

Sunday January 3, 2021

A True Person

Koan:

Yu The Donut Maker

Yu worked in town as a donut-maker. She used to visit a Zen temple and listen to talks and ask questions with the other students. The teacher, Langya Chi, gave her the koan, "There is a true person of no rank, who is that true person?" and she carried it with her during the day, and while she did her work. She wondered about it at night and as she slept.

Questions:

1. What sorts of ranking do you do, habitually? What kinds of ranking seem necessary?
2. If you lift the idea of rank, of better or worse, how do you describe or experience things?
3. What sorts of practices do you take with you into your life, as you do your work? Why?

Poem

I Think That When I Die *by Ursula LeGuin*

I think that when I die,
I can breathe back the breath that made me live.
I can give back to the world all that I didn't do.
All that I might have been and couldn't be.
All the choices I didn't make.
All the things I lost and spent and wasted.
I can give them back to the world.
To the lives that haven't been lived yet.
That will be my gift to the world
that gave me the life I did live,
the love that I loved,
the breath that I breathed.