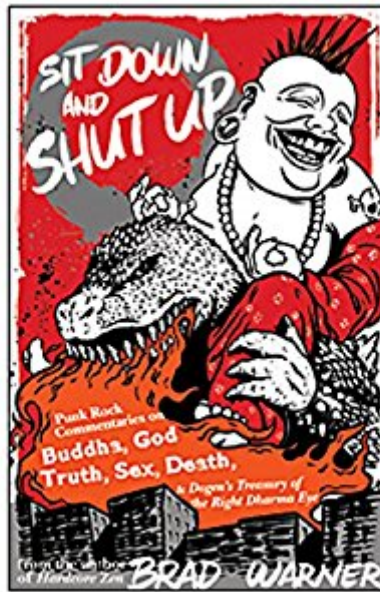


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# Sit Down And Shut Up: Punk Rock Commentaries On Buddha, God, Truth, Sex, Death, And Dogen's Treasury Of The Right Dharma Eye



## Synopsis

In *Sit Down and Shut Up*, Brad Warner tackles one of the great works of Zen literature, the *Shobogenzo* by 13th century Zen master Dogen. Illuminating Dogen's enigmatic teachings in plain language, Warner intertwines sharp philosophical musings on sex, evil, anger, meditation, enlightenment, death, God, sin, and happiness with an exploration of the power and pain of the punk rock ethos. Riffing on his triumphant return to Ohio for a reunion concert of Akron punk bands, Brad uncovers the real heart of Zen, in teachings and stories with a sharp smack of truth.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

How much do I envy Brad Warner? Hard core punk rocker. Japanese monster movie work. Lived in Tokyo. A Zen Buddhist master. One hot book already ("HardCore Zen" and now this one.) A column in *Suicide Girls*. And in one of his recent *Suicide Girl* columns he reveals that his well-known master Gudo Nishijima has asked him to be his successor ... and Brad has accepted. This from a guy who reveals in this book he hates being a Zen master, hates the challenges, the assumptions of his authority. Yes, I shouldn't envy him, I don't know his actual condition or what awaits him (or me) but it's hard not to envy a guy whose accomplished so much...yet is telling me to just go and sit facing a blank wall. Here's a guy who I expect might next show up on *Entertainment Tonight* having been spotted clubbing with Paris Hilton (could that be, Brad? Probably not) and yet he's the successor to Gudo Nishijima, who along with Chudo Cross, translated Dogen's masterwork *Shobogenzo* into English. So impressive it is distracting. Rather than sit down and shut up, I want to fly to Tokyo, I

want to enter a cool-sounding rap into my word processor. Did Nishijima have sales of the translations of Shobogenzo in mind when he asked Brad to be his successor? No, I'm too cynical. And Brad's power to explain Zen, to the extent it can be explained, shouldn't be slighted. Remember the Fuller Brush Man? One used to come lugging a suitcase to our neighborhood periodically when I was young. My Mom would always be glad to see him and he's spend time showing her his latest products. She's always buy at least one. He was well-trained, could explain each product convincingly and was polite with her.

Like author Brad Warner, I practice a form of Buddhism which has its roots in Japan. Unfortunately, the school with which I have been associated for the past 20-some years has ZERO ability to laugh at itself, even when the group or its leader says or does something absurd. We in the SGI (soka gakkai international) take our mission for world peace VERY SERIOUSLY and although we can make jokes about others, we never, ever joke about our sect or its leader. Never. Ever. We can only strive joyfully together and warmly encourage each other to unite with the heart of our leader in Japan. A recipe for boring prose if ever there was one. What a huge relief it was, then, to encounter this book, where Warner actually uses his own, clear, funny, insightful voice to discuss Buddhist perspectives on life, death, compassion and consciousness. He interweaves these topics into a sort of travelogue of his return to Akron, Ohio to appear with a reunion show of punk-rock bands from the 80's. This helps to "ground" the concepts being addressed, but in a day-to-day way which is more interesting than a typical corporate cube experience. I and a few friends have been on a bit of a Dogen "kick" for awhile, and "Sit Down and Shut Up" is an extremely valuable commentary to support that effort. All the other commentaries I have read have been earnest but plodding, and I have had about all the earnest, plodding prose I can handle for the next fifty lifetimes. Warner takes his subject seriously, but he doesn't take himself too seriously, and that is a huge relief. With all this praise, I must point out that Warner does make a few errors. For example, in his discussion of the Lotus Sutra's parable of the Burning House, he does not mention the super-doooper-cool prize (i.e.

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