

Swords and Canons: Constructing an Ethics of Violence in Early 20th Century Japan

Prof. Chris Goto-Jones
Leiden University

Tuesday April 28th, 2009

15.00 - 17.00

Lipsius building, LUF room (148)



Abstract

This is not a talk about the samurai, and it is not about 'the soul of Japan'. It is part of a larger project that analyzes some of the key texts that have defined the bushidō 'tradition' in modern Japanese history. Hence, the talk has two main foci: the first is historical - to explore the ways in which the idea of bushidō was developed (invented?) and manipulated in the modern period, with distinct politico-cultural purposes and effects; and the second is philosophical - to explore the ethical content of a deliberately constructed 'canon' of bushidō in imperial Japan.



Chris Goto-Jones is Professor of Modern Japanese Studies at Leiden University, and Director of MEARC. Having studied at Cambridge and Keiō Universities, he received his PhD from Oxford University. He has published on themes in the intellectual history of modern Japan, with a focus on political and ethical philosophy. His publications include *Political Philosophy in Japan: Nishida, the Kyoto School and Prosperity* (2005) and (ed.) *Re-Politicising the Kyoto-School as Philosophy* (2007). He is currently working on a book for Cambridge University Press *Warrior Ethics in Japan: Bushidō as Intellectual History*.

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