

Re-Examining Japanese Wartime Intellectuals: Kiyoshi Miki during the Japanese Occupation of the Philippines

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Abstract

This paper analyzes the specific writings of Kiyoshi Miki, one of Japan's most celebrated philosophers, who wrote about Filipino society as a member of the 14th Army Propaganda Corps in the Philippines. It sheds light on how the subject of the Filipino Oriental Character became a centerpiece of these writings. In doing so, the paper rethinks other aspects of the Japanese occupation of the Philippines, and reexamines the role of Japanese intellectuals during the war. Miki had an ambivalent place in wartime cultural and economic policy; on the one hand, he was part of the propaganda machinery of Japanese imperialism and on the other, a bona fide intellectual who wrote passionately about Philippine society and incurred the ire of the Japanese imperial bureaucracy.

Keywords: Kiyoshi Miki, Second World War, Filipino Oriental character, intellectual history, wartime intellectuals

Pan-Asianism, War, and Japanese Intellectuals

The *daitōa kyōeiken*¹ ‘greater East Asia co-prosperity sphere’ (hereon, GEACPS) is often perceived as Japan’s ideological justification for the invasion of countries like the Philippines.² Indeed, the Japanese military constantly deployed the idea of a regional order composed of Asian nations throughout the fifteen-year war (1931–1945), which encompassed the Mukden Incident, the Second Sino-Japanese War, and the Pacific War. During the Pacific War (1941–1945), the promotion of the GEACPS was consistent with Japanese propaganda in all of Japan’s occupied territories.

Japan believed it was in the best position to comprehend Western encroachment on the vast resources of Asia and capitalize on the region’s dense—and thus large—population. But even without the motive of economic exploitation, Japanese leaders, both military and civilian, were convinced that Asia needed their guidance. Japan had the experience; it modernized soon after it opened up further to the Western world during the Meiji Restoration. They believed that the region’s transition in the 20th century would work best through mutual cooperation between nations of common culture, race, geographical location, and history. The said transition could not be left up to the Westerners—imperialists who colonized and took advantage of the region in the name of modernization.³

The Japanese intellectuals of the 20th century developed and further theorized pan-Asianism as an alternative to Westernization with very little political and economic impetus (see Saaler 2007; endnote 3). At present, it is widely believed that the Japanese government only used the pan-Asian rhetoric in particular periods to protect and further Japan’s interests—in founding Manchukuo in 1932; upon leaving the League of Nations in 1933; in declaring a “New Order” for East Asia in November 1938;⁴ and in the conception of the GEACPS in 1940 (Saaler 2007, 12).

However, there were various strands of pan-Asian thought during this time, but among those better known was the *tōa kyōdōtai* (East Asian cooperative community) commonly associated with philosopher Kiyoshi Miki and political scientist Masamichi Rōyama.⁵ Rōyama in his book, *Tōa*

to *Sekai* (East Asia and the World, 1941) describes the pan-Asian new order as a form of regional international organization that respects nationality, independence, and freedom and ensures world peace through diplomatic negotiations (Rōyama 1975, 21–22). Rōyama envisioned a regional community of East Asian nations comprised of Japan, Manchukuo, and China. But during the Pacific War, because of the period's *sōryokusen* (war of ideas), Rōyama included in this “East Asian” community Japan's occupied territories, which Imperial General Headquarters called “greater East Asia” (Rōyama 1942). Indeed, there are indications that the war, complicated by the limited intellectual freedom brought about by political pressures, greatly affected the theoretical formulations of Japanese intellectuals. In fact, the Sino-Japanese war broke out while Rōyama was formulating his ideas on the *tōa kyōdotai*. During this time, Rōyama shifted his efforts on the so-called normalization of Sino-Japanese relations (Kobayashi 1997, 43). It is believed that Miki and Rōyama's idea of an Asian new order was rooted not entirely in the region's geographical and ethnic identity but more in universal principles (Iriye 1981, 10). To Rōyama, more than a cooperation based on commonalities in history and skin color, the future aims of the greater East Asian community were industrialization, popular welfare, and advancement of science and technology, all of which can be interpreted as a condemnation of modern capitalist civilization and bourgeois values (*ibid.*, 10 n12). This is what distinguishes the East Asian cooperative community from the liberal Western order.

Kiyoshi Miki, GEACPS, and the Filipino Oriental Character

Despite being the cornerstone of the new Japanese order, the GEACPS figures little in Miki's work. In fact, none of his writings exclusively discuss it. Perhaps he was never convinced by its ideological vitality; its political undertones weighed against his own understanding of the war. As briefly discussed earlier, the pan-Asian order that was sold to the public was not a new idea to him. In fact, Miki, his contemporaries, and other thinkers before them, had already been clamoring for a unified,

region-based and multinational political and economic order. Even so, it is unfortunate that despite his being one of the main and original architects of Japanese pan-Asian thought, it is difficult to make out Miki's actual thoughts on the GEACPS. To look for possible subtleties in his writings that may point to his disagreement with the dominant thought only leads to an "overestimation of negative resistance" (Maruyama 1969, 58n).

So if the GEACPS figured little in his work, what did Miki write about? This paper provides a content analysis of his specific writings. Specifically, it argues that Miki's oeuvre was less about propagating the GEACPS and more about "spirit" and "theorizing the Filipino Oriental character." "The issue is how to make them (Filipinos) return to their Oriental consciousness and to create a new culture of the nation as a link to the GEACPS" (Miki 1968, 15: 593). Citing translations (from the original Japanese) of Miki's writings and presenting them in almost raw form to benefit contemporary non-Japanese reader, the paper provides a modest contribution to current perspectives on the role of Japanese intellectuals during the Second World War, and fills a lacuna on scholarship about the War in the Philippines.

Debating the Place of Japanese Intellectuals During the War

The status of Japanese intellectuals before and during the war shifted between extreme polarities: prestige and isolation. Having graduated from the oldest and most prestigious Japanese universities, these individuals became members of the nation's intellectual elite; Miki himself obtained his degrees from Kyoto Imperial University (now Kyoto University). Intellectuals also gained fame during the Meiji Restoration because the government depended on them to understand Western thought (economy and politics) better. Prime Minister Konoe's support for the intellectuals in 1938 further bolstered their reputation. Despite the prestige, the intellectuals were simultaneously isolated by their elite status. At the time, the military were often at odds with the intellectuals who were traditionally considered as guardians of the civil rights movement. The civil service

exams in 1887 created a new breed of bureaucrats whose aims were to understand and administer the nation (Fletcher 1982), thus setting aside the intellectuals who used to exclusively perform these tasks. Indeed, during his ten-month draft to the Philippines, Miki was treated dismissively and suspiciously by his compatriots and within the propaganda corps.

At any rate, intellectuals played a huge role in the formation of Japanese wartime consciousness and propaganda. During the early 1940s, philosophers and writers analyzed Japanese society and economy via books and articles in *zōgōzasshi* ('general magazines') like the *Chūō Kōron*. These publications carried a lot of influence, especially among the educated sector (Shillony 1981, 110–11). As graduates and professors of prestigious universities at home and abroad, intellectuals maintained the respectable role of savants and thinkers of Japanese society. Since the Meiji era, these writers, philosophers, and political scientists had become the intellectual lifeline of a society that was only starting to understand, resist, or accommodate the various streams of thought from abroad and within the country. As they did with pan-Asian theorization, the imperial army utilized the intellectuals' output in formulating Japan's wartime ideological foundation. The army actively mobilized some intellectuals in pre-Pacific War think tanks, and, during the war, drafted them as members of a number of military propaganda units dispatched to occupied territories. They organized intellectuals through the *Shōwa Kenkyūkai* (Shōwa Research Association), the government think tank established in 1930. This organization enjoyed the full support of Prince Fumimaro Konoe when he became Prime Minister in 1937, and was at the forefront of the government's attempt to understand global conditions better. Japanese public opinion at the time was heavily influenced by information from outside Japan, and was especially divided when the Sino-Japanese War began. It was commonly viewed by the public that an association composed of individuals other than bureaucrats would collect data better, objectively assess the situation, and formulate appropriate national policies. The state appointed intellectuals as key members of this association. In addition to Miki and Rōyama, other intellectuals who became public figures in the

mid-1930s were also mobilized. Among them were Ryū Shintaro, Yabe Teiji, Sasa Hirō, Gotō Ryunosuke, Taira Teizō, Yoshida Shigeru, Kazami Akira, Kaya Okinori, Gotō Fumio, and Arita Hachirō (Crowley 1971, 324). Most Japanese intellectuals studied, wrote about, and propagated almost all the intellectual traditions and thoughts of the time. Although intellectuals never really gained control of the direction, much less the outcome of the war, they did participate in matters that were less known to the historical audience.

This role of “bona fide” Japanese intellectuals during the war has been obscured by the tendency of historians—with the exception of a few, particularly Shunsuke Tsurumi (1986), Richard Mitchell (1976), and James Crowley (1971)—to focus on the brutal aspects of the conflict.⁶ Of course, it was common for philosophers like Kiyoshi Miki to write about the need for a strong dictatorial rule. But some of them also defended the rights of the working class. This ambiguity is why most historians find it difficult to locate wartime intellectuals in the political milieu of the period. Indeed, there is still debate about whether these intellectuals were really (bona fide) intellectuals or whether they had succumbed to or actually embraced fascism.⁷ Miki’s mentor, Kitarō Nishida, had been subjected to such debate after his death in 1945 (Arisaka 1996; Lavelle 1994). This academic debate on the “Nishida enigma” was called such simply because Nishida’s writings about fascism were all obscure. Miki’s ideas too were sometimes compared to that of the fascist regime. But William Miles Fletcher III (1982, 81) clarifies that Miki’s comments on fascism simply reaffirmed that fascism in Europe successfully linked nationalist ideology to national reform. This was the main reason why Miki desired to see a strong Japan (*ibid.*, 87; 106–7).⁸

At any rate, Tsurumi, Mitchell, and Crowley were among the first to account for the role of wartime Japanese intellectuals beyond accusations of fascism based on relatively loose parameters. David Williams (2014, xxiv) has also commented on how historians have analyzed intellectuals at the Kyoto School thus far; he reminds us that “we must agree that after decades of interpretive failure, the tenets of the orthodox Allied

interpretation of the Pacific War, the product of the Moral Revolution of our liberal century and the propaganda needs of a wartime emergency, do not allow us to read the writings of the Kyoto School with clarity, confidence and accuracy.”

Other historians focus on other facets. Masao Maruyama argues that intellectuals, in the “proper sense,” were not positive advocates of the driving forces of the fascist movement (Crowley 1971, 319). On the contrary, “their mood was generally one of vague antipathy toward it, an antipathy that amounted to passive resistance” (*ibid.*; also in Maruyama 1969, 58).⁹ Like Maruyama, other historians have taken on a benefit-of-the-doubt stance. They assert that Japanese intellectuals were compelled and likely given little choice but to amend whatever opposing views they had against the state if they wanted to resume their academic work (Sugiyama 2004, 73; Fletcher 1982, 86).¹⁰ Rōyama became the head of the political section of the Kokumin Seishin Sōdōin Undo (National Spiritual Mobilization Movement) formed in 1938 by the Konoe regime. Both Miki and Rōyama later become significant figures in the Taisei Yokusankai (Imperial Rule Assistance Association), which replaced the Showa Kenkyūkai after its dissolution in November 1940.

In line with these approaches, this paper reanalyzes and rethinks some of the key ideas of one of Japan’s most celebrated prewar and wartime philosophers, Kiyoshi Miki, on the Philippines. It departs from a framework that seeks only to determine whether Japanese intellectuals were fascists and imperial propagandists. While not denying that Miki’s writings on spirit and the Oriental Character overlapped with the Pan-Asianism of the GEACPS, the study shows that Miki was involved in other tasks apart from work in the Propaganda Corps in wartime Philippines (Tairako 2008). Furthermore, the paper treats Miki as *bona fide* intellectual (as conceptualized in Crowley 1971), whose writings had at least an ambivalent relationship to the dominant imperial ideology of Japan. On the one hand, he delivered a pro-Japanese broadcast and his discourse on spirit and Oriental Character dovetailed with the GEACPS. On the other, it must be borne in mind that he already had pan-Asian ideas that predated the war

and did not have any political and economic impetus, let alone plans for imperial domination. He had also denounced fascism in Germany, had Marxist leanings, and ran afoul of the Japanese imperial state who arrested him before he came to the Philippines and imprisoned him when he returned to Japan. As such, the study can easily be interpreted as a direct rebuttal to this “interpretive failure” (as coined by Williams; see Williams 2004 and 2014).

Kiyoshi Miki in Philippine Scholarship

Except for Lydia Yu-Jose who recognized Miki and his ideas (Yu-Jose 1992, 152–53), Miki is a comparatively relative non-entity in wartime history among Filipino historians. In comparison, Japanese social scientists like Terami-Wada (1984) and Tairako (2008) highlight Miki’s role during the period. Much of Miki’s work has been left unexplored: there were at least fifteen known published essays and four volumes of manuscripts¹¹ produced during his stay in Manila. It is with regret and irony to learn that Miki, who was as bona fide an intellectual as one could be, has not been afforded a better place in Philippine intellectual history. Here was a Japanese intellectual on a “research mission” in Manila in one of the most defining periods in Asian history (Tairako 2008, 330) yet he is barely mentioned in annals of the Philippines-Japanese war. In Philippine scholarship, token mentions of Miki and almost none of his main ideas deprive us of the opportunity to situate him, and nuance his role, in Imperial Japan’s cultural and economic agenda in the Philippines.

Kiyoshi Miki: A Short Biography

Kiyoshi Miki was born in 5 January 1897 to Eikichi Miki, a farmer, and his wife, Shin, in Hyogo Prefecture (Miki 1968, 19: 850–89; Zavala 1998, 289–92)¹² where he took his primary and secondary education. He was an excellent student and won several oratorical competitions. After high school in 1917, he enrolled in the Philosophy Department of the Faculty of Literature of Kyoto Imperial University, where he studied under Professors

Nishida, Seiichi Hatano, and Hajime Tanabe. After graduation in 1920, Miki entered the Army as a student conscript and trained for one month with the 10th Battalion. In September of the same year, he took up philosophy of history in the graduate school of Kyoto Imperial University. In May 1922, Miki received a scholarship from Iwanami Shoten (Iwanami publishing house) to study in Germany.

In Heidelberg, Miki studied philosophy of history under Heinrich Rickert, in whose seminars Miki presented his paper, “A Theory of Individual Causality.” During this time, Miki became associated with the philosophers Karl Mannheim, Eugen Herrigel, and Hermann Glockner. In 1923, he published an essay in German, “The Significance of Rickert to Japanese Philosophy” in the magazine, *Frankfurter Zeitung*, considered then as one of Germany’s more democratic publications. In the same year, Miki moved to Marburg to study Aristotle, Schlegel, Humboldt, Dilthey, Nietzsche, and Kierkegaard under Martin Heidegger. After a year, he moved to Paris, learned French, and read Poincaré, Taine, Renan, and Pascal. In 1925, he contributed three essays on Pascal to the Japanese magazine, *Shisō*. He returned to Kyoto in October 1925 when his grant was over, and taught philosophy at Ryukoku University and Kyoto Imperial University. In 1927, upon the recommendation of Nishida, Miki started teaching at Hōsei University in Tokyo and lectured at Nihon and Taishō Universities. Iwanami, Miki’s employer, sent him to Korea, Manchuria, and North China. Two years later, Miki married his first wife, Kimiko Tobata.

Because of his studies on dialectical materialism and his Marxist publications, Miki became a target of the police. In May 1930, he was arrested for suspicion of donating money to the Japanese Communist Party, which was outlawed under the Peace Preservation Law (*chianijihō*) of 1925. His arrest cost Miki his tenure as professor. He thereon continued teaching as a substitute lecturer. In August 1930, Kimiko gave birth to their eldest daughter, Yōko.¹³ Three months later, Miki was sentenced to a year in prison, which was deferred for two years.

In the early 1930s, Miki continued working on Hegel's dialectics, conducting a series of academic dialogues with Nishida, and writing a series of essays on Marxism. His series, "The Literature of Contemporary Class Struggle,"¹⁴ was considered as his most outstanding Marxist piece and was banned by the Japanese government in 1933. In the same year, Miki signed a document condemning the Nazis and, together with other intellectuals, formed the League for Academic Freedom.

In 1935, he began lecturing at the Bunka Gakuin and as editor of the *Catholic Encyclopedia* of Sophia University. From 1935 to 1937, he continued his academic work through conferences and discussions with, among others, Nishida and Jun Tosaka, who, in the postwar years, would be considered as one of Japan's foremost Marxists. Miki became a member of the Showa Research Association in August 1938. In August 1940, he was sent to China and Manchuria to hold conferences and dialogues there. Miki pursued his academic work in Japan despite the dissolution of the Showa Research Association in November that year.

In January 1942, Miki was busy writing and organizing several symposia, including "In What Way Should Students Live?," which he also chaired. In attendance were students and professors from various Japanese universities, including, in particular, Tokyo Imperial University. He also published his essay, "Basis of Wartime Knowledge" in *Chuō Kōron*. The military authorities detested the article so strongly that they became even more critical of magazines that carried similar works. Because of his essay, Miki was in danger of losing the opportunity to contribute to *Chuō Kōron* and another social-critique magazine, *Kaizō*.

It was around this time when Miki received his military draft order to go to the Philippines as a member of the 14th Army Propaganda Corps. He would return to Japan in December and publish in 1943 and 1944 some of his essays containing his observations, research, analyses, and experiences in the country. It is important to keep his Marxist leanings and his relationship with the military authorities in mind, for they help shed light on my analysis of Miki's writings on the Filipino Oriental Character.

Miki's Wartime Role in the Philippines

Miki served as an influential *seijikomon* (political adviser) to the military administration in the Philippines, providing expertise and opinion on how to run the country better (Tairako 2008, 320). Such a mission, Tairako adds, was most likely given to Miki in secret before he came to the country. In addition, Miki's significant role in Japanese propaganda began as soon as he took over 2nd Lt. Shigenobu Mochidzuki's role as the head of the planning section of the 14th Army's Department of Information (previously, Propaganda Corps) in August 1942.

Miki arrived in the Philippines via La Union in March 1942 as part of the second group of civilian draftees to the 14th Army Propaganda Corps.¹⁵ He was billeted in a Manila hotel reserved for military officers, most likely so that the military could monitor his actions. But a fellow writer, Yojiro Ishizaka, gave a bolder and much more revealing reason why authorities treated Miki with utmost care (despite prevailing attitudes against intellectuals among the military). According to Tairako (2008, 322), based on Ishizaka's understanding, Miki's mission was entirely different from that of other writers and artists. Miki penned ordinances or proclamations for the Japanese Military Administration (JMA) in the Philippines and drafted the reports that were sent to Tokyo. Several of Miki's essays about the Philippines corroborate these claims. In almost all the essays, Miki would write on critical and policy decisions on the Philippine economy, agriculture, and education as though he was actually writing a gist of JMA policies and administrative guidelines. Most of the time, his proposals and advice concerned education and language, on which he spent a lot of time reading, studying, and analyzing.

Tairako (2008) pointed out (correctly in my mind) that out of the many people, military personnel, civilians, writers, poets, journalists, photographers, movie directors, and other intellectuals sent to the Philippines, Miki was the only one who wrote holistically about the Philippines. But more importantly, Miki insistently clamored for the need for Japan and its people to also reexamine themselves and change if

necessary. The Philippine Research Commission, which was sent to the Philippines by the Tokyo GHQ in late 1942, wrote a report about the various facets of Philippine society (see Hito Chosa Inkaï 1993a and 1993b). The report was meant for the GHQ's use in understanding the Philippines better. However, members of this Commission made it a point to consult Miki before he went back to Tokyo (Rōyama and Takeuchi 1967, 210–11). This extended Miki's influence in Philippine policy beyond 1942—beyond the role of writing reports for the JMA, according to Ishizaka. Several ideas of Miki evidently appeared in occupation policy from late 1942 to late 1943, most notably in his outline of the 1942 activities of the JMA, including plans to improve agricultural methods and techniques, such as the transplanting of *hōraibei* or Japanese rice mainly cultivated in Taiwan, encouragement of crop rotation, and agricultural reorganization (e.g., the cultivation of cotton flower and the conversion of tobacco land) [Miki 1968]. As with other aspects of the Philippine society, Miki gave his usual administrative advice.

Along with this guidance to agriculture, there is a need to immediately remove current hindrances to the progress of Philippine agriculture, which are the land system and the tenant system. It is also important to initiate a plan that would tackle issues like the management of peasant debts and the establishment of landed farmers (*jisakunō*). Japan should provide Filipinos with their superb agricultural techniques. Here one can also think about the present condition of Philippine manufacturing. In the Philippines, sugar factories can be found wherever there are chimneys. With the exception of these few unique places, there are not that many factories in the country. They depend on American and other imports—from basic necessities to useless goods—while the government relies on the taxes generated by these as source of fund. Considering the present situation, it is important to promote cottage industry (*kanaiōjō*). Filipinos are very skillful and they are very suitable to such kind of industry. The Philippines has been exporting embroidery goods to America, which they learned from Spanish nuns and has become their unique handicraft. Cottage industries will increase the salary of farmers and better their lives. (Miki 1968, 15: 542)

Although there is no evidence of close ties between Miki and the 14th Army special adviser Shozo Murata, Murata's plan in late 1942 for a Philippine cotton industry certainly had some traces of Miki's ideas on Philippine agricultural development.¹⁶ Probably the most significant contribution of Miki to occupation policy would be his untiring and consistent view on the need to grant the Philippines its independence, which would be the single most daring thrust of Japanese propaganda in 1943, and which anticipates the actual granting of independence in October of that year. Tairako summarizes Miki's input in Japanese colonial policy.

Unlike Miki, other drafted writers and *bunkajin* (cultural personnel) worked within the limits of what they have brought from Japan: novelists wrote novels and travel journals about their experience in the Philippines; painters painted. It was only Miki who holistically and calmly compared the Japanese rule in the Philippines with that of Spanish and American, the only one to investigate the direction, which aims at Philippine independence and the limits of the Japanese military government. (Tairako 2008, 341)

An Overview of Miki's Works

Miki wrote not only four volumes of manuscripts, but also ten volumes of notes, accounts, records, drafts, and other materials (Tairako 2008, 330, n4). In a letter to one of his friends in the academe, Keizō Yamazaki, dated 19 September 1942, barely half a year into his draft, Miki (1968, 19: 435) very proudly wrote, "I have already taken several volumes of notes." Absorbed by his desire to know more about the Philippines, Miki picked up the habit of locking himself up inside his room, to the amazement and bewilderment of other members of the propaganda corps who assumed Miki isolated himself so he could focus on his "research mission." Based on his experience in Europe where he taught himself German and French, Miki learned Spanish "more or less" before his deployment (Tairako 2008, 330).¹⁷ In letters to his friends,

colleagues, and twelve-year-old daughter, Miki always expressed his disappointment over the absence of good bookshops in Manila and complained that he often had to go to libraries to do his research, and was forced to diligently write notes, a practice which gravely sacrificed efficiency.¹⁸ In his March 1943 essay, Miki remarked that

There are many universities in Manila but bookstores are very few, and there are no good ones. What's surprising about these bookstores is that they offer almost no classical books, but there is noticeably a lot of what Americans call best sellers. It seems to them, books are like fashionable department store goods that offer no choice. (Miki 1968, 15: 618)

He was evidently comparing the academic atmosphere he had experienced in Japan and in Europe to the scholarly environment—or the lack thereof—in the Philippines. Also, upon his return to Japan, he published his research on the Philippines despite severe prohibition from military and state authorities.

Apart from a March 1942 radio broadcast of Miki's lecture and a series of essays about the Oriental character of the Filipinos translated into Tagalog and partly published in *Liwayway* on 10 September 1942, all other essays that he wrote about the country were not made available to Filipinos. Written in Nihongo, they were published in Japanese magazines and newspapers, so only his compatriots benefited the most from Miki's insights on and critique of Philippine affairs. All of Miki's works, including unpublished writings, influenced the occupational policy in the Philippines. With the exception of "Discourse on New Propaganda," there are at least fifteen known essays and lectures of Miki directly related to the Philippines, all of which he wrote during his time in the Philippines and after returning to Japan (see also Tairako 2008, 330, n37). I added "Discourse on New Propaganda," published in 1937, because its contents are related to Miki's work as a member and, later, the head of the planning section of the 14th Army Propaganda Corps. All 16 were broadcast, published, or delivered by Miki as lectures during the war. Below is a list of them in order of publication date in Japan:

1. “Discourse on New Propaganda” (in Miki 1968, 15: 212–18). Originally published in *Osaka Asahi Shimbun*, 9–11 November 1937.
2. “Japan’s Historical Standpoint” (in Miki 1968, 20: 236–241). The original manuscript is in Japanese, but whose English translation was broadcast on 4 March 1942 in the Philippines. There is no evidence of the lecture having been published in English. This is a translation of a Japanese summary of the lecture.
3. “Defeat of the American Thought Culture” (in Miki 1968, 19: 794–96). Originally published in *Tokyo Asahi Shimbun*, 8 December 1942.
4. “Forging Ahead the National Character” (in Miki 1968, 20: 242–53). Originally published in *Nihon Bunka no Shisō to Genjitsu*, January 1943.
5. “Coming Home from the South” (in Miki 1968, 15: 520–24). Originally published in February 1943 [no publication detail].
6. “Oriental Character of the Filipinos” (in Miki 1968, 15: 478–519). Originally published in 8 parts (from late July to early November [1942]) in *Southern Cross* (Minami Jujisei). The series was also translated into Tagalog and published in *Lidayway Magazine* in September 1942. Published in whole in *Kaizō*, February 1943. Also published in a collection of essays on the Philippines (Hino et al. December 1943, 3–54).
7. “Southern Area Universities—Christianity and the Educational Institution” (in Miki 1968, 15: 615–19). Originally published in *Mainichi Shimbun*, 2, 3, and 4 March 1943.
8. “Reality and Logic of War: Experience at the Southern Area Warfront” (in Miki 1968, 20: 254–56). Originally published in *Kyoto Teikoku Daigaku Shimbun*, 5 March 1943.

9. “Philippines” (in Miki 1968, 15: 525–45). Originally published in *Chuō Kōron*, March 1943.
10. “Airfield Dust” published in *Hitoha Kengun Hodobu* [March] 1943, 235–43.
11. “Nihongo and the Philippine Language Problem” (in Miki 1968, 15: 546–58). Originally published in *Nihongo*, May 1943.
12. “On the New Environment: Impressions from the South” (in Miki 1968, 15: 558–71). Originally published in *Fujin Kōron*, May 1943.
13. “Philippine Education” (in Miki 1968, 15: 572–90). Originally published in *Kyōiku*, July 1943.
14. “Character of Philippine Culture” (in Miki 1968, 15: 591–611). Originally published in *Kokusai Bunka*, November 1943.
15. “Political Character of Filipinos” (in Miki 1968, 15: 612–14). Editors of the Miki 1968 retrieved the original from Miki’s manuscripts, November 1943.
16. “The Issue of the Modern Folk Theory” (in Miki 1968 19: 806–24). A lecture originally published in *Minzoku Kagaku Daikai*, November 1944.

These essays show Miki’s grasp of the various facets of Philippine society. Hereon I will focus on Miki’s discussion of the Oriental character of the Filipinos, where he offers a bold alternative to the Filipino sense of modernity that was linked to the Western worldview.

Japan’s Historical Standpoint

To understand Miki’s views on Oriental character, one must situate them alongside his take on the War, which can be found in his lecture, “Japan’s Historical Standpoint.” Before Miki settled in Manila, the Propaganda Corps had already broadcast via radio one of Miki’s lectures criticizing Anglo-American imperialism and promoting Japanese leadership

in the Great East Asian war. The English translation of Miki's lecture, "Japan's Historical Standpoint," was broadcast in Manila on 4 March, when the Japanese were slowly stepping up their offensive in Bataan. This broadcast of Japan's premier philosopher of the time¹⁹ was one of the first and one of the most thorough explanations of the war. It was done as a primer (where questions were given and answered accordingly), simple and concise. Also, the ideas were presented in an impressively fresh perspective, unlike the worn-out rhetoric of prewar Filipino politicians and American diplomats.

Miki's lecture explained the Japanese perspective of the war and justified why other Asian countries must suffer from the conflict. It saw British and American imperialist domination and exploitation of many Asian nations as the main source of the region's problems. Miki argued that this domination was accomplished through liberalist ideas of politics and economy that the British and the Americans cultivated in their (semi)colonies. He maintained that the liberalist order seemed to grant the colonies freedom in all aspects in life, but in truth, the Anglo-America powers sustained the political and economic status quo. He believed that this world system was already failing and that the war was simply a part of the protracted collapse. Miki pointed out specific evidence of Anglo-American domination that tainted the ideological character and lifestyle of the Asian peoples. He identified materialism and *kyōrakushugi* (hedonism) as products of the dominant individualist liberal ideology. Although Miki did not talk specifically about the Philippines,²⁰ the materialist discourse was something the Manileños—whose cities have been developing for some years in the 1930s and whose dailies were overrun by advertisements for various home and personal merchandise—were not familiar with.

After singling out the source of Asia's problems, Miki offered a potential solution: change required challenging the British and Americans. Miki quickly pointed out that every major change in mankind's history needed a catalyst. According to him, Japan was that catalyst for Asia. Miki strongly argued that Japan was in the best position to realize the emancipation of Asia from Anglo-American imperialism. Miki believed that through

Japan's leadership, and through strong Asian ties and cooperation, an alternative world order was possible.

Japan is the nation that will emancipate East Asia. The age of liberalism is over. World history is now in a period of change. Liberalism cannot fulfill the freedom that it promised. This is because the liberty that the liberalist talks about ceases in its abstract form. It is because it is individualistic. Real freedom does not mean following each person's *katteki* (liberty). It is the individual's service to the whole, the unity of the individual to the totality. Japan does not want to take the place of Britain and America in imperialist domination. Japan longs to establish genuine *kyōsonkyō'ei* (co-existence and co-prosperity), and therefore a real liberal order, and play its part toward achieving true world peace. (1968, 20: 237–38)

Despite the idealism, Miki was realistic enough to recognize that emancipation would not be an easy task. Having recognized the persistent hedonistic attitude throughout the land, he ended the lecture by saying that the future order of things “shall be born in pain.” But more than anything, Miki must have felt he had to remind the audience that given the war, the Japanese occupation, and the economic crisis that was soon to worsen, changes will not happen without the Filipino people giving up long-held comforts as individuals and as a nation.

Passion for Philippine Culture and Miki's Downplaying of the GEACPS

In his writings, Miki spoke so little about the GEACPS, an oddity given that he served as head of the planning section of the propaganda corps. There may be a few reasons for this. Most field propagandists (like Hitomi) found it difficult to explain the GEACPS's deeper nuances due to the language barrier. Perhaps Miki was writing more for a Japanese audience, so it was pointless to compose further clarifications about the GEACPS. Also, as observed in the 1944 plan of the propaganda corps, the priority was to provide detailed reports about developments in the country to the Japanese back home.

To my mind, however, Miki's reticence about GEACPS springs from a different understanding of pan-Asianism. After all, as seen in the introduction, intellectuals like him had already been clamoring for a pan-Asian order that did not have a political and economic impetus, let alone plans for imperial domination. Thus, unlike the typical Japanese propaganda at the time, and despite his pro-Japanese stance, Miki never boasted of Japanese industrial success and military strength. He was, after all, against the Anglo-American culture of material accumulation. Miki instead espoused the idea of the *seishin* (spirit). Japan celebrates April 3 as the day Emperor Jimmu founded the nation in the spirit of *hakkōichiu* (eight corners of the world under one roof, or simply universal brotherhood). *Hakkōichiu* was one of the slogans of the GEACPS, but Miki focused instead on the significance of the period of this celebration.²¹ According to him (Miki 1968, 20: 236), during this time in Japan, "most poets would write about the *yamato damashii* (yamato spirit), or that which symbolized the Japanese spirit." He further added that this celebration took place in spring, the best season of the year when the *sakura* (cherry blossoms) bloom. Through the *sakura*, Miki explained the idea of Japanese spirit and its ideological difference from that of the West (Miki 1968, 20: 238–39).

Western culture esteems the material, while Japan the spiritual, which is a general characteristic of the Oriental culture. The new East Asia shall be constructed by restoring the tradition of that spiritual culture, and this should be made the world culture. In one night, the *ranman* 'beauty' and bloom of the Japanese pride of sakura flower have scattered. This represents the substantially selfless and *tentan* 'simple' spirit, and symbolizes the lavish Japanese heart, which readily gives up its existence for the sake of the greater good. This kind of spiritual strength denotes the obvious triumph of Japan in this current war. The strength of the Japanese soldier is not only dependent on the mere superiority of his weapons. It depends on this spirit, which flows in the blood of every Japanese. This moral strength was that thing which America and Britain did not understand and which they hugely miscalculated.²²

Also, Miki's downplaying of Japan's military and industrial strength in turn dovetailed with his overall attitude towards the war. Miki refused to participate whenever members of the propaganda corps were ordered to visit the battlefield, which, sometimes, took weeks. Propaganda Corps officer Junsuke Hitomi (cited in Tairako 2008, 322) recalled that

At the height of the battle of Bataan, writers and journalists, photographers and even artists and poets were sent to experience the Bataan battlefield, but you won't see Miki bringing himself to battle. If somebody asks Miki what he thinks about going to Bataan, his reply would be 'I did not come for the war. I came to study the Philippine culture. War is of no interest to me.'

Miki eventually visited Bataan soon after the Allied Forces capitulated to the Japanese. Perhaps Miki made the decision to finally visit Bataan only at the end of the fighting because it was only then that he could effectively carry out his scholarly work. Barely into the sixth month of his draft, Miki, passionate as he was for Philippine culture, already had several ideas on how he was going to write his observations regarding the country. In a letter to journalist and author Shigeo Hatanaka dated 7 August 1942, Miki (1968, 19: 432–33)²³ spoke about Americanism and the Filipino Oriental character, hinting at his approach and methodology on studying the Philippines.

...I have grown accustomed to life in the Philippines as it has been half a year since I arrived. The influence of Americanism that stood out in the beginning turned out to be partial and superficial. It is actually the Spanish influence that is deep and broad. Also, I deeply feel that Filipinos possess some common Oriental characters. But it's dangerous to make conclusions by way of first impressions. I believe it takes one year to be able to understand the psychology of the people of any land. More than a year could cause the so-called South Seas syndrome (*nanyōboke*). I don't know until when I'll be here, but I'm researching as much as I can. I read books whenever I have spare time. I believe it is the cultural aspects that are most interesting in this new occupied territory.

This passion for the research in Philippine culture appears to be one reason why Miki had limited views on the GEACPS despite the GEACPS's centrality to Japanese propaganda in the Philippines. Indeed, Miki himself had other priorities: the exposition of the Filipino Oriental character. In his eight-part essay (his longest) on the Philippines, "Oriental Character of the Filipinos,"²⁴ Miki only started talking about the GEACPS in the last sentence of the seventh part, and, again, only at the tail end of the eighth and final part. Surprisingly, despite his apprehensions on the loose conceptualization of "common blood" in the late 19th century, Miki (1968, 15:516) would utilize a similar concept in his essay.

...in the construction of the GEACPS, there is no other option but to adopt them (Filipinos) into the family. We can see them as our blood relative (*ketsuen*), a new brotherhood relative (*shinkyō daishinseki*). They shall properly develop with the character they shall get (from us), depending on how they shall be brought up within the new environment.

Miki downplays the GEACPS in another essay, "Character of Philippine Culture," where he determines the five phases of the country's past (Miki 1968, 15: 591–611). The first four phases include the age of the ancient Oriental indigenous culture; the Spanish and religious culture; the Philippine revolution in the last quarter of the century; and the American invasion. Miki's periodization of the country's history and culture is exemplary in that Philippine historiography before the war—and even up to the present—tended to be abstractly and discriminatively divided into periods of foreign subjugation and colonization. Hence, Filipino students today learn that their history consists of prehistory (i.e., the time that predates "written history" or colonization); the Spanish period; the American period; and so on.

In contrast, Miki's periodization duly recognizes significant historical episodes (like the revolution²⁵ and the concept of invasion) and cultural facets (like the Orient, indigenusness, and religion, which had been

understated by prior and oversimplified categorizations of the country's past).²⁶ Miki regarded the fifth period as the phase when “the Philippine cultural history...enters a completely new era.” However, despite (if not because of) this positive view of the country's future, Miki did not directly attribute such potential to the GEACPS. In fact, Miki (*ibid.*, 611) would in the same essay merely say that the fifth period was to be “coincidental” with the GEACPS. It is as though the fifth period was not the main focus thereof.

Japanese Spirit and Filipino Oriental Character

According to Miki (1968, 15: 540), Filipinos would always ask, “we got the church from Spain, school from America, what will we get from Japan?” This was in reference to the Roman Catholic religion and the American public-school system, both of which had become dominant ideological apparatuses in the prewar Philippines. Miki, who undoubtedly was asking himself the same question, ultimately came to an answer that was both philosophical and material—the former being “spirit” and the latter being “agriculture.” According to Miki (*ibid.*, 540), whenever this question came up,

...most of the answer... was ‘spirit’ (*seishin*). This answer I think is very correct. Japan has to instill to the Filipinos the spirit. It is fundamentally important for Japan to guide the Filipinos to the culture of the Japanese spirit, to instill the consciousness as an Oriental...

More than the GEACPS and all other idealist forms of Japanese propaganda throughout the war, Miki's conception of the spirit did not only become a centerpiece of all his discussions regarding his experience in the Philippines. More importantly, his ideas revived the Japanese intellectuals' prewar idea of the academic (nonpolitical) and cooperative pan-Asian predecessor of the GEACPS (see Saaler 2007; endnote 3). He believed that instilling this spirit is important because Filipinos “have adored the Western culture, especially American culture, and forgotten themselves.”

Miki (1968, 15: 516) stated the same reason in another essay. “For the Philippine culture to soundly develop, it is important to recover the Oriental culture that they have at present lost.” While his pan-Asianism may have predated that of the GEACPS, his rationale here mirrored that of a popular, early 1942 imperial propaganda, which reiterated that Filipinos are geographically and racially Orientals.

Characteristics of Oriental Character

Miki’s interest in history and science compelled him to unearth the various inherent characteristics of the Filipinos, including those he considered Oriental. He discussed them mainly in his eight-part essay “Oriental Character of the Filipinos” and mentioned them in others. He was particularly interested in the “feeling of nothingness,” family system, the Oriental calmness and restraint, dignity, the moralistic way of thinking, and the Oriental spirit of stoicism and resignation.

He also believed that the older characteristics were less tainted by aspects of Western culture, and, therefore, were more essential and purer. This was the reason why Miki often referred to the prehistoric—or as Miki termed it, the ancient Oriental indigenous cultural—characteristics of the Filipinos, particularly those shared with their Malay ancestors and the Ifugao of north Luzon thousands of years before. But sometimes he would speak of more recent characters in histories—like his reference to the composure of Gen. Gregorio del Pilar during the Battle of Tirad Pass at the turn of the twentieth century.

Oriental Character and Agriculture

The striking significance of Miki’s discussion of Oriental Character can be located more in its material component. While the Oriental Character serves as the conceptual assurance of the “common ‘belief’ (*shinnen*) that there is common blood,” the idea of the “Oriental agricultural society” is its material representation. By linking character to agriculture, Miki implied that this material representation also held a class

basis. Drawing on some very distinct features of the Marxist intellectual tradition, Miki argued that peasants, who constituted the majority of the Philippine population, “would be the retainer of this Oriental character” (ibid.). Reiterating this formulation, he said that

...it is very important to improve the life of the peasants who comprise most Filipinos, know their aspirations, and grasp their heart. In answering “spirit” [to the question] above, I am not being contradictory, in fact I would like to concretely answer that it is “agriculture” that Japan should leave to the Filipinos. I think in reality, the Japanese military government is also thinking along this direction. (ibid.)

Miki constantly referred to agriculture as a common feature that the Philippines shared with China and Manchuria (and consequently, at odds with Anglo-America). This was Miki’s way of restating the message replete in Japanese propaganda posters during the war, that “Asia is for Asians” and that “the Philippines is for the Filipinos.” In line with the propaganda of the time, Miki insisted that these commonalities between Asians could potentially transform their perceived alliance into a stronger pact. Miki, in the essay “Oriental Character of the Filipinos” (1968, 15: 516–517) would again emphasize the Japanese standpoint by touching on a topic close to the Filipino heart: music.

Musicians who are good in music should recognize themselves as good musicians. But only a musician can make a musician. In short, for pupils to obtain the abilities that they need, a teacher who actually possesses those abilities is essential. The Oriental Filipinos therefore need such a teacher to be able to obtain the characteristics that they need, from a nation that demonstrates the essence of Oriental culture (*tōyōbunka no seizu*). This means that Filipinos need to seek the example of Japanese culture to consummate their own character.

Homogeneity was a conspicuously significant factor in Miki’s analysis of the Filipino Oriental character. His formulation thereof was obviously based on the commonness of characteristics between Asians (see Miki 1968,

15: 591–611).²⁷ On the one hand, Miki claimed that the Philippines—a country of various ethnic and racial groups²⁸ with mutually intelligible languages, varying political and social statuses, and a mixture of Spanish and especially American influences—was in fact a *fukugōshakai* (plural society) (ibid., 591). On the other hand, Miki noted common characteristics between the various Filipino groups and the unifying influence of the Roman Catholic religion, the faith of around 90 percent of the population. Miki (ibid., 592) remarked that “of course there exist differences between each tribe, but they are all remarkably homogenous,” despite having the characteristics of a “plural society.” Homogeneity was also the reason why Miki paid attention to Filipino non-Christian ethnolinguistic groups (e.g., the Ifugao). To him, they remained untainted by Western religious and ideological clout, and, therefore, possessed the *seikaku* (character) and the *minzokusei* (identity) which “recognizes an Oriental consciousness” (ibid., 596). Calling the clash between cultures a *sekaishitekina bunkasensō* (world historical cultural war), Miki was convinced that the predominance of Spanish Christianity and American conservatism prompted the dissolution of the Filipino Oriental culture.

Miki (ibid., 593–94) constantly returned to the Filipino indigenous character because its strength, according to him, rests on the influence of Oriental culture.

...our problem is rather more on the character than on the contents of the [Filipino] culture. Before the Japanese invasion, the Philippines had an indigenous culture (*koyū no bunka*). This does not mean that its character did not have outside influences. But those that [earlier] influenced it are also of the same Oriental culture. The Philippines of olden times belonged to the sphere of Oriental culture. Those that influenced it were Indian, Arabic, and Chinese. Philippine culture [or its existence in the past] was marked by the presence of a 17-letter alphabet.²⁹ Also, all the islanders were enthusiastic about reading and writing. ‘Everybody, men or women, was literate’ according to [Pedro] Chirino.³⁰ They had various kinds of songs. Songs that existed along with music, dance, and theater. There was law and trial proceedings.

Their love for proverbs and aphorisms show that they possessed moral views. On culture, [George Arthur] Malcolm³¹ said “[g]enerally speaking, one cannot point out a single inferior ability that shows their nature. They are the same as any other cultures that developed historically....”³²

Oriental Feeling of Nothingness

Miki’s conception of the *tōyōteki kyomukan* (Oriental feeling of nothingness) must be the most interesting of all the Filipino characters that he identified because no other Filipino or foreign intellectual had conceived of anything close to it.³³ Those familiar with the Japanese language should be careful not to confuse the term, *kyomukan* with *kyomushugi* or nihilism. Miki never really gave a definition of *kyomukan*, but he would give a number of examples to illustrate his point. With regards to its difference from nihilism, Miki (1968, 15: 481) notes that

The Western nothing (*mu*) is nothingness in relation to [physical] existence (*yū*). On the other hand, the Oriental nothing is coincidental with existence and not considered as the other of existence. It’s not like nothing exists apart from existence....

Similar to Miki’s conception of *mu* was that of Keiji Nishitani, who like Miki, was a former student of Nishida. For Nishitani, *mu* or nothingness “did not really mean nothing but rather conveyed the presence of a subject that did not possess something objectively, as against ‘an ordinary self’ that is considered substantive because it possesses all things and is possessed by them” (in Harootunian 2000, 85). Miki’s idea of nothingness, therefore, is far from the mechanical and vulgar dichotomization in the social sciences between materiality and transcendence (i.e., spiritual, if not Godly). Rather, it can be more appreciated through material-immaterial coexistence or coincidence.

In the essay, “Oriental Character of the Filipinos,” Miki related several instances of Filipino behavior that led him to theorizing the feeling of nothingness. One is as follows (in Miki 1968, 15: 478):

While walking on a street, I saw a Filipino gazing outside from his window. He was not looking at the passers-by. He was not gazing at the [outdoor] scenery from his room. He was not looking at anything. In short, he was staring at nothingness. He could sit there for so many hours, staring at a certain non-matter.³⁴

Miki related another instance of the feeling of nothingness to the Filipino’s love of music, which, according to him, had been documented in old Philippine literature. He added that the Filipinos particularly are attracted to mournful music or music of lamentation, “as if they sadly appeal to it and at the same time lament on it” (ibid., 479). Miki believed that Filipinos take on the *aichō* (pathos) or the emotion of sympathetic pity while they listen to such music. Miki believed that this musical preference expresses the traditional yearning of their ancestors—who crossed the sea and migrated to the islands a long time ago—for their homeland. This musical languidness, he concluded, reflects the Oriental feeling of nothingness.

Miki also believed that Filipinos are *shukumeironsha* (advocates of fate). He related the feeling of nothingness to this Filipino fatalism and the accompanying qualities of strong patience, quiet attitude, and numbness to misfortune and suffering. Miki used as basis here the Filipino expression “bahala na” which he correctly understood as the Japanese equivalent of *mamayo* or “come what may” as well as the Chinese *meifāzu* (ibid., 480).³⁵ Another Filipino expression that he used to prove his point was *walang suwerte* (without luck), which is what most Filipinos say whenever they lose in gambling.

In what can also be perceived as a testament to how Miki really felt about his experience as a civilian draftee in the gruesome aftermath of the battles of Bataan and Corregidor, Miki (1968, 15: 480) related the Oriental

feeling of nothingness to what seemed to him was a distinct visage of the tens of thousands of Filipino refugees in Bataan soon after it was overrun by the Japanese.

When I was in Bataan, I have seen refugees, so many that you can't even see where their line begins, walking, seeking shelter like animals. I have seen in their faces this oriental characteristic in facial expression, stoic (*ninku*) blank expression.

While Miki's descriptions of the Filipino's Oriental feeling of nothingness can be easily dismissed as a subtle attempt to rationalize Japan's colonial agenda by way of Asian homogeneity, his take on Filipino behavior and sentiments during their most trying times in war, defeat, and poverty, can also be considered as a worthy alternative to the often-Western and mostly elitist view that relegate such traits as depreciable and reprobate. The elitism, for instance, informs the perception of the the impoverished Filipino whose dire indigence is commonly attributed to cultural generalizations (e.g., inaction, indolence, and lamentations) despite the material, real, and actual systemic, bureaucratic, and noncultural causes. His more positive take on Filipino character is a reason why Miki's views, especially those that highlight the need for a national agricultural basic economy to counter Anglo-American exploitation, are significant during his time and even today.

Miki's Return to Japan: Imprisonment and Death

Miki returned to Japan in December 1942 and published in 1943 and 1944, undoubtedly with the military's consent, several essays and analyses related to his observations, research, and experiences in the country. One of his essays, "Philippines," was published in no less than the *Chuō Korōn* in December 1942. He also gave a lecture about the Philippines to employees of the *Chuō Korōn* publishing company on 8 January 1943. Still, Miki was apparently severely cautioned not to publicize all his research about the Philippines (Tairako 2008, 330).

The military authorities thought that such public dissemination might preempt and hamper the pacification campaign that was about to take place in the Philippines in late 1943 when Japan granted independence to the country. It is possible that Miki was monitored by the special police after returning to Japan. He was living with his eldest son and young daughter in Saitama Prefecture when, on 25 March 1945, he was arrested by the police on the charge of “disrupting public order” (Heisig 1998). They based the arrest on Miki’s assistance to a friend who evaded the authorities after being charged with violating the *chianijihō* (Yusa 1998, 70). On 12 June, Miki was formally accused of breaking the law for the second time. He was sentenced to the Sugamo Prison and later transferred to Toyotama Prison in Nakano, Tokyo, notorious for its harsh conditions. Miki would die there, soon after the end of the war. His death was the result of kidney failure due to the scabies he contracted in prison, which hints at the very poor conditions he was subjected to (Townsend 2009, 241–44; Yusa 1998, 70).

Miki’s imprisonment and death resulted from the continued pressure against him, particularly by the military. Since the onset of fascist Japanese militarism in the early 1930s, the military viewed the left as a threat to the status quo. The “left” included in its ranks most intellectuals like Miki who, like many of his contemporaries, wrote about various philosophical traditions that just so happened to include Marxism and class relations. In fact, James Heisig (justifiably, I believe) hints that the military’s decision to draft Miki to the Philippines several years earlier was part of a continuing intimidation tactic that began in the 1930s when he was first imprisoned (Heisig 1998; Heisig et al. 2011, 702). On 8 January 1942, the editors of the critical magazine, *Chuō Korōn*, received a visit from the special police, who informed them that Miki was to be subjected to police supervision because of his article, “Basis of Wartime Knowledge,” in that month’s issue of the paper (Williams 2014, xlix; Miki 1968, 19: 85–89). From then on, Miki was not allowed to write for any *sōgōzasshi* (general opinion magazines) and was soon drafted to the Philippines for him to “improve” his views (Williams 2014, xlix).

It is not surprising that Miki's death in 1945 became a celebrated case and remained one of the main tragedies that stirred the Higashikuni cabinet. At the time, the cabinet was adamant about keeping the Peace Preservation Law, which sought to guard against the spread of Communism amidst the rising anxiety among Western powers after the post-war conundrum. Such resolve only gained external political pressures that eventually led to a dispute between Prince Naruhiko Higashikuni and the American occupying forces at a time when both parties were treading on thin ice. The discord only ended when the entire Higashikuni cabinet resigned. On 15 October, the succeeding Shidehara cabinet abolished the Peace Preservation Law.

Concluding Remarks: Miki's Ambivalent Status?

The role of Axis intellectuals during the Second World War has been unjustly characterized in various, usually polarizing, terms—either as fascist or bona fide intellectuals. The polarization was already apparent during the immediate post-war years as intellectuals were mainly characterized as either those who became part of the State apparatuses or those who chose to be silent, be defiant (through direct intellectual assault or counterculture), or be distant (through migration). Kiyoshi Miki is one of Japan's most celebrated philosophers, but his place in wartime intellectual history (especially in former occupied territories) has yet to be explored in more, deeper detail.

By outlining Miki's comparatively reticent views on the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere, his thoughts on Philippine independence, and his thrust to restore, (re)define, and develop the Filipino Oriental character, the paper has demonstrated Miki's ambivalent role as one of the authors of Japan's ideological justification for invasion, and as an intellectual with a fresh take on wartime occupation. There were two contrasting sides to Miki during his early years in the Philippines: the man who delivered a radio broadcast in support of Japan's war and the man who hesitated in conveying the importance of the GEACPS by giving little attention to it in his writings

(at least on the Philippines) and who had a vexed relationship with the state, which targeted him because of his Marxist leanings. Miki was part of Imperial Japan's military structure but at the same time held contrarian Marxist views so much so that he lost his livelihood (his tenure had been cancelled) and later on his life. His wish to emancipate the Filipino nation and mind from Western colonialism is a noble goal from a nationalist perspective. No evidence is more glaring than his earnest appeals to improve the living conditions in the occupied country, especially concerning agriculture. But it is also paradoxical since it has to be done with the help of a colonial power, if not through tutelage and another occupation. Moreover, Miki wanted independence for the Philippines that paradoxically relied on imperialism and colonialism. He spoke less of the GEACPS, had a distant attitude towards Japanese military and industrial might, and was hounded by the state. His writings on the Oriental character of the Filipinos coincided with an integral part of the GEACPS's notion of Asia for Asians, but he had rejected fascism in Europe, had Marxist sympathies that drew the suspicion of the state, and his pan-Asianism already had roots in pre-war Japanese thought that also spoke of brotherhood, community, and cooperation and did not have any imperial underpinnings.

Given Miki's output, there is undoubtedly much else to be written about him. But his life and works show that the role of Japanese intellectuals during the War need not be reduced solely and simply as obedient propagandists. There is much to be gained by seeing the ambivalences and complexities in the relationship between Japanese intellectuals and Japanese imperialism. The present study, it is hoped, is a modest step towards this direction.

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Notes

- ¹ Please take note that from here on all Japanese long vowels are identified by the macron diacritical mark.
- ² According to Motoe Terami-Wada (1984, 42), pan-Asianism became a national policy in 1936. The term "greater East Asia co-prosperity sphere," on the other hand, was first used in 1 August 1940 by Yosuke Matsuoka, then Minister of Foreign Affairs (*ibid.*, 54).
- ³ Sven Saaler (2007, 10) listed the following commonalities that writings in Japan referred to when proclaiming "Asian identity": "1. The cultural unity (*dōbun*) of the peoples and nations of East Asia, based upon the common use of Chinese characters (*kanji*), 2. The 'racial' kinship of East Asian peoples and ethnicities (*dōshu*), which, in the Western categorization of 'races', all belonged to the so-called 'yellow race' (*ōshokujinshu*), 3. The geographical proximity and historical legacy of the Sino-centric order mentioned above, representing a traditional framework for interstate relations in East Asia, but also close economic relations, and 4. The feeling of a 'common' destiny (*unmeikyōdōtai*) in the struggle of Asian and/or colored people against Western imperialism and, at times, against Westernization and/or modernization. While the first three notions limited the geographical notions of 'Asia' mostly to East Asia, it was the consequence of this fourth concept that in the years after the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5 other parts of 'Asia,' i.e. Western Asia, South Asia and the Arab World, came to play a role in pan-Asianism."
- ⁴ Proclaimed by the then Prime Minister, Prince Fumimaro Konoe.
- ⁵ Both were sent to occupied Philippines, Miki as member and later unit head of the Propaganda Corps and Rōyama as member of the Research Commission on the Philippines.
- ⁶ I borrow here the term "bona fide intellectuals" used by Crowley (1971, 319-20) to qualify Japanese intellectuals that could neither have been chauvinists nor fascists, but more inclined to be responsible individuals and informed critics.
- ⁷ The word "fascitization" has been used in some postwar analyses.
- ⁸ After Konoe's declaration of the new Asian order in 1938, Miki, along with Royama, refashioned their idea of an East Asia cooperative community through the Showa Kenkyūkai but further developments had to be delayed because of the dissolution of the association by 1940.
- ⁹ Maruyama later named particular members of the intelligentsia whose views were more or less common to radical fascists. Masaru Yasuda was among them, especially with his

book, *GokuchūShuki* (Prison Papers). Maruyama believes that “too much concern with their [intellectuals] mental posture towards the fascist movement can lead to an over-estimation of so-called negative resistance” (Maruyama 1969, 58:n).

- 10 Fletcher is ambivalent regarding this matter. His is something to the effect that Japanese intellectuals had to conform to the prevailing ideology of the time. But he also believes that these individuals, Miki and Rōyama in particular, had an “infatuation with fascist ideology” especially during their tenure in the Showa Research Association (see Fletcher 1982, 5). He later clarified that “European fascism intrigued the three men (Miki, Rōyama, and another intellectual, Shintarō Ryū) because they saw it as employing state power and the irrational emotion of nationalism in the service of rational political and economic reform” (ibid., 6).
- 11 Tairako is correct in mentioning that after coming back to Japan in December 1942, Miki’s chances to write and his likelihood to get published were extremely low. He adds that Miki, who was not given the opportunity to publish, anyway recorded four volumes of drafts of his critique on current affairs and that these articles were written not as personal memos but were written with the expectation that given the opportunity, these would be publicized (Tairako 2008, 343).
- 12 Biographical entry of Miki was retrieved from both sources. In the collection, *Miki Kiyoshi Zenshū* [Anthology of Works by Miki Kiyoshi] (Miki 1968), it is surmised that his actual date of birth is on or around 28 December 1896.
- 13 Miki regularly wrote to his daughter, who was 12 years old at the time he was drafted to the Philippines.
- 14 The very long essay consisted of nine parts. It can be retrieved from Miki 1968, 11: 77–177.
- 15 The first batch arrived with the 14th Army soon after the invasion in December 1941.
- 16 Murata, who was one of the most influential economic advisers to the JMA, was also the man who established the Philippine Research Commission.
- 17 Miki was also an English speaker. In his essay, “Coming Home from the South,” he would remark that the person who made the most remarkable work at the Philippine frontline was the person who had studied in America from kindergarten to college (Miki 1968, 15: 520). Miki only learned English at school and in this essay, he hinted at his slight disappointment at his apparent limited English language skills. When he studied in Europe, the languages he mostly used were German and French, and of course Japanese when he was around compatriots. There is at least one essay of Miki published in English (in Miki and Hosokawa 1941). Regarding Spanish, Miki would soon find out that what he had learned about the language would be of no use in the Philippine countryside. In his essay, “Nihongo and the Philippine Language Problem,” Miki remarked, “Soon after the American occupation, commissioned [Japanese] officers who went to the Philippines temporarily study Spanish before going, in the ship on the way to, or after arriving, but when they went to the countryside, [they found out that] there was almost no opportunity to use this knowledge. They were [incorrectly] thinking that Spanish has spread all over the country” (Miki 1968, 15: 549).

- ¹⁸ In Miki 1968 volume 19. Letters number 212 (to Honda Sekisuecke); 213 (to Kishimoto Seijirō); 215 (to Miki Yoko); 221 (to Daidō Yasujirō); 222 (to Hatanaka Shigeo); 224 (to Yamazaki Keizō); and 227 (to Nojima Teichirō).
- ¹⁹ Undoubtedly, Miki was introduced as such. It is apparent that Miki himself did not deliver this lecture in the Manila broadcast, as it would take some time before his arrival in Manila. From the time he landed in La Union, he stayed for a while at Barangay Damortis (in Rosario, La Union), then from there he stopped for a while at Tarlac, then went to an army or *kempetai* headquarters in San Fernando in Pampanga, where he stayed until the end of March (Hitoha Kengun Hodobu 1943, 237). Then he stayed for several days at Clark Field in Pampanga and finally entered Manila. He therefore arrived in Manila at the earliest around early April (just before or around the time Bataan fell). The first time he talked about Manila was in a letter to a friend of his (Yoshiharu Terada) dated 4 May 1942 (in Miki 1968, 19: 422–23). Most likely, a summary in English of the lecture was made to be read by the Propaganda Corps. The extent of this public broadcast is still very vague. Aside from the summary of the lecture published in Miki 1968, 20: 236–41, no other evidence of this broadcast could be found. The Office of War Information’s comprehensive analysis of Japanese radio broadcasts did not commence until June 1942. It is safe to say though, that this broadcast had been heard by almost every Filipino who had radios, especially when other forms of entertainment and news were very much limited. By this time, broadcasts had already been limited to those by the Propaganda Corps while JMA censorship on mass media had already been established with a number of existing radios having been reconditioned to Japanese broadcasts.
- ²⁰ It is entirely possible that the lecture was prepared by Miki for the wider Asian audience, which makes the piece more interesting. In not singling out an Asian colony, Miki succeeded in highlighting the all-encompassing domination and identical modes of intrusion by Britain and the United States, and quite possibly even a united effort that could counter them.
- ²¹ It is worth noting that historians like David Williams have consistently called for the “comprehensive overthrow of the conventional understanding” (Williams 2014, xxxvi) of *hakkōichū* along with other concepts like *sōryokusen* and *kyōciken*. All three are also discussed in the current essay.
- ²² In hindsight, the propaganda use of the beauty of the *sakura* to symbolize the Japanese spirit could have gone the opposite direction. In describing the *sakura*, Miki used the word *ranman* (beauty), which is a Japanese description particular to flowers like the *sakura*, the bloom of which only lasts a while when flowers fall to the ground covering everything with its supposed beauty. The imagery it was conveying was simple enough for the average audience to understand but it was too complex for the same audience whose idea of a flower’s beauty could have been based on its existence in a tropical environment (i.e., flowers that can withstand the heat for longer periods of time). The image of the *sakura* was to be rarely used by the Propaganda Corps in both texts and images throughout the occupation. It is possible that Japanese propagandists soon realized the futility of using such approach in popular forms of propaganda. Whenever flowers appear in Japanese

- wartime posters, the local *sampaguita* and not the sakura could be seen. This sakura metaphor, on the other hand, could have been more appealing to those who had the opportunity to travel abroad and were more open to the peculiar characteristics of the natural environment in other countries (i.e., the landlord class, and the prewar American-sponsored *pensionados*, whom Miki later classified as “intellectual class”).
- ²³ Letter number 222.
- ²⁴ The essay originally came out as a series of eight essays for the military magazine *Minami Jūjūsei* in late 1942.
- ²⁵ Although Miki clearly recognized the Philippine revolution in his periodization, he was also aware of its political repercussions. In the same essay, he remarked that this third period was characterized by overflowing nationalism and patriotism, “but what they (Filipinos) have to think about is that the nature of the nationalism during that time and that of the present (1942–1943) are not the same” (Miki 1968, 15: 600).
- ²⁶ Miki’s periodization becomes more glaring since early 20th century Japan (or during an academic atmosphere before having been drafted to the Philippines) was mostly influenced by a state-sanctioned emperor-centric Japanese historiography, exemplified by *Kokushi no Kenkyū* (Study of national history, 1908) written by foremost historian Katsumi Kuroita (see Yoshikawa 2017).
- ²⁷ In addition to his assertion of cultural plurality, it is important to note here that Miki was not at all implying an absolute commonality of the innate characters between Asians. In the essay, “Oriental Character of the Filipinos,” Miki pointed out, albeit condescendingly and unceremoniously, that: “The Filipino feeling of nothingness, the Japanese spirituality, and the Chinese realism are of course different. One can recognize here the influence of Southern topography. What comes to my mind is the world-famous Manila Bay sunset. It is definitely beautiful. But it doesn’t have depth. It is the same in the case of Filipino painters. Their paintings are beautiful to look at but are shallow (*heimenteki*). They are [mere] colorists (*shikisaika*) and are not very profound. Shallowness is a characteristic that is commonly seen in Filipino paintings. One can recognize here the Filipino character... The same can’t be said about the Chinese and Japanese practical assertiveness (*jissentekisekkyokusei*)” (Miki 1968, 15: 482).
- ²⁸ Miki mentioned specifically the following ethnic groups: the “very primitive” Negrito, the Ifugao mountain people (often referred to as Igorot), the Islamic Moro, the Tagalog, the Bisaya, and the Ilokano.
- ²⁹ Miki was referring to the baybayin system of writing.
- ³⁰ Spanish historian and Jesuit missionary who wrote about Spain’s influences on the precolonial Filipino society (see Chirino 2009–2010).
- ³¹ American lawyer who was appointed Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the Philippines from 1916 to 1935. As a product of his role in the colonial administration, he wrote about Philippine government, law, and civics. The University of the Philippine’s Malcolm Hall was named after him for his role in the establishment of the university’s College of Law.

- ³² What Miki was practically saying here has implications on how Philippine history was and is normally periodized. As I have already mentioned, the period in Philippine history that precedes Spanish colonization is normally termed as “prehistory” which preconceives that its society was primitive (no cultural marks and very passive to foreign influence). Miki’s view on the Filipino indigenous character reinforces his kind of periodization of Philippine history. Instead of using the term “prehistory” that was most likely alien to his academic training and endeavor, he utilized “age of the ancient Oriental indigenous culture.”
- ³³ If there were, then those must have been as gravely concealed and underestimated as that of Miki’s.
- ³⁴ Miki mentioned that an American author said the last sentence in this entry but he did not specify who it was. It would certainly be interesting to read that entire source.
- ³⁵ As discussed earlier, Miki always recognized not only the homogeneity within the Philippines but between Asians.

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