



ISSN 1076-9005
Volume 4 1997: 321-324
Publication date: 25 November 1997

Instructions to the Cook: A Zen Master's Lessons in Living a Life That Matters. By Bernard Glassman and Rick Fields. New York: Bell Tower, 1996. Pp. ix, 171. ISBN 0-517-70377-7 (cloth), \$20.00.

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Cooking has traditionally been an important discipline in the Ch’an/Zen tradition. Zen Master Dōgen, the founder of the Japanese *Sōtō* Zen Buddhist tradition, upon reaching China by ship in 1223, found that he had to remain on board for some time before he could disembark to pursue his studies at Chinese Ch’an Monasteries. One day an elderly monk, who was the head cook at Mt. Ayuwang, had walked the great distance from the monastery to the ship to buy *shītake* mushrooms so that he could offer a special noodle soup to the monks. Dōgen asked the elderly cook to stay awhile as he thought there must be other monks who could prepare the meal at Ayuwang, but the cook refused to be sidetracked from his duties as the head cook. When Dōgen asked the cook why such a venerable monk was still cooking for others when he could be meditating or studying *kōans*, the cook laughed and told the young Japanese monk that he did not yet understand the true meaning of Zen practice. This experience remained vividly in Dōgen’s memory and is recorded in his text, the *Tenzō Kyōkun* (Instructions to the Cook), which was completed in 1237. He wrote this manual for monastery cooks on the proper way to serve meals for the other trainees. But the text is also concerned with the attitudes required of a head cook who, through his cooking, was responsible not only for nourishing the physical, but also the spiritual well-being of others.

This tradition of valuing the practice as well as the metaphor of cooking continues in the work of a contemporary American *Sōtō* Zen Buddhist teacher, Bernard Glassman. In the book under review, Glassman and Fields creatively interpret Dōgen’s metaphor of cooking as a response to the contemporary American Zen practitioner as well as American society at large. According to the *Tenzō Kyōkun*, it is the duty of the cook to ensure that the best possible meal be prepared for the monks with whatever ingredients are available. Glassman and Fields interpret this process of preparing the best meal possible as a metaphor for living the fullest life possible under whatever conditions one finds oneself. They suggest that there are five “courses” to this meal: 1) spirituality; 2) learning; 3) right livelihood; 4) social action; and 5) relationships. Stated differently, these are five dimensions to living a full life. The structure of the book follows these five “courses,” interweaving the actualization of these aspects of life on a personal level along with their social application. Starting with “spirituality” and “learning,” the first several chapters outline how to become a “Zen cook.” The chapters focus on the role of meditation in revealing the “ingredients” that exists in one’s life which includes everything from one’s personal character traits to the social environment in which one lives. This attention to the “ingredients” is the starting point from which one can “pre-

pare a meal.” How to skillfully use these raw materials to serve the “supreme meal” is the focus of the remainder of the book on right livelihood, social action, and community. The ideas of interconnectedness and the middle way are highlighted in these chapters along with concrete examples from Glassman’s Zen community’s involvement in “socially-conscious” businesses. While right livelihood has traditionally been an important part of Buddhist doctrine (as the fifth directive of the eightfold path), ethical reflections on money-making have not been as central to American Buddhism as say, meditation. Glassman, however, has been a leading advocate of “socially-conscious” businesses that not only support the livelihood of Zen centers but also the communities located around the temples. He argues that the need for Buddhists to run such enterprises comes from the spiritual recognition of the interconnectedness of all life (including one’s neighbors, the homeless, or the rainforest). The community’s main business is a non-metaphorical expression of the principle of cooking — a bakery. The Greyston Bakery is a gourmet bakery that has served clients such as Bloomingdale’s and Godiva Chocolatier as well as produced brownies for another well-known “socially-conscious” business, Ben and Jerry’s. As a “Zen business,” the bakery has combined the principles of engaging in work that minimizes suffering, making the workplace a spiritual environment (a zendō exists in the same building), and tackling social problems.

Because the Zen community is located in New York, the problem of homelessness was particularly obvious. With the Greyston Bakery, Glassman provided jobs for the homeless. This expanded into the Greyston Family Inn project to assist the homeless build their own homes when he recognized the interconnectedness of the need for job training, housing, child care, and counseling in basic life skills. Glassman’s enterprises reflect a middle way of conducting business that steers a course between money-making, which has only a profit motive, and a non-profit organization which does not seek to accumulate wealth at all. He distinguishes this kind of “sustainable” business which benefits both the company and the community from a corporate philanthropy which does not have social action built into the company structure. At the same time, these businesses represent a particularly Buddhist orientation toward money and government. Historically Buddhism has, much more often than not, gravitated toward merchants and those in political power.

While it is well known in Asia that merchants and the state have been the backbone of Buddhism, in America the growth of Buddhism occurred in the 1960s, at a time when there was a deemphasis and even a mistrust of money and the state among many American Buddhists. Glassman incor-

porates both these orientations. On the one hand, he has worked with entrepreneurs, state bureaucrats, Republicans, and Democrats, viewing them as necessary “ingredients” to cook the meal of social betterment. And on the other hand, Glassman is deeply sensitive to the power of the spiritual and the need to reach out to the most needy and rejected parts of society.

Glassman’s work is significant both for envisioning a social and holistic context of practice for the American Zen practitioner as well as for providing a Buddhist perspective on social and economic engagement. In this sense, the book is a good example of what has been termed “engaged Buddhism” — a Buddhism which is not limited to the temple but pervades the workplace and the social sphere.

Although a few spelling errors of Japanese terms, such as *takuhatsu* (not *takahatsu* p. 144) or *tokonoma* (not *tokonomo* p. 149) should be revised in future editions, these minor points do not detract from the overall strengths of the book. While it is safe to assume that Dōgen did not envision the *Tenzō Kyōkun* being used to develop a strategy for alleviating social problems in twentieth-century New York, this highly creative rendering of “cooking Zen” should be of interest to Zen practitioners as well as those interested in “engaged Buddhism” as an aspect of American Buddhism.