



Don't Be a Jerk: And Other Practical Advice from Dogen, Japan's Greatest Zen Master

By Brad Warner

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A Radical but Reverent Paraphrasing of Dogen's Treasury of the True Dharma Eye

“Even if the whole universe is nothing but a bunch of jerks doing all kinds of jerk-type things, there is still liberation in simply not being a jerk.” — **Eihei Dogen** (1200–1253 CE)

The Shobogenzo (*The Treasury of the True Dharma Eye*) is a revered eight-hundred-year-old Zen Buddhism classic written by the Japanese monk Eihei Dogen. Despite the timeless wisdom of his teachings, many consider the book difficult to understand and daunting to read. In *Don't Be a Jerk*, Zen priest and bestselling author Brad Warner, through accessible paraphrasing and incisive commentary, applies Dogen's teachings to modern times. While entertaining and sometimes irreverent, Warner is also an astute scholar who sees in Dogen very modern psychological concepts, as well as insights on such topics as feminism and reincarnation. Warner even shows that Dogen offered a “Middle Way” in the currently raging debate between science and religion. For curious readers worried that Dogen's teachings are too philosophically opaque, *Don't Be a Jerk* is hilarious, understandable, and wise.

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Editorial Review

Review

“A delightful blend of irreverent everydayness, precise scholarship, and heartfelt commitment to practice, *Don't Be a Jerk* is just the kind of book to stub your toe on.”

— **Stephen Batchelor, author of *After Buddhism***

“Warner renders the esoteric [Shobogenzo] into a fun, readable text, conveying its spirit with humor and deep respect.”

— ***Publishers Weekly***

“What's clear in reading Warner's book is his deep respect and lifelong engagement with Dogen. I have spent decades of my own life trying to unpack this 800-year-old voice from medieval Japan because, behind all the paradox and poetry, something powerful seems to shine through. So while Warner's approach to Dogen may be unorthodox, its freshness might be exactly what the doctor ordered for anyone wanting a way in to the old monk's still fresh perspective.”

— **Adam Frank, 13.7 blog, NPR.org**

“Each chapter opens with a passage from the original, which is then carefully and often humorously unpacked. The book provides plenty of resources in case readers want to subsequently dive into the original work, and Warner clearly explains why he chose some words over others. His tone is direct and engaging, and his paraphrases bring Dogen's thoughts to life for a modern audience. Although the tone may be irreverent and humorous, the book shows the utmost respect for the monk, who has influenced so many over the centuries.”

— ***Booklist***

“You couldn't ask for a better guide through *The Treasury of the Right Dharma Eye*. A most warmly recommended read!”

— ***Nexus Magazine, Germany***

About the Author

Soto Zen priest Brad Warner, the author of books including *Hardcore Zen* and *Sit Down & Shut Up*, is a filmmaker, Japanese monster movie marketer, punk bassist, and popular blogger. Warner is the founder of Dogen Sangha Los Angeles.

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