

and only those with urgent business were allowed to enter. The crowd kept shouting, "Ōi, banzai, freed prisoners, banzai!" There were fireworks, and sword dancers whirled about.

Master Nakae told me that today is the day when we revere women above men. I was, he said, the single bright red flower in a field of green. My work as the only woman among men was exceptional and was one of the most notable aspects of the Osaka incident. He made me sit on top of the table and showered me with drinks and food. We did not get back to our inn until nightfall.

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THREE

REFLECTIONS ON THE WAY TOTHEGALLOWS

Kanno Sugako

By the turn of the century, many of the early Meiji advocates of people's rights had joined the establishment, no longer offering a radical opposition to the vested interests. The socialists, who were by now beginning to raise their voices on behalf of social justice and political freedom, were, as Fukuda Hideko observed, the true heirs of the early Meiji popular-rights movement.

The first woman to stake her life in this cause was Kanno Sugako (1881-1911). Born in Osaka, Kanno's early life was marked by difficulty and struggle. Her father's fairly successful small mining business had begun to falter by the time she was eight or nine. Furthermore, Kanno's mother died when she was ten. Her father remarried, but unfortunately, her stepmother turned out to be the proverbial sadistic stepmother, who was convinced that Kanno was cunning and evil because she was born in the year of the serpent (*kanoto-no-mi*).

At fifteen Kanno was raped by a miner, and this traumatic experience left her with a lasting sense of shame and guilt. (Years later she claimed to have discovered that the miner was encouraged by her stepmother to rape her.) Kanno's interest in socialism was aroused when she read an essay by Sakai Toshihiko in which he counseled rape victims not to be burdened with guilt. After reading this essay, Kanno began to read Sakai's other writings and eventually gravitated to the circle of socialists.

When Kanno was seventeen, she married into a merchant family in Tokyo. Although she felt no attraction to the man she married, the union enabled her to escape the harassment of her stepmother. However, after her stepmother abandoned the family when Kanno's father suffered a

stroke in 1902, Kanno returned home to nurse him and take care of her young brother and sister.

This was the period when Yosano Akiko was winning renown as a writer and poet. and, influenced by her, Kanno decided that she too would become a writer. At that time aspiring writers would apprentice with established writers and learn the craft under them. The most renowned writer in the Osaka region during this period was Udagawa Hunkai (1848–1930). Even though Kanno had only an elementary education, she so impressed Hunkai that he agreed to help her. He got her a job with a newspaper in Osaka and worked with her on her short stories and articles. Despite the differences in their ages (Hunkai was in his mid-fifties and she was twenty). Kanno became emotionally involved with him and they became lovers.'

By 1903 Kanno had become interested in the reform movement being undertaken by Japanese Christian leaders. She became affiliated with Yajima Kajiko's Fujin Kyōfūkai (Women's Moral Reform Society), which was working to end the system of legalized brothels in Japan, and wrote a series of articles attacking this institution. When the Russo-Japanese War broke out in 1904, she joined Christian and socialist opponents of the war and became part of the Heimisha group led by Sakai and Kōtoku.

In 1906 when the publisher of a local newspaper in Wakayama prefecture, the *Murō Shimpō* (*Murō News*), was jailed for writing articles critical of the government, Sakai Toshihiko arranged to have Kanno Sugako keep the paper functioning in the absence of the publisher. A young socialist, Arahata Kanson (1887–1981), also joined the newspaper's staff. Although six years her junior, he and Kanno entered into a common-law marriage in 1906. When the publisher was released from prison, Kanno left the paper and moved to Tokyo, where she got a job with the *Tōkyō Dempō* (Tokyo Telegraph). Arahata became a reporter for the *Heimin Shimbun*. By this time (1907) Kanno had contracted tuberculosis. She continued working, and these difficulties made her more irritable than usual. Soon Kanno and Arahata's relationship became so strained that they separated, though their friends still saw them as husband and wife.'

While Kanno was editing the *Murō Shimpō* she published a short essay in which she expressed her views on the status of women.

In these postwar years there are many tasks facing the nation in politics, economy, industry, education, and so on. But for us women

the most urgent task is to develop our own self-awareness. In accordance with long-standing customs, we have been seen as a form of material property. Women in Japan are in a state of slavery. Japan has become an advanced, civilized nation, but we women are still denied our freedom by an invisible iron fence. There are women who take pride in their apparel, who are content to eat good food, and who regard going to the theater as the highest form of pleasure. We could ignore for the time being these pitiful women with slavish sentiments and hapless plights, women who give no thought to anything but their own self-interest. But women with some education and some degree of social knowledge must surely be discontented and angry about their status. . . . Our ideal is socialism, which aims at the equality of all classes. But just as a great building cannot be destroyed in a moment, the existing hierarchical class system, which has been consolidated over many years, cannot be overthrown in a day and a night. If we act too hastily we are likely to produce a history of repeated mistakes. But we must cling to the ideal of a new society as our hope and entry into a new, sun-lit world. So we must first of all achieve the fundamental principle of "self-awareness," and develop our potential, uplift our character, and then gradually work toward the realization of our ideal.'

In June 1908 Kanno attended a socialist-anarchist rally where red flags were hoisted and anarchist songs were sung. The authorities arrested the leaders of the gathering, among whom were Ōsugi Sakae, Arahata, Sakai, and Yamakawa Hitoshi (1880–1958). These were all prominent leaders in the socialist-communist-anarchist circles of the late Meiji and Taishō eras. Kanno went to the police station to inquire about her comrades and was shocked to see the brutal manner in which the men were being beaten. Furthermore, she too was thrown in jail for visiting her friends. This experience convinced Kanno that peaceful change was not possible under the existing system. "It is necessary," she decided, "to arouse the people of the society by instigating riots, undertaking revolutionary action, and engaging in assassinations." When she appeared in court after her arrest following the Red Flag incident and was asked by the judge about her political convictions, Kanno responded forthrightly. "My beliefs are closest to anarchism," she replied.'

She was not held responsible for the Red Flag incident and was not

sentenced to prison, but she had spent over two months in jail while awaiting trial. Her comrades were sentenced to prison terms of one to two and a half years. Kanno had contracted tuberculosis before her arrest, and her physical condition deteriorated during her incarceration. To make matters worse, she had also been fired from the *Murō Shimpō*.

Following her release from prison, Kanno met the activist Kotoku Shūsui, for whom she had developed a strong respect and admiration. Kotoku was not in Tokyo for the Red Flag incident and so had not been incarcerated. Earlier in 1905, though, he had spent five months in prison for his writings in the *Heimin Shimbun*. Upon his release, he left for the United States and there became acquainted with a number of anarchists. By the time he returned to Japan six months later, he had become a firm convert to anarchism. By early 1909 he had divorced his second wife and was living with Kanno. Despite his ideological belief in equality for women, Kotoku often treated women as mere sexual objects and was a frequenter of the brothels. Like many male reformers of this era, he saw no contradiction in his professed humanitarian ideals and his visits to, and hence support of, publicly sanctioned brothels, prewar Japan's most inhumane exploitation of impoverished young girls. In her personal life, Kanno too had affairs with a number of men, including her stepbrother. Such behavior provided the foes of women activists a convenient weapon to discredit their work as the ravings of loose, immoral women.

Kanno and Kōtoku's affair outraged their comrades, who saw this as a betrayal of Arahata, who was then still in prison. Ōsugi charged that "Shūsui stole the woman of a comrade in prison, and Kanno abandoned a foot soldier in favor of an officer."

In 1909 Kanno and Kotoku started the journal *Jiyū Shisō* (Free Thought). From the beginning, the authorities moved to prevent its publication and constantly harassed Kanno and Kotoku. Kanno was soon arrested for publishing the journal and sentenced to a fine of four hundred yen or three months in prison. Unable to raise the money, she returned to prison. prior to this, however, she had become involved in a plot to produce a bomb to assassinate the emperor. The plan was hatched by Miyashita Takichi (1875–1911), a factory worker who had become a student of socialism and anarchism."

Miyashita's scheme had interesting roots. A member of the Heiminsha circle, Horiichika Umpei (1881–1911), had introduced him to the theory that the emperor system was based on a myth created by establishment

historians. He had also read a pamphlet published by a Zen monk and an anarchist, Uchiyama Gudō (1874–1911). Explaining the reason for the poverty of tenant farmers, Uchiyama wrote:

There are these leeches: The emperor, the rich, the big landowners. They suck the people's blood. . . . The big boss of the current government, the emperor, is not the son of the gods, as the teachers have misled you to believe. The ancestor of the present emperor came out of the corner of Kyushu and killed and robbed people. He then destroyed his fellow thief, Nagasune-hiko. . . . That the emperor is not a god becomes obvious if one thinks about it even for a moment. When it is said the dynasty lasted for 2,500 years, it may sound as if he is divine, but historically the emperors have been tormented by foreign foes and domestically they have been treated as puppets by their vassals."

Kanno was enthusiastic about carrying out the plan, hoping to emulate Sophia Perovskaya, who had participated in the assassination of Alexander II of Russia. But Kōtoku, informed of the plan, began to lose enthusiasm and started to distance himself from the plotters. The four who were directly involved in the plot were Kanno, Miyashita, Niimura Tadao (1887–1911), an admirer of Kotoku, and Furukawa Rikisaku (1884–1911), who was recruited into the group by Kanno." Miyashita made the bomb and turned it over to his friend Shimizu Taichirō for safekeeping. Shimizu betrayed him to the police.

Kanno, some observers believe, was the central figure and the moving force of the conspirators, not Kōtoku Shūsui, though the government and most historians have made him the focus of attention. One of the defense lawyers, Imamura Rikisaburō, later asserted, "She was not a likable woman. If Kōtoku had not been ensnared by a woman like that he would not have ended his life in that manner. The Great Treason incident was all Kanno Suga's doing." Arahata Kanson (who seems not to have forgiven her for her leaving him for Kōtoku) years later questioned her philosophical understanding of the issues and ascribed her actions to her Pessimistic outlook, misanthropy, and world weariness caused by her long struggle with tuberculosis." But this assessment ignores Kanno's strong commitment to her convictions, her passionate desire to redress social injustices, her formidable sense of responsibility, and her courage,

When the plot was uncovered in May 1910, Kanno was serving her

prison term. The authorities (under Prime Minister Katsura **Tarō**, who had been directed by the *genrō* [elder statesman] Yamagata Aritomo to come down hard on the leftists) rounded up everybody who had the slightest connection with **Kōtoku** and charged them with complicity in the plot. Twenty-six people were put on trial, and Kanno was the only woman. The trial opened on December 10, 1910, and was closed to the public. Of the twenty-six, twenty-four were sentenced to death and two were given prison terms. Later the death sentences of twelve men were commuted to prison terms. In all, twelve were executed, including Kanno, **Kōtoku**, Miyashita, Niimura, and Furukawa. Also among the executed were Horiuchi Umpei and Uchiyama **Gudō**.

Kanno faced her accusers with courage, making no attempt to evade responsibility or bend her principles. During her preliminary **interrogation** she remarked:

Basically even among anarchists I was among the more radical thinkers. When I was imprisoned in June 1908 in connection with the Red Flag incident I was outraged at the brutal behavior of the police. I concluded that a peaceful propagation of our principles could not be conducted under these circumstances. It was necessary to arouse the people's awareness by staging riots or a revolution or by undertaking assassinations. . . . I hoped to destroy not only the emperor but other elements too. . . . Emperor Mutsuhito, compared with other emperors in history, seems to be popular with the people and is a good individual. Although I feel sorry for him personally, he is, as emperor, the chief person responsible for the exploitation of the people economically. Politically he is at the root of all the crimes being committed, and intellectually he is the fundamental cause of superstitious beliefs. A person in such a position, I concluded, must be killed."

When she was asked by the presiding judge if she wanted to make a final statement in court, she responded:

I have no regrets. I am only chagrined that our plan ended in failure. It is my fault. I am a woman . . . and lack will power. . . . This is my shame. There are many pioneers who sacrificed their lives by courageously putting their plans into effect. They set examples for us to emulate. I feel that I have failed these pioneers. I shall die without

whimpering. This is my destiny. Those who sacrifice their lives for a cause are accorded the highest honor and respect by later generations. I shall die as one of the sacrificial victims. I have no regrets. But I do have one request. I am prepared to die. I was prepared for this from the very moment we hatched this plan. I have no complaints no matter how severely I am punished. But my plea is for the many people other than myself. These people have no connection with us. From the outset I knew that our plan would not succeed if we let a lot of people in on it. Only four of us were involved in the plan. It is a crime that involves only four of us. But this court, as well as the preliminary interrogators, treated it as a plan that involved a large number of people. That is a complete misunderstanding of the case. Because of this misunderstanding a large number of people have been made to suffer. You are aware of this. These people have aged parents, young children, and young wives. If these people are killed for something that they knew nothing about, not only will it be a grave tragedy for the persons concerned, but their relatives and friends will feel bitterness toward the government. Because we hatched this plan a large number of innocent people may be executed. If such an injustice should be the end result . . . I may die, but my sorrow will linger on."

Her outrage at the wholesale conviction of innocent people is expressed in the memoirs she wrote a few days before her execution. Regarding her own situation, she remained steadfast, her only disappointment possibly being the information the prosecution passed on to her about **Kōtoku's** efforts to reconcile himself with this former wife.¹⁶

On January 24, 1911, eleven of Kanno's comrades were executed. On the following morning she herself was hanged.

The newspaper *Miyako Shimbun* reported: "She mounted the scaffold escorted by guards on both sides. Her face was covered quickly by a white cloth. . . . She was then ordered to sit upright on the floor. Two thin cords were placed around her neck. The floor-board was removed. In twelve minutes she was dead."

Public reaction to her execution was cool. The *Tokyo Asahi News* commented, under the headline "Personification of Vanity," "She lived her life without believing in the gods or spirits. She indulged herself by reading biographies of Russian anarchists and nihilists who had given their

lives to their so-called principles. It is said that she prided herself as a pioneer among Japanese women. "" Hiratsuka Raichō, who was to organize her Seitōsha several months later, recalled, "I hardly took any interest in the Great Treason incident, which caused such a commotion in the society." 19

Reflections on the Way to the Gallows

KANNO SUCAKO

This is written as a record of the period from the time the death sentence was pronounced to the time I mount the scaffold." I shall write things down candidly and honestly in a straightforward fashion without any effort at self-justification.

In the women's prison in Tokyo. January 18, 1911. Cloudy. Needless to say, I was prepared for the death sentence. My only concern day and night was to see as many of my twenty-five fellow defendants saved as possible.

I boarded the prison carriage just before noon. From the window of the carriage I could see in the dim sunlight saber-bearing figures solemnly standing guard en route. They seemed to presage the verdicts of the trial, and I waited impatiently for the court proceedings to start at 1:00 P.M.

The time came. We climbed up to the second floor, then to the third floor, and then down again to the second floor to the courtroom of the Supreme Court. The security measures along the corridors and in the courtroom during the proceedings were extremely tight. The court was packed with people-lawyers, newspaper reporters, and spectators. I tend to get dizzy easily, so I felt a bit faint, having climbed many stairs and because of the stifling presence of the crowd in the courtroom. After I calmed down, I looked around at my fellow defendants. They were all sitting circumspectly, looking worried. They looked as if they were afraid to smile at each other. A pride of hungry lions. Their nails and teeth had been filed and smoothed down. There they sat before me. Twenty-five sacrificial lambs.

Soon the judges entered through the left door at the front of the courthouse. Will it be life or death? Many of the defendants' hearts must have beat faster. The clerk read the names of the defendants. Chief Justice Tsuruōichirō said a few words of instruction. Then, contrary to the usual

procedure, he left the verdicts to the end and proceeded to read the lengthy arguments, sipping occasionally from a glass of water. As he continued to read, it became clear that he was arbitrarily linking even those who were clearly innocent to Article 73 of the criminal code." His sophism became increasingly blatant. My concern [for my fellow defendants] increased and finally overwhelmed me like a tidal wave. But until he read the verdict for each defendant, I kept hoping against hope that some, even one person, would receive a minimal sentence. But, aah, it was all in vain. . . . It was all over. Except for Nitta Tōru, who was sentenced to eleven years in prison, and Niimura Zenbei, who was given eight years, the remaining twenty-four of us were sentenced to death.

From the beginning, I feared that this would be the case, but the trial was conducted in such an unexpectedly meticulous fashion that I began to hope that it would be relatively fair. The verdicts came as a shock. I was so angry and upset that I felt as if my entire body were on fire, and I began to tremble.

My poor friends, my poor comrades! More than half of them were innocent bystanders who had been implicated by the actions of five or six of us. [Kōtoku Shūsui, Miyashita Takichi, Niimura Tadao, Furukawa Rikisaku, and herself, as she wrote in the diary entry for January 21. See below.] Just because they were associated with us, they are now to be sacrificed in this monstrous fashion. Simply because they are anarchists, they are to be thrown over the cliff to their deaths.

I was not the only person shocked by this unexpected turn of events. All the lawyers, prison officials, and police who had been present during the trial on the sixteenth and were privy to the truth about this affair certainly must have been shocked at these outrageous verdicts. You could read it on the faces of everyone in the court. The defendants remained voiceless and silent; for the moment they were frozen in irrepressible anger. Then cold smirks appeared on their lips.

I wanted to comfort my fellow defendants, but I was so upset and angry I could not think of the right words. I could only mutter to myself, "What a shocking, lawless trial."

Then the straw hat [that covers the face of the prisoner] was placed on my head. Because we were marched out in reverse order of our arrival, I was the first to leave. As I stood up I thought of my comrades. Though they will mount the same scaffold as I, we shall never meet again. Some of them must certainly feel bitter toward us. But they are all my comrades.

WC stood side by side as fellow defendants. Farewell, my twenty-five friends. Farewell. twenty-five victims. Goodbye!

“Goodbye. goodbye!” That was all I managed to say.

“Goodbye, goodbye,” they shouted after me. As I left the courtroom I heard someone shout “Banzai!” No doubt one of the zealous anarchists was shouting for the anarchist cause. As I stepped on the first step of the stone stairway someone shouted, “Kanno-san!”

When I returned to the detention room of the courthouse, I began to cool off and regain my composure. I felt somewhat ashamed of myself for getting so angry. But what an outrageous trial!

However, it should not have surprised me. My past experiences should have prepared me to expect this as a matter of course. We initiated our plot precisely because this kind of outrageous legal system and despotic political authority exist. It was absurdly foolish to hope, even for a moment, that the wielders of power-whose authority I do not acknowledge-might save my comrades simply because the court hearings were meticulously carried out.

Soon the prison carriage arrived. I left the dimly lit detention room. The blood-red face of Takeda Kyūhei, one of the defendants, showed in a small detention-room window. He shouted, “Goodbye!” I replied, “Goodbye!” Someone else shouted “Goodbye!” One word filled with so much emotion. The late afternoon sun hits the prison carriage from the side. The carriage carries me to Ichigaya, on a route that I shall never see again.

January 19. Cloudy. Though I was furious, I must have been exhausted from the strain of the past several days. I slept soundly from early evening, and today I feel refreshed. I have received permission from the prison authorities to leave some of my possessions to my friends as mementos. I will leave my formal silk kimono to Sakai Mā-bō, the single-layer kimono to Iori Yasuko, the black cloak and the lined garment of striped muslin to Yoshikawa Morikuni.²²

I wrote postcards to the three lawyers, Isobe Shirō, Hanai Takuzō, and Imamura Rikisaburō, expressing my shock at the verdicts. I also wrote cards to Sakai, Hori, and Yoshikawa, telling them about the mementos.

In the evening, the chaplain, Numanami Masanori, appeared. He told me that one of the fellow defendants, Mineo Setsudō, came to appreciate the value of faith in an external power after he was sentenced to death.

The chaplain said he was impressed that Mineo showed no signs of fear or worry. He then urged me to seek solace in religion. I told him I could not be more at peace with myself than I now was. It is ludicrous for an anarchist who is against all authority to turn to Amida Buddha for peace and security simply because he faces death. But I can appreciate Numanami's position as a religious leader and as a chaplain. I have, however, my own beliefs and peace of mind.

We had sailed into the vast ocean ahead of the world's current of thought and the general tide of events. Unfortunately, we were shipwrecked. But this sacrifice had to be made to get things started. New routes are opened up only after many shipwrecks and dangerous voyages. This is how the other shore of one's ideals is reached. After the sage of Nazareth was born, many sacrifices had to be made before Christianity became a world religion. In light of this, I feel that our sacrifice is miniscule.

I told the court these thoughts on the last day of the trial. They are with me constantly. I am convinced our sacrifice is not in vain. It will bear fruit in the future. I am confident that because I firmly believe my death will serve a valuable purpose I will be able to maintain my self-respect until the last moment on the scaffold. I will be enveloped in the marvelously comforting thought that I am sacrificing myself for the cause. I believe I will be able to die a noble death without fear or anguish.

At night Tanaka, director of prison instruction, came to see me. He told me that my fellow defendants were fairly calm and serene. I was pleased to hear this. He also talked about instances in which people condemned to death faced their end admirably. I described the kind of coffin I wanted made for me and how I wanted to be dressed after death. I was afraid that the supporters of the emperor and champions of patriotism might dig up my corpse and hack it to bits. I did not want to look too shabby when this happened. After Tanaka gave me his blessings, Numanami brought me two pamphlets: the *Tan'ishō*²³ and *Outline of the Blessings of Faith*.

January 20. Snow. Snow has settled on top of the pine trees and the dead branches of the cypress trees. The world has been covered in silver during the night. Since the beginning of the year there have been several short flurries, but this storm doesn't look as though it will stop soon. Let it snow, let it snow! A foot, two feet. Pile it up high. Envelop this sinful city of Tokyo in snow, like a city buried in ashes. Level the entire landscape.

I wonder what the defendants in the men's prison are thinking of now as they look out at the cold snow from the three-foot iron windows?

Snow. Full of memories. As I stare out the iron window and observe the gently swirling snow, memories of many years float past my eyes, the many times that I looked up at the same sky with all sorts of thoughts and feelings. A combination of happiness and sorrow quietly presses against my chest. I long for those days, but I realize that all things are ephemeral. Everything now belongs to the past. I don't know what will happen to me tomorrow. Now I do not have time to enjoy reminiscing about the past. Oh, yes, I have the time, but my time is too precious. I must use the time to read, to write. And there are things that I must think about immediately. My mind is preoccupied with thoughts of things that I must take care of. Why do I feel so restless and hurried? I don't understand it. Is it because a stack of books is facing me? Is it because I can't see the people I must see to have certain things taken care of? Is it because I haven't written my last words to my younger brother?²⁴ People tell me that I haven't changed at all, that I am still full of energy. But even though I am busy with all sorts of things, nothing gets done. Still, it doesn't matter. I'll do what I can and whatever's unfinished, I'll leave as it is.

Two or three days ago I got a letter from Sakai. He wrote:

I saw your letter of the fourth. I hope you will write your prison diary as forthrightly and courageously as possible. I admire you for not giving up your English studies. There is a saying that goes something like this: "For each day that a person lives, there is one day's worth of work." We all could die tomorrow, but I am studying German and French bit by bit as if I were definitely going to live till I am sixty. I don't know how many days or months you have left. If we look at our lives from the standpoint of the eternal universe's time and space, they last only a split second. Isn't it wonderful that we can spend part of that moment exchanging lighthearted letters like this?

[Kanno had written Sakai on the fourth: "Now that the trial is over I have nothing at all to do. Since the first of the year I have been keeping a prison diary as a sort of record of my thoughts and feelings. I plan to write candidly about whatever comes to mind. Memories, impressions, confessions, hopes. I expect you will be able to see it sometime in the future. . . ."]

I certainly am calm. Since September of last year I've been playing tug of war with the dictionary, trying to learn English. I go at it with a nervous

sense of urgency but am making very little progress. I am only one-third into Reader V.

I had gotten so that I could at least read a [Japanese] magazine without much schooling. It is only natural that I cannot come up to the hem of those who have a formal education. However, what bothered me most of all was that I did not know a foreign language, and I wanted at least to be able to read one. Though I started to study on my own several times, poor health or something else always interfered: So I had not been able to do anything about this till recently. It was due in part to my lack of will power and patience but also to the circumstances I found myself in that only in mid-September did I decide that the time had come for me to learn to read at least some simple English selections. I had to do so before I died. So I started with a Third-level Reader. Now, I don't know when I will be executed. I probably don't have much time left, so I guess I won't be able to master the language. I regret this very much.

This diary will be written without any falsehood or pretense. Sakai need not worry about this. It will reveal the naked Kanno Sugako, just as I am. [Kanno then jotted down some random thoughts, which she inked out.]

- I must copy down two or three poems from my other diary [which evidently is lost].
- What are we puny things fighting about—in the midst of eternal time and boundless sky?
- Born in a tiny country, I am sacrificing my little body for a glimmer of hope.
- What a nation! It takes pride in spilling the life-blood of a hundred thousand people over one inch of the map.
- Another day spent guarding the shadows created by the sunlight that comes through the barred window.
- I know that the cliff drops one thousand fathoms, yet I rush down the path without turning back.
- I lie motionless in the cold night bed and listen time and time again to the stealthy sounds of sabers.
- I lie on my back for half a day, looking through the three-foot window and watch the leaves of the cypress tree sway in the wind.
- The ginkgo tree in the winter exudes a sense of reverence. It looks like a holy man coming from the snowy mountains.

- This wretched love. It continues to smolder like the smoke that keeps rising from glowing ashes.
- My last day will soon come. I smile as I think about my life. I can think about it forever. Is the strong, courageous child of revolution the same person as the weak, frail, weeping child? Is this me?
- Don't ask where the seed that dropped in the field is. Wait for the east wind that blows in the spring.
- We lined up by the railing listening to the song of the seashore where Hatsushima Island [near the Izu Peninsula] floated three *ri off* in the waves.
- Deep in the night the wounded person cries. Both the old and new wounds are painful.
- In coming and going, did I see through the straw hat, the pale face in the third window?
- His eyes said “forgive me.” but my eyes were as cold as the ice in the northern sea.
- I cursed at the light and darkness that came and went through the iron window for two hundred days.
- The evening crow. It keeps solitary watch over the rain clouds floating slowly across the big sky.
- Autumn afternoon. In the hollow of the cherry tree two tiny frogs are having fun.
- The pillars of words in my heart. They collapse one after the other in the autumn wind.
- I remember when I said “I'm going to end my life at twenty-two” and cut the strings of the violin and wept.
- You and I. We go to our graves feeling as if our hearts are separated east and west by the sea.
- The cherry petals fall on the stone-covered path of the Daihikaku Temple. And the temple bell peals.

In the evening I received cards from Sakai and Tameko [Sakai's wife], Yoshikawa, and Kōtoku Komatarō.²⁵ I wanted to jot down my thoughts after reading the cards, but it was more than I could do. As I reread what I've written so far, this diary strikes me as totally disorganized and fragmentary. It's almost as if I'm writing down the mutterings of my dreams. It's distressing. Should I stop altogether!

January 21. Clear. The sun is shining on the snow on the pine tree branches. It looks like a painting by Maruyama Ōkyo [1733–95]. An exquisite scene.

When Sakai started his *Baibunsha*,²⁶ the first person to ask for help was a student in a women's college. She wanted the *Baibunsha* to write her senior thesis. What a comment on our society-comical and disgraceful at the same time.

I hear that Sakai Tameko is attending midwives' school. I admire her courage and initiative to begin studies at the age of forty. And I admire Sakai for helping his wife become independent and self-sufficient. I am sure this entails some inconvenience for him. Not every man would be so willing.

Kōtoku's mother died on December 28. She caught malaria and then pneumonia and died ten days after she got sick. I was told that when she came to Tokyo in November to see Kōtoku, she had planned to visit me too, but because Ochiyo [Kōtoku's former wife] was with her she held back and left without seeing me. Even though Kōtoku and I had broken off relations by then, she and I still saw each other as mother and daughter. When I heard that she had come all the way to Tokyo and did not visit me, I was hurt and felt she was being heartless. Now having heard what happened, I feel guilty to have thought ill of her even for a moment. I think of her with fondness. We were mother and daughter, and then we were no longer members of the same family. Now we have parted, never to see each other again. She had comforted me constantly with her letters and packages. The past is like a dream. Ah, life is like a dream. Time is the graveyard, and everyone is going to be buried eventually. It is only a matter of time. Here I am, weeping over the death of others. But I too will be buried soon.

I seem to have caught a cold. I have a bad headache, but I took a bath anyway. Bathing is one of the few pleasures of prison life. Visits, letters, and bathing. I have no family, am virtually alone, so I seldom have visitors or get letters. The bath we are allowed every five days is my greatest pleasure.

From the clear, blue sky the warm sunlight streams in through the barred window. Sitting before the desk, feeling relaxed after my bath, how happy I would be to simply melt away and fall asleep forever.

Yoshikawa wrote in his letter:

This day a year ago I was released from prison.*' Of the three of us who left prison that day, Higuchi Den [a writer] is doing extremely well. In contrast. I am merely staying alive. Oka Chiyohiko [a printer] went back to his old nest in Chiba and is struggling with cold weather and hunger.

I wonder why Oka was imprisoned. Are those who are successful right and those in the depths of despair wrong? What about Morioka Eiji,²⁸ who lost his mind and jumped into an old well in Dairen? What about those people who abandon their principles like worn-out sandals because they fear government oppression and hope to save their skins? Isn't fate fickle? The human heart is so frail. Let those who want to leave, leave. Let those who must die, die. New shoots sprout only after the mammoth tree falls. In the springtime of the intellectual world, those of us who deem ourselves to be pioneers need not look back to fall and winter. We must look forward. We must rush forward. We must rush toward the light that offers us hope.

It seems that the authorities are watching our comrades in the outside world with even greater vigilance. The trial's shocking and outrageous results show that the government is planning to take advantage of this incident to adopt extreme, repressive measures. Persecute us! That's right, persecute us! Don't you know that for every force there is a counterforce? Persecute us! Persecute us as much as you wish. The old way is fighting the new-imperialism versus anarchism. Go ahead: Take your piece of stick and try with all your might to stop the onrush of the Sumida River.

Chaplain Numanami comes and asks me, "How are you?" I reply, "Same as usual." He says, "You have peace of mind because your life is founded on faith in your ism, your cause. Some people may be chagrined about the whole affair, depending on how deeply they were involved in it. You were involved in the affair from the beginning to the end, so you must have been prepared to face anything." What he said pleased me. It was much better than his trying to convert me.

I am sure many fellow defendants are deeply distressed about what has happened. This incident is unprecedented in history, but the punishment is unprecedented too. This affair should not be labeled a conspiracy by the anarchists. Rather it should be called a conspiracy concocted by the public prosecutors. The invocation of Article 73 in the trial was truly idiotic. The

public charges and the truth of the matter were totally unrelated, like a novel written by a third-rate writer. Only the five of us—Kōtoku, Miya-shita, Niimura, Furukawa, and I—were involved in the conspiracy, the group that the prosecutor called the "reserves under Kōtoku's direct command." The prosecutors linked the others to the conspiracy simply because of the idle talks we had with them in the past, talks that were as ephemeral as smoke drifting in air.

The prosecution argued that the affair was a conspiracy of the anarchists-so-and-so is an anarchist, or so-and-so is a friend of an anarchist; therefore, they were participants in the conspiracy. Using this kind of outrageous reasoning, they went about arresting people. Rushing to fight for honor and fame, the authorities strove to bring as many as possible to the dock. They resorted to deceit, double-dealing, threats, and, in extreme cases, methods similar to the tortures used in the past. Some were questioned continuously day and night without rest or sleep. The prosecutors latched onto the common complaints that ordinary people, not necessarily anarchists, mouth about the government. They presented these casual discussions as if they were linked in a profound way to the conspiracy.

Even though one were to let them interpret these discussions as broadly as possible and define them as being conspiratorial, they can in no way be linked to Article 73. At most, the prosecutors might prove a plot to stage a civil uprising. But the prosecutors and judges who conducted the preliminary investigation questioned the accused in detail about anarchism. When the ideals of anarchism—and these were merely ideals—were expressed, the prosecutors concluded that because anarchism believes in absolute freedom and equality it perforce also naturally rejects the imperial family. Through such reasoning they managed to get their inferences into the records of the examination. They then used these theories and ideals, which have no relationship with the current affair, to entrap completely innocent people. ✓

The more I think about this the madder I get.

You poor pitiful judges. All you wanted to do was protect your positions. To safeguard them, you handed down these verdicts even though you knew they were unlawful and arbitrary. You went against your consciences. You poor judges, poor slaves of the government. I should be angry at you, but I pity you instead. Here I am bound by this barred window, but my thoughts still spread their wings in the free world of ideas. Nothing can bind my thoughts or interfere with them. You may live for a ✓

hundred years, but what is a life without freedom, a life of slavery, worth? You poor slaves.

At 4:00 P.M. I was taken to the visiting room. Four people were there: Sakai. Mr. and Mrs. Ōsugi [that is, Hori Yasuko], and Yoshikawa. Before the visit, I was told by the warden that I was not to speak about the trial. This must have been a governmental directive, based on the fear that if the truth about the outrageous trial got out, our comrades might vent their anger against the government.

I remember how Sakai and Ōsugi looked when we were together during the trial of the Red Flag incident in room 3 of the court of appeals. Today they looked no different. Both are healthy and vigorous. We spoke a word here, a phrase there. I tried to avoid meeting their eyes, which were filled with tears. I tried to laugh and chat casually, but finally when the time came to say farewell, especially when it came time to shake Yasuko's hand, the tears that I had been holding back poured out as if from a broken dam. We both cried and held hands for a long time.²⁹ Oh, my dear friends, my comrades! When I blurted out "The verdicts were a surprise," Sakai said in anguish, "I expected you and Kbtoku to die for the cause but. . . ." That's all he said—his heart was overflowing with emotion.

Today I wrote a letter to Mr. and Mrs. Ōsugi and cards to Messrs. Sakai and Yoshikawa.

[To the Ōsugis she wrote, "Ōsugi, Yasuko, thank you for visiting me. I was pleased to see Ōsugi, looking so well. I hope both of you will take good care of yourselves and live for many years." To Sakai Tameko she wrote, "Please come and pay me a farewell visit when it is convenient for you. I am grateful for the sash you sent me. Thank you so much." To Yoshikawa she wrote, "I am prohibited from making even the slightest comment in my letters, so I am jotting things down in my diary. Please read it after I am gone."]

January 22. Clear. last night, for the first time since I was jailed, I felt depressed. The final visit from my friends was nerve-racking. Since June 2, when I heard that our plot was uncovered, I have been convinced that I have to learn to discipline myself.³⁰ Right now I feel like a worthless person—to be overwhelmed, even for one night, by such irrational feelings. I despair for myself. How could I be such a weakling?

Maybe it is only a natural reaction. Asian heroes say that one's face should not reveal feelings of joy or anger, happiness or sorrow. In a way,

this is a highly admirable ideal, but at the same time it is hypocritical. Maybe an idiot or a sage can really transcend joy and anger or happiness and sorrow, but ordinary people are filled with such feelings. Only by lying or pretending can they live without showing feelings. I am a weak person, emotional to the extreme. I hate lies, I dislike pretense. I detest all things unnatural. I cry. I laugh. I rejoice. I get angry. I let my emotions have free play. I don't care how others measure my worth as a human being. I will be satisfied if I can end my life without lying to myself.

Today, however, I feel very good. The sadness of last night has vanished. I wonder why I felt so bad? I was overjoyed to hear that my fellow defendants in the male prison wing are ready to face death, displaying a fortitude worthy of anarchists. When I heard this, I felt as if I were floating on air. Since we are responsible for their plight, I was very worried about how they might react. We are all human. It's only natural that they might find it intolerable to be punished so harshly for the truly tenuous connection they had with the affair. I am really impressed that they have decided to sacrifice all for the sake of their principles. They are worthy anarchists, worthy comrades. I am truly happy. I am proud to be a believer in anarchism. I have nothing more to worry about or regret. The only worry that had been hovering over my thoughts like a black cloud has dissipated completely. Everything is as bright and clear as today's sky.

I wrote letters to Koizumi Sakutarō, Katō Tokijirō, Nagae Tamemasa, and cards to Okano Tatsunosuke and Watanabe Yayoko.³¹

In the evening I received letters from our attorney, Hirade, and from Sakai. Hirade wrote:

I knew what the verdicts would be before the judge finished reading ten lines of the argument. Like all lawyers who hope for favorable decisions, I had clung until then to the hope that five or six of the defendants would get off with light sentences. But it was in vain. Hard as it was to remain in the courtroom, I did not want the two men I was defending to lose hope. So even though I found it painful, I stuck it out until the end of the proceedings. I even said a few words of encouragement to them. There's nothing that can be done about the application of the law, so let us leave the question of the verdicts' justness to the judgment of history. I don't think that you're the sort of person that requires words of comfort. I am tormented, though, when I think about how those who were not prepared to face the

worst must have felt. I haven't been able to do anything since the eighteenth.

Even a lawyer feels this way. Is it any wonder that I feel tormented beyond endurance, me, their comrade, who is responsible for their plight? I wrote a reply to Hirade under the dim light-bulb.

January 23. Clear. I wake up every night at 2:00 A.M. when they come to change my hot-water bottle (used as a footwarmer in bed). Though I am drowsy, I can't fall back to sleep for two or three hours. I lie there thinking about all sorts of things. Last night when I woke up, I thought about a number of things—Sakai who came to see me the day before yesterday, my fellow defendants, my younger sister's grave,³² which is in Seishunji [in Yodobashi in Tokyo]. When Sakai or Yasuko delivers the money to take care of the grave, as I asked them to, I wonder what that monk whom I detest so much will say. I don't believe in the superstition that the dead will be saved by the power of the sutra, so I tended to neglect sending gifts to the temple. Whenever I visited my sister's grave, the monk always gave me a nasty look. As a result, I stopped going to her grave site to place flowers and incense and instead placed her favorite food and so forth before her photograph. This is just as silly, for, after all, the dead person's body has already turned to smoke or has decomposed and returned to its original atomic particles. I don't believe that the spirit survives and is pleased to receive flowers, incense, or other gifts. I did these things out of habit and for my own psychological satisfaction.

Given my current situation, however, I feel I ought to give the temple at least a little money to care for the grave. If not for me, then certainly for the sake of my younger brother, who is currently in America. When he returns to Japan one of these years and asks about our younger sister's grave, he would, without question, be crushed if he found that the grave had been neglected and allowed to deteriorate because it was looked on as the grave of a person without family.

Last night I thought about what should be done with my body after my death. After my last insignificant breath and when I have become a mere lump of flesh, I suppose it doesn't really matter what happens to my remains. But I hate the thought of being squeezed into a coffin in an awkward position with my legs bent under. I want a coffin in which my body can be laid out flat. The day before yesterday, when my friends visited me,

I asked Warden Kinose, who was present as an observer, to get me a full-length coffin. I expect the coffin will be finished before long. I had also wanted to be in my good clothes. If by chance someone were to dig up my coffin and expose my body, I didn't want to look too unseemly. Now, however, I've decided it would be more natural for me to be dressed in my ordinary clothes. It doesn't matter if my dress is torn or soiled.

I had also asked Section Chief Iizuka to let me take a bath on the morning of my execution, but this morning I told them to forget about that too. I don't care about the headstone. Truthfully, I really don't care if they burn me and scatter my ashes in the wind, or if they throw my body in Shinagawa River. But I suppose they couldn't do a thing like that. So if I am to be buried, I really want to be buried next to my younger sister. As I said, I don't like that temple, so I have arranged to be buried in the convict graveyard in Zōgegaya. This will be the least trouble. The day before yesterday when Sakai and Yasuko asked me if I had anything I wanted taken care of, I told them where I wanted to be buried."

This morning I wrote cards to the Baibunsha and to our attorney, Hirade. I asked the people at Baibunsha to arrange to have a new wooden tablet set up by my sister's gravestone when they went to the temple.

Thinking about the grave, I was reminded of the prosecutor Taketomi Wataru.³⁴ I met him three years ago after the Red Flag incident. At the time, we clashed over my request to have the wording of my pretrial statement corrected because there were inaccuracies. We ended up getting angry at each other. Then the following year—that is, two summers ago when I was imprisoned and charged with a violation of the press law in connection with my work with the magazine *Jiyū Shisō*—the same prosecutor tormented me. He was extremely mean and devious in questioning me and pressed the case against me in a merciless fashion.

When the current affair broke out, I was initially examined by him, but I was determined not to say a word, since I disliked him so much. In fact, I even thought of killing him and bringing him along with me to the land of the dead if I got the chance. Later, however, he talked about his life—about his mother and how he had worked his way through school—and I began to feel sympathetic toward him and abandoned any thought of killing him. I, too, shared my feelings with him, and we parted amicably.

Several days later he came to me and said, "I find it interesting that you don't want to say a word to me about the affair. I won't try to make you talk about it. Instead, won't you tell me about yourself? Wouldn't it be a

novel idea to have me, whom you detest so much, write your life story? I really would like to do it."

I imagined that this would be his way of repaying me viciously, but no matter who writes about me it's highly unlikely that anything good will be said. I have been a maverick and haven't followed any straight and narrow path. Thanks to my stubbornness and determination not to knuckle under, I succeeded in not becoming a prostitute or a textile-factory worker. But the story of my life would not elicit the sympathies of anyone except, perhaps, kindhearted people concerned with social problems. I have given up any hope of winning people's understanding. My story is bound to be told in a slanted way, and I might as well have it told as unsympathetically as possible. So, in the end, I told my life story to the prosecutor almost as if it were a novel."

When we discussed things unrelated to the current affair, the prosecutor impressed me as a cheerful person, free of sinister intents. I didn't see anything hateful in him. I can vividly recall his face as he listened avidly to my story. He would say, "It really is like a novel," and kept repeating, "You and I must have had some strong ties in our previous existence." In the end, he told me, "If by chance you are executed, or if you happen to die before me, I promise to bring flowers and incense to your grave."

His eyes seemed to say that he was not merely flattering me. So I thought he might visit my grave at least once. When I mentioned this to someone, they laughed and said that he was probably just superstitious about the entire thing."

If I could return as a ghost, there are so many people, beginning with the judge of the Court of Cassation, that I would like to terrify. It would be wonderful to scare them witless and make them grovel.

Early this morning, I had an interesting dream. I was with two or three people whom I can't recall now, and we were walking on a path in a field by a brook. When I looked up, I saw the sun and the moon, about three feet apart, vividly etched in the blue sky. The sun was the same color as the moon, and it was not fully round but was shaded by a third. The moon was about ten days past the new moon. I told my companions that when the sun and the moon appear together it means a great calamity is about to befall the nation. Then I woke up. Maybe my brain is somehow injured, but from way back I've often dreamed all night long. I've never had a dreamlike that, though. A crescent-shaped sun and moon. I wonder what all this means?

Nowadays, every morning when I get up I think in amazement, "Oh, am I still alive?" That I am still alive feels like a dream.

I heard from Tanaka, chief of moral instruction, that over half of the defendants condemned to death have been given a reprieve. Their sentences were probably reduced one degree to life imprisonment. The verdicts were so unjust that this came as no surprise. Still, it is delightful news. I don't know whose sentences were reduced, but it must be those who had very little to do with the affair; those people who, in my opinion, were completely innocent. They must be overjoyed, since, even though they were condemned unjustly and arbitrarily, they were facing the death penalty.

The authorities first hand down these harsh sentences, then reduce them, touting the action as an act of the emperor's benevolence. They try to impress the people of Japan, as well as those of other nations, that this is an act of justice and mercy. Are we to admire this kind of clever scheming? or condemn it as artful politicking? Still I am really happy that my comrades' lives have been spared. To be fully satisfied I would like to see all others saved except for the three or four of us. If I could take the places of all of them, I would be happy to be broiled to death by being trussed upside down or have my back split open and have molten lead poured into me. I am willing to suffer any kind of torture and punishment.

Someone told me an interesting story about Tanaka who was a samurai of Aizu-han." Tanaka was captured and condemned to death in 1872. On his way to the execution grounds he was unexpectedly given a reprieve. It is a story that intrigues someone in my situation a great deal.

Tanaka is tactful in tailoring his talk to fit the person he is talking to. He does not say anything mentally upsetting but simply comes up with timely and appropriate stories. I am impressed. It is the fruit of years of experience.

Five letters arrived. They were from Sakai Mā-san, Koizumi Saku-tarō, Minami Sukematsu, Kayama Sukeo, and Tomiyama." Mā-san's is a beautiful picture-card of flowers and grass. She has written in pencil, "I understand you are giving me something. Thank you very much. Good-bye." I can just see her big eyes, fair face, and adorable figure. She is really a lovable child.

Koizumi wrote, "I am writing this as a farewell missive. On New Year's Eve when I got drunk at Chikushi-kan I wrote the following poem for [Kōtoku] Shūsui:

Before I lift the sake cup, I think only of the relationship with
 beautiful princesses.
 After I am drunk I understand the bitter search.
 Tonight my dear friend is in prison.
 Where will the spirit that haunts his dreams be at the end of the
 year?

I also started to compose a poem for you, but I failed to do so and completed only one phrase: 'How pitiful. This enlightened age derails the talented lady.'

He has been of great help to me during the past two or three years. I read his letter over and over, and was overcome with emotion. Please stay well. Live for a hundred years.

I am writing this under the dim electric-light bulb. I can barely move the brush, which is cold as ice. It is difficult. The call for us to go to bed was issued sometime ago. The lonely wind is blowing past the window. I guess I will call it a night.

January 24. Clear. I wrote to Messrs. Sakai and Masuda, and Ma-bō. I asked Sakai to send my younger brother in America some mementos from me.

The court's verdict, consisting of 146 pages, arrived. I plan to send it to my comrades in the United States. Yoshikawa sent me the *Suikodo-Kensō*.¹⁹

I feel distressed after reading the hyperbolic, twisted reasoning of the verdict. I cannot get my spirits up to write today.

A postcard from Yoshikawa arrived.

At night I wrote letters and cards to the four lawyers, Isobe, Hanai, Imamura, and Hirade, and to Messrs. Yoshikawa, Minami, Kayama, and Tomiyama. [In her letter to Yoshikawa she wrote]:

Yesterday I heard that more than half of my fellow defendants were reprieved. When I heard the verdicts, which were completely unexpected, I was so bitter that the blood in my whole body flared up as if on fire. Now, I am very happy that some of the defendants have been saved. They must be the people who I was certain were innocent. After hearing the news I felt that half the burden on my shoulders had been lifted.

FOUR

THE ROAD

TO NIHILISM

Kaneko Fumiko

Kaneko Fumiko's life (1903-26) was conditioned by the social environment of the underprivileged sectors of two societies. In Japan she suffered privation and hardship before she was sent to Korea at the age of nine and after she returned to Japan when she was sixteen. In Korea she was thrown into a society where the entire indigenous population had been impoverished and oppressed by the annexation of Korea by Japan in 1910. Her life there with her grandmother—a member of the privileged, "carpetbagger" class—did not change her status as underprivileged, because of the abusive treatment she suffered at the hand of her grandmother. Her ultimate rejection of all authority must certainly have been based on the treatment she received from her parents and grandmother, but her observations in Korea undoubtedly reinforced her view of life as a struggle for survival in which the strong abuse and exploit the weak. She eventually embraced a thoroughly anarchist, nihilistic philosophy, and she made common cause with Pak Yeol (1902-74), a Korean anarchist.

When she arrived in Korea that country had just been brought under Japanese rule. Japanese rulers had imposed a military administration to keep Korean nationalism under control and had also confiscated large tracts of farmlands from Korean farmers, reducing them to tenancy and vagrancy. Koreans who went to Japan in search of work ended up laboring as miners or construction workers. In the late 1930s they were forcefully conscripted and dragooned into labor crews.

The Korean nationalists on the peninsula struggled to resist the Japanese rulers, but to no avail. In March 1919, just before Kaneko was sent