

Article

Buddhism and Cultural Heritage in the Memorialization of the Hiroshima Bombing: The Art and Activism of Hirayama Ikuo

Paride Stortini 

Divinity School, The University of Chicago, Chicago, IL 60615, USA; paride@uchicago.edu

Abstract: Debates on the memorialization of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima have played an essential role in the construction of postwar Japanese identity, public memory, and historical consciousness. Religion, often conceived beyond traditional terms through concepts such as “spirituality” and “heritage”, was part of this process. This article examines the role of Buddhism in the autobiographical and visual narratives of the atomic bomb survivor Hirayama Ikuo, who expressed his personal trauma through art, turning it into a call for peace and for the preservation of the cultural heritage of the Silk Road, associated with the spread of Buddhism. Using recent critical approaches to heritage studies, I will show how the heritagization of Buddhism in Hirayama’s work does not preclude the sacralization of aspects of Silk Road heritage. Placing Hirayama’s approach to the nuclear bombing in the context of postwar discourses on Japan as a peaceful “nation of culture”, I will also problematize his view of Buddhism and the Silk Road by showing how similar views were used in support of imperialism in the prewar period.

Keywords: cultural heritage; memory; Hiroshima bombing; Buddhism; Hirayama Ikuo; Silk Road; Yakushiji



Citation: Stortini, Paride. 2022.

Buddhism and Cultural Heritage in the Memorialization of the Hiroshima Bombing: The Art and Activism of Hirayama Ikuo. *Religions* 13: 146. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13020146>

Academic Editors: Yuki Miyamoto and Susumu Shimazono

Received: 21 November 2021

Accepted: 27 December 2021

Published: 5 February 2022

Publisher’s Note: MDPI stays neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.



Copyright: © 2022 by the author. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

1. Introduction

The Japanese painter Hirayama Ikuo (1930–2009) narrates the story of his career starting from a significant painting that he realized in 1979, when he was already a recognized artist: *The Rebirth of Hiroshima* (*Hiroshima shōhenzu*, Figure 1). In many of his autobiographical works, he talks about how, for decades, he had felt inadequate expressing his own experience as a survivor (*hibakusha*) of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, on 6 August 1945, but then, during a visit to the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park, he decided to deal with his trauma and respond to the moral call of the victims in his painting (Hirayama 1997, 2011). *The Rebirth of Hiroshima* visualizes Hirayama’s memories of the fire and scorching heat following the bombing, but also adds a message of hope by painting a Buddhist symbol towering above the flames and ruins: the protective deity Fudō Myōō.

Buddhism played an essential role in the artistic production of Hirayama Ikuo, as the artist received his earliest awards and recognitions for his painting, *The Transmission of Buddhism* (*Bukkyō Denrai*, 1959, Figure 2). His favorite subjects were scenes from the life of the Buddha and the history of the spread of Buddhism, as well as landscapes of sites in Central Asia commonly associated with the Silk Road routes that facilitated the spread of Buddhism. In addition, Hirayama is famous for his efforts to study and preserve Buddhist sites across Asia, for which he became a UNESCO Good Will Ambassador in 1989.

Hirayama’s approach to Buddhism cannot be inscribed within any sectarian affiliation of traditional Japanese Buddhism. Most of his works decorate museums, private collections, and public spaces rather than temples. This is the product of Hirayama’s stress on Buddhism as a shared cultural heritage that connects East and West—an approach that very often Hirayama prefers to the definition of Buddhism as a religion, as we will see in the third section of this article. In his landscape paintings, the trade caravans that facilitated the movement of Buddhist ideas, texts, and monks cross the boundaries of empires turn the

ancient Silk Road into a symbol of flourishing economic, artistic, and religious exchange. This visual reimagination of the past becomes practice in many of Hirayama's projects for the preservation of Buddhist art and sites, which are aimed at fostering international collaboration. Rather than being simply a source of artistic inspiration, Hirayama's approach to Buddhism imbues his art and preservation projects with a sense of moral mission and spiritual purpose.

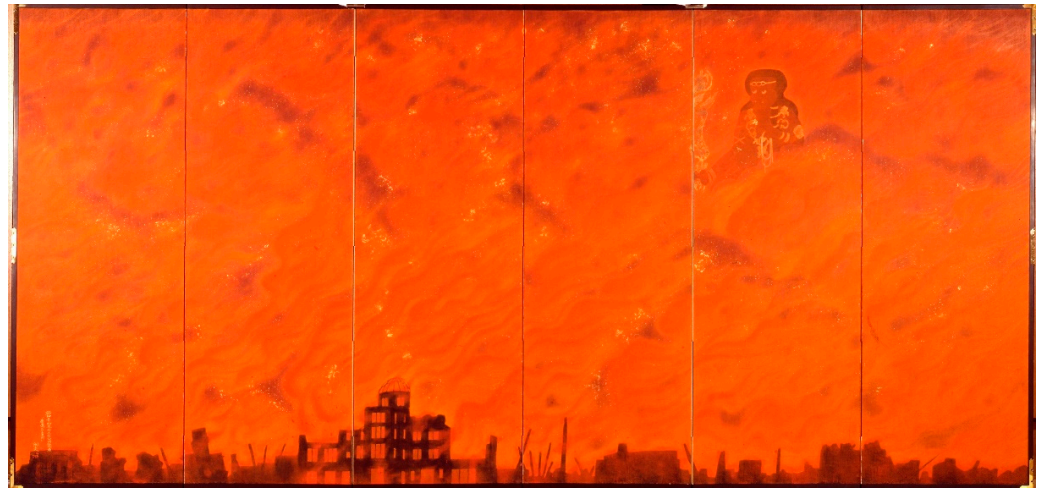


Figure 1. *The Rebirth of Hiroshima (Hiroshima shōhenzu, 1979)*, by Hirayama Ikuo. Hiroshima Prefectural Art Museum, Japan. Photo courtesy of the Hiroshima Prefectural Art Museum. Permission of use obtained thanks to the collaboration of the Hirayama Ikuo Silk Road Museum. No reproduction allowed without authorization.



Figure 2. *The Transmission of Buddhism (Bukkyō Denrai, 1959)*. By Hirayama Ikuo. Saku Municipal Museum of Modern Art, Japan. Permission of use obtained thanks to the collaboration of the Hirayama Ikuo Silk Road Museum. No reproduction allowed without authorization.

Hirayama's approach to Buddhism can be understood within post-WWII Japanese cultural politics, which used art and international aid to promote a new role for affluent

Japan in the world stage, after its war defeat and the trauma of the atomic bombings on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Hirayama's role as an artist and his focus on cultural heritage could be conceived as a form of secularization of the use of Buddhist art in continuity with late nineteenth century museum practices and aesthetic discourse. However, in this article, I will build on critical approaches to the memorialization of trauma and to the construction of cultural heritage to show how Hirayama's approach to Buddhism can be analyzed as a form of expansion of religious discourse and practice through the moralization of nuclear bomb victimhood, and through the intersection of Buddhist art preservation with temple memorialization rituals. Rather than imposing a definition of the key terms of "religion" and "cultural heritage", I will show how Hirayama himself used them in different and strategic ways.

I will argue that the analysis of Hirayama's use of the concepts of religion and cultural heritage to discuss Buddhism and the Silk Road shows the central role of his experience as a survivor of the Hiroshima nuclear bombing, while also offering ways to think the expanded and transformed role of religion in the "Atomic Age". As I read it, Hirayama's own retrospective interpretation of his experience as a *hibakusha* becomes a key to the universalization of a moral and spiritual message he imbues his artistic and cultural heritage activities with. Following a pattern analyzed by historians of trauma and memory, Hirayama universalized his experience of the nuclear bombing, while also offering Buddhism—in his own universalist view as culture and spirituality—as a solution to this same experience. Hirayama combined these two forms of universalization of Buddhism and of nuclear bomb trauma in his moral imperative to use the preservation of Buddhist cultural heritage as a call for international collaboration: many retrospective exhibitions on Hirayama significantly define his career as a "journey of peace" (*inori no tabiji*, Hirayama et al. 2007). Sections 2 and 3 of this article will each analyze trauma and cultural heritage and reveal the persisting role of religion in them.

In Section 2, I will analyze the function of Buddhist elements in Hirayama's autobiographical narratives and in his artistic production. Building on Didier Fassin's concept of "traumatism" as a form of moralization of the status of victim (Fassin and Rechtman 2007), and on Dominick LaCapra's reflection on the post-secular sublimation of the memory of trauma (LaCapra [2001] 2014), I will show how Hirayama's association of Buddhism with the trauma of the atomic bombing functions not only as a founding myth for his artistic career, but also as a moral imperative which guides his activism for the preservation of cultural heritage. In Section 3, I will build on critical approaches to religion and heritage to analyze how the moral call produced by Hirayama's association of Buddhism and the *hibakusha* experience is translated into practices which on one side turn the sacred into heritage, facilitating international collaboration in a secular setting, but on the other are open to the sacralization of heritage—its use in ritual and religious contexts. An example of the first is Hirayama's project to build a "Red Cross for World Cultural Heritage", while the artist's collaboration with the Buddhist temple Yakushiji in Nara is an example of the second.

In the conclusion, I will question Hirayama's parallel construction of Buddhism as a transcultural connection and his universalization of the experience of trauma by looking at the aesthetics of Silk Road Buddhism on a longer, transwar timeline of Japanese history. I argue that, while Hirayama's view of Buddhism and of the Silk Road is strengthened by the redefinition of postwar, "Atomic Age", Japan as a country which supports pacifism and international collaboration, it presents continuities with interwar pan-Asian views which were marshaled in support of Japanese militarist expansion into East and Southeast Asia.

2. Transcending History through Imagination: Trauma, Buddhism, and Travel in the Art of Hirayama Ikuo

Hirayama Ikuo's experience as a survivor of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima plays an essential role in the construction of the moral message behind his artwork and cultural heritage activism, which he also frames in connection with Buddhism. However, as also

Enomoto Yasuko has noted (Enomoto 2021), the moral and spiritual reading of the trauma of the bombing, as well as of his career and mission, does not begin with Hirayama's postwar artistic production. Rather, it develops especially from the 1980s, right after he produced *The Rebirth of Hiroshima*. In Hirayama's autobiographical works, the *hibakusha* experience is associated with a sense of moral mission to reconstruct the city, the country, and to foster peaceful international relations through art and the preservation of cultural heritage. In addition, to present Hirayama's view of Buddhism, some of his publications can be read as spiritual or moral self-help literature. For example, Hirayama uses his own career, with a focus on his travel and art, to discuss issues of finding one's own personality, success through overcoming difficulties, extending these reflections to collective Japanese identity in the context of world history (Hirayama [1996] 2012). In this section, I will explore Hirayama's reinterpretation of his life, basing on the many autobiographical works—published either as single monographs or included in exhibition catalogues—while also critically considering the function of this retrospective reading.

Hirayama Ikuo was born in 1930 on the island of Ikuchijima, Hiroshima prefecture, in the middle of the Seto Inland Sea.¹ At the time of the bombing, he was among the teenagers mobilized for the war effort, and was employed in a military depot near Hiroshima. In one of his most detailed autobiographies, he recalls August 6, 1945, which he often refers to simply as “that day” (*ano hi*), when he witnessed the burning of the city from a hill (Hirayama 1997, pp. 47–62). Despite not being injured directly from either the explosion or the subsequent fires that engulfed the city, his exposure to the radiation has been seen as the cause for the anemia and immune system issues that Hirayama suffered in the postwar period.

Soon after the war, Hirayama moved to Tokyo to study art. From the late 1950s, after a few years characterized by health and financial issues, his artistic work began to be recognized. After receiving a UNESCO fellowship to study comparative religious art in Europe in 1962, Hirayama started to define his career around the concept of “Silk Road”, pursuing research projects for the study and preservation of Buddhist sites across Asia—many of which he visited multiple times in his travels, and used as a source of inspiration for his own artistic production. His paintings represent the landscapes and ruins of ancient civilizations observed during his travels, together with his own reimagination of historical events that are said to have happened at those sites.

Parallel to his artistic work, Hirayama began an academic career at the Tokyo University of the Arts, which he became president of in 1989. This allowed him to pursue projects for the study of Buddhist sites in Asia—among which were the Mogao Caves in Dunhuang, China. Building upon his previous fellowship with UNESCO, Hirayama developed projects for the preservation of the cultural heritage of the Silk Road, and in the 1980s he envisioned a project called “Red Cross for Cultural Heritage” (*Bunkazai sekijūji*), which was turned into a foundation in 1987. This contributed to his 1989 designation as the first UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador to come from Japan. Today, his name is closely associated with the Japanese imagination of the Silk Road—to the extent that many of the exhibitions of his paintings are often combined with collections of artifacts from sites across Eurasia.² Hirayama passed away in 2009, after completing a series of wall paintings for Yakushiji temple in Nara (which I will discuss in further detail in the third section of this article).

In his autobiographical accounts, Hirayama imbues many of the major turning points in his life and career with a sense of predestination—constructing a progressive narrative of the discovery of his sense of a moral mission. For example, Hirayama interprets the immediate aftereffect of being an atomic bomb survivor—moving to live with his uncle—as determining his path to an artistic career, as his uncle encouraged him not only to become an artist, but a Japanese-style, or *nihonga*, painter (Hirayama 1997, p. 69). Nevertheless, we should also contextualize this decision in the history of postwar Japanese art, when *nihonga* artists could count on governmental support in their efforts to reconstruct, through this style, a Japanese identity imbued with the new values of pacifism (Foxwell 2015).

Though Hirayama associates the inspiration for his successful 1959 painting, *The Transmission of Buddhism* (*Bukkyō denrai*), with his family's religious practices and his youth experiences, this can likewise be more practically explained in terms of the artist's participation in a workshop on Dunhuang during the 1950s, as Enomoto points out (Enomoto 2021, pp. 176–80). Hirayama's construction of his career around the concept of "Silk Road" did not come simply from his travels, however. They also were derived from his experience of a mass broadcast event: the torch relay ceremony for the 1960 Olympic Games in Rome (Hirayama 1990, vol. 3, pp. 103–17). This ceremony highlighted the ancient cultural ties between Rome and Greece, and was further expanded through a path modelled on the Silk Road routes for the successive Olympics in Tokyo in 1964, symbolizing Eurasian connections.

Despite recognizing part of the historical contexts and contingencies behind important turns in his career, Hirayama imbues them with a sense of mission strongly associated with his *hibakusha* experience and with his personal interpretation of Buddhism. I propose to analyze the religious dimension in Hirayama's written and visual narratives under three rubrics: his view of history as a flow and repetition that can be turned into eternity through Buddhism; the importance of the personal experience of suffering at Hiroshima which is solved through the symbol of the Buddhist deity Fudō Myōō; and the association of suffering, a sense of purpose, and travel with the figure of the sixth century Chinese pilgrim-monk Xuanzang, who becomes a model in Hirayama's art and narratives.

A sense of time and of history plays an important role in Hirayama's art, as many of his paintings depict personal reimaginings of historical events. The experience of the atomic bombing is central here: in his memories of the period immediately following the end of the war, Hirayama stresses how the Japanese defeat and the consequences of the radiation exposure to his own health determined a sense of time dominated by uncertainty and fluctuation (Hirayama 1997, p. 73). While the trauma of the bomb could be limited to personal memory, Hirayama interprets history by expanding the subject, which is immersed in the flow of time, from the individual to the collectivity of humanity (*jinrui*) and culture (*bunka*), thus universalizing the experience of the bomb (Hirayama [1988] 2011, pp. 22–28, 33–37).

Hirayama uses his art both as a way to represent this flow of time, and as a tool for the imagination to suggest ways of overcoming suffering and the meaningless condition of those immersed in the flow. While his subjects are often landscape views or historical scenes, Hirayama approaches them from a non-realistic perspective, blurring borders and lines with hazy colors and leaving details undefined. Commenting on the symbolic importance of the color blue in his work, the artist associates it with three important elements of his view of time and art: childhood memories, intercultural connections, and the imaginative role of art to foster connections (Hirayama 1997, pp. 33–43; Hirayama [1988] 2011, pp. 26–28). He explains that the color blue recalls the Inland Sea where he grew up, but also notes that artifacts of blue color from different sites and religious traditions can allow for an interconnected view of the Silk Road. Finally, the artist uses the color blue to create a mystic and hazy atmosphere in his paintings, which is aimed at encouraging the observer's imagination and suggesting a universal meaning beyond the scene depicted. Individual memory and sense of identity, the interpretation of culture as connecting peoples, and the role of art in promoting this interpretation are three key aspects of Hirayama's visual discourse.

While Hirayama describes his own approach to art as "historical painting" (Hirayama 1997, pp. 151–52), he also stresses that the role of the artist is to add personal experiences and imagination to the subject represented in order to inspire in the observer a more intimate connection to the work. The imaginative and visionary approach in Hirayama's art allows the artist to blur personal memories and history, the past and the present. For instance, he uses events in his own life as inspiration to represent scenes from the life of the Buddha, and he superimposes reimagined scenes of historical events on his observation of contemporary landscapes and ruins. Hirayama's artistic reimagination was recognized by the Japanese novelist Inoue Yasushi (1907–1991), who stressed that Hi-

rayama's paintings allow the viewer to see the Buddhist sites of Central Asia not simply as ghostly ruins (*haikyo*), but as inspiring traces of the past (*iseki*), noting how this perspective impacted his own appreciation of the sites (Inoue 1976).

While the focus on ruins, desert caravans, and exotic landscapes could be associated with a romantic approach, Hirayama rejects this characterization of his work, and instead uses the personal experience of trauma and suffering to claim a deeper connection with the subjects he represents (Hirayama 1997, p. 145). Hirayama's autobiographical narratives interpret the artist's choice to represent Silk Road landscapes and Buddhist scenes in terms of destiny: his experience as a survivor of the atomic bombing—with the subsequent sense of being continuously in danger for his health—generated in him a search for eternity and salvation that European romantic painters did not express in their interest for the exotic (Hirayama [1988] 2011, p. 37).

If on the one hand personal suffering becomes a way to legitimize the artistic choices of Hirayama, on the other hand his paintings are aimed at inspiring in the observer an imaginative identification with the subject. This specifically refers to Buddhism as a message of spiritual salvation from suffering. For example, commenting upon the painting *A Fantasy of Entering Nirvana* (*Nyūnehan gensō*, 1961), Hirayama notes that he used the scene of the peaceful death of the Buddha Śākyamuni surrounded by his disciples to offer himself consolation for the loss of his father-in-law (Hirayama 1997, p. 87).

This brings us to the second main point in the analysis of religious themes in Hirayama's visual and textual discourse: the role of Buddhism as a spiritual solution to personal and collective suffering. It is specifically Hirayama's experience as a *hibakusha* that allows for the universalization of both suffering and the solution to suffering—that is, Buddhism—thus extending outwards from the individual to a shared sense of humanity and following a pattern of Hiroshima memorialization described by Lisa Yoneyama as “nuclear universalism” (Yoneyama 1999).

This is particularly visible in Hirayama's interpretation of the painting that I introduced at the beginning of the article: *The Rebirth of Hiroshima* (*Hiroshima shōhenzu*, 1979, Figure 1). As previously stated, the scene is dominated by red flames, erasing the city immediately after the atomic bombing, with the highly recognizable A-Bomb Dome at its center. This representation combines both Hirayama's personal memories of that day, and an iconic symbol which makes the location of the scene easy to identify also for an international observer—as the Dome was included in the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park.

The idea of rebirth is represented by Hirayama with a choice that is immediate neither to the eyes of the general observer, nor necessarily to those of a Buddhist one: the protective deity Fudō Myōō towering over the flames next to the Dome. While a common deity in esoteric Buddhism and especially in the Tendai and Shingon sects in Japan, Fudō is less representative of the Hiroshima area—which is dominated by Jōdo Shinshū sects that would more likely choose the image of a salvific Amida Buddha descending from the Pure Land. In Hirayama's explanation, he was looking for a strong symbol that would call for rebirth. He considered Avalokiteśvara—the bodhisattva of compassion—but deemed it too gentle to convey this message; likewise Amida Buddha was deemed too weak to respond to the post-bombing situation of Hiroshima (Hirayama 1997, introduction, and Hirayama [1988] 2011, pp. 20–22). Being at the same time a wrathful and protective deity, Fudō Myōō was chosen as a strong and energetic symbol that would both encourage the city to go on living, while also expressing Hirayama's message as a survivor to overcome both anger and pity.

The choice of Fudō can also be seen in Hirayama's personal approach to Buddhism, which tends to disregard cultural or sectarian divisions. In addition to the above-mentioned explanation given by the painter himself, the decision to avoid a more direct appeal to local Jōdo Shinshū Buddhists by choosing Amida can also be seen as a way to broaden its appeal to the audience—avoiding potential appropriation of the image by Buddhist sects. Hirayama clearly states that the message of rebirth in the painting is meant not only for the city or for Japanese Buddhists, but for all of humanity (Hirayama [1988] 2011,

p. 19). The view of Buddhism he shares through his art is seen as a tool to spread this message. What particularly draws him to Buddhism is the experience of suffering that is foundational to the Buddha's message, and for which the Buddha found an answer. This interpretation is meant to be shared across sectarian traditions, and can be considered a universal human experience.

Hirayama's approach to Buddhism—as expressed both in his texts and in his art—does not reflect any particular affiliation with the Pure Land traditions which dominate the Hiroshima area, and can be interpreted as a form of universalization of Buddhism through the experience of suffering aimed at overcoming sectarian boundaries. This interpretation could partially address but not solve the religious identity issue raised by Yuki Miyamoto in her investigation of religious ethics and memorialization of the atomic bombing (Miyamoto 2005, 2012). Analyzing the moral and religious interpretation of the bombing by a local Jōdo Shinshū priest, Miyamoto points out that, while the priest's use of Buddhist concepts of interdependent lives and collective body (*dōtai*) can provide a way out of dichotomies of victimization and retribution, it also leaves open the question of how people with different religious identities and beliefs might accept such Buddhist-based solution (Miyamoto 2005, pp. 154–57; Miyamoto 2012, chapter 3). Hirayama's choice of a visual approach to Buddhism not directly inspired by specific sectarian traditions might go beyond local affiliations and appropriations, but can still fall within the limits of exclusive religious identity. In the next section, I will further expand on this issue, showing how Hirayama's stress on Buddhism as cultural heritage rather than religion can be interpreted as a universalization strategy aimed at avoiding conflict based on religious identity and affiliation.

The way in which Hirayama describes his own approach to religious practice and to Buddhism reflects his eclectic view. For example, he describes the important role-model of his father, a devout Buddhist (Hirayama [1988] 2011, pp. 29–31), and he remembers his attraction to Zen Buddhism. In addition, Hirayama uses the Buddhist concept of karmic connection (*innen*) to explain why he chose to focus on Buddhist subjects in his paintings and why he chose *nihonga* (Japanese-style) rather than *yōga* (Western-style) painting: he sees these as the result of his connection to the previous generations of his family and to a lineage of artistic mentors. Likewise, while Buddhist vocabulary is strong in Hirayama's narratives, the painter also uses terms more commonly found in a Christian context. For instance, he compares the Christian concept of atonement with his feeling of indebtedness toward the victims of the atomic bombing (Hirayama 1997, introduction), and uses the term *setsuri* (providence) to strengthen the moral mission he associates with his choice of Buddhist subjects.

In this way, both the experience of suffering connected with the memory of the atomic bombing, as well as the solution to this suffering offered by Buddhism, become universalized as human experiences in Hirayama's narratives and in his art. This message of rebirth is not limited to a transcendental or individual level, but is connected to an ideal of pacifism and international collaboration that Hirayama associates with his view of Buddhism as a tradition that has crossed borders, facilitating intercultural connections. The idea of journey is one of the leitmotifs in Hirayama's art, in the way he narrates his life, and is also a basis for his efforts in the preservation of the artistic heritage of Buddhism.

The metaphor of travel is also derived from the painting that earned Hirayama his early recognition: *The Transmission of Buddhism* (*Bukkyō denrai*, 1959, Figure 2). The painting represents two monks with shaved heads and saffron robes crossing a forest eastward on horseback. The first monk extends his hand toward a white bird, likely a dove. The scene is meant to depict the seventh century CE monk Xuanzang heading back to China after spending years in India to study the sacred texts of Buddhism, which he brought back to his country. Xuanzang played an essential role in the history of East Asian Buddhism—not only for his direct role in the translation of Buddhist texts and the development of philosophical schools in China, but also because his journey inspired hagiographies and a rich religious and literary imaginary in East Asia.³ In Hirayama's art and texts, he became

a symbol of spiritual motivation and of cosmopolitan encounter, with which Hirayama himself identified through his own life experiences.

Hirayama offers a retrospective interpretation of the painting and of how he came to choose the subject, imbuing the former with a moral purpose and the latter with a sense of destiny (Hirayama 1997, pp. 82–98). As with all of the other Buddhist scenes, Hirayama explains his decision to represent characters with undefined and blurred faces within his conception of imaginative historical painting: by not providing too many realistic details, he makes the scene less “other” in time and space, thus facilitating the observer’s identification with the depicted subject. The artist also points out the importance of the direction of the two monks, who are heading eastward back to China after their journey to India. The idea behind this choice is that spiritual travel is supposed to conclude in one’s homeland, with the moral duty of spreading the message learnt throughout one’s journey. The fact that Xuanzang is holding a dove, a symbol of peace, reveals the projection of the present situation of postwar Japan on the scene: the ultimate moral message that Hirayama wants to associate with Buddhism and travel is the need for peace. According to this message, Buddhism is retrospectively seen as a form of transcultural spiritual salvation from suffering which spread across Asia through the efforts of monks and pilgrims like Xuanzang. The rediscovery—or retrospective construction—of this Buddhist message becomes, for Hirayama, a way to support the view of Japan as a promoter of peace and international reconciliation after World War II, thus expanding his interpretation of Buddhism from one of individual salvation from suffering to one of collective response to war.

Hirayama reads his extensive efforts later in life to preserve the artistic heritage of Buddhist sites across Asia in light of this moral mission that emerges from the individual and collective trauma of the nuclear bombing. In the same way in which Xuanzang had undertaken a dangerous journey to search for the original meaning of the Dharma in India, Hirayama spent decades travelling the same routes of the ancient monk to retrieve this shared Buddhist heritage. Additionally, in this case, suffering, travel, and moral purpose are connected in the artist’s retrospective interpretation of *The Transmission of Buddhism*. He tells how the idea for the painting came to him after a hiking trip to the mountains of Aomori, in northeastern Japan. He recalls an experience of revelation while contemplating the natural landscape after a dangerous climb (Hirayama 1997, pp. 82–85). This episode—which Enomoto reads as a kind of “satori” (Enomoto 2021, pp. 172–74)—expresses Hirayama’s conception of enlightenment through suffering. It is only after the painful experience of hiking, made even harder by his health conditions still affected from the consequences of radiation exposure, that he could fully admire nature and attain a sense of meaning beyond it. Hirayama compares this experience to Xuanzang’s perilous journey across the Himalayas in search of the meaning of the Dharma. While this retrospective and almost “self-hagiographical” account may not reflect the practical context that inspired Hirayama’s choice to paint Xuanzang’s journey, it shows the religious narrative at work in his interpretation—his emphasis on a combination of suffering, spiritual awakening, and sense of purpose.

In Hirayama’s narratives, suffering becomes a way to read travel in moral terms, while also allowing for a deeper understanding of the journey. In one of his “spiritual self-help” publications, he discusses the meaning of the spread of Buddhism with the head priest of an important Zen temple in Kyoto; when he is reminded of the importance of the embodied aspect of the transmission of Buddhism through art, Hirayama notes his own sense of gratitude for being able to travel so extensively despite the condition of his health in his youth (Hirayama [1996] 2012). In addition, the sense of a shared purposeful suffering together with the many other pilgrims, merchants, and monks who spread Buddhism along the routes of the Silk Road allows Hirayama to attach a sense of moral duty to remember, through his artistic reimagination, those who were forgotten by history (Hirayama 1997, p. 42).

The two crucial paintings in Hirayama's career that I have analyzed in this section—*The Rebirth of Hiroshima* and *The Transmission of Buddhism*—show how the artist connects the individual experience as an atomic bombing survivor to the universal experience of suffering, and proposes Buddhism as a spiritual solution to both. This moralization of memory echoes Didier Fassin's analysis of contemporary discourses on trauma which he defines as "traumatism":

"During the last quarter of the century, traumatism imposed itself as a form of original appropriation of the traces of history and as a dominant way of representing the relation to the past . . . the collective memory is inscribed as a traumatic relation with the past through which the group identifies itself as victim by recognizing a shared experience of suffering violence. Beyond the contextual differences, the same moral thread is traced: suffering becomes a cause, the event nourishes a re-reading of history".

(Fassin and Rechtman 2007, p. 30).

In light of the traumatic reading of the *hibakusha* experience, Hirayama proposes a visual re-reading of Buddhism as a remedy to recent historical traumas.

While Fassin's analysis allows us to reveal the moral and universalizing aspects of discourses on trauma, Dominick LaCapra's critical approach to the historiography on trauma can be applied to Hirayama's narratives in order to show the religious and myth-making aspects contained within them. LaCapra defines "traumatropism" as the process by which an experience of trauma is turned into a founding myth that legitimizes certain practices, and uses the language of "sacred" and "martyr" to show post-secular elements in the way victims of trauma are described (LaCapra [2001] 2014, pp. xii–xv). While Hirayama often characterizes Buddhism in terms of spirituality and culture rather than religion, his use of it as a potential solution to the suffering of trauma and as a shared heritage whose recognition can avoid risk of further traumatic experiences of conflict reveals the role that religion plays in the universalization of the memory of the atomic bombing. Rather than being a form of secularization of Buddhism through the activities of a lay artist as Hirayama, the artistic production and autobiographical works of this Japanese artist reveals the way in which religion—translated in terms of culture and spirituality—played an essential role in the memorialization of the individual and collective experience of the atomic bombing. In the post-Hiroshima "Atomic Age" in Japan lay artists and intellectuals such as Hirayama provided religion with the expanded language of solution to trauma. In the next section, we will see how these narratives of Buddhism were not limited to textual and visual discourse, but turn into practice through Hirayama's work on heritage preservation.

3. Buddhism as Cultural Heritage, Silk Road as Sacred Memory

In his autobiographical narratives, Hirayama sees 1979 as the year in which he finally visited Hiroshima after decades, and decided to express his personal traumatic experience of the atomic bombing through art, painting *The Rebirth of Hiroshima* twenty years after his early career-defining depiction of Xuanzang's travels in *The Transmission of Buddhism*. But 1979 also held significance as the year that Hirayama translated his discourse of peaceful intercultural collaboration, centered on the memory of shared Buddhism, into practice. An exhibition of his works was held in China, and he took the occasion to visit the Mogao caves in Dunhuang, fostering Sino-Japanese collaborations in the study and preservation of its Buddhist art. The following year, Hirayama and the abbot of Yakushiji temple in Nara, Takada Kōin (1924–88), held a Buddhist ceremony to inaugurate the beginning of one of Hirayama's most challenging works: a series of Silk Road-inspired wall paintings for the temple's Xuanzang Pavilion.

Both of these events exemplify the way in which the moralizing discourse on the memory of the nuclear bombing promoted by Hirayama is not limited to visual or textual narratives, but it contributes to the legitimization of practices of cultural heritage preservation and of religious rituals of collective memorialization. In this section, I will discuss both of these examples to show how they share the concept of "Buddhist heritage",

blurring the boundary between secular and religious practice. While Hirayama's mission to study and preserve the artistic heritage of Buddhism across Asia can be considered as a form of heritagization of Buddhism, memorialization rituals at Yakushiji connected with Hirayama's art and view of the Silk Road can be seen as a form of sacralization of heritage. This dynamic shows the fluidity of the categories of religion and heritage, and how their strategic deployment can expand, rather than confine, the role of religion in the "Atomic Age".

Hirayama's interest in the preservation of the art and archaeological sites of the Silk Road can be traced back to his early engagement with the study of comparative religious art he had undertaken with a UNESCO fellowship in the early 1960s. As we have mentioned above, however, Hirayama was already familiar with research into the Dunhuang caves conducted by scholars of the Tokyo School of Fine Arts. If the landscapes and ruins of the Silk Road were a source of inspiration for Hirayama's paintings, they were also an object for copying practices by art students of the *nihonga* style in Japan—a practice that Hirayama had encouraged by establishing expeditions to China and facilitating the arrival of Chinese students of art in Tokyo (Arai 2015, chap. 5). On the backdrop of newly established trade agreements between Japan and the People's Republic of China (PRC) in the 1970s, as well as the growing collaboration between the two countries in the 1980s, Hirayama played an essential role in fostering the use of Buddhist art heritage as a field of collaboration (Enomoto 2021, pp. 196–229). While the focus of the early missions in the 1980s was the Buddhist caves at Dunhuang, in the 1990s Hirayama also promoted a project for the preservation of the ancient city walls in Nanjing (Hirayama and Tani 2011, pp. 101–10).

Hirayama's projects on cultural heritage were not limited to the study of sites or to the use of ancient art for the inspiration of modern art; rather, they became increasingly concerned with the preservation of artistic heritage, especially in areas affected by military conflict. From the 1970s, Hirayama began to envision a "Red Cross for Cultural Heritage" (*Bunkazai sekijūji*), which became structurally organized as a foundation in 1988 through collaboration with the Tokyo University of the Arts, UNESCO, and Japanese aid for development. Beyond its initial focus on Chinese sites, the foundation has supported projects in Cambodia, South Korea, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, and also for collections of Japanese art in Europe and North America (Hirayama and Tōkyō Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan 2011). Hirayama's prestigious role as an artist and a scholar of art, as well as his connections with UNESCO and with the Japanese political leadership of the 1980s, formed the basis for successful funding campaigns for such projects (Ōmiya 2012). Indeed, the ethos of these projects echoed the policy of expanding Japanese foreign assistance to Asian countries by the Takeshita Noboru cabinet in the late 1980s (Enomoto 2021, pp. 212–16). The popularity of the 1980s NHK television documentary series *The Silk Road*, which spurred the imagination of exotic places now more accessible for the expanding market of Japanese tourism, also attracted interest in Hirayama's art and his funding campaigns.

While the development of this foundation and its projects might simply be seen as the product of a positive combination of marketing and media strategy with political networking, Hirayama's motivations in his efforts to preserve the cultural heritage of the Silk Road are imbued with a sense of the collective moral duty of the Japanese people, and with a sense of the urgency conferred by his experience of war—already visible in the choice of the name "Red Cross" for the heritage foundation. Hirayama states that the initial idea to establish this project came to him during the 1970s, when the civil war in Cambodia threatened potential damage to the Angkor Wat site (Hirayama and Tani 2011, pp. 71–80). The fate of the giant Buddhas of Bamiyan, Afghanistan was another of Hirayama's great concerns. Before their destruction by the Taliban in 2001, Hirayama visited and depicted the giant statues in the 1960s, making multiple public appeals in Japan and with UNESCO to try to save them. Hirayama connects this failed attempt to save the Afghanistan Buddhas with his experience of war under the concept of a "cultural heritage refugee" (*bunkazai imin*). Hirayama used this concept to promote projects for the retrieval and restitution of artifacts stolen from areas of conflict.⁴ In Hirayama's view, these quasi-humanized artifacts

become custodians of the memory of times when people, goods, and ideas flowed along the trade routes of Central Asia, and their protection becomes a way to promote this view of peaceful, cosmopolitan cultural exchange.

The experience of the atomic bomb plays again an important role in the construction of the sense of duty toward cultural heritage that Hirayama wants to spread among his Japanese audience. He recognizes the limits and potential criticism of using development aid only for the preservation of artistic heritage, and sees his own projects as basis for the cultural, educational, and economic development of the local communities at the sites involved in these various projects. Explaining the origins and purpose of his “Red Cross for Cultural Heritage” foundation, Hirayama cites the trauma of losing one’s heritage as one of the motivations inspiring it—conceived not only in cultural, but also in material terms. For instance, he compares the destruction caused by the civil war in Cambodia with his own experience of loss after the Hiroshima bombing, and with other forms of loss due to natural disasters, such as the 1995 Great Hanshin earthquake in Japan (Hirayama and Tani 2011, pp. 86–87). Building on both his personal trauma as a *hibakusha*, and on a collectivized memory of WWII, Hirayama stresses the duty of Japan to use its economic power to promote international dialogue through the preservation of the cultural heritage of the Silk Road (Hirayama and Tani 2011, chap. 8).

This instrumental use of cultural heritage preservation is particularly visible in the case of his decades-long collaboration with the PRC from the 1970s, which focused on the Buddhist caves of Dunhuang. In short, Hirayama sees the shared effort to study and preserve cultural heritage as a way to go beyond national borders and interests (Hirayama and Tani 2011, pp. 16–38). A key dimension of Hirayama’s project involves looking at Buddhism as a form of shared cultural heritage rather than a religion—as the latter could lead to sectarian and competitive forms of affiliation and identity. Hirayama’s interpretation of Buddhism as shared culture rather than religion can be seen as a further attempt to solve the risks implied in identifying with a specific religion that we have analyzed in the previous section. While Hirayama’s approach to Buddhism already constitutes a form of universalization going beyond specific Japanese sectarian traditions, his stress on Buddhism as culture can be seen as a strategy to reach a wider audience and avoid boundaries and limits connected with religious affiliations.

Hirayama’s view of Buddhism is also expressed in his artistic reimagination of the spread of Buddhism across Asia. While recognizing the religious aspects of Buddhism, Hirayama nevertheless stresses that his own approach through art and heritage allowed him to perceive it as culture (Hirayama [1996] 2012, p. 176). In addition, looking at the history of Japan in relation to other peoples, Hirayama repeats a typical discourse of “Japaneseness” (*nihonjinron*) which highlights how the Japanese have been able to absorb and make their own elements from other cultures, and in the light of this he defines Buddhism as an “advanced form of international culture” (Hirayama [1996] 2012, p. 95).

This focus on culture as a tool to connect Japan with the rest of Asia while also recuperating the value of Japanese identity in a peaceful context echoes the policy of Japan as a “nation of culture” (*bunka kokka*), promoted by Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru immediately after WWII. Historian Carol Gluck discusses this as an attempt “to displace politics and to create pride in a long cultural tradition” (Gluck 1993, p. 57). Gluck also observes how a similar conservative construction of public memory through historical consciousness was at work in the years immediately after the war and at the end of the Shōwa period, the late 1980s, when Hirayama Ikuo’s cultural heritage activism reached international recognition with his appointment as UNESCO Good Will Ambassador. This same chronological pattern characterizes the development of Japanese approaches to cultural heritage preservation as analyzed by Aike Rots and Mark Teeuwen (Rots and Teeuwen 2020, pp. 6–12).

In light of recent research into religion and critical cultural heritage studies (Meyer and de Witte 2013; Rots 2019), Hirayama’s stress on Buddhism as a form of international cultural heritage, rather than a religion, can be seen as a discourse of “heritagization” connected with practices of cultural heritage preservation, tourism, and marketization. But

this process does not imply a form of secularization or the disappearance of religion; in fact, turning religion into heritage can expand its role in the public sphere, while religious discourses and practices transform into new forms of sacralization, which universalize and naturalize religious beliefs and practices—as Aike Rots shows in his analysis of the use of heritage in Japan (Rots 2019). Hirayama’s use of the language of cultural heritage facilitated the possibility of collaboration between Japan and the PRC by avoiding the risks that a stress on the religious nature of Buddhist art could pose to fundraising and the involvement of public institutions.

In addition, the interaction between religion and heritage is not a one-way process of heritagization of the sacred. The opposite process of sacralization of heritage is also at work, according to which certain religious elements are kept in the process, and may even receive an enhanced “sacred surplus” in terms of universalization or authenticity (Meyer and de Witte 2013). In the case of Hirayama’s “heritagization” of Buddhism, we can see how his art is also used in a religious space and in connection with ritual practice at Yakushiji temple in Nara, which benefits from the international image of the Silk Road promoted by the artist.

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, in 1980 Hirayama began work on what is often defined as his “Sistine Chapel”: *Wall Paintings of the Great Tang Western Regions* (*Daitō saiki hekiga*),⁵ a series of seven scenes depicting the landscapes, from China to India through Central Asia, which had been the setting for Xuanzang’s journey in the seventh century, observed through the eyes of the contemporary traveler Hirayama and imbued with his imaginative approach to “historical painting”. The paintings decorate a hall behind the Xuanzang pavilion, which was built in the 1980s to enshrine the relics of the famous Chinese pilgrim-monk that had been recently acquired by Yakushiji temple.

Hirayama was commissioned by the temple’s charismatic abbot, Takada Kōin, as his name had become synonymous with the Silk Road and he had first achieved recognition with a painting dedicated to Xuanzang’s journey. Takada himself had successfully employed the cultural heritage of the Silk Road and of Buddhism as a link between Japan and Asia to secure support and donations to Yakushiji—marshalling the temple’s long history of connection with the continent, dating back to the Nara period and supported by its possession of various important artifacts. Connecting this cosmopolitan view of the history of the temple with rituals for the memorialization of the dead aimed at the lay supporters, Takada managed to attract interest, donations, and tourism to Yakushiji, using the profits to restore and rebuild many of the precincts’ structures (Stortini 2018).

It took twenty years for Hirayama to realize the wall paintings—a timeframe that he compares to Xuanzang’s translation of the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras* (that he had brought back from India), stressing again the parallel between himself and the Chinese monk (Hirayama 2001). After their completion, the paintings were solemnly inaugurated through a consecration ritual called the “eye-opening ceremony” (*kaigen kuyō*) on the significant date of 31 December 2000, the last day of the second millennium. The ritual, which was broadcast live on television as part of the celebrations for the end of the year, was modelled on the ritual used in the eighth century to consecrate the Great Buddha of Tōdaiji temple, also located in Nara. It featured Hirayama providing the final stroke to the paintings with a giant brush, connected through colorful ropes to the abbot of Yakushiji behind him and to the other priests and the audience outside the hall.

The consecration of Hirayama’s wall paintings shows how the discourse on Buddhism as a form of shared cultural heritage connecting Japan with Asia is not simply an expression of the secularization or retreat of religion, but instead offers new modes of sacralization—adding the universality, authenticity, and cosmopolitanism provided by Hirayama’s discourse on Buddhism and his practices of cultural heritage preservation. The experience of the nuclear bombing and the historical consciousness of living in an “Atomic Age” are present in the discourse and ritual practice of Yakushiji, as the prayers performed in front of Hirayama’s wall paintings are aimed at building a peaceful world. Even today, on the fifth of each month, a ceremony is performed in front of the scenes

painted by Hirayama, where the commemoration of Xuanzang is associated with a prayer for peace. The choice of consecrating the paintings on new year's day of the first year of the third millennium, symbolically closing a century with two world conflicts, must also be understood in terms of the construction of a public memory which moralizes and spiritualizes the Japanese experience of atomic bombing and war defeat to stress the new role of postwar Japan as a country of culture and spirituality—as a country which uses its economic power to foster peace and international collaboration.

4. Conclusions

The concept of an “Atomic Age” ushered in by nuclear experiments and atomic bombings might suggest the idea of a deep break in historical consciousness, a “before and after”, which might also be repeated in the construction of public memory and in the role that religious practices and ideas have within it. As we have seen, the *hibakusha* experience was central in Hirayama's narratives of his life and artistic career, in his conception of Buddhism as a spiritual salvation from suffering and as a cultural link across borders, and in his universalization of trauma and his call for Japan to preserve the cultural heritage of Buddhism and the Silk Road as its moral duty.

Yet, in Hirayama's conception of history and in his universalization of the memory of the atomic bombing as affecting all humanity, it is continuity rather than rupture that plays an essential role. In particular, Hirayama uses the concept of “generation” (*sedai*) to connect groups of people across time, allowing to transcend individualism into a universal sense of humanity (Hirayama [1988] 2011, pp. 33–41). This connection across generations is also strengthened by the Buddhist concept of causality through the idea of karma—*innen*—that Hirayama uses to interpret his artistic choices in terms of destiny and indebtedness toward the previous generations of *nihonga* painters. This is also visually translated into a painting he dedicated to the art historian Okakura Kakuzō (1863–1913), whose legacy as president of the Tokyo School of Fine Arts he felt he had inherited. The painting, titled *An Image of the Lineage of the Japanese Art Institute* (*Nihon Bijutsuin ketsumyakuzu*, 1965), represents Okakura riding a horse surrounded by a crowd of people, likely the generations of artists and intellectuals with whom Hirayama felt connected. Okakura's posture visibly echoes Xuanzang's in *The Transmission of Buddhism*; the difference is that Okakura is directed westward, symbolizing his efforts to rediscover the spiritual connection of Japan with Asia through art—again prefiguring Hirayama's own efforts for the Silk Road heritage.

Hirayama's stress on connections across generations and across national borders is aimed at generating a sense of moral duty toward others and toward future generations, building on a blend of Buddhist karmic causality and the modern concept of heritage. While his aim is to foster peace and international collaboration, a critical approach to continuity in the discourses, practices, and aesthetics of Buddhism as a cultural connection across Asia reveals the problematic nature of this form of historical consciousness and collective memory. As Gluck has pointed out, postwar representations of Japan as a country of culture and peace tend to displace their political nature, erasing a similar stress on pride for a long cultural tradition expressed in prewar Japan by the imperial institution (Gluck 1993). Similarly, Lisa Yoneyama has shown the paradoxical use for the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park of a wartime architectural project originally conceived for the construction of a shrine to celebrate the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere, which was an instrument of Japanese imperialism and military expansion in Asia (Yoneyama 1999, pp. 1–3). These examples show a problem with the moralization and conflation of memory and history in discourses on trauma that is also described by Fassin and LaCapra: namely, that they naturalize and de-politicize these domains.

Moreover, in the case of Hirayama's construction of Buddhism and the Silk Road as cultural connections inspiring peaceful cooperation across borders in order to avoid the mistakes of WWII, there are potential obfuscations of elements of continuity with prewar ideas, images, and practices which justified nationalism and imperialism. For example, the Silk Road route used for the torch relay ceremony of the 1964 Tokyo Olympics,

which inspired Hirayama's interest in the Silk Road, was originally a proposal for the 1940 Japanese Olympics, ultimately cancelled because of the start of the war (Collins 2007). The idea of the Silk Road connecting Japan with Asia was similar, though of course the aim was different, as the prewar project stressed the glory of the Japanese empire. This view was certainly connected with the prewar redeployment of Okakura's slogan, "Asia is one" and pan-Asian views in anti-Western and imperialist discourse.

Religion and Buddhism are not immune to such a critical approach to pre- and postwar discursive continuities. Many Buddhist priests and intellectuals contributed to this same discourse in the prewar period, stressing a universalist view of Buddhism which justified Japanese expansionism in East Asia. Wartime events also affect the memorialization practices we have described at Yakushiji: while the link between the temple and Xuanzang can indeed be located in its foundation in the Nara period and its cultural connections with China, the relics enshrined in the Pavilion only arrived in Japan during WWII, after being discovered in Nanjing during the military occupation (Sakaida 2013; Brose 2016). Yakushiji priests and lay community have toured the relics in China and organized pilgrimages and reciprocal visits with Chinese Buddhist communities, but the efforts in collaboration could obfuscate the contested history of these relics.

Therefore, while the role of religion and of Buddhism in the construction of historical consciousness in the "Atomic Age" might suggest ways to overcome the nationalist appropriation of the symbols and narratives of trauma, at the same time, their depoliticized and de-historicized use might obscure the way in which these same ideas and images were conducive to imperialist ideology and militarist policies in the prewar period.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: Not applicable.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Notes

- ¹ For a short chronology of his life and work, see (Hirayama 2007, pp. 94–98). For his artistic production, see the seven volumes of Hirayama 1990, while for the catalogue of a retrospective on his life and work, see (Hirayama et al. 2007).
- ² See in particular the Hirayama Ikuo Silk Road Museum in Yamanashi prefecture (<http://www.silkroad-museum.jp/>, accessed on 5 October 2021), and the museum dedicated to the artist's life and work: <http://hirayama-museum.or.jp/> (accessed on 5 October 2021). Other museums that host substantial collections of Hirayama's paintings are Sagawa Art Museum (<https://www.sagawa-artmuseum.or.jp/plan/hirayama/collection.html>, accessed on 5 October 2021), and Saku Municipal Museum (<https://www.city.saku.nagano.jp/museum/exhibition/001-hirayama-ikuo.html>, accessed on 5 October 2021).
- ³ For a recent study of the figure of Xuanzang in East Asian Buddhism and more broadly its cultural impact, see (Brose 2021). Max Deeg has analyzed in depth Xuanzang's travelogue and its literary, hagiographic, political aspects (Deeg 2014).
- ⁴ Hirayama visited Afghanistan in 2002. Among the results of this project of "cultural heritage refugee" is the retrieval of fifteen objects stolen from the National Museum of Kabul and their return to Afghanistan (Kyūshū Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan et al. 2016).
- ⁵ See the temple's website: https://www.yakushiji.or.jp/guide/garan_genjyo.html (accessed on 20 September 2021).

References

- Arai, Kei. 2015. *Nihonga to Zairiyō: Kindai ni tsukurareta dentō*. Musashino and Tokyo: Musashino Bijutsu Daigaku Shuppankyoku.
- Brose, Benjamin. 2016. Resurrecting Xuanzang: The Modern Travels of a Medieval Monk. In *Recovering Buddhism in Modern China*. Edited by Jan Kiely and J. Brooks Jessup. New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 143–76.
- Brose, Benjamin. 2021. *Xuanzang: China's Legendary Pilgrim and Translator*. Boulder and Colorado: Shambhala Publications.
- Collins, Sandra S. 2007. *The 1940 Tokyo Games. The missing Olympics: Japan, the Asian Olympics and the Olympic Movement*. London: Routledge.
- Deeg, Max. 2014. When Peregrinus is not Pilgrim: The Chinese 'Pilgrims' Records. A Revision of Literary Genre and its Context. In *Searching for the Dharma, Finding Salvation: Buddhist Pilgrimage in Time and Space*. Edited by Christoph Cueppers and Max Deeg. Lumbini: Lumbini International Research Institute, pp. 65–95.
- Enomoto, Yasuko. 2021. "Tonkō" to Nihonjin: Shiruku rōdō ni tadoru sengo no Nitchū kankei. Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Shinsha.

- Fassin, Didier, and Richard Rechtman. 2007. *L'empire du traumatisme: Enquête sur la condition de victime*. Paris: Flammarion.
- Foxwell, Chelsea. 2015. The Painting of Sadness? The End of Nihonga, Then and Now. *Art Margins* 4: 27–60. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Gluck, Carol. 1993. The Past in the Present. In *Postwar Japan as History*. Edited by Andrew Gordon. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 29–61.
- Hirayama, Ikuo. 1990. *Hirayama Ikuo zenshū: The Masterpieces of Ikuo Hirayama*. Tokyo: Kōdansha.
- Hirayama, Ikuo. 1997. *Hirayama Ikuo: yūkyū no nagare no naka ni*. Tokyo: Nihon Tosho Sentā.
- Hirayama, Ikuo. 2001. *Hirayama Ikuo Yakushiji Genjō Sanzō-in daihekiga*. Tokyo: Kōdansha.
- Hirayama, Ikuo. 2007. *Hirayama Ikuo no sekai*. Tokyo: Bijutsu Nenkansha.
- Hirayama, Ikuo. 2011. *Gunjō no umi e: Waga seishunfu*. Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Shinsha. First published 1988.
- Hirayama, Ikuo. 2012. *Ikasarete ikiru*. Tokyo: Kadokawa. First published 1996.
- Hirayama, Ikuo, and Hisamitsu Tani. 2011. *Bunkazai sekijūji no hata*. Tokyo: Hakubunkan Shinsha.
- Hirayama, Ikuo, and Tōkyō Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan. 2011. *Bukkyō denrai no michi Hirayama Ikuo to bunkazai hogo: Bunkazai hogohō seitei 60-shūnen kinen*. Tokyo: NHK.
- Hirayama, Ikuo, Tōkyō Kokuritsu Kindai Bijutsukan, and Hiroshima Kenritsu Bijutsukan. 2007. *Hirayama Ikuo: Inori no tabiji*. Tokyo: Yomiuri Shinbun Tokyo Honsha.
- Inoue, Yasushi. 1976. Hirayama Ikuo. Shūkyōtekina shikisai gensō no gaka. *Geijutsu Shinchō* 319: 75–78.
- Kyūshū Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, Tōkyō Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, Sankei Shimbun, and National Museum Kabul. 2016. *Hidden Treasures from the National Museum, Kabul*. Tokyo: Sankei Shinbunsha.
- LaCapra, Dominick. 2014. *Writing History, Writing Trauma*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. First published 2001.
- Meyer, Birgit, and Marleen de Witte. 2013. Heritage and the Sacred. *Material Religion* 9: 274–404. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Miyamoto, Yuki. 2005. Rebirth in the Pure Land or God's Sacrificial Lambs? Religious Interpretations of the Atomic Bombings in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 32: 131–59. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Miyamoto, Yuki. 2012. *Beyond the Mushroom Cloud: Commemoration, Religion, and Responsibility after Hiroshima*. New York: Fordham University Press.
- Ōmiya, Tomonobu. 2012. *Hirayama Ikuo no shinjitsu*. Tokyo: Naminorisha.
- Rots, Aike P. 2019. World Heritage, Secularisation, and the New 'Public Sacred' in East Asia. *Journal of Religion in Japan* 8: 151–78. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Rots, Aike P., and Mark Teeuwen, eds. 2020. *Sacred Heritage in Japan*. New York: Routledge.
- Sakaida, Yukiko. 2013. *Dare mo shiranai "Saiyūki": Genjō Sanzō no ikotsu o meguru Higashi Ajia sengoshi*. Tokyo: Ryūkei Shosha.
- Stortini, Paride. 2018. Materializing Buddhist Memories: Objects and Images of the Silk Road in Hirayama Ikuo and Yakushiji temple. *Japanese Religions* 43: 121–44.
- Yoneyama, Lisa. 1999. *Hiroshima Traces: Time, Space, and the Dialectics of Memory*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.