

## **Vortragsveranstaltungen und Filmvorführung:**

**Brian Daizen Victoria, Professor of Japanese Studies, Antioch University,  
Yellow Springs, Ohio, USA**

Verfasser u.a. der Werke *Zen At War* (Rowman & Littlefield, 1997/2006) und *Zen War Stories* (RoutledgeCurzon, 2003).

**Tuesday, May 29th, 6 to 8 p.m.: “Violence-Enabling Mechanisms in Buddhism”**

### **“Violence-Enabling Mechanisms in Buddhism”**

This lecture will identify numerous malleable Buddhist doctrines and associated praxis that, in certain situations and circumstances, can be reconfigured or transformed into instruments that at least countenance, if not actively condone, the use of violence. Such Buddhist doctrines as karma, rebirth and compassion, together with such Buddhist praxis as meditation, sutra recitation and sutra copying, will be shown to have been ‘weaponized’ at various times in Buddhist history, most especially, though not exclusively, during WWII in Japan. Further, these ‘weaponized’ doctrines and praxis are present in all major sects and schools of Buddhism. Thus Buddhism, like *all* of the world’s major religions, should be recognized as a religion of both peace *and* violence.

**Karl Jaspers Centre, Voßstraße 2, Building 4400, 69115 Heidelberg, Room 212**

**Wednesday, May 30th, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.: "Zen, D.T. Suzuki and the Nazis"**

**Wednesday, May 30, 11 am to 1 pm,**

### **"Zen, D.T. Suzuki and the Nazis".**

In recent years the role of Japan's leading Zen masters as strong supporters of Japanese militarism during WWII has been established beyond a doubt. However, D.T. Suzuki's wartime role remains a subject of great, and sometimes heated, controversy. This is true despite the fact that one of Suzuki's wartime editors, Handa Shin, wrote in 1941: "Dr Suzuki's writings are said to have strongly influenced the military spirit of Nazi Germany." But is this true?

This lecture seeks to address this question beginning with the first American to make direct contact with D.T. Suzuki in postwar, occupied Japan, i.e., Albert Stunkard. Stunkard recalls the circumstances of his meeting with Suzuki as follows: “I was working in Tokyo as an army medical officer at Sugamo Prison, providing medical care for the men who were being tried for war crimes by the International Military Tribunal for the Far East. . . . One of the prisoners, later to become recognized as a religious thinker, was Graf Duerckheim, a German. He used to talk to me about Zen. One day he mentioned Dr. Suzuki, with whom he had studied, suggesting that I visit Dr. Suzuki at his home in a small town not far from Tokyo.”

Although he was only mentioned briefly, I recall wondering who Graf Duerckheim was, and why he had been imprisoned as a suspected war criminal? Far more importantly, I wondered why a suspected German war criminal had been studying with D.T. Suzuki during WW II? The purpose of this lecture is therefore to share the 'discoveries' made in the process of researching this question and the larger question of Nazi interest in Zen and Buddhism.

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**Wednesday, May 30th, 3 to 5 p.m.: Film “Zen and War” and discussion**

### **“Zen and War” (58Min., 2009)**

In the beginning of the 20th century Japan waged a number of wars during which it committed atrocities that matched those of the Nazis during the Second World War. In 1998 the book *Zen at War* was published in the US which elaborately describes how Buddhist monks actively participated in these wars. They not only fought along, but also donated money and materials for fighter aircraft in the army. In this film *Zen and War* a number of Buddhist Zen monks in Japan talk about their predecessors' collaboration for the first time. This happened due to the initiative of a Dutch woman, Ina Buitendijk, whose husband suffered severely from his internment in a Japanese camp. As a Zen Buddhist she wrote letters to the monasteries inquiring how it was possible that Zen monks got involved in warfare. The Zen masters decided to address her inquiry because of the human suffering she expressed.

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