

Miki's Philosophy of Imagination and Temporality

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It is well-known that Nishida Kitaro, the leading figure of the Kyoto School of philosophy, developed an original account of being based on Buddhism, and his existentialist philosophy has attracted a wide, global audience. Interestingly, and somewhat counter-intuitively, Nishida's philosophy of the "present" was critically inherited and extensively extended not by conservative disciples of the School but by two leftist Kyoto School philosophers, Miki Kiyoshi and Tosaka Jun. This may indeed appear surprising to the audience. The common sense understanding of Nishida's legitimate heir was mainly held by the Big 4—the mainstream conservative disciples of Nishida's, including Kosaka Masaaki, Nishitani Keiji, Koyama Iwao, and Suzuki Shigetaka—who infamously collaborated with the imperial government, or at least it appears to be so to contemporary readers (Tanaka 2000).

Miki Kiyoshi, a leftist philosopher of the Kyoto School, was born in the Hyogo prefecture in 1897. After graduating from a prestigious high school in Tokyo, Miki moved to Kyoto to study under the supervision of Nishida at the Kyoto Imperial University. Despite his outstanding academic record, he never obtained a position in the faculty of letters where many other, particularly conservative, Kyoto School philosophers held professorships. Instead, he returned to Tokyo in 1927 to take up an academic position at Hosei University, where he worked until 1930 when he was dismissed for the alleged violation of the infamous Public Security Act and died in prison in 1945.

The School's leftist philosophers inherited Nishida's project and devoted their intellectual lives to solving Nishida's problem of being. My argument in this paper proceeds as follows. First, I introduce two existentialist philosophers from Japan and Germany, Martin Heidegger and Nishida Kitaro, who developed their philosophies at almost the same time—the interwar period—in order to clarify the problem of writing about the indescribable, in other words, writing about being. I particularly delve deeply into Nishida's later works. Second, Miki's works are introduced with a focus on his philosophy of history. Following his publication of historical philosophy, Miki joined *Showa Kenkyukai*, former prime minister Konoe Fumimaro's brain trust. Third, I will investigate the discourses he published as a member of this brain trust. Finally, I take up Miki's argument on "imagination" (*kosoryoku* 構

想力)), which he developed by reflecting his political engagement. There, I introduce Miki's experience of the Philippines and his reflections upon them.

Throughout his life, Miki struggled to reconcile the abstract idea of the universality and concrete experiences of everyday life. In this struggle, concepts such as relationality, temporality, and morality play crucial roles.

Heidegger and Nishida: Existential Philosophy and World War II

In terms of the concept of human existence, Martin Heidegger and Nishida Kitaro are probably the first intellectuals that we think of when we investigate this demanding topic. As is well known, both played an active philosophical and political role in the interwar period. The two philosophers, who were responsible for significant philosophical trends in Europe and Asia, attempted to present certain prescriptions in the age of confusion and disarray through the development of ontology. This was motivated by the impact of World War I, or the Great War as it was called—unspeakable, of course, for both East and West—which resulted in a social state in which trust in reason was unprecedentedly shaken. In the era when Western civilization was assaulted by the barbaric violence of war, these two philosophers attempted to find a reason for human beings to live. In their philosophical inquiries, they posed the fundamental question, “What is being?”

What was common between these two philosophical figures was a sort of critical view towards the modernity and civilization of the time. People become a part of a mass due to the emergence of consumer society. The idea that Immanuel Kant desperately tried to rescue by asking, “What is enlightenment?”, that is, the idea of rational and independent individuals, which Western philosophy assumed as a premise, had already disappeared. Heidegger (1962) described such people with the word “falling.” Given the existence of unethical people, Nishida insisted on a connection with others through his concept of the “eternal present,” which would allow society to be opened up to those who are regarded as others. Both philosophers criticized the loss of humanity due to the extreme development of reason (mainly instrumental reason) in Western philosophy and sought a “return” to what Heidegger called the “original” place of human beings, that is, a return to bodily experiences. The development of a series of esoteric philosophical terms ranging from “pure experience” (*junsui keiken*: 純粹経験) to “self-identity of the absolute contradiction” (*zettai mujunteki jiko doitsu*: 絶対矛盾の自己同一) in Nishida's struggle with being can also be understood as an approach to this “intrinsic” existence (Nishida 1947, 1948).

What underlies the two philosophical engagements is their exclusive focus on bodily experience as

a fundamental element of human existence, rather than that of a robot or machine. Emphasis on the body against reason was the original challenge with which Heidegger and Nishida were concerned. Conversely, it can be said that what was lost most in Germany and Japan during the inter-war period was a concern with the body and bodily experiences. The world showed unprecedented development, the global economy boasted, and “civilized countries” gave themselves the “honorable” role of leading many other “barbaric” countries through colonization. However, everyday people lost themselves and the aim of life and were alienated from society: They lost the meaning of living and melted into the masses. They became a part of a huge machine, doing what they were supposed to, and repeatedly spending their days in the same way. To overcome this condition of lost humanity, it was necessary to return to the “original” element of human beings. What these philosophers found was that the key to answering this question lay in bodily experiences.

The consistent interest of Nishida’s philosophical inquiry was to investigate being via the question of how to philosophize bodily experiences. He maintained this interest until his last writings. In his final article, entitled “Locational logic and religious world view,” Nishida presents the concept of *heijotei* (平常底) which literally means “normal bottom.” He used this term to refer to what he tried to describe with such concepts as the place of nothingness and the eternal present (Nishida 1949), and, like other similar concepts, it derived from Nishida’s adherence to the body rather than the mind. Here, Nishida sees a transcendent state of mind during ordinary life, such as when wearing clothes, eating a meal, or taking a rest when one is tired. In such casual life experiences, which are common to all people, we see religious transcendence (Nishida 1949) because we do not think or have to plan when we carry out such actions. Nishida’s idea that everydayness equals a transcendental state of mind can be understood as idealizing everydayness and claiming the superiority of the body over reason. This transcendence based on bodily experiences was given a predominant position in Nishida’s political writings to prove the presupposed superiority of Japan to the West.

The problem here resides in what kind of concreteness this *heijotei* has. In Nishida’s philosophical composition, the description of the relationship of individual/universal (“one is many” and “many is one”) is repeatedly employed. For Nishida, an individual is a representation of concreteness and is placed in contrast to the universal. Individuals are the self-realization of the eternal present, that is, the universalized being. In Nishida view, individual existence is in contradiction with the universal in one way or another because each individual has their own experiences. However, this “individual” is problematic since it appears to be a very abstract existence. Its existence is born in the relationship with universality, and, as a result, it emerges as a uniform, abstract, leveled existence. Nishida ar-

gues that each individual existence differs, although the illumination of individuals itself is standardized. This is exactly the factor that causes Nishida's philosophy to be criticized as idealism. In fact, the absence of this concrete being results from the disappearance of the bodily experience in his discourse (Tosaka 1966) in the name of bodily experiences.

This criticism parallels Levinas's critique of Heidegger. Levinas found difficulty in adopting Heidegger's existentialist ontology's concept of "others" or alterity because Heidegger's philosophy standardized "others" without a face. For Levinas, Heidegger's ontology is a project of totalization that resulted in preventing an "ethical face-to-face relation" (Topolski 2015, 16). Nishida's ideas experienced exactly the same problem, which was why the left-wingers of the Kyoto School took a critical stance towards his philosophy of being.

Interestingly, it was not the key members of the Kyoto School, such as the Big 4, that injected concreteness into Nishida's discourse (although it seems that Tanabe Hajime was obviously heading in this direction) without deforming the essence of his philosophy. As is well known, the Big 4 took a different direction by applying Nishida's ontology to the Westphalian idea of nation-states. In a sense, this was a further abstraction of Nishida's ontology, which purified Nishida's being with a rational understanding of the Westphalian world. As such, there is no pain or suffering of peoples in their configuration of world history.

Rigorous attempts to bring Nishida's ontology down to earth were rather materialized, or at least attempts were made to materialize them by an intellectual tradition of the leftist Kyoto school philosophers. Among them, Miki Kiyoshi is worthy of attention.

The Leftists of the Kyoto School

The leftist Kyoto School philosophers include Miki Kiyoshi, Tosaka Jun, and Kakehashi Akihide (Hattori 2000). Nakai Shoichi and Fuanayama Shinichi may also be counted. They were generally regarded as severe critics of the mainstream philosophers of the Kyoto School and not sufficiently discussed by contemporary specialists. Even if cited as members of the School, they are often depicted as representations of the Kyoto School's perception of modern technology (Fujita 2001; Hattori 2000; Ohashi 2004) because, in many parts, the leftists critically engaged with capitalism by deploying Marxism, and their focus was inevitably directed toward scientific technology and the development of production.

Unlike the general understanding of the leftist philosophers of the School, I would argue here that one of the characteristics of their philosophical engagements can be found in their ceaseless efforts to socialize Nishida's philosophy by bringing it back into concrete contexts. The intellectual context of the time was responsible for their engagement in this extremely recalcitrant and intricate task. There was an impulsive advent of right-wing politics in the Japanese political landscape from the 1920s to the 30s that criticized liberalism and Marxism due to their disrespect for national polity (国体) (Hattori 2008). There was also a widespread feeling among Japanese intellectuals that there was an urgent need to counter this harsh and intolerant right-wing political narrative. Nishida was also one of the intellectuals who were critical of the advent of narrow-minded nationalists and continuously remonstrated their extreme ideas. However, much like his philosophy, his remonstrations were rather vague and abstract and, therefore, did not directly impact this new political wave. It is also worth noting in this context that this time was one full of anxiety. This situation was not limited to Japan but was common worldwide, instigated by such tragic events as the Great War and Great Depression. Modernity was now in the process of being dismantled, and its magnificent structures seemed to have collapsed. It appeared as if everything was losing its foundations. Adopting Nishida's wording of the fundamental being, Miki writes in his philosophical note that the "biggest problem of the whole of humanity today is how to make a shape out of a shapeless being" (Miki 1967a, 259).

The left-wingers' efforts to conceive Nishida's ontology based on nothingness at times took place critically and at others proceeded in a more affirmative manner. As there is no concrete being in Nishida's philosophy, there is no society or social justice in his narrative either. This is partly because Nishida's engagement was purely philosophical and partly because his intention was to find the reason for his own tragic experiences, such as the loss of his wife and children. In other words, Nishida's inquiry into being was strongly motivated by his personal experiences, and his philosophy naturally came to exclusively focus on himself. This exclusive focus on his own personal experiences made Nishida's socio-political engagement weak; indeed, he appears to us to have little interest in society, and, consequently, individual subjectivity was placed in direct contrast to universality.

Here, the philosophy of nothingness, Nishida's most well-known concept, which supposedly includes every being within it, became a mere open system in which everyone is included. It does not have a clear direction or programs to achieve: In other words, Nishida's concept of nothingness only promotes a place or field in which new relations take place, much like capitalism, which also relies on new combinations and networking for inventions and innovations but does not have a clear direction or programs for social justice. Consequently, Nishida's philosophy appears to be a simple liberal-

ist discourse, as Tosaka (1966) correctly describes.

The leftists of the School strived to break this limitation in Nishida's philosophy and to concretize the fundamental being in order to socialize it for the purpose of social justice. This was, some interpret, a challenge to bring the concept of the public into Nishida's philosophy (Goto 2007). Their efforts aimed to establish the public space in the discourse of Nishida's philosophy. The socialization of Nishida's philosophy, which appears to be more private than public, at the same time transformed it into the context of relationality among others, not just the entire universe. Although Tanabe Hajime also made an attempt to reinforce Nishida's philosophy by placing the concept of "species" between the universal and the individual, Tanabe's concern was not social justice; on the contrary, by introducing concrete, rather than abstract or standardized, others in the picture of nothingness, Miki and Tosaka strived to find a way out of Nishida's dead-end, that is, the failure to provide any concrete social justice approach.

Miki Kiyoshi and Historical Philosophy

Unlike its plain style of writing, Miki's philosophical life appears to be one of the puzzles of Japanese philosophy, particularly among English-speaking scholars. Miki's life was ambivalent when it came to the relationship between war and imperialism. On the one hand, as a Marxist, he appears to be a part of the political forces opposing the war; and on the other, he seems to have been actively involved in the war by participating in Konoe Fumaro's *Showa Kenkyukai*, prime minister Tojo Hideki's predecessor's brain trust (Osaki 2019, loc. 3343/6442). This difficulty in understanding him is partly reflected in the lack of literature in English: Despite a number of books on the Kyoto School published in the Anglophone world, there is surprisingly little discussion on Miki compared to Nishida, Nishitani, Koyama, and even Tosaka (Goto-Jones 2008; Heisig and Maraldo 1995; Davis, Schroeder, and Wirth 2011; Carter 2013; Fujita 2018; Kawashima, Schafer, and Stolz 2013).

In the post-war Japanese intellectual community, Miki has been regarded as the most decent and legitimate heir of Nishida as regards the philosophical tradition of the Kyoto School. At the same time, he was an icon of pure intellectualism in the interwar period. This is partly because of his tragic death in prison in September 1945, six weeks after the end of WWII, and partly because of his accessible writing style, which is far simpler than the works of Nishida and less aggressive than that of the Big 4. However, the assessment of his work was turned upside down in the 1990s when a new article "Shinajihen no Sekaishiteki Igi [World Historical Meaning of the China-Japan War]" was discovered in which it appears that he may have actually been an enthusiastic apologist for the

East-Asian Cooperative Body, which later developed into the Great East Asian Co-prosperity Sphere (Sugawara 2018).

Despite the recent reinterpretation of Miki's writings, it is worth introducing Miki's philosophical engagement, particularly on morality, because his writings represent a philosophical bridge from Nishida to Tosaka, whose moral philosophy is now attracting the attention of international relations researchers in the Anglophone world (Harootunian 2008; Kawashima, Schafer, and Stolz 2013; Shimizu 2015, 2014). Miki's philosophy was widely said to be under the profound influence of the ethics initially developed in Nishida's *An Inquiry into the Good*. Among the disciples of Nishida who also adopted his concept of nothingness, Miki legitimately and accurately inherited the concept in the sense that he argued that it not only connotes being nothing but also entails anxiety and darkness (Tanaka 2000, 257). For Nishida, to be ethical in this context is to synchronize oneself with nothingness. Adopting Mahāyāna Buddhist logic, Nishida sees the process of losing one's ego attachment, and thus subjectivity, to be an ethical practice (Nishida 1947, 1950). Here, to be ethical means to be transcendental and virtuous in the Buddhist sense.

Nishida adopted a nonlinear temporality, which was more concerned with the concept of the "present" rather than linearity or cyclicity (Hutchings 2008; Agathangelou and Killian 2016; Hom and Steele 2010; Shimizu 2021). To accept the idea of the present and, therefore, losing one's ego and subjectivity, simultaneously represented the way in which to become virtuous in Nishida's philosophical writings. This is because, as Mahāyāna Buddhism presupposes, the world is in the process of ceaseless transformation, and nothing is stable, concepts that Nishida brilliantly adopted in his philosophy. In other words, understanding and accepting the ever-changing reality and synchronizing oneself with it is what Nishida believed to be the way to become virtuous.

Following Nishida's ethics, Miki's philosophy of morality is based on a similar perception of temporality, and the presumption of virtue ethics is even more clearly described in Miki's writings than Nishida's. Unlike Nishida, whose philosophical engagement was characterized by his exclusive focus on the individual and universal, Miki was more concerned with society and its relation to individuals. Miki repeatedly and explicitly asked himself the meaning of life while he considered the process of social construction in order to clarify the meanings of individual existence. Miki believed that society must become moral itself to promote individual morality and that a moral society should provide conditions under which diverse individuality is fundamentally recognized and acknowledged as it is (Uchida 2004; Miki 1967f). In a sense, this was the first step Miki took toward placing the concept of

social justice on his philosophical horizon.

Needless to say, Miki's philosophy was developed under the profound influence of Nishida. Like Nishida's "pure experience," Miki uses his concept of "basic experience" (*kiso keiken* (基礎経験)). Miki views this as a primary experience before language and understands that it is not controlled by language or logos. According to him, our daily lives are usually recognized and guided by logos because ordinary experiences are formed via interactions and negotiations through language. The basic experience is at the bottom, falling below ordinary experiences; thus, in a sense, it transcends language. In other words, everyday experiences are dominated by logos, but the basic experience naturally and inherently disturbs such logos because it precedes it. While logos functions to fix and stabilize experience, the basic experience is dynamic and refuses to become stabilized in this way. Once created, logos controls all the experiences and perceptions of human life; it will suppress life itself. At some point, however, the dynamic basic experience is unable to withstand the pressure of existing logos and comes to oppose old logos and demand new a one. This is what Miki calls the first transformation process of logos. The logos at this stage aims to fix and stabilize the fundamental experience, yet it becomes systematized through philosophy and intellectual activities, which is called the second logos. Miki labels this second logos an ideology. The first transformation process of the logos created by the basic experience gradually affects the second logos, and eventually, the ideology is forced to change (Miki 1966).

This is the basic framework of Miki's philosophy, and he continuously used and applied it to various contexts. In his philosophy of history, for example, Miki contends that there are three types of history: history as existence, history as logos, and history as facts. The first and second types of history are usual history as we know it, that is, the history of events and narratives. Miki paraphrases the first type of history as objective, while the second is subjective. Usually, we presume that objective events are subjectively narrated, and we call the outcome of this process "history." History in this sense falls under the law of causation, that is, one event is interpreted to cause another, and we find both cause and effect in this relationship. In this sense, history is an integration of subjective and objective history, and this integration becomes possible only in the moment of the present (Miki 1967d).

Miki's description of history reminds us of E. H. Carr's *What is History?* In this book, Carr also takes a relativist position and argues that history is a continuous dialogue between the past and present. To understand history, therefore, we have to know not only what is described but also who

described it (Carr 1990). Miki argues in a similar, but slightly different, manner, contending that the practice of writing is relative and not totally dependent on the narrator's perception, as Carr presupposes. The historical narrative, instead, is circumstantial and depends on the way of the narrator's being and, thus, their relationality. In this way, history is continuously written, and this practice will never stop. As Miki states,

When humans write history, it belongs to one of the fundamental ways of their being, and is being written every day. And isn't it always an infinite line without stopping? Somewhere in one era includes the sprouting of another era. In this case, if there is some point where this perpetual process is completed, and the historical entirety is materialized, it would be only the present, nothing else. (Miki 1967d, 16)

Miki calls this point of completion "history as facts," a type of history that is primitive and fundamental and moves forward by destroying the history of existence. In this sense, this is the "basic experience" of history (Tanaka 2000). For Miki, the facts here mean the reality that creates a subject and object: It is a relational concept in which everything (subject, object, consciousness, history, etc.) springs out (Uchida 2009, 12). Needless to say, this concept parallels Nishida's eternal present, and later Miki develops the concept of facts into the "imagination," *kosoryoku*, the most important concept of his philosophy.

From this understanding of history, Miki draws his idea of morality. Unlike Kant's philosophy of morality, which is exclusively based on the idea of individual freedom, Miki views morality more contextually:

Kant's moral philosophy of action sought to base the act solely on the concept of freedom. Thus, the meaning of an act as an event is not considered, and therefore the meaning of a historical act is not considered either. (Miki 1968c, 406)

In contrast to Kant, Miki's morality requires us to know what the history is, to find ourselves in it, and act accordingly. Unlike Kant, who makes a sharp distinction between truth and morality and, thus, epistemology and ethics, Miki sees morality in the historical context. Here, Miki presumes the subject is fluid and flexible and, consequently, relational.

For Miki, ontology, epistemology, and ethics are all in place, and all depend on each other in the

sense that we need an accurate comprehension of reality in order to contemplate ethics. For such an accurate comprehension of reality, we must understand what being is, and in this context, the key is the concept of culture. In fact, during his philosophical inquiry, Miki continuously revisited the concept of culture due to his persistent presumption that it can bridge morality and society. Miki argues;

The purpose of individuals does not reside in culture, but the purpose of culture resides in individuals. Cultural goals ultimately reside in morality and become possible only through the individual's moral awareness. (Miki 1967c, 492)

What then is this "moral awareness"? Miki maintains that an individual becomes moral when "he is sincere and honest to his work." What is important here, according to Miki, is "humanness" (Miki 1967e, 173), in other words, a virtuous character.

Miki's program for social justice was based on his concept of *kosoryoku*, that is, imagination, which he developed from the history as facts in his later years by connecting philosophy with the politics of the time (Miki 1967c). Here, *kosoryoku* refers to Kantian imagination, which is a human function synthesizing subject and object, or a particular and the universal. Kant states that sensibility in the cognitive faculty has two dimensions: sense and imagination. The former is intuition in the presence of an object, and the second is without it. Imagination functions by translating the senses into intellect, and this faculty is, of course, indispensable and extremely influential in our daily lives (McLear 2019).

History and the East Asian Cooperative Body

Miki joined Showa Kenkyukai (Showa Research Group) in 1936, the brain trust of Konoe Fumimaro, a former prime minister, to develop foreign policies for Asian cooperation, which later became one of the foundations of the imperialistic Great East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere policy. Miki attempted to provide the philosophical foundation for East Asian cooperation (the earlier concept of the Great East Asian Co-prosperity Sphere) by applying his philosophy of history.

Miki argued that Japan's leadership was indispensable for the liberation of China, while China's independence and autonomy should be guaranteed after this liberation. This argument sounds liberal, but it does not address a crucial question of imperialism. While Miki stressed the importance of avoiding the repetition of imperialistic and violent domination over China by replacing the West, he

did not question why Japan should position itself to lead and liberate other Asian nations, except for one short sentence mentioning that China was lagging far behind Japan in terms of modernization and industrialization (Miki 1967g). He even went on to say that the newly independent China should place East Asian cooperation at the core of its construction of new polity as a whole. Needless to say, the East Asian cooperation here refers to the geopolitical invention later abused by Japanese imperialism, and Miki asserted that China should adopt it (Miki 1967g). Here again, the ideal temporality of the present was taken over by the linear temporality, in which Japan and China were placed in the linear order of civilization and development.

Here, we see the contradiction within Miki's understanding of temporality. On the one hand, he envisioned an open system based on the eternal present in the context of East Asian politics, while on the other, a linear temporality is assumed in materializing the concept. The open system of the eternal present is embraced by the Westernizing and modernizing linear system of temporality, which easily adopts the widespread comprehension of the current political-economic situation, that is, Japan was running ahead of China. Miki stated that "Japan is indeed placed in the position to take the initiative" (Miki 1967h, 324-5), implicitly assuming that there were no other options.

The problem therein is that the normative nature of the eternal present, the open system of the public, ultimately becomes overtaken by linear time, and we find ourselves unable to take any other normative argument than the morality of the concept of linear progress. Here, we find the contradiction between the two temporalities. Miyagawa Toru states:

On the other hand, assuming Japan in the international context and Konoe Cabinet in the domestic context as the "leader," it (Miki's discourse of East Asian Cooperativism) principally denied the liberation of the other Asian nations and the class struggle in Japan. On the other hand, nevertheless, from a world history standpoint, it was a counter-argument to the imperialistic and totalitarian ideologies as far as it was emphasizing the anti-Japanese supremacist/anti-totalitarian position. (Miyagawa 2007, 124-5)

In assessing Miki's involvement with the dominant regime, Yonetani Masafumi and Koyasu Nobukuni severely criticize him for simply providing a new form of imperialist discourse, claiming it was merely an adaptation of imperialism in demanding for China to be a part of Japan, and, therefore, only envisioning the peace of the empire (Yonetani 2008; Koyasu 2006). The discourse on the liberation of other Asian nations from imperialism was regarded in this context as a mere disguise,

and critics see the core of Miki's intention as supporting imperial expansion.

What is missing in arguments of this kind is Miki's repetitive contention that Japan needed to change itself in accordance with the logic of imagination. Thus, what was at the core of Miki's contention, ingrained in the discourse of the East Asian Cooperativism, was relationality. According to Miki:

If Japan is to take its initiative and enter this new order of Toa itself, Japan and its culture must also be innovated in accordance with this new order. It is logically impossible to imagine that the East Asia Cooperative body can be established while Japan remains. (Miki 1967h, 325)

For Miki, taking initiative did not necessarily mean that Japan should discipline other nations, let alone dominate or govern them. This was by no means a teacher–student relationship; rather, it was a coach–player relationship in which coaches are supposed to support players, not preach to them. It is should aim for the parties to walk the path toward development and civilization together in order to transcend the problems posed by contemporary capitalism.

Here, it seems reasonable to ask what made Miki different from other Kyoto School philosophers in terms of becoming aware of the importance of a self-critical attitude toward Japan. Why did Miki express his deep concern with the current plight of the Japanese?

The Logic of Imagination

Around the same time, Miki wrote *The Logic of Imagination* in response to the Manchurian Incident of 1931 (Uchida 2009). Miki wrote three chapters covering myth, institution, and technology and published them as the first part of his project on imagination in 1939. Later, he tried to write a chapter on experience for the second book but never completed it. This second book was published posthumously with the title *The Logic of Imagination Part II*. After publishing his previous book, *Rekishī Tetsugaku*, Miki saw anxiety and darkness in the minds of Japanese intellectuals. He also received the shocking news that Heidegger had joined the Nazis in Germany and criticized him for advocating the integration of Germany by relying only on concepts such as blood, land, and fate—which revealed that Heidegger was only concerned with pathos, not logos. This move partly constituted Miki's motivation to complete his philosophy of history, and he accelerated his attempts to accomplish the integration of pathos and logos. Miki believed that his project was not only derived from personal interest but also a social demand present in this age of anxiety and darkness (Tanaka 2000, 268).

In these volumes, Miki directly adopted and further developed Nishida's concept of "action tuition." Miki believed that an act broadly means "making beings" and "changing the shape of beings to make new shapes" and stated that the form created out of this action is "historical." This historicity becomes colored through the function of culture; in other words, how beings are crafted and change their forms is exclusively cultural. Thus, the task of his philosophy was to clarify the "logic of history" from the subjective and cultural act of production. His argument follows the development of pathos's conceptualizing power in the order of "myth," "institution," "technology," although the main point of Miki's consideration is clearly "technology" (Sagara 2003).

Myth, institution, and technology represent three ways of integrating subjective perception and objective epistemology, in other words, pathos and logos (Miki 1967c). If we apply Miki's argument of history to his theory of imagination (Shimizu 2013), we find three ways of self-defining the present.

In the chapter on myth, Miki investigates the meaning of the enthusiasm that people show when they seek social change. Miki viewed the phenomenon of people going in a certain direction at the time of the Manchurian Incident as if they had been possessed by something. He captures the enthusiasm shown during historical changes in society as the moment when doxa and dogma collapse in one stroke, and when a new search for social knowledge begins. What has been understood by the existing sensibility and intellect collapses, and imagination works from their depths to create a myth. Miki states that, since myths are phenomena directly born out of real contradictions and linked to social actions, a myth-based utopia is not a mere narrative of illusions but a representation of the words of the expressions and movements of the firm beliefs of a social group (Uchida 2009).

Doxa and dogma require further explanation. Doxa is a concept that Aristotle first investigated and refer to sensible perceptions or common sense placed in contrast to episteme. Miki categorizes doxa with four characteristics: givenness, assertion, illogicalness, and simple adoption. In the case of doxa, the truth is already discovered, and there is no need for further investigation; the truth is already given. As doxa presupposes the given truth, what one should do is simply assert the truth repeatedly and with confidence. Miki explains that doxa is illogical in the sense that it denies the scientific and logical procedure of re-examination; rather, it is repeatedly and positively asserted. Lastly, doxa is believed to have no logical foundations or rational reasons: It is simply and easily adopted by people with illogical reasons, for example, because it is popular among them (Miki 1967d, 296-299).

When society becomes stable, the doxa must be rationalized for those who are benefiting from this social stability. They pour their wealth into transforming the doxa into a more rational and logical discourse, which is dogma. In this sense, social science always poses the danger of becoming dogma. When it does turn into dogma, it sets the limit of intellectual inquiry and asserts that principles and foundations are already given and universal. The result is the severe gatekeeping of academic practices, which then only annotate and expound (Miki 1967d, 306).

According to Miki, myth appears when doxa and dogma are shaken by social change. This is because reality contradicts social organizations in such a way that pathos overwhelms logos; in other words, when logos is predominant over pathos, society appears to be stable. In this stable society, logos is represented in a “form,” and the formation process of this form is what Miki calls “institution.” In an institutionalized society, individuals are constrained by given laws and conventions, thus losing their freedom. The institution is a representation of a state of society that is often witnessed in the contemporary world. Here, pathos is narrated into the world of logos and comes to obtain a certain form (Miki 1967c). Institution’s primitive style is already materialized in myth in the form of rituals, which Miki views as fictitious acts on the one hand and the fixation of enigmatic power on the other (Uchida 2009).

Miki viewed technology as the key to understanding the contemporary world, which is characterized by new inventions. For Miki, in the case of “myth” and “institution,” the imaginative faculty is used in a rather receptive way, which only promotes the reproduction of society. However, unlike myth or institution, the imagination used in technology represents the production through which new inventions become possible. It is this function of imagination that brings about the dynamism of social transformation. It is unsurprising that the attempt to connect the concepts of imagination and technology is peculiar to Miki among the Kyoto School scholars, which is why some observers cite Miki’s analysis of technology as his main contribution to philosophy (Sagara 2003; Uchida 2004).

Miki was also aware of the negative effects that technological development brought to everyday lives. He argued that the main cause of problems was not the technology itself but how it is used and applied. Miki advocates the development of social morality, which he regarded as the “technology of minds” (Miki 1967e, 289). This is precisely the moment when morality appears to become a central question in Miki’s discourse; this is not morality in abstract terms but in the concrete context of technology and production.

Miki's arguments regarding morality come very close to Nishida's. Like Nishida, Miki sees morality in relation to "others," and states that "to be morally aware" is to face "the self as the other," which means "being called by the self as the other" (Miki 1967e, 157-8). Thus, in Miki's moral philosophy, the existence of the "other" is an imperative element in becoming a moral individual. In addressing the question of morality, Miki claims that it should not solely be engulfed by the question of the actions and will of individuals, as Kantian philosophy presumes. Miki saw Kantian philosophy as being extensively over-reliant on the concept of autonomous and independent individuals and believed that the question of morality should instead be analyzed through the concept of relationality with others. Individuals are simultaneously constructed by history and construct history themselves.

Although this line of Miki's thought largely overlaps with Nishida's discourse of "good," there are also some differences between the two philosophers. One such difference is the question of relationality. For Nishida, morality should be contemplated in the framework of the particular and the universal; thus, the relationality between them is the target of his inquiry. Like Buddhism, there is no such thing as society in the contemplation of Nishida's philosophical practice, which supposedly mediates the particular and the universal. According to Miki, there must be something in between the particular and the universal to allow for the materialization of Nishida's philosophy of action intuition, *koiteki chokkan*. This was precisely why Miki frequently refers to culture and history in his works; in so doing, he aimed to establish the public sphere. Like Hannah Arendt (1998), who saw the potentiality of justice in the form of the public, Miki attempted to philosophize politics by pursuing the idea of the public. To put his engagement in history differently, it sets the goal in answering the following questions: How could we come to have a concept of "we"? In what way can we provide a space in which political dialogue and deliberation among "us" take place?

Epistemologically, finding and establishing the public is part of the practice of knowing the truth. Miki's truth is not abstract or universal: It is concrete and substantive. As aforementioned, Miki criticizes Kantian philosophy, which is also based upon the resumption of a transcendental and universal truth. For Miki, the truth is contextual and concrete. It is not something waiting to get discovered; rather, it is created and constructed through the practice of cultural and historical actions. How could we then reach truth of this sort? It comes out of dialogue and deliberation. In this context, Miki distinguishes two types of truth, *shinri* (真理) and *shinjitsu* (真実). *Shinri* is an abstract truth that is supposed to be universal and does not have any concrete context. *Shinjitsu*, on the other hand, is a truth only generated out of dialogue on various subjects, depending on the diversity in subjectivity and the existence of the public sphere (Miki 1967b, 5). According to Miki, facts change

historically, and the truth changes accordingly. Facts are a construct mainly formulated by society out of negotiations and dialogue with others; therefore, when social relations change, fact, and thus truth, must also be deconstructed and transformed anew.

However, this “other” is regrettably not really concrete but rather remains abstract in Miki’s discourse of morality, much like in Nishida’s. As Sagara points out, Miki’s abstract character of the “other” becomes evidently clear when he writes about the “absolute other,” which is represented by humanity in its entirety (Sagara 2003). “Others,” thus, become abstract and, in some ways, universalized. This interpretation of “others” also synchronizes itself with Miki’s comprehension of history. This moment marks the weakness of Miki’s moral philosophy, which lacks the will to confront the given environment or social injustice (Sagara 2003), and this seems to have become the fatal mistake when it was applied to the concrete context of world politics.

Miki’s attempt to bring Nishida’s philosophical thought into foreign policies was, by any means, courageous. It was overtly clear that his intention was not to support the imperial government but to change the course of Japanese imperialism. In so doing, he repeatedly contended that who to change was not confined to China or other Asian nations but that also Japan should also be included in the list. However, in this way, he too was caught in the trap of temporality. As I have explained, Miki attempted to configure the world with Nishida’s concept of the present, and it is evident that his focus on the imagination aimed to materialize the present in understanding and establishing appropriate foreign policies for the world he faced. However, when he said that Japan had the responsibility to liberate and train China for East Asian cooperation, it is undeniable that he was placing the linear progressive temporality at the core of his foreign policy configuration. What is important in Miki’s presumption of temporality is his initial perception in the philosophical discourse that the present and linear progressive times are mutually exclusive. Miki believed this to be a one-or-the-other question, rather than one of mutual influence. Although he emphasized the idea of the present, it was subdued and enmeshed into the linear progressive temporality in his moral philosophy.

Encountering the “Others” in the Philippines

Ironically, Miki came to understand what “other” meant after he published his book on the imagination. Miki’s others were no longer the entirety of humanity but became a particular people in the Philippines. Miki was sent to the Philippines in 1942 for approximately 10 months as a service reporter for the Japanese imperial army since it was an army policy to hire novelists, journalists, academics, and poets to be sent to occupied locations to disseminate propaganda.

It is well known that talented soldiers and army administrators with international understanding were often sent to these occupied territories. In this context, such soldiers and administrators had direct contact with the locals and came to understand that there was a substantial gap between the plight of the Philippines and the perceptions of the central government toward it:

Well-informed leaders with international experience in military and government affairs were rather engaged in military administration work in the occupied territories. In other words, useless and cunning people remained in the mainland of Japan; only those people who tried to abuse their powers by using their authority and official clichés such as the “clarification of national polity,” *kokutai meicho*. In the occupied territories, the foolishness of the decisions and orders sent from the central government that did not take into account the local circumstances were obvious, and the stupidity of communicating with and conciliating the locals by spreading such propaganda as the Japanese spirit and the eight corners under one roof, *hakko ichiu*, was also evident. (Tairako, 2008, 339)

Miki was one of those who clearly recognized this gap. He accompanied the occupational army and conducted fieldwork, and he frequently drafted manuscripts for military announcements as he was, interestingly, trusted by the Japanese soldiers.

What he obtained during this period was a critical perspective towards those Japanese intellectuals who were confused by and fatigued with the chaotic politics of the time. Miki saw them as only following the despotic political order of domestic politics to obtain their own psychological and economic stability. To transcend this turmoil, Miki diagnosed the need to maintain the independence of culture:

Many believe that the chaotic plight of modern culture can only be saved by politics, all of which refer to the contemporary dictatorship ... They must be philosophical apologists ... They serve to strengthen the order enforced by dictatorship. Their status is not painful for them for it brings them a certain psychological order. This is also a simple solution to the confusion of spirit and culture. It is so simple that it is often used consciously and subconsciously by people who are fatigued with confusion. But can the cultural confusion be solved in this way? Certainly, a new order must be brought about to solve this contemporary confusion. But is it possible to set the cultural order independent of politics? The ability to set an order by despotism is a privilege of politics, whether good or bad. However, it is impossible to set an order by such external political

force as autocracy when it comes to the case of the cultural order. There is a fundamental opposition between politics and culture. Thus, if the order of culture can be established as in politics, how happy today the intellectuals would be. (Miki 1968b, 828-9)

Unfortunately, this manuscript was supposed to be written sometime around 1944 but was never published (Tairako 2008). Here, we can see how much Miki was concerned with the domination of politics over culture toward the end of his life:

The intellectual's work belongs not to power but to freedom. The happiness and unhappiness of intellectuals reside in this freedom. The cultural order must be established internally, and if it were to be brought about politically from the outside, the confusion would be greater. In some cases, the cultural order will be completely destroyed. It must be argued that following the dictatorial political order is enormously hazardous. In this case, it can be said that remaining in the turbulence is actually more meaningful. Are today's intellectuals so fatigued that they can only follow the cultural order brought about by politics? (Miki 1968b, 829)

The sentence "remaining in the turbulence is actually more meaningful" represents Miki's determination for criticism:

Of course, politics is not opposed to culture in the form of order and disorder. That is not to say that the internal order set by culture and the external order established by politics do not always coincide with each other. The most substantial difference lies in the question of whether it is possible to establish an order by autocracy. (Miki 1968a, 830)

While the cultural order of Miki's time was largely brought about by despotic politics, Miki's ideal cultural order was the other way around, that is, where the cultural order sets the political order. This represented his commitment to people's everyday lives:

Despite the confusion of the modern age, culture should not give up on establishing an order by itself. Today's menace can be seen in cases when it seems that a cultural order has arisen; it actually submits to politics. The cultural order should endeavor to give order to politics by giving order to itself. The order of politics and the order of culture must ultimately coincide, but there will be some struggle to bring about this unity ... In order for culture to be able to oppose politics and to be able to be defended against politics, culture must generate an order within itself. Only with

creativity can culture be defended. (Miki 1968b, 830)

What underlies this menace to culture is nihilism. Miki thought that nihilism was the last stage of the development of social evolution and rightly pointed out that the main cause of Nazism in Germany also resided in nihilism. It was not limited to Europe but was also evident in Japan, particularly among intellectuals. Additionally, Miki saw nihilism in Asia as somewhat different from that in Europe, arguing that there was a sort of nihilism in the Asian tradition. This tradition was later connected with Western thought and came to transform itself into a more complex style.

To overcome this nihilism, Miki advocates having virtue. Here, he defines that to have virtue is “to create an order in the mind” (Miki 1968a, 836). To obtain such virtue, we must start by changing trivial things in every life, for example, “stop dealing in the underground market” (Miki 1968a, 383). This practice aims at an individual becoming creative. This creativity does not aim to contemplate a story of social transformation and political subversion; rather, it resides in everyday life actions, such as crafting a desk and chairs. These actions represent a place where idealism and pragmatism become unified and where subjectivism and objectivism overlap. In following the objective law of natural science and understanding the objective nature of materials, we can materialize the idea in mind. By “deeply understanding the meaning of our everyday actions,” we become able to develop “a thought that provides the foundation for a new order” (Miki 1968a, 841). This is the way “to construct an order from below not from above” (Miki 1968a, 842). This remained Miki’s commitment until his tragic death in 1945.

Conclusion

The tragedy in Miki’s life was that, despite his engagement with the mainstream politics of Japan in the form of Showa Kenkyukai, he was arrested during the war. His death was even more tragic: In September 1945, a month after the end of WWII, he was discovered dead in his prison cell. This was a huge loss for Japan’s post-war intellectual society. However, his struggle for democracy was passed on to Japanese intellectuals.

What was salient in Miki’s life in comparison with other Kyoto School philosophers was his persistent consideration of people’s everyday lives: He was certain that changes do not come from the above but from below. According to him, changing everyday practice is the only possible manner in which to make the world better in the era of nihilism. Miki began his intellectual life as a Marxist and ended it with a focus on people’s everyday lives; his intellectual engagement was colored with his exclusive interests in materiality.

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