

Tasting Zen

by Zen Master Anzan Hoshin

“If you eat, you should know how to cook. Knowing how to cook is not something that that can be known all at once. But then nothing is. Nonetheless, some people feel justified in saying that they don’t know how to cook as if this meant that they were incapable of learning. Outside of what one learns through the process of formal Zen practice, cooking is the most important thing to learn. The bodymind is the food that it has consumed...

...The art of cooking is the most intimate of all art forms. The work that you have created actually becomes your audience...It can change you as you learn how to cook and it can change how the people who eat your food understand flavours...

It becomes an art form through exploring in a very thorough-going manner ingredients, procedures, spices and herbs, equipment, developing a sense of timing during preparation and a sense of nuance and balance...

As with Zen brush work that requires thousands of strokes to learn how to brush a stroke so that the unexpected can be incorporated into the body of the stroke as a whole, each meal is like a sketch. Be willing to fail miserably.

And throughout, see, hear, touch, taste, smell, and think clearly and openly. Cook with the whole bodymind and eat with the whole bodymind...”

- Zen Master Anzan Hoshin. Excerpts from “It Becomes You”, teisho five in the series “Zen Arts: The Flowering of the Senses”, 1999

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