diaries can be significant historical records, they are often considered untrustworthy and biased when analyzing events. Diaries can also be a self-indulgent activity: they describe trivial aspects of everyday life and show fragmentary insights of the writer. Some scholars, including Jochen Hellbeck, have, however, reevaluated the status of diaries, studied their multiple facets, and discussed the marginality of diaries connected to the political exclusion, racial discrimination, and gender differentiation in history. The study of diaries, therefore, is not as simple as might initially appear (Langford and West, 1999: 6–9).

Tomoe's Poetry

Diaries have played a significant role in Japanese literature. According to Donald Keene, “In other countries, diaries are no more than reference material, but in Japan there is a whole genre of literature dedicated to them...this is only found in Japanese literature” (Keene, 2012). Poetry is included in many traditional Japanese diaries. This convention goes back to the medieval period and modern Japanese writers continue to write literary diaries that make allusion to classic *waka*.⁵ Normally, a person who keeps a diary writes poems and integrates them into a narrative. In *The Internment Camp Diary*, however, Tana included his wife's poetry so the narrator and the person who composed poems are different individuals. *The Internment Camp Diary* is thus a collaborative work, which makes the prose and the poetry gender specific, even though attributed to a single male author. This textual correlation indicates the peculiar relationship between the couple.

Tana rarely wrote poems himself.⁶ He did not oppose writing poetry but considered it irrelevant to the Buddhist way of life. In his mind, Shinran, the posthumous founder of Shin Buddhism, did not write poetry and avoided associating with those who held power through the gatherings of poetry exchange, although Shinran must have understood the way of poetry because he composed many Buddhist hymns (Tana, 1981: 180–181). Modeling himself on Shinran, Tana separated Buddhist writings from poetic materials and was committed to sharing Shinran's teaching with fellow internees throughout his imprisonment. He organized Buddhist gatherings, officiated Buddhist

⁵ See, for instance, Marilyn Jeanne Miller, “Nikki bungaku: Literary Diaries: Their Tradition and Their Influence on Modern Japanese Fiction”; Marilyn Jeanne Miller, *The Poetics of Nikki Bungaku: A Comparison of the Traditions, Conventions, and Structure of Heian Japan's Literary Diaries with Western Autobiographical Writings*; and for translations of modern Japanese writers' diaries, see Donald Keene, tr. *Modern Japanese Diaries: The Japanese at Home and Abroad as Revealed through Their Diaries*.

⁶ Tana only occasionally composed *haiku*, such as on New Year's Day. For instance, in the entry titled “My Thoughts on New Year's Day, January 1, 1944” he included *haiku* he wrote with a *haiku* master (Tana, 1985: 42). *The Internment Camp Diary* also includes *senryu* (satirical *haiku*) that the internees of the Santa Fe camp wrote, such as “erotic *haiku*” (Tana, 1985: 372–377).

services, and delivered dharma talks. He wrote a Buddhist sermon every week and sent them to his family and former Sunday School students. He continued this activity even after his health deteriorated so much that he spent more than two years in the internment sanatorium.⁷ Tana's inclusion of Tomoe's poetry in his diary, therefore, caused an unintended consequence. Although Tana was not interested in either expressing an aesthetic sensibility or in creating a literary work, *The Internment Camp Diary* can be read as a literary diary.⁸

Tomoe, who passed away in 1991, was an acclaimed poet. She began writing poetry at the age of ten and in 1949 received an invitation to attend Emperor Hirohito's annual poetry contest in Japan. She also taught Japanese poetry and calligraphy to Lucille M. Nixon, who won that same honor in 1956 as the first foreigner (Winslow 1989).⁹

Tomoe published the first volume of *The Internment Camp Diary* in 1976, four years after her husband's death, hoping that "a history can be studied more deeply when people pay attention to the evidence of a life" (Tana, 1976: preface). Tomoe had already read portions of his diary during the period of their internment because Tana had asked some friends to hand-carry them to her when they were forcibly removed to the Gila River War Relocation Center (Tana, 1978: 211, 264, 507).

As editor of *The Internment Camp Diary*, Tomoe faithfully followed Tana's original hand-written diaries and kept his outspokenness as it was. Since Tana did not name his diary, Tomoe came up with the title based on his words in it. Each entry has its own caption and date. Where Tana had not written captions for daily entries, Tomoe created them referring to his descriptions. In her capacity as the person who had written poetry to him, she often modified her poems. Overall however, her editorial work can be considered fair.¹⁰

A set of Tomoe's poetry usually appears at the beginning or at the end of a daily entry. Only occasionally does it relate to what Tana wrote on that day. Tana included a set of

⁷ Tana's attitude toward poetry recalls a tension between literature and Buddhism in medieval Japan, though the relationship between Buddhism and non-canonical literature is not necessarily exclusive (LaFleur, 1983: 7-8; Ramirez-Christensen, 2008: 88-89, 108-109; Heine, 1997: 4, 10).

⁸ During his internment, Tana read Japanese novels and quoted or summarized some of them in his diary. For instance, he comments on Kurata Hyakuzō's *Ai to ninshiki tonō shuppatsu* (Tana, 1978: 207-208), Mushakōji Saneatsu's *Zoku Jinsei dokuhon* (Tana, 1985: 441), Izumi Kyōka's *Ni Sanba, Jūni Sanba* (Tana, 1989: 149), Kamitsukasa Shōken's *Seiseishō* (Tana, 1989: 289, 293-303), Kurata Hyakuzō's *Shōjo no shi* (Tana, 1989: 310), and Yada Tsuseko's *Kōnosu nyōbō* (Tana, 1989: 331-333).

⁹ For Tomoe's work, see, for instance, *Tomoshihi: Lucille M. Nixon's Japanese Poem, Tanka Collection and Biography with Her Study of Japanese Tanka Poetry*.

¹⁰ The Buddhist Churches of America Archives housed in the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles contains Tana's original diaries kept in eight notebooks (in "Record Group 3 Manuscript Collection," "Rev. Daisho Tana Papers" consist of three boxes). Judging from them, Tomoe edited his writings only slightly.

her poems for the first time when the FBI took him to the Santa Barbara County Jail.

My Arrest (March 13, 1942)

...I knew I was going to be taken into custody when the FBI conducted a house search on February 24. I found the following poems and a picture in a pocket of my overcoat.

Please take care of yourself, by Tomoe, on February 24, 1942

I, loyal subject, am worth living;
With heaven and earth, wait for the celebration of spring,

Not having committed a crime, how insignificant your captivity is,
I see victory for Japan.

Memories of your image are always with me,
Constantly bringing to mind the grief and sadness we both share.

Below, I'm attaching my letter to Tomoe, which I entrusted to Mrs. Shimakawa who came to the Santa Barbara County Jail to see her husband, Reverend Shimakawa, off ... (Tana, 1976: 108).

The first poem that Tomoe sent to her husband hints at a famous poem in the classic compilation of Japanese poems, the *Man'yōshū*: "I, loyal subject, have lived to some avail: I have but to think how I have come into a time when heaven and earth are in flower" (Cranston, 1993: 377). Ama-no-Inukari-no-Okamaro composed this poem in response to the Emperor Shōmu's imperial command. Using a technique of allusion, Tomoe expressed her allegiance to Imperial Japan and faith in her husband, while hoping for Japan's victory.

The number of Tomoe's *tanka* in the first volume of *The Internment Camp Diary*, which covers the period between December 7, 1941 and December 6, 1942, exceeds two hundred. Tana did not include her poems with each entry, but when he did, he reproduced four or five at a time. Several reasons for the irregular appearances of Tomoe's poetry in her husband's diary can be considered: She did not always include poems in letters to her husband, Tana selectively reproduced the poems or could not include them because he ran out of the space he allocated for that day's entry, and mail service connecting the internment camps was unstable due to censorship. In her poetry, Tomoe typically expressed her love for her husband and children, depicted the camp life where she and her children were forced to live, nature and the climate she observed, and Buddhist services she attended. Here, it is worth citing two entries from the first volume of *The Internment Camp Diary*.

My Decision on a Sunday School Dharma Talk (May 17, 1942)

Tomoe's twenty-second letter has arrived. [According to her letter,] Sunday School and Buddhist services were organized at the Tulare Assembly Center and people felt enriched by being within the voice of the nenbutsu. Some people, who had gone to a Christian

Sunday School in Lompoc, walked around the camp looking for flowers to be placed on the Buddhist altar. It must be easy for a child to return to the religion of his/her parents.

Saying, "To the Buddha," young girls pick flowers and hand them to me;
I delightedly offer them to the Buddha.

From the peaks of the Sierras, winds blow this way and that:
In the dead of night, I pile on more clothes because of the cold.

During a Dharma Talk, cries of a cricket are heard from time to time;
How like the voices of the Buddha.

Opening a sacred text I carry;
The voices of the devout chant a sutra in unison.

When rains come, clouds leave.
How like the world of impermanence
This sudden change, where no one lives forever.

Since the only Buddhist minister presently in the Tulare Assembly Center is Reverend Imamura Kanmo, I've decided to help in my limited way by sending dharma messages in the form of letters to the Sunday School children there....

Among those forced to move to the Tulare Assembly Center, some purchased a sacred text, hoping to learn how to recite a Buddhist sutra. They had been too busy to sit in front of a Buddhist altar until now. Since being sent to the assembly center, however, they tend to seek spiritual solace because they now have the time to think about themselves without worrying about eating (Tana, 1976: 194).

Seems [the U.S. government] Has No Sense of Direction (June 26, 1942)

This morning, about eighty people from the Fort Missoula Camp in Montana arrived. At three o'clock, those who had been sent to Texas from the Santa Fe Camp about a month ago arrived looking healthy. I heard that this facility [in Lordsburg] accommodates up to three thousand people, so the U.S. government might move all the detainees here. That may be a good thing, but I wonder why seventy people were first sent to Texas from the Santa Fe Camp? In Santa Fe, there were enough beds to accommodate five hundred people, but the government suddenly moved them to Texas and disassembled the newly-built cabins, which were sent to other places. America lacks unity, doing useless things.

About a month ago, the U.S. government spent money and time to build a facility in Texas [and sent our advance group there], but then transferred the group to Lordsburg. Including the Santa Fe Camp, the government has built three facilities. The government takes our fingerprints whenever we move from one place to another, which is bothersome. Imagine how exhausting this can be: Building temporary facilities to house more than 100,000 Nikkei [away from the Pacific Coast], only to move them to another location one or two months later. As this suggests, it would take the government a

tremendous amount of time to deal with a state of emergency. Considering this, America cannot war against Japan effectively.

Tomoe's thirty-seventh and thirty-eighth letters were delivered to me today via the Santa Fe Camp. Shibun [their second son] returned home, fully recovered from the hospital.

It appears that valley fever has plagued the Tulare Assembly Center. Doctors don't know how to treat it. Even here [in Lordsburg], a wind stirs sand dust like a snowstorm in Hokkaidō [where I was originally from]. When five thousand people are forced to gather in one small place, accidents can't be prevented.

Tomoe's poetry:

Minding a sick child who seeks mother's affection,
I cannot progress with my needlework, or even wipe away my perspiration.

Skimming his diary without stop makes my eyes moist;
When I put it down, I realize I have forgotten to even wipe off my perspiration.

Wandering without a husband for whom I yearn,
I look with nostalgia at his handwriting, reading it again and again.

My husband is about to touch my face;
When I awake from that dream, the flickering of stars enters my eyes.

The lullaby I croon seems to wake the child;
He croons with me while half asleep (Tana, 1976: 249–250).¹¹

Tomoe's poems provided Tana with snapshots of Tomoe's and their children's daily lives in the Tulare Assembly Center and later in the Gila River Center. Her *tanka* conveyed to him her experiences and challenges as well as her love for him in the shortest yet most precise way. By including those verses and the expressions of her love in his diary, Tana confirmed her affection and created a romantic space for himself. At the same time, he made his diary a collection of her *tanka* and occasional *haiku*.

Tomoe's poetry gives a sense of rhythm to Tana's text that he could not have produced by himself. According to Philippe Lejeune, diaries represent a mode of writing that is both continuous and discontinuous. Diaries do not require a formal style of writing, but "each diarist quickly settles into a small number of forms of language that become 'molds' for all of his entries, and never deviates from them" (Lejeune, 2009: 180). Diaries are, therefore, fragmentary and simultaneously regular. Tana would begin an entry after first copying Tomoe's poems, or finish an entry by reproducing her verses. A set of Tomoe's *tanka* in seven-and-five syllable meter gives a discernment of linguistic disjuncture and often contextual inconsistency in each entry; however, as a style of

¹¹ Note that the English renderings of Tomoe's poetry only hint at their meanings. The fourth poem is not structured according to the 5-7-5-7-7 form.

writing, the combination of prose and poetry forms a pattern in the diary. Such a writing style reflects Tana's meticulous personality.

The flow of Tana's writing, however, suddenly changes and the number of Tomoe's poems decreases significantly in the second half of *The Internment Camp Diary*. While two hundred sixty-one poems are included in volume two, only sixteen and fifteen poems are included in volumes three and four, respectively. The cause for this change is unclear, but Tana indicates that censors might have banned the internees from sending poems, because they suspected poetry might be a means of encrypted correspondence (Tana, 1985: 136–137).

The change in the text coincides with a deterioration of the author's health. Tana lost a great deal of weight and had problems with his digestive system. He then had a relapse of tuberculosis in October of 1943 and was moved to a sanatorium. He sighs in relief after his first night at the sanatorium:

I felt extremely constrained while living in a barrack, as if I slept wearing my robe. I felt obliged to act as other Buddhist ministers did, whose behavior fellow internees criticized and which I felt included me. I can't stand others making a fuss over who talked or farted while asleep. Now I'm alone and able to relax, and feel as if completely saved (Tana, 1978: 482).

Tana considered internment as an opportunity to test his Buddhist commitment. He felt stressed, however, because it also forced him to interact closely with a group of Buddhist ministers he did not respect and because other internees expected those who follow a religious vocation to act in a certain way, namely, cleaning restrooms, attending the sick in the internment hospital, etc.

Tana was critical of his colleagues from the start of the internment and that attitude continued until he was released. He felt some Buddhist ministers neglected their clerical duties—they dressed improperly during the services, lacked courtesy, communicated poorly, and enjoyed gambling and playing baseball. Tana even criticized those who washed dishes at the mess hall for pocket money. He also felt they confused other clerics and lay members by making decisions based on convenience such as choosing a resident temple when anticipating release from camp and making unclear postwar career plans. Further, he was tired of competing with ministers of other Buddhist denominations and Christian ministers, as well as priests of new Japanese religions such as Konkōkyō.

Tana's harsh remarks on the ministers he considered to be slackers reflect the differences between his upbringing and theirs. Unlike the great majority of other Buddhist ministers, Tana neither came from a temple family nor studied at the denomination's university. It was common practice for the Kyoto headquarters then to send ministers with higher education overseas, and non-hereditary Japanese Buddhist ministers were unusual in the United States before World War II. While those Shin ministers took their profession for granted, Tana was motivated as a self-taught minister. He referred to them as *obocchan kaikyōshi*, or spoiled ministers (Tana, 1978:

338). He even negatively evaluated some senior ministers, such as Kyōgoku Itsuzō, who had graduated from Tokyo Imperial University and established a reputation in the Japanese community of Fresno, California (Tana, 1976: 314; Tana, 1985: 449–51; Tana, 1989: 98–99, 177–178, 842–843, 864).¹² As we will see later, these differences might explain Tana's unique attitude as a Shin minister and why he was extremely strict.

Tana as Husband, Father, and Buddhist Priest

Tana grew more introspective after being placed in a sanatorium, which released him from the pressure he had felt about the internment and almost served as a Buddhist retreat. His physical activity became limited, as was access to his surroundings. While spending time leisurely, Tana was able to improve his ministerial capability by reading Buddhist scriptures, studying Shin Buddhist doctrine, reciting sutras, and conducting services privately.

In volumes three and four, Tana wrote about his fellow internees' activities on retrial, parole, and release to their families, while describing his own conditions. Although many Buddhist ministers joined their families in the Crystal City civilian internment camp in Texas, Tana decided to stay in Santa Fe. He felt obliged to remain loyal to Japan by not petitioning the U.S. government for a parole (Tana, 1985: 166), and he did not want to leave his Lompoc temple members behind in Santa Fe (Tana, 1985: 155, 194). He also knew that while he could have been united with his wife and three children, he would not have been much use to them because of his illness (Tana, 1978: 77–78, 382, 488). He, therefore, enjoyed the treatment and solitude at the sanatorium, which unfortunately made it appear that he did not want to return to his family.

That does not mean, however, that Tana ignored his family. As fellow internees left for their families and Tomoe reported on the growth of their three children to him, longing to see his family grew. As a result, Tana frequently expressed his concerns about his family and froze time in his diary by revisiting his marriage before being interned.¹³

Flowers Blooming in Our Minds (February 22, 1944)

Tomoe often informs me about our children. I occasionally refer to them at the beginning of the Dharma talks I write, so I decided to revisit what she wrote about them at the beginning of her correspondence...

¹² The number of criticism that Tana directed towards Kyōgoku and his wife is substantial, especially when compared with Tana's evaluation of other fellow ministers. This may have been in part because Kyōgoku had worked in Lompoc for a long time before Tana's assignment there. Tana's remarks, however, can also be interpreted in part as jealousy regarding Kyōgoku's establishment and his higher educational background.

¹³ Philippe Lejeune points out that the freezing of time is one of a diary's functions, i.e., "to build a memory out of paper, to create archives from lived experience, to accumulate traces, prevent forgetting, to give life the consistency and continuity it lacks" (Lejeune, 2009: 195).

In a letter, dated September 17, she recalled our first meeting in detail. She considered it the most memorable day of her life: she had rushed to Yokohama from Kyoto and met me in a cabin on the Ship *Tatsutamaru*....

I've kept this useless diary since the beginning of the war. It's been three years now, and I seem to keep repeating the same interests. I've depicted camp life, but it's no more than criticizing fellow internees. That's why I thought about writing some sort of autobiography, but I haven't done so yet because it would only bring disgrace on not only myself but also my parents. Since Tomoe and I are separated, I've decided that if there is nothing else for me to write about, I will write about our relationship and my recollections of her. Tomoe will be the first person to read this diary. Because I'm interested in her recollections of me, I think it will be exciting for her to read my recollections of the time we spent together more than if we talk about it personally. I don't intend to recall the throes of puppy love but make naked assessments, so I believe Tomoe will appreciate it. Even if my record is a bit embarrassing—because she must raise three children—it wouldn't be useless for Tomoe to read it in order to understand the mind of a man. Just as I don't know much about the mind of a woman [and I wish I did], Tomoe probably wants to know what I think. I'm OK with our children reading it when they are grown....(Tana, 1985: 130–131).

Tana initially thought of documenting the rise of Imperial Japan in North America from the perspective of those who migrated to California and were then interned. He assumed Japan's victory and wished his diary would be read by people in Japan. At this point however, he intended to make his diary a record of an interpersonal dialogue between a husband and wife. As was usual during that time in Japan, he and Tomoe had an arranged marriage. They had spent only three years together until the federal government imprisoned them separately, so he wished to go back and deepen his love. He took this period of separation as an opportunity equivalent to the time when a couple, who marry for love, would normally take to develop feelings toward each other before marriage.

At the same time, he realized that he did not have a sense of parenthood. Unlike the carefree ministers he criticized, Tana had a strong sense of calling. Prior to his internment, he attempted to be an ideal Buddhist minister that the members and he had created in his own mind. Upholding such a noble character, however, prevented him from being natural to his family. This thought occurred to him when Tomoe sent him a picture of her and their three children, just before he was hospitalized (Tana, 1978: 474–475). Five months later, Tana reflected on it again but on a much deeper level:

Going back to the Beginning of Life (March 22, 1944)

Tomoe, who hadn't considered the topics of our conversation till now and had immature ideas—for instance considering the proper conduct of a chaste wife to be submitting to her husband for his demands [for intercourse]—has grown up by now, because she is able to accept my advice.

Her present life, which she enjoys with our children and without the responsibilities of being the wife of a Buddhist minister, has also helped her mature. For that, we can be thankful to the war. If Tomoe had maintained the resolution when we were married to live in America, she would have been disappointed at her worldly life now. This war and the internment experience must have made her understand how indifferent people are about what she had done with such care and rather considered her kindness as meddling. Or she might have gotten bored with me if we had lived together simply because we were a married couple. But the war has prevented that. Without children, she wouldn't have felt her life fulfilled. So, I should be happy for her, even though she initially didn't want children.

In any case, we're a couple with children now. We must adapt ourselves to the reality we're facing and forget the life perspective we held at the time of our marriage. Fortunately, I became free from ministerial chores at a temple. We aren't sure what's going to happen to us. Because I wore a robe [in the past], I felt obliged to sacrifice myself and starve my family for the needs of others. We can, however, liberate ourselves from such ideas. Serving a temple at the expense of my family sounds very noble, but all I was doing was using my family in order to receive praise from the members and satisfy my vanity. I didn't want children because of that. But now I have children. This is our life—we need to accept that and take appropriate measures (Tana, 1985: 180–181).

For Tana and Tomoe, an ideal Buddhist minister gave priority to their members and thought of themselves last, not showing their weakness and not relying on others. Such characteristics, however, made them “less human-like” and “unapproachable” to some people, including their children (Tana, 1985: 324–325).

When striving to fit the image of an ideal minister and not expressing himself openly, Tana realized that he and Tomoe had somewhat diverged from the Shin Buddhist teaching. They calculated and justified their actions by outwardly catering to the demands of the members of their temple and trying to win their respect. Manipulation of one's thoughts, however, goes against Hōnen's teaching which Shinran quotes in one of his letters: “Persons of the Pure Land tradition attain birth in the Pure Land by becoming their foolish selves” (Hirota, et, al., 1997: 531). To put it differently, Tana noticed that he and his wife had acquired the characteristics of those who pursue a self-power (*jiriki*) Buddhist path by relying on their strength and outwardly appearing to be “wise persons.”

This realization reminded Tana of his normal feelings. Remarks such as the above appear sporadically in volumes three and four of *The Internment Camp Diary*, implying his desire to transform himself and “break out of his shell” (Tana, 1985: 175). For instance, he wrote:

Three Letters [from Tomoe] (February 22, 1945)

Some people say camp life is bad for children. When I reflect on how we treated our children in the past, however—working hard all the time apart from them—isn't spending

time with them, as Tomoe is now able to do, the best of times? Such times seem to come only once in decades.

The same thing can be said about me. I used to give Dharma talks at a temple outwardly for the benefit of the congregation, but it was actually a way to earn money for me and my family. From a spiritual point of view, I often lived like a stranger to my wife and to our children, and as a result, we were emotionally disconnected. Because of the war, however, I'm exempted from the duty of working for myself and my family. I'm living in peace now because of my illness, even though we're separated, and I'm embracing my love for Tomoe without stint. It's OK for me to think only of what I should send my children. I don't have to suffer from a sense of obligation to care for other children before my own. I'm able to think about my family as I like, with a loving look on my face.

For our family, this war doesn't seem to generate negative influences. From the very beginning, we've accepted the fact that we came to the United States naked [and have acquired whatever we have] (Tana, 1989: 70–71).

Or on another occasion, he wrote:

Life as It Should Be (On April 28, 1945)

I now often think: In the past, I felt good about receiving compliments and felt that I'm doing this on the behalf of the temple and society. That was why, I worked so hard. But what did I actually give to them? I pretended I had exhausted myself for others but all I was doing was think of myself. Presently however, I can think only about living for myself— that allows me to enjoy doing things such as arranging a Buddhist altar much more than in the past.

The happiest way of living would be to honestly say I am working for myself and for the sake of my family. For that, as Tomoe once said, I can be a gardener. But because I put on a saintly face, I feel bad about buying meat with the money that I received for conducting a Buddhist service. I even imagine how nice it would be to live in a degenerate age where no one would question me when I use the offertory to buy underwear for my wife. The family of a Buddhist minister will be miserable otherwise. Tomoe has accepted that for herself, but not for our children (Tana, 1989: 188–189).

Tana was a conscientious minister, or perhaps too conscientious about sharing the Shin Buddhist teaching. That attitude caused him to neglect his household economy. The war and internment, however, formed a “reverse condition” (*gyakuen*) that allowed Tana to look at himself as husband and father, rather than as a priest, and examine the nature of his occupation. Once released from the pressure he had imposed on himself, he understood the importance of caring for his family. Tana felt it was necessary to change his attitude toward the ministry so his children would accept his profession and Buddhism when they grew up.

By developing a transpersonal perspective, Tana also compared himself to the conduct of fellow Buddhist ministers. He reflected on his own behavior and perceived himself as a “greenhorn by not knowing the social convention” (Tana, 1989: 717–719). When

someone praised him as a “saint”—which Tana disliked because he knew he was full of base passions—while complaining about the quality of other Buddhist ministers, Tana even defended them: if all Buddhist ministers in camp are self-disciplined, it would make camp life uncomfortable, whereas the prosperity of Shin Buddhism depends on how a minister skillfully mingles with his members (Tana, 1989: 561). In essence, Tana shared the positive outlook on incarceration with his colleagues. Duncan Williams points out that the “optimistic approach to incarceration, as an ideal time to reflect on Buddhist teachings on the nature of life, was a consistent theme in many Issei Buddhist sermons” (Williams, 2003: 267).

Despite wishful fulfilments such as loosening himself from ministerial duties and giving more priority to his family, in the end Tana renewed his commitment to his work without compromising. He valued diligence, abstemiousness, and dedication, while continuing to question the conventional lifestyle of hereditary Buddhist priests who perform their work merely as a matter of routine.

Know One’s Own Direction (October 25, 1945)

In the past, I told myself that I would not talk to Tomoe about what I would do after being released from internment camp. This thought hasn’t changed. I don’t want to deviate from the path I should pursue only because of my obligation to feed my family. I want to maintain the determination that I made upon becoming a minister.... I would feel bad if I said to Tomoe, “I will be able to buy you something because I’m going to give a Dharma talk this afternoon.” I wouldn’t have questioned such an attitude if I had been born to a temple family. But I’m sure Tomoe would have understood such an attitude. If I pursue the path as I think I should, moreover, Tomoe will understand, even though that might mean leaving her alone and going wherever I must (Tana, 1989: 595).

This passage clarifies Tana’s determination to continue pursuing his career as a conscientious self-disciplined Shin Buddhist minister. Sickness was not a factor that prevented him from following that path. In the last entry of *The Internment Camp Diary*, dated March 31, 1946, Tana wrote that imprisonment had given him confidence. After watching his fellow Buddhist ministers, he perceived that even a minister in poor health could do something for the Japanese community in the United States (Tana, 1989: 912).

Keeping a diary not only helped Tana reestablish his faith in Buddhism but also significantly improved his marriage. Writing was a medium for the couple to understand each other. Just as Tomoe revealed her day-to-day struggles and her love for him in the letters she sent to him, in his diary Tana disclosed his moral and spiritual dilemmas and even expressed his sexual desire to Tomoe. Exchanging letters and keeping a diary for more than four years brought the couple far closer than being physically together. Concentrating their efforts on the practice of writing as a discipline gave both of them insights about themselves as individuals and also about

themselves as a couple.¹⁴

Tomoe's Letters and My Diary (January 26, 1946)

Tomoe seems to have many thoughts concerning my release and return. She wrote: "I feel a bit sad when I think I will not send you letters anymore. I have written you a letter every day. I can continue writing letters even if you are transferred to a civilian hospital and visit you there, can't I? Our exchanges will be more interesting because you will read my letters as a free man! Censorship has limited my expressions. While regretting not being able to write letters anymore, I look forward to it."

This is her seven hundred ninety-fourth letter—a considerable number. I've kept a diary every day since the outbreak of the war. I initially thought that it would become some sort of resource for future discussion [concerning the Pacific War, for instance]. But the war itself has lost its significance, so my diary is useless for that purpose now. This diary will, however, represent our memories, as we've scribbled down things that we were unable to say to each other face to face. Tomoe may be the only one to read my diary, so I've written things without hesitation that I can't express in letters because censors would laugh at them. The censors must be fed up with the quantity of Tomoe's letters and those who register them must be agape with wonder. If I write in a letter what I kept in a diary, it may be a source of gossip, but I'm not ashamed of my diary even if someone were to read it surreptitiously.

As Tomoe points out, I don't think I can keep a diary, after leaving this place and moving to a hospital where she can visit me. A separated life has helped our feelings for each other to grow. I'm sad about not being able to keep a diary any more. Still because I did keep it, I've written about things that I should have kept to myself. I'm not in rush to leave this place and I want to continue writing while here. This may be similar to how Tomoe feels about parting from her custom of writing me letters as she has for four years now....

Looking back, I realize our love has become stronger because the war separated us. When we're together again, we'll be able to share feelings more directly, which we were unable to do four years ago. We'll be free from others [whom we consider as censors] then. We can talk about anything we wish, more openly than what I've written in my diary. We may not be able to talk all day and night because of my illness, but we can at least openly talk without worrying about what other people think of us (Tana, 1989: 779–781).

It appears that the period of his internment was only the time Tana kept a diary. He probably would have been unable to keep it for more than four years without imagining Tomoe as a reader. Her letters and poems helped him open up his feelings and encouraged him to write. Although he may not have recognized it, by incorporating Tomoe's poetry and part of her letters into his diary, Tana developed his aesthetic sense. For Tana, therefore, writing was not just a means of expressing his spirituality.

¹⁴ Wartime correspondence of an Issei Christian couple—Iwao and Hanaye Matsushita—also provides accounts of the ordeal of a husband and wife, separately incarcerated (Fiset, 1997).

Keeping a diary was also a means for Tana to evade censorship. As a resident Buddhist priest who was taken into custody, he knew what was and what was not acceptable to write in letters. By keeping his pro-Japanese and anti-American sentiments strictly to himself, Tana resisted becoming a subject that the U.S. government demanded of the enemy aliens, even though outwardly complying with the Department of Justice. As Julie Rak says, “If anything, diaries evade authority” (Rak, 2009: 19) For Tana, keeping a diary was a political act as well.

Conclusion

The Internment Camp Diary reveals the interaction of two Japanese individuals who sought a Buddhist way of life in the United States during the Pacific War and the postwar period. It documents how Tana Daishō’s attitude towards the two nation states of Japan and the United States, his family, and fellow ministers and internees changed during the internment period. This process was not linear but repetitive and disruptive. At the same time, it shows Tomoe’s effort to rediscover multiple aspects of her husband, which she pursued until publication of the work was completed in 1989. It took her almost a half-century beginning with Tana’s first entry on December 7, 1941. *The Internment Camp Diary*, therefore, records both Tana’s “diary time” and time in Tomoe’s life.¹⁵ For Tomoe, who died in 1991, the war and internment were never things of the past. Her poetry, which her husband included in his diary, speaks volumes. More importantly however, the couple looked to the future. Tana mentions in his diary that science and technology would provide the foundation for Japan’s rebuilding, while Tomoe witnessed the rise of Japan in the seventies and eighties (Tana, 1989: preface).

This study demonstrates that although there are many other ways to study *The Internment Camp Diary*, Tomoe’s poetry is a key to understanding the formation of the diarist’s Buddhist subjectivity. The absence of Tomoe’s poetry in the second half of the Diary is unclear, however, and it deprived Tana of Tomoe’s literary presence. Structural changes in the text also coincide with Tana’s physical breakdown and indicate a shift in his attitude towards his family and his self-evaluation as a Buddhist minister. Despite his initial reaction, Tana took the incarceration as a positive experience. It interrupted his ministerial duties, which had become routine, and gave him an opportunity to redirect his life and reconnect with his wife. By exchanging letters with Tomoe, including her poems in his diary, and meditating on his marriage, he confirmed the long-standing Shin Buddhist tradition in which collaboration of husband and wife is an integral part of a Buddhist minister’s work. With this firm foundation at home, Tana was ready to return to ministerial work when released from internment. *The Internment Camp Diary* is a compelling story of a husband, father, and minister who lived during a

¹⁵ Julie Rak writes, “Lejeune suggests that diaries, even those created with the help of a computer, are addressed to a future self, the one who will reread them (perhaps immediately, as an editor), or to an uncertain reader of the future, whether that person is the diarist or someone else. This is the wager on the future which Lejeune posits: an unfolding of time in life, and of time in ‘diary time’ which can address the past, but which is most concerned with making sense of the present as it accumulates each day” (Rak, 2009: 24).

period of upheaval caused by the Pacific War.

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