

B E R N A R D
G L A S S M A N

Greyston Seminary is the only house on Dodge Hill that is all lit up. In the cold dark of a December morning, the imposing stone mansion looks remote, grand and mysterious. Lights framed by gothic windows begin going out and the back door opens. Bundled up against the cold, twenty men and women come out and pile into two vans and one small Honda. It is 5:30 A.M., and if Zen teacher Bernard Glassman is among his students there is no way of telling.

They drive through the silent lanes of Riverdale in the Bronx, one of the most affluent neighborhoods on the East Coast, and follow the Hudson River north for three miles to a run-down section of the Yonkers industrial waterfront. Here the offices of the Zen Community of New York (ZCNY) occupy a dilapidated three-story building on Woodworth Avenue. A concrete structure connected to the first floor houses the Greyston Bakery, the wholesale business that supports this community. The vans pull into an enclosed loading dock while the car parks on the sidewalk—a common practice on this desolate block, removed as it is from the routine concerns of local police.

Minutes later a mallet striking a wooden board announces *zazen* in the “bakery zendo” on the third floor. Five monks enter in full-length black robes, while the lay residents wear clothing comfortable for cross-legged sitting: full skirts, blue jeans, sweaters. No longer inconspicuous, Glassman appears in the brown robe reserved for teachers of Soto Zen. A short, portly man who has grown considerably more rotund since the bakery began in 1982, he enters the zendo on the last hit of the *ban*. Ninety minutes of total silence follow. Silence, save for the delivery trucks pulling up to the meat distribution plant and cargo warehouse that share Woodworth Avenue with the Zen Community.

Emerging from the zendo, two monks discuss a special order of five hun-

dred shortbread cookies to be delivered by 4 P.M. to the World Trade Center in Lower Manhattan. The Christmas rush has already started and with it the pressing request for nonresident members to help out. The monks are joined by a large bearded man who has missed zazen in order to provide the bakers with a complete computer printout of the day's orders and deliveries. One van has already left for Manhattan. Another will leave shortly to make the Westchester deliveries. If it isn't back in time, the cookies will have to go down in private cars. The monks disappear into a changing room and come out in bakers' whites and blue hairnets. Half the residents work on the floor in the production area, the other half in the first- and second-floor offices. Glassman changes from robes into slacks and a black cotton jacket, the kind used by Japanese monks for working on the grounds, and goes downstairs to join his students for breakfast. Scrambled eggs, cooked on a stove that melts down kilos of Godiva chocolate every hour, are served with blueberry muffins, scones, and Danish—a small selection of the gourmet product line sold to the Russian Tea Room, Bloomingdales, Macy's, and Sardi's, as well as to art museums and the fanciest hotels and charcuteries in Manhattan.

While this combination of wealth, want, hi-tech, bakers' whites, and black robes has confounded visitors, for community members it is all part of "the practice." That practice is Zen Buddhism. And even though Bernard Tetsugen Glassman Sensei is the first American holder of his Soto Japanese Zen lineage, few visitors have been more surprised by this community than Japanese Zen clergy.

Ordained a Soto Zen priest in 1970, Glassman is abbot of Zenshinji, the Soto Zen Buddhist Temple of ZCNY. He is number eighty-one in a line that claims direct descent from the historical Shakyamuni Buddha. He is also the executive director of ZCNY and head of the Greyston Bakery. Against one wall of his cramped, windowless office is a small Buddhist altar. Above his desk hang photographs of Japanese Zen masters, including his own teacher, Taizan Maezumi Roshi. Aside from a chrome-framed swivel chair and an intercom phone system, the only signs of executive action are the titles of a dozen hardbacks: *Management*, *Strategic Management*, *The Changing World of the Executive*, *The Harvard Business Review*, *The Chief Executive's Handbook*, and so on.

Glassman started ZCNY in 1979 and set himself up as both spiritual director and executive administrator. After one year he was criticized by the

board of directors for wearing two hats. Then when he started the Greyston Bakery two years later he was criticized for wearing two hats too many. The sole job of the spiritual director, it was argued, was to teach Zen. Glassman claimed he was doing just that. But many students had very specific ideas about Zen training, and these did not include making apple pies and chocolate cakes, driving delivery vans, or learning how to program computers for bakery production. Then again, of all the classic metaphors used to describe the job of Zen teacher, one of Glassman's favorites is that of a thief in the night who steals away preconceptions and attachments. And if he has his way, which has been the case more often than not, he will soon be the executive director of more affiliate enterprises.

Placing a pair of slippers neatly by his chair, he pulls his legs into the lotus position and explains why busy Zen is only an apparent contradiction: "Zen is *not* about nonmovement. That's a romantic idea, and a lot of students both here and in Japan have gotten caught in it. Sitting is a centered, strong position in the midst of movement. When you get a top spinning just right, even though it's going very fast, it's so stable that it doesn't even look as if it's moving. If it's slightly off balance it wobbles. It has to be centered and moving very fast in order to be stable. That's what Zen is all about."

While the Zen path has been somewhat slow for other adherents, and painfully wobbly at times, it apparently never was for Glassman. Born in Brooklyn, New York, on January 18, 1939, he began Zen practice in Los Angeles with Maezumi Roshi in 1968. At the time he was designing shuttle systems between Earth and Mars for the aerospace corporation McDonnell-Douglas. In 1970, while McDonnell-Douglas was sponsoring his doctoral work in mathematics at the University of California, Los Angeles, he became a monk and was given the name Tetsugen. *Tetsu* means "to penetrate" and *gen* is sometimes translated as "mysteries," although Tetsugen himself prefers "subtleties." "Gen," he explains, "is the stuff that's right in front of you that you can't see." In 1971 he moved into Maezumi Roshi's residential center with his wife, Helen, and their two young children, Alisa and Marc. For the next five years he lived and studied at Zen Center Los Angeles (ZCLA) and was its chief administrator while holding down his full-time job at McDonnell-Douglas. After finishing koan practice in 1976 and acquiring the status of teacher, he quit the aerospace industry to work full time at ZCLA. He did not wait until he had his own center to initiate a very fast-

moving Zen practice. As executive director of the Los Angeles center, he accumulated an entire quadrangle of city real estate, led demolition crews, renovated old buildings, started a publishing company, helped establish a clinic for the largely Mexican-American neighborhood, led the monthly week-long retreats, and administered a staff of sixty resident trainees.

"I'm a fan of Tetsugen's," said a monk at the Los Angeles center, "but he runs a community like a juggernaut. The biggest problem around him is always going to be burnout. Nobody can keep up with him." His students in New York agree, but for those committed to a long tenure the trick is to stop trying. Glassman has advised his students to pace themselves, to eat when they're hungry, sleep when they're tired, and assess their needs with the same discernment that monks apply to filling their eating bowls. But the pressure to work as hard as he does pervades. Usually called "sensei" ("teacher" in Japanese), he is also called "the boss"—more often than not behind his back—which indicates just how extensive the business of ZCNY is. At this center the question of what Zen is all about has focused on hard work and work-practice. For those who have studied with traditional Japanese teachers or have visited Japanese monasteries or have read D. T. Suzuki, Glassman offers a version of Zen so different that to believe it is Zen at all requires an implicit trust in this teacher's understanding and in his capacity to reinvent authentic expressions of Zen Buddhism.

Japanese monasticism has historically been supported by patronage. In Shakyamuni's time monks begged for their keep, and even today the Theravadin monks of Southeast Asia are not allowed to handle money. The original founders of the Zen School in China, however, developed self-sufficient communities, partly because their teachings were too new and radical to secure patronage. Self-sufficiency is not new to Western monasticism, either, but neither this nor Chinese Zen has had much effect on legitimizing the Greyston Bakery for ZCNY's members. Their attitude seems to be "Yes, but is it Zen?"

ZCNY's bakery was modeled after the successful Tassajara Bread Bakery run by San Francisco Zen Center. Students there, however, have alternated between urban livelihood projects and intensive practice periods at that center's rural monastery; the very existence of a monastic center, moreover, figures prominently in the overall structure of that organization. Many urban Zen centers in the United States now maintain mountain centers that, rem-

iniscient of secluded Asian monasteries, remain the archetypal training mode for Zen practice. Of all the various projects Glassman foresees, however, a mountain center, or anything vaguely resembling the isolation of traditional monasticism, is not one of them.

In May 1987 Glassman initiated the Greyston Family Inn, taking a holistic approach to the crises of homelessness. Not just another shelter, the inn directly addresses issues that perpetuate homelessness: lack of affordable housing, unemployment, and drug and alcohol abuse. An abandoned public school, still under the jurisdiction of the Yonkers School Board, has been proposed for a residence that would both house ZCNY members and homeless families and offer job-training programs and therapeutic counseling. While members of the Yonkers business and political consortium, familiar with Glassman and ZCNY through the bakery, have been instrumental in helping the inn get started, it has met with opposition from real-estate developers as well as neighbors fearful of both homeless shelters and religious communities, and so far no location has been approved.

Glassman had always said he would move into social action as soon as the bakery stabilized ZCNY's finances. The bakery has supplied soup kitchens with day-old baked goods and delivered a weekly order of bread for the hunger program at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, but it has attempted nothing on the order of the projected Greyston Family Inn. Since 1982 at least a dozen students who have objected to the emphasis on business have left the community. For some dissidents, Bernie Glassman, Brooklyn Jewish businessman, had finally found his true vocation in commercial baking. As social concerns move into the forefront of ZCNY's programs, some of those students have contacted Glassman to see how they can participate. "Social action," he said wryly, "looks so much more glamorous than the bakery."

The Greyston Family Inn is Glassman's most ambitious project to date, but until it moves off the drawing boards ZCNY is a community that will continue to be defined by the Greyston Bakery. Social action may look more glamorous, it may be ingeniously timely, and it may capture the imagination of the membership in ways that the bakery has not. But in terms of work-practice, hard work, and Glassman's willful determination to make his dreams come true, there are already indications that social action at ZCNY will provoke as many questions about Glassman's teaching as the bakery has.

At ZCNY Glassman has reapportioned the values traditionally assigned to the basic components of Zen training—samu, or work-practice, zazen, and face-to-face study with the teacher. In the Japanese monastic regime, daily samu entails working on the grounds, in the kitchen, or in the office. Samu is the time to practice Zen in action, to maintain the internal stillness of zazen in the midst of motion. It is rarely pursued with the same intensity as zazen and is often appreciated as a respite from the physical rigors of cross-legged meditation. But when taken seriously, it may prove to be the tougher test of concentrated awareness.

Zazen is still considered the core practice at ZCNY, even though work-practice has dominated the concerns of the community. "You cannot have Zen training without zazen," Glassman says. "If we didn't have work-practice, we could still be a Zen community. If we didn't have zazen, we could not." The ZCNY schedule offers daily formal zazen, but Glassman warns against associating zazen with an activity performed only in the zendo. "Wherever you are, you are in the zendo. We think the zendo is that special place, which it is, and we are going to try to do something special there, try to be concentrated or quiet, and when we leave we can start screaming again. We don't see the whole world as a zendo. Of course, it's too much and we need breaks. And so we need 'a special place' and 'special training periods.' But really, every day is a special day, every place is a special place *as it is.*"

While Glassman's broad view of Zen training confronts the attachment to neatly codified modes, it also jeopardizes a clear definition of a Zen community, creating an ambiguity that has been particularly challenging to students with previous Zen training. Some of these students had come from Maezumi Roshi's center in Los Angeles or East Coast centers, none of which had engaged in extensive businesses. And the more exposure students already had to Zen, the more they resisted Glassman's restless experiments to discover the American form of these Eastern teachings. Only two students remain of the original twelve who accompanied him from Los Angeles to New York, and one of those is Helen Glassman, also a Soto Zen priest. "You have to find out what works," Glassman says. "Before Dogen Zenji's time, they didn't even have sesshin. Then things changed and it became helpful. It worked. In the old days in China the students and the teacher worked alongside each other in the fields or in the gardens. The teacher didn't just sit on the

'high seat' and talk about Zen. The teachings were embodied by the teacher. He taught by being who he was."

Glassman not only gambles on the model of Chinese Zen working in America but has no trouble identifying himself as the teachings, the embodiment of Buddhist dharma. With disarming confidence in his own attainment, he takes the liberty of experimenting freely. He has retained some of the most un-American aspects of hierarchical Japanese monasticism, such as having personal attendants and commanding the drumroll for the abbot's dharma talks. Yet he will also wash dishes and drive the delivery van; he will place meditation cushions in a circle "like the Indians"; he will have a nondenominational zendo adjacent to an interfaith service hall. To his fans these experiments are liberating and creative; to his critics they are irritating and irreverent.

Glassman has been described as both too radical and too conservative. His natural comfort with Japanese Buddhist ritual as well as Japanese social custom is considered unusual for a Westerner. Indeed several other American teachers have thought his use of personal attendants as a training mode and of Japanese dharma names within the community inappropriate for their own culture. And whereas the life of his monks bears little resemblance to the life of the traditional monk, he still considers the full-time commitment of monkhood as a model for spiritual aspiration. He has simultaneously displaced the traditional emphasis on zazen and koan study by intensifying work-practice.

Advocates of classical Japanese training argue that American students, unlike Chinese Zen monks, need the restrictive methodology of Japanese Zen to attain some inkling of the nature of their own minds before they can avail themselves of a more active practice. They argue that without this foundation students have no personal experience from which to assess Glassman's experiments. This, claim his harshest critics, leaves him free to do whatever he wants as long as he keeps calling it "Zen," a freedom they consider perilous for a community leader.

"If I had to choose between being something called 'spiritual director' and being 'business manager,' I'd choose the business," Glassman says. "That's how I want to teach. It looks radical because we're shifting from a Japanese form. If we use a Cistercian model, it's not radical. If we use a Chinese model, it's not radical. Sitting together is definitely the most inti-

mate way of being together. No doubt. But work-practice affords me more possibilities of working individually with students. It gives me an opportunity to work with who they are, or who they think they are. I know what people think are their own limits. I see potentials that they don't. I see the buttons. They stand out in all of us. It's easier for all of us to see them in each other than in ourselves. But we don't always give others the opportunity to help us see ourselves. If people come and sit zazen and get up and leave—there is no way to work with them. Sitting is the most direct way to let go of body and mind. But without a laboratory it's very, very difficult. There's no feedback. I agree with Yasutani Roshi, who said that zazen can be a trap. He used to say, 'The dolls in the window are doing perfect zazen but they are not opening their eyes.' And I've seen that in groups where zazen is emphasized in an extreme way. You can be a zazen freak without putting emphasis on really opening up, and that brings a bigger problem because you get attached to the form. And the form becomes a substitute for life. As a teacher, zazen doesn't give me enough interaction. Work-practice is not necessarily the best way, but the way I'm going to be doing it."

Glassman assumes, perhaps idealistically, that everyone comes to a Zen center to learn zazen. Using a definition derived from Hui Nêng, the Sixth Patriarch of China, he presents zazen as the elimination of the separation between subject and object. According to Buddhist doctrine, this separation is essentially not real but the fictive projection of the self. The elimination therefore refers more specifically to the notions of self that generate this illusion. For Hui Nêng zazen is a state of mind that can be cultivated anywhere; in his day there were no such special places as zendos. "People see the work-practice as a means by which they can then do 'real' practice," says Glassman. "But the work-practice in and of itself has to become zazen. We are not doing anything 'in order to'—what we are doing *is* the practice. In Japan you had only the monastic practice. Lay people came to the temples, but there was really no concept of a strong practice outside the monastery. There are always going to be people who want to go to a zendo and sit and leave and not talk to anybody, including the teacher. They don't want any interaction. They want a church or a synagogue or a temple—a place to go and get some peace and quiet and leave. Zen can offer that. You can sit and derive from zazen a sense of well-being, but that is not the marrow of Zen training.

The issue here is: is there a Zen practice that doesn't really get into your lifestyle? Can I practice Zen in some way without its affecting me, affecting the way I live? I don't think you can have true practice without that interaction. And the issue for me is what form that takes. It's very explorative, and for me it's taking the form of business right now. Then we'll explore social action."

A famous Chinese quotation captures the Zen ideal of enlightened presence in the midst of ordinary activity: "I draw water. I chop wood. How miraculous!" But for Americans, Zen was anything but ordinary. ZCNY initially attracted many students between the ages of forty and sixty who had been among the first generation of American Zen practitioners. For those inclined to spiritual practice in New York's greater metropolitan area, not much was more special than the silence of Zen, the luxury of sitting in elegant zendos listening to words of esoteric wisdom, waking before dawn to Japanese gongs.

One of Glassman's toughest tasks has been to disabuse his students of a persuasive attachment to the specialness—and preciousness—of Zen training. It was D. T. Suzuki, who, with typical foresight in 1936, while addressing a conference on world religions in London, asked the questions for contemporary Zen everywhere: "How can I construct my humble hut right here in the midst of Oxford Circus? How can I do that in the confusion of cars, buses, and all kinds of conveyances? How can I listen to the singing of birds, and also to the leaping of fish? How can one turn all the showings of the shopwindow displays into the freshness of the green leaves swayed by the morning breeze? How am I to find the naturalness, artlessness, utter self-abandonment of nature in the utmost artificiality of human works? This is the great problem set before us these days."

Work-practice has been one way that Glassman has addressed this problem. Though it has met with strong resistance within his community, Glassman has done little to appease the mounting dissent. Allowing the demands of the business to take top priority, he has regularly missed scheduled sitting periods and has often been unavailable for seminars on Buddhist texts and for koan study. For several years the subject of his talks was commonly work-practice and the Greyston Bakery. The ZCNY calendar, from 1980 on, records a steady variety of programs that include retreats, liturgical study, classes, workshops, and ecumenical events; but starting in 1982 Glassman

himself gave the impression that very little interested him as much as the bakery. If one wanted to study with him, the bakery was where to find him. He called it “Zen,” but many others did not.

Glassman had initiated several livelihoods at Zen Center Los Angeles, but work-practice was never accepted as a prime mode of Zen training and after his move to New York, ZCLA's livelihoods dissolved. “In the early days in Los Angeles most Zen students considered work-practice as a means to support themselves,” he explains. “They used the term, but they didn't really consider it a part of training. And you saw all the seniors as they were being trained leaving the work-practice to go on to ‘serious’ training. The feeling was that once you got to a certain level you could do ‘real’ Zen training. And you hear that attitude a lot here. At the last council meeting a senior monk was still saying, ‘I'm worried about the tail wagging the dog,’ and I keep saying, ‘the tail *is* the dog.’ It is for me. That's where I'm training. It doesn't mean that I'm not training in other ways, but this is essential.”

During an evening discussion in the zendo at Greyston, a nonresident psychologist in her fifties who comes regularly from her townhouse off Park Avenue questioned Glassman on the objective virtues of work-practice. Presenting a case for the therapeutic value of free time, she asked why “working” was better than “messaging around.” Quoting Dogen Zenji, Glassman answered, “‘To study the enlightened way is to know the self. To know the self is to forget the self. To forget the self is to be enlightened by all phenomena.’ There are lots of different ways of doing that. There is no particular value to my style. A fish swims and a bird flies. Does one have more value than the other? I like to keep us on the edge, but for some that edge might be five hours of zazen or work or whatever. For someone else, it might be one hundred. Everybody should go up to his limit—and then a bit more. Overdoing it is too much. If you underdo it, you don't learn anything about yourself. Where is that edge? You can't compare two people. I've never understood the concept of not liking work. For so many people, what they do not like in life they call work.”

Underlying the resistance to work-practice and hard work has been an independent antagonism to the bakery as a business, as a competitive enterprise that pulls ZCNY into the corporate structure of capitalist America. Here Glassman is in many ways at odds with students of his own age. Unlike most of them, he maintained his distance from the cultural revolution of the

1960s. He was twenty-nine years old in 1968 when he began Zen studies. That was the year that saw Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr., assassinated, the biggest build-up of American troops in Vietnam, race riots in American cities, Lyndon Johnson at the White House besieged by antiwar demonstrators, the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia, and the Democratic Convention in Chicago turned into a battlefield. The vision of a world run amok that catalyzed a collective quest for radical sanity did not tempt Glassman into the wholesale rejection of accepted values as it did for so many of the new religionists. While the disenfranchised white middle class freely combined drugs and alternative lifestyles with Eastern religions, Bernie Glassman put on his suit and tie every morning, said goodbye to his wife and kids, and drove to McDonnell-Douglas to work on space industry products under contract to the American military.

For Glassman there has never been a contradiction between Zen and business, Zen and corporate structures, between spiritual and material. These are the standard oppositions formulated by Zen students who accused their own Judeo-Christian institutions of having been so co-opted by bureaucratic and material interests that they were rendered spiritually ineffectual at a time when they were most needed. Advocates of the new religions had come from mostly middle- to upper-class families, well off, well educated, and steeped in business. Glassman's circumstances were modest by comparison. His parents were Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe: his father was a printer by trade who raised his five children in a middle- to lower-class section of Brooklyn. Neither material accumulation nor middle-class status were his to reject.

The first fifteen-member board of ZCNY, chosen by Glassman, consisted largely of middle- to upper-class college graduates and professionals; two were respected writers and five held doctorates in the humanities. For most of these board members the pursuit of spiritual ideals complemented an elitist social vision in which any consideration of money—that necessary evil—was a vulgar intrusion. With the exception of a former Jesuit seminarian turned Wall Street broker, Glassman was the odd man out.

“When Zen was introduced in Japan,” he says, “its inherent cultural context was art—aesthetics. You had the Confucian ideal and a feudal system. In our culture it seems correct to me that business is the world we most associate with.” And for Glassman, business—working together—provides a

sense of community that wasn't available to lay groups in Japan. Yet as the first board members of ZCNY exemplified, the context for Zen when it was introduced into the United States was, if not specifically art, the larger realm of humanitarian interests. But unlike the support art received in medieval Japan, art in the United States has been pushed to the cultural edge by science and business. To steer his ship away from this elite edge and head into the American bull's-eye, Glassman had to antagonize the professional, humanitarian, well-established, middle-aged, and middle-class sector of his community. And while they had no intention of moving into Greyston or devoting their lives—monklike—to Zen practice, they still comprised the major donors of ZCNY.

"The true assimilation of Zen will be getting it into a milieu that exists in this country," says Glassman. "What's going to make it Zen? If we can use the word 'Zen' it only makes sense if it's something not based on an ego-structure. In terms of Zen and business, it will be as we say in Zen: first mountains are mountains, and then mountains are not mountains, and then they are mountains. In the third phase, the separation is gone. There isn't an 'I' and 'the mountain.' On the outside the bakery may not look different from other bakeries, but actually I think that even on the outside it would look different, feel different. Because at the same time that all this work is going on there is also a release of the ego-structure, a letting go of the self. That has to be part and parcel of the whole process. The actual expedient means are not so easy to know. But the bakery is being run with that intention. So new forms develop. We have to get it all together, but getting it all together *is* the teaching. That's a hard one for people to grasp."

Getting ready to leave his office, Glassman unlocks his legs and says grinning, "I believe in management by meandering. I did the same thing at McDonnell-Douglas with my division. I wandered around a lot, sticking my big nose in everything." His nose is big and bulbous and his cheeks full fleshed. Bushy black eyebrows frame large brown eyes that are sometimes brooding, even mournful. Everything about his physical presence is rounded, except his hands and feet, which are oddly long and bony.

In an outer office he stops at the desk of his attendant monk, a forty-three-year-old former microbiologist who gave up her cancer research at the Sloan Kettering Institute to be on Glassman's staff. Slumped in front of a television monitor, she disconsolately watches a Pronto computer program flash

ZCNY's precarious financial balance direct from Chemical Bank. "That's her soap opera," observes her Zen master on his way downstairs to meander through the production floor.

Another episodic drama that has engaged the membership at large concerns the role of the Greyston mansion itself. The sale of Greyston has been considered four times in its short history as a Zen seminary. Three times these proposals were brought to the governing body by Glassman and voted down. While Greyston's enormous maintenance costs have always entered into the discussions, money has not been the sole issue. Glassman has always been ambivalent about the role that the mansion itself has played in the formation of the community, and ever since the bakery began he has wanted to consolidate living and working areas. In the spring of 1985 a council of senior students approved putting Greyston up for sale with the intention of buying residential property close to the bakery. As usual Glassman wasted no time. The next day he was driving around Yonkers looking at houses and talking about the virtues of consolidation. "Who knows? Maybe we'll end up at Greyston. And that would be fine, too." Paraphrasing Zen master Ikkyu, he adds, "If you don't know where you are going, you can't get lost."

The following year, with no prospective buyers in sight, he began transferring community activities from Greyston to Yonkers. Of all his unexpected moves, abandoning the mansion surprised many of the original members most, even more than his starting a bakery had. Zen claims that ultimately there are no beginnings and no endings, no birth, no death; but leaving Greyston would certainly close a chapter in ZCNY's history.

That chapter began before Bernie Glassman returned to his hometown as Tetsugen Sensei. At least five members of the original board of directors were New York residents who had come into contact with Maezumi Roshi and were ready to roll out the carpet for his first dharma heir. In keeping with Japanese customs regarding lineage, Maezumi Roshi was the first abbot of the Zenshin Temple and therefore the original occupant of ZCNY's high seat.

Born in 1931, Maezumi Roshi is only nine years older than Tetsugen, but having developed one of the most extensive and public Zen communities in the United States, he is often identified with the older generation of Japanese teachers who first introduced Zen to the United States. A slight, dignified man, he has the refined facial features associated with Japanese nobility. He speaks English slowly, which doesn't make him easy to understand, and he

always seems ready to listen. By the end of the 1970s he was listening to the complaints of East Coast students disillusioned with their Zen teachers. By 1978, as Tetsugen was making plans to leave Los Angeles for New York, Maezumi Roshi suggested to these people that they not only study with Tetsugen but help organize his new center. As one person recalled, "Roshi has a way of asking you to do something that makes it more like a privilege than a favor."

For idealists a request to build a community from scratch, whether issued by Maezumi or not, was a privilege in itself. For East Coast students older than Glassman, an American Zen teacher was still something of a contradiction in terms; to support this ambitious young utopian was to put one's own shoulder to the Americanization of Zen. According to Glassman, "Maezumi Roshi deliberately stayed away so that we would not be influenced by Japanese flavors." Maezumi himself had high hopes for his favored son and for how his lineage would be represented by this American heir. His own father was a respected member of the Soto establishment, and both his brothers are priests in Japan. He, too, had a lot riding on Tetsugen.

People in New York were captivated by Tetsugen's conviction that anything was possible, and there was no shortage of money or people to get ZCNY going. The community's first purchase was a three-story brick building on Mosholu Avenue in a middle-class section of Riverdale. The ground floor was converted into a zendo and an office; the apartments above were shared by resident members. The Glassman family rented a modest house nearby. Two months later Columbia University put the twenty-six-room Greyston property on the market for \$600,000. Designed as a summer home for the Dodge family in 1868 by James Renwick, Jr., the principal architect for St. Patrick's Cathedral, the estate had been donated to Teacher's College of Columbia University by its founder, Grace Hoadly Dodge. At a cost of \$175,000, the Mosholu building, which sufficed as a basic facility, had already absorbed the first donations, but Greyston offered a new set of possibilities.

As an invitation to Zen practice, Greyston would make a sensational drawing card. Cloistered from the urban ghettos of the South Bronx as well as from the rough southern tip of Yonkers, it offered a rare corner of peace and privacy in New York City. Opponents of the purchase feared that "the middle way"—the Buddhist tightrope between absolute and relative reali-

ties—would be subverted by the “upper-middle way.” They argued for more humble environs that would limit the size of the community and honor the traditional simplicity of Zen, or at least for something less reminiscent of the palace that Shakyamuni had left behind. But even those most skeptical of buying the mansion agreed that the prominence of Greyston, with a respectable social standing all its own, would attract an established membership. However Greyston was approached, it was clear that it would need a large constituency if it was to support itself.

During these discussions Glassman remained oddly quiet. Greyston was special; it would impose its own identity on an embryonic community. That identity was guaranteed to help establish ZCNY, but it was no blank page. In the midst of these discussions, Maezumi Roshi arrived for a visit. In Greyston he saw a showcase for Zen in America, one that would validate Zen Buddhism for Americans in their own materialistic terms and also indicate to Soto headquarters in Japan that the mission to transmit his lineage to the United States had been accomplished. A board member who had to vote on the Greyston purchase recalls: “You simply don’t go into this kind of purchase without thinking that the head guy can pull it all together. All the ingredients were there to encourage people to come and sit, and then Maezumi Roshi comes along and says, ‘Go for it, this guy Glassman can handle it.’ There was strong opposition to buying Greyston, but it was Roshi’s confidence in Sensei’s capacity to represent the highest attainment in Zen that was so convincing.”

The down payment on Greyston was made with large donations from very few people; Columbia University held the mortgage, and Maezumi Roshi’s description of the showcase continued to be both vilified and extolled. Certainly Greyston did its job. It was imposing though not threatening, and no one was asked to check his middle-class lifestyle at the door. Indeed, few of ZCNY’s members had been privy to such grandeur. To some Greyston itself was more attractive than anything called “Zen practice”—a splendid refuge dubbed “The Zen Hilton” where the 4:45 wake-up bell could be ignored in favor of French toast at 7:30.

A schedule of daily meditation, monthly retreats, classes, and workshops started immediately. Twenty-three retreats were offered in the first twelve months. The schedule itself simulated a rigorous monastic regime, but with new students Glassman was the perfect, obliging host. Waiting to see what

would emerge, he was as patient as he was skillful. Zen enthusiasts may have captivated their audiences at Greyston's communal meals with stories of exemplary devotion, such as that of Bodhidharma, who faced the wall for nine years, or of Eka, who proved his zeal with an offering of his self-amputated arm, or of Japanese aspirants, who would sit knee-deep in snow for a week before gaining admittance to the temple to pursue "the great matter of life and death." But in 1980 the slightest of entry trials would have all but emptied Greyston's halls.

Glassman's style in the beginning was so accommodating that he was perceived by long-standing Zen students as too relaxed, too permissive; he didn't present "real Zen"—an accusation he seems to provoke no matter what he does. During the first winter ten residents were employed outside the community, leaving after the morning practice period for jobs that included teaching school, editing Russian journals, working on the Long Island Railroad, and nursing at Roosevelt Hospital. Another ten students were supported by ZCNY and helped run the center out of the Mosholu office. The schedule was followed faithfully by the monastics, who created an atmosphere of hard-core practice that was cohesive enough to absorb personal irregularities. Still, several men—men being more prone than women to identify Zen with samurai rigor—thought it sacrilegious that students who slept in weren't roused from their beds or that the "encouragement stick" was not used to hit people nodding off on their cushions.

For the first two years the residency remained small, while workshops and talks were often attended by more than fifty people. Glassman commanded attention from an elevated platform in the service hall of Greyston, placed in front of a row of arched windows that looked out over the dramatic cliffs of the Palisades. For Sunday dharma talks the assembly was asked to "please stand" for the abbot's entry. To the accompaniment of brass gongs, he situated himself as two attendants arranged his robes. On winter afternoons, with the hall flushed with streaks of red from the western sky, the high seat seemed just a little higher; yet even his adversaries admit that when Tet-sugen talks dharma, he needs no seat at all. In addition, he was the only American Zen teacher in the metropolitan area, and even if the qualities of enlightenment remained ineffable, he talked smart and thought fast in a way that New York intellectuals appreciated. They came to his talks, nodded with sagacious approval, and left. The more adventurous moved in for an

occasional retreat, but very few ever considered giving up their worldly lives for full-time Zen training.

Greyston's civilized style came as close to the mannered aristocratic aesthetics of Japanese Zen as America allowed. It did function effectively as a showcase, but Bernie Glassman never quite pulled off being lord of the manor. He has little affinity with the WASP courtesies of the immediate neighborhood and minimal interest in talking about such abstract things as art or politics. A reserved man, he is impatient and somewhat uneasy with small talk; he takes little pleasure in social events within the community and even less for those that he's occasionally obliged to attend on the outside.

While the showcase continued to attract new students, financial resources dwindled. The large donations that accompanied the first wave of enthusiasm were not repeated and cash-flow crises were frequent. Speaking with the authority gained from his corporate past, Glassman informed a board with little collective business sense that "if an organization doesn't have a cash-flow problem, it is not growing." Nor was it his job to placate the anxieties of a middle-class student body with its inevitable leanings toward financial security. More than once he indicated that keeping the community on the financial edge helped create the very unpredictability most suitable for Zen training.

In June of 1981 ZCNY was offered a one-year contract to run the kitchen concession for the exclusive Riverdale Yacht Club, which caters to Riverdale's most wealthy residents. ZCNY needed money, but the proposal antagonized members who did not endorse serving the rich as an appropriate expression of Zen practice. Zen practice, retorted Glassman, was about cultivating an attitude of service without discrimination. For a teacher who had defined one aspect of his job as making students "uncomfortable," of tugging away at their preconceptions, the Yacht Club offered a perfect opportunity: it fit virtually no one's idea of service. It was also an opportunity to cultivate Greyston's neighbors and to assuage their suspicions about "the Zens," as they called them. For one year ZCNY staff cooked and served dinners to club members, but when special events taxed their limits community volunteers were recruited. Club members applauded the quality of service but wages averaged only \$2.50 an hour. Students confronted their own fixed attitudes toward the very rich and toward where and with whom the practice of Zen applied. At the same time more neighbors started attending events at

Greyston with a newfound sympathy generated by their personal association with the Greyston residency. But by the middle of that winter, with the mathematically minded Zen teacher compiling the Yacht Club statistics, a new direction was clearly in the wind.

That same winter ZCNY began preparing for Glassman's abbot installation ceremony, which took place on June 6, 1982. "Abbot installation" is the prosaic translation of what the Japanese call *Shinsanshiki*—"ascending the mountain." Although the incoming abbot said that Zen practice is "always a matter of ascending and descending at the same time," the ceremony called for Maezumi Roshi to descend the mountain on the eve of June 5th, vacating the high seat for his dharma heir.

Maezumi Roshi may have stayed away so as not to impose Japanese flavors, but for the *Shinsanshiki* and its 250 guests, among them a contingent of Soto priests who had flown in for the ceremony, the aromas of old Japan were in full force. Neither customary etiquette nor the Japanese accent on detail went unobserved by the incoming abbot. Special incense holders and flower arrangements were set out on newly constructed altars covered with silk brocade. Guests received gifts of books and sumi drawings wrapped in handmade silk-screened scarves and placed in white bags on which their names were written in calligraphic script.

This adherence to custom reflected Maezumi Roshi's persistent concern for an orthodox and meticulous transmission of his lineage. "In the Soto sect there is a traditional study for dharma transmission," explains Glassman. "In the times of Dogen Zenji these studies were very extensive. In Japan, as Zen spread and temples popped up all over the place, they needed more and more priests and the studies got shorter and shorter. But Maezumi Roshi went back to the way it was in Dogen's time, and the amount of studying we did was more than an average priest would do in Japan today. The one thing Roshi really wanted to do with me, I think, was to make sure that at least one teacher in his line could not be faulted in terms of formal study. The Japanese are very particular. He had me study aspects of Soto liturgy that many Soto priests are completely unfamiliar with. Even things like the *Shinsanshiki*. In Japan there's a way of getting around everything. Traditionally, part of the Soto training was to be the head monk for three months. But there were so many temple posts to fill that the monasteries changed the rules and said, 'okay, you only have to be head monk for a week.' They have been skimping

on everything. Very few people do a formal Shinsanshiki. It's never been done in this country the way we did it and that's because of Roshi. He wanted to set an example with me, and he wanted to pass on as much of the old ways as he could before they disappear. There are all kinds of things that most people in this country will never know about. Some things will get written up by scholars, but we won't know them directly, by example."

While guests were suitably impressed with Greyston, the ceremony, the gifts, and the sit-down luncheon that followed, most were unaware of the significance of the kinds of details Glassman had arranged. The timing and sequence of brass gongs, bells, wooden mallets, and drums were particular to a Shinsanshiki. A neighbor's home served as the symbolic resting place for the new abbot, who prior to the ceremony traditionally refreshes himself at a layperson's house after traveling on foot to his new temple. The presentation of poems at the temple gates and the order of the procession that followed were all prescribed: ZCNY's board of directors led off, followed by Soto Zen clergy and Japanese and Americans affiliated with the Soto lineage; then came representatives of Buddhist, Christian, and Jewish communities, including Brother David Steindl-Rast; Cambodian monk Maha Gossananda; Korean master Soen Sa Nim; Baker Roshi, then abbot of San Francisco Zen Center; Kwong Roshi, abbot of Sonoma Mountain Zen Center; and Dean Morton, of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. Tetsugen was flanked by his attendant monk, Peter Muryo Matthiessen, and Maezumi Roshi, whose outer robe was majestic purple. With the hand-held banners and colorful garments, the ornate regalia recalled the Heian Buddhism of medieval Japan rather than the monochromatic aesthetic associated with Japanese Zen. The color, however, was somewhat lost on the new abbot himself, who is color-blind and sees bright colors in more muted tones.

Taking the high seat, Tetsugen listened as the certificate of appointment from Soto headquarters was read in Japanese. "Standing on the lion's throne," he answered, repeating a Japanese script edited for this American event, "this humble monk Tetsugen offers this incense, burning in the golden burner. I offer its merits to the successive presidents of the United States, to the justice and freedom of our nation, to the peace of the world and mankind, to the harmony of all beings." For those Zen students unfamiliar with the standard liturgy of Jewish or Christian services—and there were many—the fleeting image of Richard Nixon or Ronald Reagan in the midst of this cer-

emony co-opted for a moment all the glorious expectations of Zen in America. For how long and under what circumstances Japanese customs would be replicated was fast becoming a thorny issue for American students. For the Shinsanshiki, however, the old alliance between Japanese Zen and political leadership was mostly shrugged off as a polite gesture of hospitality to the Japanese guests.

Tetsugen's opening remarks emphasized that although the Shinsanshiki might appear to be filled with things symbolic, there are no symbols. The heart of the Shinsanshiki is *jodo*, or "dharma combat," in which "dragons and elephants in this assembly" are urged to "contemplate the prime principle of reality" and invited to test the realization of the high priest. During the *jodo* a young monk rushed forward, banged his head three times against the altar, and asked, "How can I not bang into things like this?" Tetsugen replied, "Open your eyes." The monk banged his head three more times, with eyes wide open, and repeated the question. "Open your eyes," Tetsugen replied. "Sensei, if there is nothing at all," asked another man, who was wearing a gray robe over a pin-striped suit, "how did you find your abbot's job?" "I got it through the *New York Times*."

W. S. Merwin then offered a poem on behalf of Aitken Roshi and the Diamond Sangha in Hawaii. The ceremony ended with the reading of a telegram from an old priest in Japan who apologized for his absence "due to circumstances beyond control"; by the time the telegram was read the old priest had peacefully passed away.

The Shinsanshiki was grand. The Riverdale residents and the ecumenical clergy were duly impressed. The professionals, the poets, and the middle-class membership that Glassman had courted were all there to witness his ascent to the mountain. With his legitimacy so publicly confirmed, the view from the top must have indicated clear sailing ahead. But as Glassman's favorite koan asks: where do you go from the top of a hundred-foot pole?

Glassman went to a defunct bakery just north of the Bronx-Yonkers line and leased it for two years. A \$175,000 loan from a founding member catapulted twenty-five resident trainees into the nitty-gritty of commercial baking. Four monks were dispatched to San Francisco to train at the Tassajara Bakery, while others concentrated on equipment and sales. Glassman trained a dozen people to use the first of four Apple computers, which was then fed a list of every gourmet shop and restaurant in Manhattan. Not one



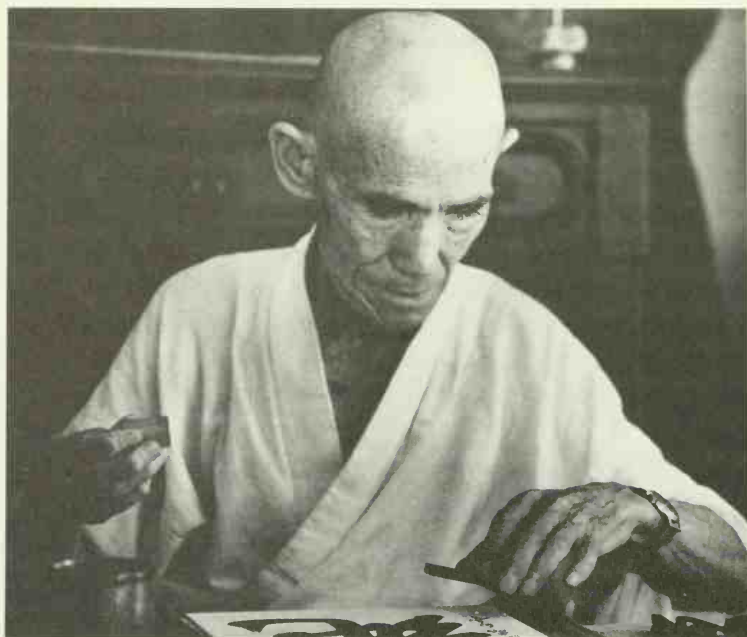
D. T. Suzuki. Photo courtesy of Ruth McCandless.



D. T. Suzuki and Nyogen Senzaki, circa 1947. Photo courtesy of Ruth McCandless.



Haku'un Yasutani, circa 1967. Photo © Tim Buckley.



Haku'un Yasutani, circa 1973. Photo courtesy of the San Francisco Zen Center.



Shunryu Suzuki at Tassajara, circa 1969.
Photo © Robert S. Boni.

*Shunryu Suzuki at Tassajara, circa 1969. Photo courtesy
of the San Francisco Zen Center.*





Nakagawa Soen, circa 1970. Photo courtesy of Maurine Stuart.



*Robert Aitken and members of the construction crew at the Palolo site, 1987.
Photo © Francis Haar.*



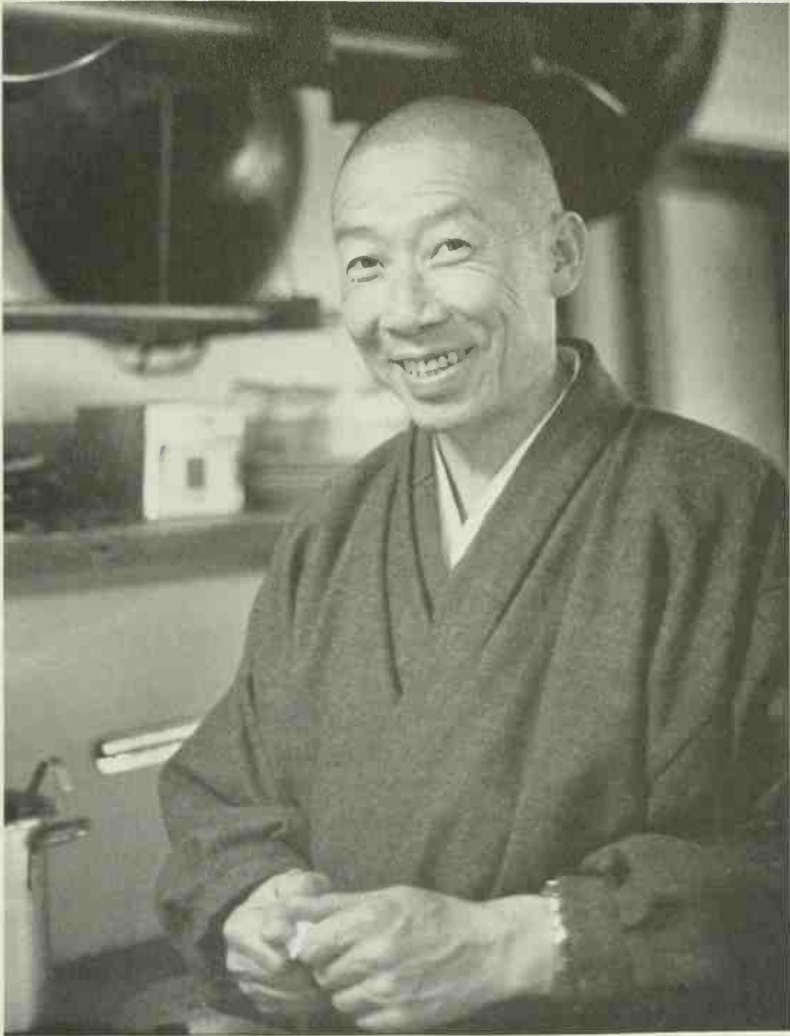
Robert Aitken, circa 1982. Photo courtesy Robert Aitken.



Robert Aitken and others at sesshin held between the two samu training periods that focused on the Palolo construction, 1987. Photo © Francis Haar.



*Robert Aitken and Koun Yamada at Koko An Zendo, 1981.
Photo © Francis Haar.*



*Jakusho Kwong in the kitchen of Sangha House at Genjoji, 1984.
Photo courtesy of the author.*



Jakusho Kwong and his wife, Laura, standing in front of Shunryu Suzuki's memorial rock, 1983. Photo courtesy of the author.



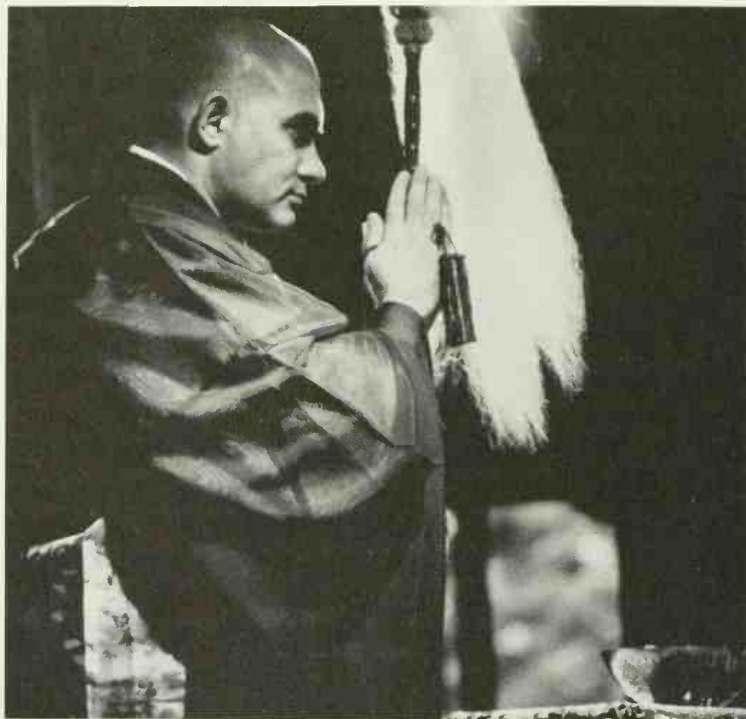
*Jakusho Kiyong, circa 1968. Photo courtesy of the
San Francisco Zen Center.*



*Taizan Maezumi, Bernard Glassman, and Lou Nordstrom inside Greyston
zendo preparing for Glassman's abbot installation ceremony, 1982.
Photo © Peter Cunningham.*



*Bernard Glassman and Taizan Maezumi in front of Greyston Seminary, 1981.
Photo © Peter Cunningham.*



*Bernard Glassman officiating a Buddhist service at the Zen
Community of New York, 1982. Photo © Peter Cunningham.*



Bernard Glassman, 1982. Photo © Peter Cunningham.



*Bernard Glassman and Taizan Maezumi sharing a meal at Greyston.
Photo © Julie Thayer.*



*Maurine Stuart and Nakagawa Soen at Zen Studio Society, New York.
Photo courtesy of Maurine Stuart.*

*Maurine Stuart offering incense at the altar of Cambridge Buddhist
Association, 1989. Photo © Julie Thayer.*





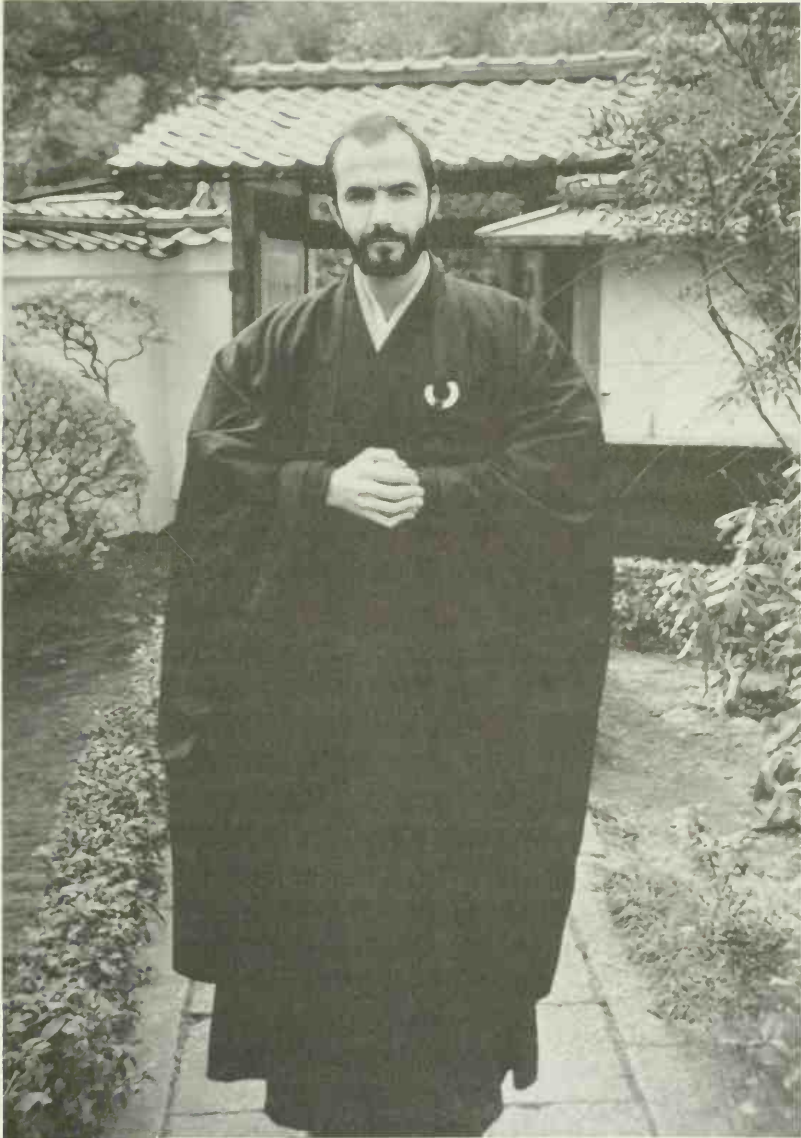
*Maurine Stuart in the zendo of Cambridge Buddhist Association, 1989.
Photo © Julie Thayer.*



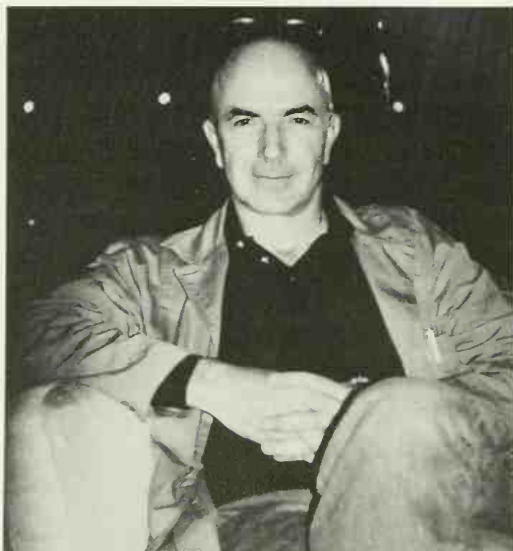
*Richard Baker, circa 1965.
Photo © Robert S. Boni.*



*Richard Baker in Germany, circa 1985.
Photo courtesy of Jürgen Tappich.*



*Richard Baker in Japan, circa 1968. Photo courtesy of the
San Francisco Zen Center.*



*Richard Baker in Thailand.
Photo courtesy of Richard Baker.*



*Richard Baker and Philip Whalen in Santa Fe, New Mexico, 1987.
Photo © Ulricke Schmidt-Aberjan.*

person on ZCNY's staff was familiar with professional baking, a problematic fact for everyone except Glassman, who insisted that "if you put your mind to it you can do anything." The new abbot put on coveralls and led work crews who removed massive quantities of debris to prepare for the installation of rotating ovens, mixers, racks, and dishwashers. Trade magazines cluttered the Mosholu office. When the Tassajara apprentices returned, they led all-night baking crews at the Greyston kitchen. The experimental samples were delivered daily to soup kitchens and church organizations. Sweet-smelling cakes permeated dawn zazen.

By 1983 new residents could no longer live at Greyston and work outside the community; they entered a "seminarian program." They were assigned jobs, roommates, cleaning tasks, and dishwashing schedules and, in addition to a full day of work in the managerial or production spheres of the bakery, were expected to sit zazen regularly as well as participate in evening classes and weekend programs. In addition to room and board, residents received monthly stipends of \$100. Although alimony payments, therapy bills, clothing allowances, and vacation spending monies were provided by the community, Greyston was no longer anyone's Zen Hilton.

With the bakery consuming the time and energies of the teacher and the residents, nonresident members felt increasingly isolated from the community. Some felt "seduced and abandoned" by a community that initially promised to accommodate and support their spiritual practice wherever and however they chose to pursue it. A sportswriter who had studied with Japanese teachers before coming to ZCNY recalled: "In the first two years, Glassman took great pains to create the idea that this was the opposite of an autocratic situation. The myth was that the student could have it almost any way that suited his or her inclination. If you wanted strong Rinzai Zen, great. If you wanted to come and sit and have no relationship with the teacher, great. If you wanted to be a monk and live with your wife, fine. If you wanted to live at Greyston and watch soap operas all afternoon, that was fine too. If you wanted Judaism or Catholicism, we'd provide that, too. Not only did he permit all that, but he constantly adjusted the definition of Zen so that it was consistent with any or all of these preferences."

But by 1983 it seemed to nonresidents that the bakery was the only place that the teacher was teaching. "He betrayed my vision of Zen," said the disillusioned writer. "You can call anything you want Zen, but I felt like I signed

up for basketball camp and the counselor decided to teach tennis." Yet when the student acquiesced and decided to study tennis, he found that Glassman still wouldn't play by the rules. He told Glassman that he kept taking the net away. "Well, yes," Glassman replied, "that's my job, to take the net away." At first the answer seemed impressive, but six months later the writer left to practice at a nonresidential center where life revolves around dawn and evening zazen, convinced that to study at ZCNY was to study Glassmanism, not Zen.

A defender of Glassman's claims that there is method in this madness: "Life is inconsistent, always changing, never what you expect or want. So he concentrates on internal stability in the midst of change. And he's the boss. So he keeps changing it all around. It always comes down to faith in the teacher. Either you trust that his moves are the functioning of his realization for the benefit of others or you think that he is a capricious, irresponsible ego-maniac. That choice is personal, not subject to objective judgment, and no one is one hundred percent free of doubt. Only dead people are perfect, and it's easy to have faith if your buttons are never pushed."

While the debate over Glassman's teaching style continued to preoccupy his students, ZCNY was increasingly faulted by the membership for measuring its success solely in terms of bakery sales. For the first quarter of the bakery's first year, Glassman's optimistic projections were characteristically twice as high as the actual income. Later projections were similarly unrealistic, and even as the bakery became more successful, its profits continued to be eclipsed by the total overhead. In addition to buying the bakery building, new equipment, vans, and so on, ZCNY was still meeting the interest payments on Greyston as well as the \$175,000 loan to start the bakery. In 1986 ZCNY closed their financial records in the black for the first time. Total expenses of \$650,000 were met by \$500,000 income from the bakery, with the difference covered by dues, program fees, and donations.

Even when bakery sales were down, though, lavish praise from the outside helped sustain the new enterprise. Wholesale buyers as well as culinary pros from schools and restaurants were impressed with both the quality of the goods and Glassman's managerial talents. The in-house ratings were somewhat less flattering and more difficult to assess since they came from students who had little or no business experience and were trying to define Zen practice through bakery work. "The difference between Greyston and

other bakeries is that money is not the bottom line,” said a twenty-six-year-old former monk and bakery manager who left the community to pursue a career in baking. “Without constant consideration to money, inefficiency is rampant. After all, a straight business can’t turn around and receive donations on behalf of its spiritual contribution to society or get loans as a not-for-profit religious organization. I can’t say whether or not the Greyston Bakery is ‘Zen training.’ I only know that for a manager it was totally frustrating. In an ordinary bakery cost considerations are the constant reference, and that can be a teaching too.” This same baker was fired from his first straight job when six dozen cheesecakes were ruined by incorrect scaling. When he had been a baker-monk, similar mistakes had been written off as opportunities for learning and had never carried the vaguest threat of unemployment. Soon, fortified by this lesson, he got a job with one of Greyston’s most formidable competitors, and within three months of leaving ZCNY, this same monk who had lived on stipends for virtually all his adult life was making \$40,000 a year.

While the conflict between profit motive and learning experience is a common problem for the bakery staff, Glassman has continued using the bakery as his laboratory, placing people in new jobs at the expense of conventional organizational wisdom. “Just when you get comfortable with a job, when you think you know how to do it right,” explained a student who had been working at the bakery for three years, “he gives you something to do that makes you feel dumb all over again. Then after a while you begin to feel that you can do anything. At first you have these ideas about what you can and can’t do. I can drive the van but I’ll never learn the computer. I can make the Danish but I can’t do sales; I can be a Zen student but I can’t be a baker. You begin to see yourself differently, to think about yourself differently, to give up your attachments to fixed ideas about yourself. And there has been a loss of ‘efficiency’ in running the bakery this way. Sensei has always said that this was a training, not a profit-making enterprise, but the community has been under extreme financial pressures. We are trying to support the place and we are the livelihood, so it can be confusing to switch gears between profit and practice.”

One Saturday morning, wearing a brown beret and a blue down jacket, Glassman drove a delivery van down the Major Deegan Parkway to deliver breads to D’Agostino’s and Sloan supermarkets throughout Manhattan. “In

a Japanese monastery the tenzo is the cook,” he explained. “We say that the most experienced person, or the most attained monk, should be the cook. And that when people eat the food they will taste that attainment. And how does that happen? What is the training of the tenzo? Certainly that training is not happening here yet. It’s not so simple to get it all together to get to a place where that can happen. Jishu [his attendant] is preparing to lead a one-month training period and she is studying *The Diamond Sutra*. She has always been curious about how it starts off—Shakyamuni got up, he cleaned himself, he got dressed, he got his bowl, he went into town, and *then* he started to teach. And it finally struck her that it was all preparation. You have to get it all together, and then you can teach. We can look at that in many ways—like we have to get our community together before we can even teach ourselves—but getting it together *is* the teaching. That’s a big problem for a lot of people. They miss the fact that getting it together is it. We have a wonderful koan about that: how can the water buffalo jump through the window when his tail can’t fit through? That koan is considered one of the most difficult. This bakery has brought us into contact with business leaders like Peter Grace. A religious leader accepting Zen doesn’t have the same effect. This country has a built-in acceptance of business. In order for Zen to really get its bearings in this country, it has to adapt to what’s happening in the society. So many people still want the magic of an Oriental teacher. They say to me, ‘I’m not at ease with a Japanese teacher, or Tibetan, or Korean.’ But when they see an American Zen teacher doing business, it’s not magical enough.”

Glassman grew up on the border of Brighton Beach and Coney Island, half a block from the Atlantic Ocean. His father had come from Russia, his mother from Poland. He is the first and only son, born when his four sisters were nine to sixteen years older. Standing in the kitchen of the same apartment in which she was raised, Edith, his eldest sister, explains, “We weren’t that religious. Still we were Jewish, and after four girls you might say that when Bernie was born it was like Jesus Christ arrived.”

When Glassman was seven his mother died of cancer. The family was “more socialist than Jewish,” and for one year following his mother’s death, the boy went alone to the synagogue to say the mourner’s prayer. Zen lore is filled with outstanding figures who lost one or both parents in childhood, learning life’s crucial lessons of impermanence and suffering at an early age.

The lives of Dogen Zenji, Bodhidharma, Hui Neng, Nyogen Senzaki, and others offer parallels to Glassman's, but he is not inclined to credit any event with dramatic significance and further disclaims that suffering turned him toward Buddhism. "For a lot of people, suffering is the standard entry to Buddhist studies. I never felt that it was for me. In fact, no religious, personal, or social experiences that I know of add up to a linear evolution toward Zen."

Glassman's family contends that for the only boy the maternal gap was more than filled by his four older sisters. Glassman observes that this theory may not hold up under therapeutic scrutiny, but then he gives a Talmudic shrug that suggests some skepticism about therapy itself. He has displayed no more interest in the psychological motives of his adult life than of childhood, but a psychotherapist who has studied with him for five years once described Glassman as "a guy who always gets what he wants, but sees himself as always wanting what he gets."

Unlike many of his students, he has never engaged in any kind of therapy. He has recommended short-term therapy for several students but in general displays little interest in the origins of behavioral patterns or in psychological descriptions: "If you want to find out why you behave in a particular way, go to a therapist. If you want to find out how to let go, practice. Because we have personality traits, because we are human, we say in Zen that we're always defiling the precepts. We are always dirtying up the empty glass. Just by using it. By allowing it to fulfill its function. So our job is to keep cleaning it and that's the way it is. As long as we realize that our practice is to keep it clean and that it will get dirty, then we're observing the precepts. And then in our practice we have to go to the place where there is no glass. And in that very state, although we are constantly cleaning the glass, there is no cleaning and there is no glass. Both exist at the same time. Zero and one exist at the same time. I'm not so interested in the question why. I'm more interested in how. There is a tendency in this country to make the Zen teacher into a therapist. And there will be Zen teachers who will be trained in psychology, and how they use psychology will be their valid expression of Zen. But that's not who I am, not how I was trained."

A studious interest in how things work formed early. By age ten he was taking apart radios and television sets, devising experiments with electricity, and repairing household appliances. As assistant to a television repairman in

high school, he learned that ninety percent of the times that a television was reported broken the set was unplugged. As he says of one's original nature, "Unless you turn the switch on you don't know it exists."

In 1960 Glassman received his B.S. in aeronautical engineering from the Polytechnic Institute of Brooklyn. For a philosophy course he had been assigned Houston Smith's *The Religions of Man* (1958), and it provided him with his first introduction to Zen. In the section on Buddhism, Smith records both the "loving legend" that has encased the life of the cosmic Buddha and the human story of Siddhartha Gautama, "the man who woke up." He portrays Siddhartha as a hard-working, pragmatic teacher, disciplined, revolutionary, comparable to Socrates. "Every problem that came his way was automatically subjected to the cold, analytical glare of his intellect. . . . The remarkable fact, however, was the way this objective, critical component of his character was balanced by a Franciscan tenderness so strong as to have caused his message to be subtitled 'a religion of infinite compassion.'"

Polytechnic's humanities program was a required concession to American educational pluralism and did very little to contradict the ideological separation between the humanities and sciences that has dominated Western thinking since Descartes. Yet Smith's portrait embraces both sides of the spiritual-science dichotomy, applying supreme analytical powers to the diagnosis of human suffering and to its remedy—a systematic map to liberation called the Eightfold Path. For the class of 1960 no account of Shakyamuni could have been more convincing, since Buddhist hagiography more often than not invokes a divine reverence for Shakyamuni that inhibits mortal description.

Smith ends the section on Buddhism with a brief description of Zen that, influenced by D. T. Suzuki, emphasizes the use of koans as a method for awakening the mind from the deadening effects of habit. Glassman recognized that here was something he wanted. Before graduating, he made three promises to himself: to visit a Zen monastery in Japan; to visit a kibbutz in Israel; and, influenced by Eugene O'Neill's play *The Iceman Cometh*, to spend some part of his life living on the streets.

Having accepted an offer from McDonnell-Douglas in his senior year, he sailed for Israel the following summer and met his future wife, Helen Silverberg, on board ship. The twenty-year-old college student from Minneapolis wrote home from Tel Aviv that she was dating a young man who had rec-

commended Somerset Maugham's *The Razor's Edge*. In her letter she told her conservative Jewish parents that the novel's idealistic hero, Laurence Darrell, who leaves behind the vacuous preoccupations of English society to follow the Vedanta path in India, was a lot like Bernie himself. Mrs. Silverberg flew to Israel in alarm.

Two years later the bride-to-be absently said to her mother, "What if I'm marrying someone who ends up becoming a Zen monk?" They married in 1963 and settled in Santa Monica, California. According to Helen, their friends were an eclectic group of itinerant boat-dwellers, accomplished eccentrics, including a mathematician obsessed with elegant proofs, and a suicidal pianist turned optometrist. "It was very much a men's group," she says. "Buddies. Bright young men. They sat around our living room drinking beer, eating pizza, smoking cigars, reading Alan Watts, and talking about enlightenment." By 1966 Glassman and his friends were making periodic visits to the Japanese Temple in downtown Los Angeles where the elderly Bishop Togen Sumi had been sent by Soto headquarters to preside over the Japanese-American congregation. One Saturday afternoon Glassman asked Sumi Roshi about the walking meditation that is done between periods of sitting. Sumi Roshi spoke little English and referred the question to his attendant monk, who answered, "When we walk, we walk." The young monk was not yet Maezumi Roshi and Bernie Glassman didn't see him again for almost two years.

When *The Three Pillars of Zen* appeared in 1965, it had a major impact on Glassman as it had on many readers of Zen. Compiled by the American Zen teacher Philip Kapleau Roshi, it combined basic Zen texts with the first how-to instructions for Westerners. No longer could an American read about Zen and not know where to begin.

After reading *The Three Pillars of Zen* Glassman started doing zazen at home. One evening, as he sat before an unlit fireplace in the dark, he began to experience himself disappearing. "I began to have a sense that I was losing myself—like whoooooosh. And I panicked. I didn't want to lose myself. I thought I was going crazy. And there was a real sense of fear. I went into the bedroom and turned the lights on and woke Helen up. I couldn't stay in the dark. I was terrified. It took the whole night for me to calm down. And I stopped sitting. And I remember at that time wishing there had been someone to tell me that it was okay to go on. I was afraid to do it alone."

The Three Pillars of Zen begins with a translation of the introductory talks of Kapleau Roshi's teacher, Haku'un Yasutani Roshi. Two years after the book was published, the Theosophical Society of Los Angeles sponsored a talk by Master Yasutani; the translator was Taizan Maezumi. Yasutani talked about letting go—the importance of *being* the infinity of no mind. Glassman recalls that a woman in the audience stood up and said, "But if that were true, then you'd be completely gone."

Glassman recounts, "And Yasutani Roshi said, 'Yeah, that's right.' But the woman spoke as if being 'completely gone' were an absurd, crazy statement. And he just said, 'Yeah.' And that response was very powerful for me: 'Yeah.' Like no big deal. That's just the way it is. I had been slowly getting the idea that 'letting go' was what it was all about. But it wasn't until Yasutani Roshi's talk that the weight of it struck home and the whole thing made sense to me—what was *really* required. And then seeing that the woman couldn't grasp the words, that they were so removed from her idea of common sense that they didn't mean anything—that had a big impact, too."

The Three Pillars of Zen also provided Americans with an introduction to Dogen Zenji through the essay "Being-Time," excerpted from the *Shobogenzo*, "The Treasury of the True Dharma Eye." Written in ninety-five fascicles over a period of twenty-five years, it was completed shortly before Dogen's death in 1253. Kapleau Roshi wrote that although "Being-Time" is "perhaps the most abstruse section" of the *Shobogenzo*, it is "peculiarly relevant for students of Zen living in the science-oriented twentieth century, revealing as it does in a unique way the meaning of time and the universe." Noting the similarities between Dogen's insights and contemporary physics, Kapleau Roshi then addressed the critical difference: "Dogen's realization, being a Self-discovery, liberated him from the basic anxieties of human existence, bringing him inner freedom and peace and deep moral certainty. But, as far as can be seen at this time, no such inner evolution has followed in the wake of these scientific discoveries."

Glassman had participated in the American dream of dominating space by developing instruments that could analyze it, measure it, traverse it, even deny its supreme anonymity. His studies of quantum theory offered scientific validation for what the Buddhists call the truth of "non-knowing" and proof of the basic oneness: the universe could no longer be fragmented into separate, isolated particles. While interplanetary research was taking him as far

into outer space as he could get, three pages of Dogen indicated that if mind and the objects of mind are the same, then the whole universe in its totality and particularity, in all of its past, present, and future expressions, was his to “be”—but he had to travel inside to know it. Glassman says, “Here was a guy writing in the thirteenth century who had *experienced* what modern physics was just beginning to discover!” Indeed, he had surpassed what modern physics was about to discover, for as he wrote in another section of the *Shobogenzo*: “A practitioner of zazen passes beyond the entire universe at full speed and is greatly honored in the abode of the Buddhas and patriarchs.”

Following the talk at the Theosophical Society, Glassman signed up for a retreat led by Yasutani Roshi, but his best intentions could not overcome crippling leg pain exacerbated by a college judo injury. After one day of sitting like a frog with his knees closer to his ears than to the floor, he left with the true if somewhat feeble excuse that one of his sisters had just flown in from the East Coast. He rushed home in time for cocktails with Edith on the patio with an unannounced resolve to conquer the form of zazen. From then on car pools to the office and Saturday afternoon football games on television were occasions to stretch his muscles into the lotus posture.

Taizan Maezumi was then attracting American students to the meditation meetings he led at his small house on Serrano Street. With the uncompromising zeal of a new convert, Glassman wanted to drop out of graduate school to devote more time to Zen studies. But since he had taken a leave of absence from McDonnell-Douglas to complete his doctorate, a \$300-a-month stipend from UCLA was the Glassmans' total income. Helen, pregnant with their second child, argued for a more pragmatic approach. As it was, her husband's fervid new interest was already threatening her sense of well-ordered domesticity, and Maezumi's plans for a residential center didn't help.

In the summer of 1970, following Tetsugen Glassman's ordination, Helen traveled to Japan with her husband, eager to sightsee and determined not to practice. For Glassman Japan was a very familiar culture. “Nothing ever felt foreign. There was never anything strange about Japan or about Zen, as there seemed to be for others.” Helen, being one of those others, continued to experience things Japanese as cloying and restrictive. Zen had become their bone of contention; they separated on returning to Los Angeles and he moved into the new center. “He's willful, stubborn,” says Helen. “When he

wants something, he's a sledgehammer." More than anything, he wanted Zen teachings, he wanted enlightenment. "I was a fanatic," he says. "I had nothing else on my agenda."

Six months later they reunited on the condition that Helen and the children live at the Zen center, but a common commitment to Zen practice was slow in coming. Tetsugen's talents for accomplishing the Buddha Way may have been a source of rejoicing for his teacher, but his wife had a different response. "*Bride* magazine," she says wryly, "does not tell you how to deal with your husband's kensho experience." Soon she began dealing with it by giving zazen another try. After five years of steady zazen Helen became ordained, formally entering the lineage of her husband and his teacher. Maezumi Roshi gave her the name Yuho, which means "Subtle Dharma." An effusive and articulate talker, she laughingly explains that "Maezumi Roshi usually gives a name that he wants you to grow into."

The succession to which Glassman is lineage holder descends through Maezumi Roshi and his father, Baian Kuroda. In addition to being certified by his father, Maezumi Roshi also received dharma transmission from Yasutani Roshi and Osaka Koryu Roshi. After studying with Koryu Roshi, a lay Rinzai teacher, for four years, Maezumi went to Sojiji, one of the two main Soto training centers, before coming to Los Angeles in 1956. On trips back to Japan he continued his koan practice with Koryu Roshi, and in 1972, after twenty-five years of study, Maezumi Roshi received Koryu Roshi's seal of approval. Maezumi met Yasutani Roshi for the first time in Los Angeles in 1962 and immediately asked to be his student. For the next ten years Maezumi Roshi studied with both teachers.

During an "Introduction to Zen" workshop, Glassman attributed the type of preliminary talk he was giving to the Harada Roshi-Yasutani Roshi influence. Dai'un Harada Roshi did sitting practice for many years as a young monk before straying from the Soto fold in his search for an enlightened master. After studying at a Rinzai monastery for seven years, he left to go to the Soto university, and then, determined to pursue koan study, continued to wander until he went to Nanzenji, a Rinzai training compound in the eastern hills of Kyoto. Here he completed koan practice with Master Toyoda Dokutan (1841-1919) and received this master's seal of approval. At age fifty he became the Soto abbot of Hosshin Temple, demanding vigorous koan practice from his Soto students. He is considered responsible for re-

forming the Soto sect, for shaking his monks loose from the intoxication of complacent sitting.

“Very different styles flow into the ocean,” said Glassman in the workshop. “Each one of us has all these different aspects, but when you get to know yourself, you see that certain aspects are emphasized and you will be attracted to those that are dominant in you. There are many different ways of studying. The fact that everything is different is what we mean by the oneness of life. The heart practices differently from the eyes, the ears. Koryu Roshi emphasized wisdom in everyday life. His forte was in powerful sitting, deep, centered concentration, and the emphasis of his school is called *prajna*, or the ‘wisdom’ of awakening. In studying with him the spirit was always aimed at the wisdom aspect of what’s happening. He penetrated into the heart of the matter. Yasutani Roshi has the reputation of having always driven toward kensho or awakening—understanding what life is about—but there was a big difference in the flavor of these two teachers. Yasutani Roshi demanded a meticulous understanding and study of what’s happening, and Koryu Roshi didn’t care for that at all. Koryu Roshi just wanted you to grasp the spirit. He didn’t allow for discursive thoughts; he didn’t want to clarify your understanding through discussion. There are virtues with each style, but some people always complain. Some people said that Yasutani Roshi took too long in the dokusan room, that he was too thorough. Some people thought Koryu Roshi was too fierce. Seated in dokusan he seemed towering and his voice was very loud and the demands he made created a tension that could be frightening. He was the fiercest teacher I ever met in dokusan, but outside the dokusan room he was the most gentle man. Both Koryu Roshi and Yasutani Roshi were very gentle people.”

Above a yellow tiled fireplace in Glassman’s spacious and well-lit private interview room at Greyston are five framed photographs: Harada, Koryu, Maezumi, Yasutani, and Kuroda. Sitting cross-legged on a blue sofa, surrounded by religious books and fresh flowers, Glassman looks frequently at these portraits as he recalls his early experiences with Zen practice. In 1969 Yasutani Roshi assigned him the koan *mu*—“the barrier set up by the ancient masters to help break through the gateless gate”—which Glassman describes as “working on becoming *mu* itself and then, without leaving that state, seeing what it is.” Before the year was out, Glassman was left in charge of the new community while Maezumi Roshi returned to Japan for one and

a half years to complete his own studies with Yasutani Roshi. In May 1970 Maezumi Roshi returned briefly to welcome Koryu Roshi to Los Angeles. "At that time," recalls Glassman, "since Maezumi Roshi was so close to finishing his own koan studies with Yasutani Roshi, I was resolved to resume my koan practice with Maezumi Roshi—until I heard Koryu Roshi's first talk in the zendo. I was blown away by it. Not that I could understand it. It was in Japanese. But that didn't matter. Maezumi Roshi translated—sort of. But it wasn't in the words. It was his style of presentation. I was intrigued. I wanted to work with him in that dokusan room. That talk was so powerful and so immediate that I decided to start right in."

Before the sesshin ended Glassman had passed through the barrier. "I passed *mu* in my first sesshin with Koryu Roshi in Los Angeles and apparently it was a very clear passing. Very deep. By the fourth night of sesshin I was ready. Maezumi Roshi was running the zendo and he knew and he just pushed me over the precipice. So I went into dokusan and I passed it and Koryu Roshi and I were crying and hugging, and I think for me that was the deepest feeling of love I've ever known."

Under Maezumi Roshi, Glassman completed koan study in 1976. "The way I've worked with the koan *mu* has certainly been tremendously influenced by the way Koryu Roshi worked with me. There are many different ways of working on koans and particularly on this first one. I don't know that I can honestly say that one way is better than another or that I know which way is best, but I was very influenced by his demand for total concentration, single-mindedly pushing toward one point, not giving any room at all for discursive thought. I worked with him almost twenty years ago, and there have been periods when I didn't work that way with students, when I thought that style was too pushy and could be too harsh, but I seem to come back to it, though not necessarily with everyone, and I keep seeing how effective it is."

Maezumi Roshi inherited from Yasutani Roshi the belief that teaching is the best way of learning and therefore insisted that Tetsugen start teaching almost immediately; he requested that he run the zendo, give talks, and officiate at services. "I wanted as many people as possible to encounter The Way," says Glassman, "but I didn't want to be a teacher. That was my biggest dichotomy. My teacher requested that I teach. I began teaching in 1970. I was too young, but that's how he trained me."

In Los Angeles Glassman is remembered for his tough, aggressive style of teaching, a style influenced by both Koryu and Yasutani. "I followed a standard textbook way of passing *mu* which doesn't happen all that often. And in a way I got trapped by that. It took me a few years to realize that it doesn't happen that way all the time. I was naive and thought that 'I' worked really hard. So I thought all you had to do in the zendo was push a person really hard and that 'it' would happen. And, also, I felt that it was extremely important for some kind of opening to occur. In this I was influenced by Yasutani Roshi. I felt that openings were critical and that you really had to push. And I saw a lot of effect from doing that. I saw that by pushing people in certain ways you really could get them to let go and they really did have some kind of experience. So there was reinforcement for this style. Then, over the years, I began to see the shallowness and decided that it was not the best way of doing things. It's very dramatic and you gain a lot of power and everyone's having these far-out experiences, but over the long run my own sense was that it wasn't where Zen practice was at."

Although Glassman refers to the Harada-Yasutani line as the one that most influenced Maezumi Roshi's teaching methods and therefore his own, it is Maezumi's relationship to his "source teacher," his biological father, Kuroda Roshi, that moves Glassman the most. This is the relationship that most expresses the actualization of nonseparation—the foundation of Zen—and this intimacy is what Glassman sees as the heart of dharma transmission. In response to a question about teacher-student relationships, Glassman once told a woman who had come to a formal interview with an infant strapped to her breast: "The relationship that I have with Maezumi Roshi is more intimate than the one between you and your baby."

Glassman's own memory of Kuroda Roshi is one of seeing compassion in action, "watching him accept people who came to him without discrimination, without judgment. To see his availability, his openness to others, his patience, his capacity to give and to comfort—and you got to see that in his daily life, in his house, with his family, with all the different people who would visit. Yasutani Roshi was probably the sharpest teacher in terms of prajna wisdom, the clearest. His understanding of dharma was truly brilliant. And as for Koryu Roshi, I never met anyone with that kind of *samadhi*, that kind of sitting power. But Maezumi Roshi always said that he learned the most from his father. He lived with him. He learned day-to-day func-

tioning. How do you respond to somebody coming unexpectedly? How do you respond to somebody burning down the temple? To somebody stepping on your prized chrysanthemum? Now when Maezumi Roshi talks, I can hear Yasutani Roshi or Koryu Roshi, but when he acts, I see his father."

Although Glassman's lineage incorporates lay and monastic paths of Zen training, Maezumi Roshi adheres to the orthodox belief in the supremacy of the monk's vows. This belief has never been stated more unequivocally than by Dogen Zenji, who claimed that "even if a monk violates the monastic precepts, he is superior to a layman who does not break his precepts." And it has retained a strong hold even among those teachers who have been the most outspoken critics of the corrupting forces of monasticism. Following Koryu Roshi's death in 1985, Maezumi Roshi explained that receiving this lay teacher's seal of approval was a recognition of understanding, but that his own lineage was through his father and that he, like Yasutani Roshi and Harada Roshi, still considered the monastic context in which he was raised the most serious expression of Zen practice. According to Maezumi Roshi, Harada Roshi used to say that "if you really get involved, you cannot help but become a monk." And Maezumi Roshi explained: "for me, being raised in a temple and within a very strong Soto monastic tradition, the idea of monasticism is very common and natural. In this country we are involved in the question of lay and monastic, but in Japan there was one very important difference. In Japan monastic practice also became a way by which a monk acquired his status. It's a route to going home and taking over the local temples. In this country it's different. The purpose of practicing together in a community or a center is different. But now we are in a kind of transitional period. And in a way it is always a transitional period. A few years ago, just having men and women practicing together was a big thing. And monks and laymen. That's another big thing. These are radical changes taking place. We cannot generalize so easily."

Glassman Sensei has also expressed faith in the supremacy of monastic vows. But the superimposition of this ideal onto communities that are essentially secular has provoked conflicts in both the Los Angeles and New York centers, where monks have been relieved from the traditional bans on marriage, sex, and intoxicants. However widespread sex and alcohol were for Japanese monks, the abuses of the ideal were, at the very least, carried out with a sense of discretion, whereas in the United States these departures have

been openly sanctioned. In theory, regardless of lifestyle, ordination implies that the vow to help all sentient beings will be the guiding principle of one's life.

In the actual day-to-day functioning of the New York and Los Angeles centers what has distinguished the monastics, besides shaved heads and distinct robes, has been a superior status in the organizational structures. In both communities the perception of monastics comprising an "in-group" has attracted those interested in organizational power and its association—however tenuous—with both spiritual authority and spiritual virtue. But monastics have proven themselves no more committed to Zen practice than laypeople. At ZCNY three of the present monastics were ordained by other teachers, and only two of the seven monks ordained by Glassman have remained at the center.

Combining monastic vows with secular lifestyles has nonetheless served two functions. It has introduced the monastic dimension of the Japanese Zen tradition to the United States, where it may someday figure prominently. It has also been a skillful means for establishing the authority of Zen teachings both within and without the communities. At ZCLA as well as ZCNY, newcomers to the Zen workshops have been much more willing to trust the authority of the instructor if he or she has been ordained. In 1985, in recognition of how misused the term "monk" had become, Maezumi Roshi tried to replace it with the term "priest," which is appropriate for the Japanese—as well as Protestant and Jewish—custom of married clergy. "Monk" has been officially deleted from public records but has stayed very much in colloquial use in both communities. In 1986 Glassman returned to New York from a meeting in Los Angeles and announced that Maezumi Roshi wanted celibacy to be part of the monastic path. There had been three students at ZCNY who had planned to enter the novice program. After that announcement there were none.

While the question of spiritual status remains confusing to communities of monastics and secular practitioners, Glassman has created parallel paths designed to give lay practitioners a sense of progression that is built into novice training. "We say that there's no place to go and nothing to learn, but most people benefit from some sense of progression," he explains. "When I came to New York I felt that we needed to create some rites of passage for people to be comfortable in their practice. You can't forget about the form. That

doesn't work. At ZCNY there is no one uniform practice. Different paths can be addressed, but the form can be misleading. There are traditions where the form is secular, but surrender to the teachings through the teacher, the guide, or the guru is total, complete. And in a way, that's true monasticism. And in the same way, you can have monks who wear robes but with no sense of surrender at all. The same thing is true with celibacy. You can interpret it strictly to mean no sex. But another way of understanding celibacy is in terms of availability, of being wholeheartedly available to the teachings, to the teacher. And again, you can have celibate monastics who are not available. It gets tricky. You have to have the form. But just having it isn't enough either."

In all Glassman's teaching modes, paths, and organizational structures—which he restructures continually and unabashedly—there is an underlying concern with dharma succession. "Anyone can teach Zen," he says, "but the unique vow of a lineage holder is to maintain the lineage." Specifically, this means acknowledging individual dharma heirs. The commitment to maintain the lineage is Glassman's priority. In his current view, not all heirs will be Zen teachers. Poets, plumbers, philosophers—and bakers—can be Zen teachers insofar as their work inherently expresses their attainment. "I want to open it up," says Glassman, who foresees many successors but has none to date. These would-be teachers will receive *shiho*, a Soto term for transmission, but the Rinzai *inka* will be reserved for only the deepest level of spiritual realization. In Japan the terms *shiho* and *inka* have been roughly equivalent; both indicate a final, formal recognition by one's master. But *inka* is now being used by Glassman as the highest step on the Soto ladder. This change was introduced by Harada Roshi and used by Maezumi Roshi. "These descriptions may change tomorrow," says Glassman, "but I want to create ways for people to question themselves. All these structures are expedient means. If you decide not to use a structure, that's an expedient means, too. I see the problem with structures, but I see more problems without them."

Community affords Glassman the familial conditions for the intimacy that occurred in the transmission between Maezumi Roshi and his father. In 1983 the Glassmans left their own house and moved into Greyston, occupying a suite of rooms on the second floor. Like all the rooms at Greyston, theirs are never locked and students are free to wander in and out of their

apartment. Although the model of Chinese masters laboring alongside their students was incorporated into Japanese Zen, it is unlikely that any Japanese abbot has come close to embracing a lifestyle that has as much parity with his students as Glassman has. In Japan intimacy is not necessarily associated with informality; Glassman's style of familial informality is particularly American.

"I want you to know who I am," Glassman told an assembly of students in the Greyston zendo. "I want you to see me at my best and at my worst. It's very standard that anyone who is really serious about practice will discover that their teacher is human and you either deal with it or you don't. It depends on how close you are to the teacher. I was extremely close to my teacher. The only times I was discouraged in my Zen studies had to do with the human character of my teacher. The closer you are to the teacher, the harder it is to deal with his humanity. Half the time the student breaks away. Very, very rarely is realization matched by actualization, and it can get discouraging."

Asked by a monk how he had resolved those difficulties for himself, Glassman answered: "Part of it was tied in with what Dogen Zenji said: you find a teacher and you don't look at what you consider negative aspects—not necessarily negative but what you *consider* negative; don't pay attention to those and study as hard as you can. I was very rigid in those days, so I just dove in. I took everything I could get from Maezumi Roshi. I was there to chew him up. There was no way for him not to transmit the dharma. And I just said to myself, okay, I'll study as hard as I can and then I'll get enlightened. But not so simple, huh? In order to accept somebody else's humanity, their so-called weaknesses, you have to accept your own. Not so easy. Roshi knew, for example, that I didn't approve of the way he used to drink and I never drank with him—well—not never. But in any relationship, as we uncover each other's weaknesses—I don't like that word 'weaknesses'—but, as we uncover the places in the other person that we don't want that person to have, because we don't want to face the fact that we have them in ourselves, we either work with them or we walk away. Like a marriage. In dharma it's the same. Those aspects are always there. That's what the practice is all about—giving into the humanness in all of us, the 'isness' of who we are. Everybody has the ability to work with these things, no matter who they are, and you either stay or you don't. I don't believe there's ever been a teacher-student relationship that didn't have doubting moments."

Assessing a teacher's realization seems to be the favorite game of Buddhist students, although one seasoned player compared it to playing tag in a hall of mirrors. Another student left ZCNY after telling Glassman, "Enlightened people can't be fat!" While ZCNY has not experienced the turbulence that has marked other centers, including Maezumi Roshi's, it has not remained indifferent to the investigations concerning what it means to be a Zen master and what it means to be a Zen student. In 1984 the Zen centers of Los Angeles and San Francisco initiated reforms that would allow greater student control over the operations of the community. Glassman Sensei's response to this was swift and direct: "I'm going to become more autocratic," he announced softly—and repeatedly.

"In Buddhism," Glassman explains, "we study the world of differences, that's the world of form; we study the world of emptiness, the realm of oneness; and we study the relationship, the mapping, the isomorphism between those two, which is called 'harmony.' These are the Three Treasures: the Buddha is oneness, emptiness; the dharma is form; and the sangha is the relationship between the Buddha and the dharma, which says that they are really the same thing. Form is emptiness and emptiness is form. Nowadays we use *sangha* to refer to community. So all the members of a community make up the sangha and this is theoretically one of the three treasures. But the term 'sangha' originally meant 'the community of *enlightened* disciples' that formed around the Buddha. The enlightened sangha does not include people who wander in on Sunday mornings to hear a talk or who come to the zendo a couple of evenings a week. They may call themselves Buddhists or Zen students or whatever, but a community based on the Buddhist treasures must rely for its principal guidance on the realization of the teacher. Otherwise you have a secular community. That might be a very nice thing, but it's not what I'm interested in and it doesn't allow me to fulfill my commitments as a lineage holder. You can't get the best part of a teacher and deny who he is at the same time. Here I was being asked not to express Zen teachings in terms of the bakery or work-practice. So it felt like the best thing to do was to be much *more* expressive of who I am, if I can. It's up front.

"The notion of a sangha taking over—becoming the driving force—won't work unless it's an enlightened sangha—that is, unless it's a fully integrated Buddha-Dharma-Sangha. That's not impossible, but it is so hard for that to happen that, as I see it, it's safer if it's weighted the other way, on

the side of the teacher. If there is a strong, enlightened teacher things will continue because there will always be a couple of students around a real teacher. If a student doesn't have confidence in the realization of the teacher, then it can't work. But that confidence has got to ride out the judgments of personal behavior. If it doesn't, the student should leave. At a certain point each student really has to ask himself or herself what he or she is doing in a Zen center. At ZCLA and San Francisco all these nice people came together, many were married couples, many had small children, and they evolved a way of life. And this way of life itself became very attractive to others. For many people it became more attractive than Zen practice. And at a certain point, like any other community, the consensus is for stability, security, protection. That's human nature. As the masses grow their needs will be defined by their interests. It happens in every tradition. The questions being raised about the behavior of the teacher are not unimportant, but my own feeling is that if a student is really determined to accomplish the way, is wholeheartedly set on knowing what this life is about, those questions will fall into place."

The autocracy of the Zen master has its counterpart in surrender as an ideal form of spiritual practice. In Japan surrender to the master is taken for granted not just for the attainment of Zen teachings but for the attainment of harmony with the entire universe. It has existed between Zen master and disciple with no more urgency or virtue than between warlord and samurai, feudal landlord and serf, mistress and maid, or boss and employee. Americans, however, show little instinct for the kind of submission and obedience that has been indigenous to Japan as well as to any area that has come under the influence of Confucianism.

At ZCNY the monastic ideal of 'doing what the teacher says' has rarely been achieved with any consistency by the monks and far less by the laity, for whom this Japanese prototype has set an unworkable standard. Yet without any real recourse to monastic orthodoxy, Glassman continues examining seven hundred years of Japanese Zen convention while reinventing practice forms for contemporary America. "In the monastery," he says, "the illusion is that the monks have a desire for nakedness. In a monastery they all share the same illusion. In this country we don't know what the rules are. Zen monks here won't know what they are for a couple of hundred years. I'm very critical, too. I have very tough standards. I don't think any of us are monks. I have this sense that as Americans we're very attracted in some kind of intel-

lectual way to a notion of a committed monk but that in our guts we're householders. There's nobody that I know of as a monk who puts the Buddhist dharma above his own householder life. There's no comparison with the Trappist monks. Those people are appealing to us, but there's nobody I know who really wants to live like that."

Glassman still strongly believes in community as the way for Zen practice in this country, but community based on work-practice. "Most people who get involved with Zen in this country are like parishioners. So you get some kind of parish Zen. And there's nothing wrong with it. In Japan you have parish Zen, too. Temple Zen. Those people are not really Zen practitioners. And it took a while for us, as American teachers, to realize that very few people coming into a Zen center were really committed to working with us. Over and over I've talked with teachers in this country who realized they didn't have a monastery. They had people coming and going. So what's the model? The monastery was not just a way of operating a strict practice mode. Living with the teacher meant that practice was all through the day. How do you really form a spiritual life without that kind of intimacy? The needs of the parish are important. But you don't get the same concentration of energy with the parish as you could with monastics, and even in a community like this, making extensive accommodations for parishioners can really drain the energy. So there's that tension between the parish and the monastery, the laity and the ordained. It's in many traditions and every major religion has lots of accommodating paths. How do you work it out? Well that's what we're trying to figure out, and it's a very transitional time. I used to have ideas about American Zen. Now I don't. I see the experiments going on. I don't know where they're going. I don't know the feeling of this whole community yet and what the community means to everybody and what their involvement is. It hasn't taken shape yet. What does membership in a Zen community mean? It certainly will be different five years from now."

Yes, but is it Zen? That is a question that promises to continue to haunt ZCNY. Although its membership has generally been more receptive to social action than to the bakery business, in the most recent discussions about the Greyston Family Inn the question was asked again: Yes, but is it Zen? A woman who joined the Greyston residency in the summer of 1986 objected five months later to the center's direction of social action, claiming that bak-

ing alone was true Zen practice. And the question will no doubt be asked of another of Glassman's projects, which is to fulfill his vow to live on the streets. He has already suggested the possibility of a homeless sesshin. Those brave enough to sign up would live on the streets with no money, food, or identification papers while asking the old question, "Who am I?"

While the Greyston Family Inn is eligible for funding from city, county, and federal agencies, some financial advisors have tried to convince Glassman that his program is timely and attractive enough to secure funding from the private sector. This option would keep the project free from the machinations of local politics and bureaucratic restrictions, which by religious convention are considered the very dregs of worldly existence. But this argument has held no sway for Glassman, who says, "All the things that people say are not Zen are the things that I want to get involved with."