



The Philosophy of Japanese Wartime Resistance: A reading, with commentary, of the complete texts of the Kyoto School discussions of "The Standpoint of ... Studies in the Modern History of Asia)

David Williams

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The transcripts of the three Kyoto School roundtable discussions of the theme of 'the standpoint of world history and Japan' may now be judged to form the key source text of responsible Pacific War revisionism. Published in the pages of *Chuo Koron*, the influential magazine of enlightened elite Japanese opinion during the twelve months after Pearl Harbor, these subversive discussions involved four of the finest minds of the second generation of the Kyoto School of philosophy. Tainted by controversy and shrouded in conspiratorial mystery, these transcripts were never republished in Japan after the war, and they have never been translated into English except in selective and often highly biased form.

David Williams has now produced the first objective, balanced and close interpretative reading of these three discussions in their entirety since 1943. This version of the wartime Kyoto School transcripts is neither a translation nor a paraphrase but a fuller rendering in reader-friendly English that is convincingly faithful to the spirit of the original texts. The result is a masterpiece of interpretation and inter-cultural understanding between the Confucian East and the liberal West. Seventy years after Tojo came to power, these documents of the Japanese resistance to his wartime government and policies exercise a unique claim on students of Japanese history and thought today because of their unrivalled revelatory potential within the vast literature on the Pacific War. The Philosophy of Japanese Wartime Resistance may therefore stand as the most trenchant analysis of the political, philosophic and legal foundations of the place of the Pacific War in modern Japanese history yet to appear in any language.

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