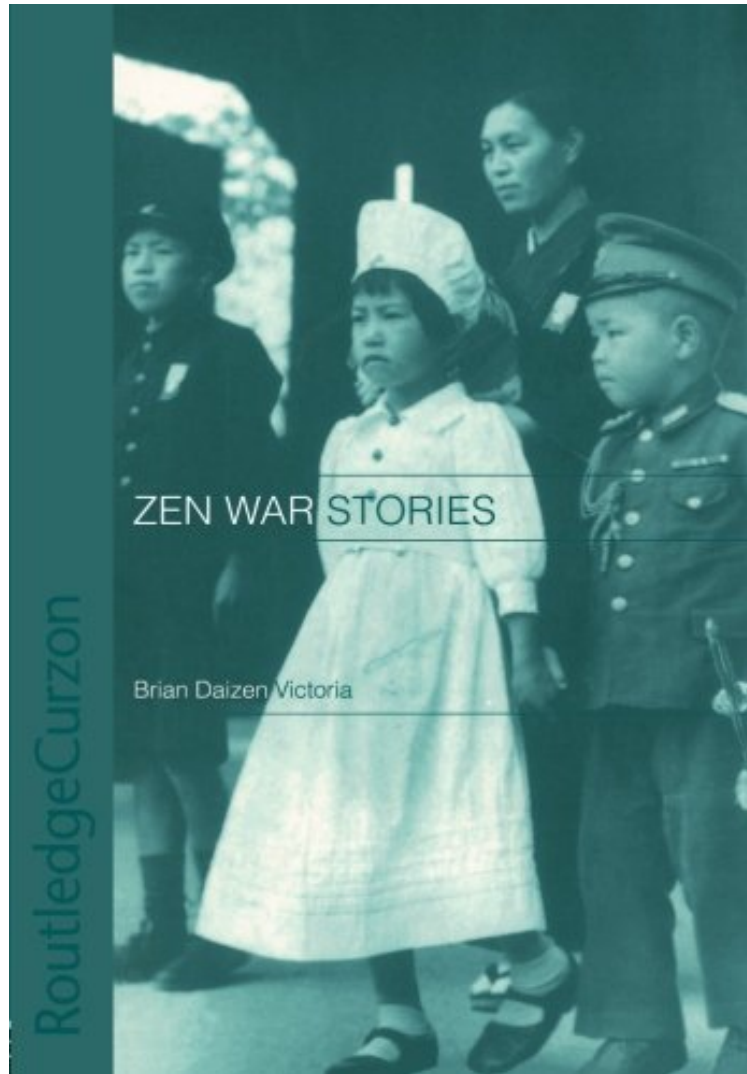


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## Zen War Stories (Routledge Critical Studies in Buddhism)

Brian Victoria

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**Brian Victoria : Zen War Stories (Routledge Critical Studies in Buddhism)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Zen War Stories (Routledge Critical Studies in Buddhism):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Olaf van KootenIt is very clear11 of 13 people found the following review helpful. highly recommendedBy J. AliaThis book gives a rarely portrayed glimpse into the influence of Zen Buddhism within and on the early 20th century war machine of Japanese imperialism. With many stories of religion gone wrong, this is an important work.34 of 37 people found the following review helpful. An excellent bookBy David BrazierThis well researched and controversial book makes a deep impression. It raises crucially important questions about the relationship between religion and state as well as casting new light upon

twentieth century Japanese history. That even Buddhism, in theory the most peaceful of creeds, could have been so extensively corrupted by a military agenda, gives one many insights into human nature, not least, by comparison, into the contemporary phenomenon of guerrilla fundamentalists and their crusading patriotic opponents. The book contains a wealth of fascinating original source material, a feature that not only brings home the reality of war and its moral dilemmas, but also, most importantly, enables the reader to draw his or her own conclusions. An excellent book.

Following the critically acclaimed *Zen at War* (1997), Brian Victoria explores the intimate relationship between Japanese institutional Buddhism and militarism during the Second World War. Victoria reveals for the first time, through examination of the wartime writings of the Japanese military itself, that the Zen school's view of life and death was deliberately incorporated into the military's programme of 'spiritual education' in order to develop a fanatical military spirit in both soldiers and civilians. Furthermore, that D. T. Suzuki, the most famous exponent of Zen in the West, is shown to have been a wartime proponent of this Zen-inspired viewpoint which enabled Japanese soldiers to leave for the battlefield already resigned to death. Victoria takes us onto the naval battlefield in the company of warrior-monk and Rinzai Zen Master Nakajima Genj. We view the war in China through the eyes of a Buddhist military chaplain. The book also examines the relationship to Buddhism of Japan's seven Class-A war criminals who were hung by the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal in 1948. A highly controversial study, this book will be of interest, first and foremost, to students of Zen as well as all those studying the history of this period, not to mention anyone concerned with the perennial question of the 'proper' relationship between religion and the state.

'Victoria presents us with a carefully documented study.' - Japanese Journal of Religious Studies  
About the Author  
Brian Daizen Victoria holds a M.A. in Buddhist Studies from Soto Zen sect-affiliated Komazawa University in Tokyo, and a Ph.D. from the Department of Religious Studies at Temple University. Brian entered the Soto Zen priesthood in 1964 and, following training at Daihonzan Eihei-ji, pursued graduate studies in Buddhism at Soto Zen sect-affiliated Komazawa University in Tokyo. At present, Brian is a Senior Lecturer in the Centre for Asian Studies at the University of Adelaide in South Australia