

仮面の奇人 : マニラにおける陸軍報道班員 三木清

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The Masked Crank: Kiyoshi Miki, the Japanese
Army Propagandist in Manila

Abstract in English by Prof. *emeritus* Takashi Miyanaga, Hosei Univ., Tokyo, Japan

Japan is a small country with limited natural resources. She aspired to strive for supremacy in the Far East, following examples of the Great Powers, after gaining national strength in the prewar times. The word, "Imperialism", symbolizes not only aggressive tendencies but also territorial expansion which lasted till the end of the Pacific War. The scarcity of natural resources goaded Japan into the invasion of Southeast Asia in the last war. Some five years before the outbreak of the recent war, the Japanese government organized for wartime needs and advocated a new policy called 'The Greater East Co- Prosperity Sphere' (大東亜共栄圏) after signing the Anti-Comintern Pact (i.e. a Triple Alliance) with Germany and Italy in 1937.

The fact stiffen the U.S' attitude towards Japan. In diplomatic talks, held in Washington on 26, Nov. 1941 between Japan and the United States, Cordell Hull, the Secretary of State proposed a non-aggression treaty among the Pacific Powers and provided for the withdrawal of Japanese troops from China and French Indo-China. This was not acceptable for Japan by no means. Japan gave no answer to the U.S' suggestions.

The U.S regarded Japan's invasion into the south of Indo-China as a preparatory process of invading Singapore or the Dutch East Indies. When the distrust of Japan reached the climax, the U.S. froze Japanese assets and issued an embargo on the export of petroleum to Japan. Then Great Britain, China, and the North East Indies followed the U.S example (i.e. The ABCD encyclement against Japan). Everything went against Japan. To live and protect itself, Japan declared war on 8, Dec., 1941, owing to unavoidable circumstances. The U.S regular forces under Gen. MacArthur were stationed in the Philippines at that time.

Four hours after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, the Japanese air squadron bombed some cities and airfields in the Philippines. The war which the Philipinos had dreaded became a reality. The advance troops of the 14th Japanese Armies, under the command of lieut. Gen. Masaharu Honma, landed at several places in the Philippines and proceeded to Manila in concert. Manila was occupied by the Japanese Army on 2, Jan. 1942.

The Imperial Headquarters dispatched the Japanese Propaganda Corps (報道班) with the advance

troops to the Southeast Asian countries. The corps consisted of the following:

- 1) Novelists, critics
- 2) Painters
- 3) Newspapermen
- 4) Newspaper photographers
- 5) Translators
- 6) Cameramen for movies
- 7) Religionists
- 8) War correspondents
- 9) Technical experts for industry sent by commercial firms
- 10) Singers and dancers for consolation

The idea of sending civilians to the front seemed to have originated from an extreme rightist to punish liberalist or the Left.

This essay deals with Kiyoshi Miki (三木 清, 1897~1945, a philosopher and critic in the Taisho and Showa period, former professor at Hosei Univ., who died in prison), the man and the propagandist in Manila. He was mobilized as one of the members of the second Japanese Propaganda Corp based on the National Mobilization Law in Jan., 1941. After spending three weeks in the mansion of Iwasaki zaibatsu (i.e. plutocrat) located at Takanawa, Shinagawa ward, he embarked on a transport ship named the *Konzan* (崑山丸) with his comrades (a little over 60 men) and left Ujina, Hiroshima Pref., landing at Lingayen at the end of February in 1941. Thus began the story of his stay in the Philippines for about 10 months.

The party got on trucks headed for Manila, however, his truck collided with another one at a crossroad in the capital. Miki was thrown out of the truck. He entered a Catholic hospital in the walled-City (i.e. intramuros). After leaving the hospital, he moved into the *Bay View Hotel*, an allotted quarters for the propagandists. Hence began his doubtful life as a propagandist. His daily life was not well known. He was freed from work, however, he was often asked to write proclamations for the General. Sometimes he talked before the villagers or war prisoners through an interpreter and at training centers for public servants or helped with the editing of Japanese textbooks. He once spoke on the radio on 'Japan's Historical Standpoint'. He was ordered to see the vestiges of war with punishment from march through May because of his antimilitaristic remarks which brought on his comrade's wrath.

During his stay in Manila Miki shut himself up in the library or in his room to study the history

and culture of the Philippines. Actually he was a hard worker making lots of excerpts from technical books though, he was a bad neighbour. He was ill spoken of because of his sharp tongue. To live on his writings during the war, he needed to pretend to be a right-centered man concealing his true nature. He was a learned timeserver as well as a double-faced person. This character marked him.