

Miki Kiyoshi as a Liberal Humanist against Nazism and Stalinism

Uchida Hiroshi

Miki Kiyoshi (1897—1945), one of Japanese representative philosophers during the Fifteen Years War (1931—1945), endeavoured to unite both individual and social aspects of human existence, not only theoretically through studies of huge philosophical literatures, classical and modern, Western and Asian, but practically through social and political activities, relating hot issues within and without Japan, which was then expanding to East Asian countries to build so called The Great Co-prosperity Erea of East Asia.

In the severe situation where most of socail and political movements against the imperialist moves of Zaibatsu and Gumbatsu were oppresseed, Miki, not as a fascist as misleadingly categorised in W. M. Fletcher's *The Search for a New Order*, but as a liberal humanist, found his way to approach to fractions of the ruling powers, e. g. The Showa Research Association, and tried to influence them to turn towards alternative real coexistence policy.

Though not a Marxist, Miki stood for Marxism in the difficult circumstances where many Japanese Marxists were violently forced to convert from Marxism to ultra-nationalism, or were kept long in prison, because he found in the thought of Marx indispensable recognition of the social practical aspect of human being.

Notably, Miki criticised from humanist viewpoint both Nazism and Stalinism at work. He was a student of Martin Heidegger during his stay at Marburg University in 1920s. Miki nevertheless wrote a critical essay against Heidegger in a Japanese paper in 1933 just after he addressed the inaugural speech of "The Self-Assertion of German University" to support Hitler, and participated in The Liberal Union of Thinkers and Artists to protest Nazi's oppression of culture, whereas not only fanatic ultra-nationalists, e. g. Minoda Kyoki, but Miki's friends and students who now converted to "Nippon-shugi (Japanism)" openly or privately attacked him as a Marxist or a communist when Marxism and communism were prohibited by The Maintenance of the Public Order Act.

He ventured to criticise, e. g, in a monthly *Le Serpant* in 1937, Stalin's

purges of Soviet communists including Marshal Tukhachevsky, while most of Japanese Marxists espoused Stalin as the greatest leader of communism, though some of them are still esteemed for their pioneering scientific analyses of prewar Japanese capitalism.

Miki's actual concerns with Japan and the world in the wartime stimulated him to plan and tackle his unfinished lifework of *The Logic of Imagination* (*Einbildungskraft*), with which he expected to take part in common mission to actualise individual creative potentials and organise them into the elements of a creative social body.