

## **“Tell me What You Eat, And I Will Tell You Who You Are”.**

The act of eating, apparently prosaic has a veiled significance in almost all esoteric traditions.

In bygone eons, while answering a question by Zoroaster on what the first man was eating, Ahura Mazda, Supreme God in the ancient Persian religion (Mazdeism) replied saying, **“He ate Fire and drank Light”**. Two fundamental principles of GOD: **Love and Wisdom**.

In the Bible, **Christ the Slain Lamb** urges us to **eat his natural flesh and drink his blood** (Matthew 26: 27 sq) to have life eternal. Behind this symbolism stands a profound underlying truth.

Other religious movements or spiritual organizations erected it in science; that is the case of the Universal Brotherhood **Hrani yoga** revealing the alchemy and magic of nutrition.

In their search for the Philosophical Stones alchemists mixed together ingredients such as Gold and Silver to be heated in a crucible to obtain **the Elixir of Everlasting Life**.

Think also of the famous **Ambrosia**, the food of Greek Gods and Goddesses believed to confer immortality.

At this stage the question one can ask boils down to the following: **“Tell me What You Eat, and I Will Tell You Who You Are”**.

In the Kongo tradition, there is an expression related to both material and spiritual nutriment. Besides, the Kingdom of Kongo is picturesquely seasoned with cooking implements, hence the frequently used expression **“MAKUKU MATATU MALAMBA KONGO”** (Three fireplaces serving to cook Kongo) putting forward the tasty side of full existence as concocted by Nabi Kongo (Kongo Great Initiates).

On the other hand, the following formula comes as buzz words: **“ Muana Ngo Tu Dia”** = We are going to eat the leopard cub". As regards the importance attached to this animal in most African societies (representing *inter alia* a symbol of royalty), the above-mentioned expression evokes a situation in which an emergency solution is a must on a given fact or problem undermining life in the village; otherwise, no one is entitled to escape from the case.

From the spiritual standpoint, words generally assuming double sense in Kikongo (a matter-of-fact sense and a lofty one), this means attaining self-realisation; The Multiple must merge into the One, to reach the Buddhist nirvana, moksha, Unio Mystica or triumph over the wheel of incarnations, uplifting towards celestial spheres.

This reality also expresses itself amongst the Ouêhies of Côte d'Ivoire in the form of food (spoils) to share **“Tchin-dji”** in French: *Dépecer la panthère*, (to cut up or carve the panther). As Alphonse Tierou, Ivorian scholar puts it in his book entitled (*Le Nom Africain ou Langage des Traditions*): "In Oubloa, some old people would retire in a

hut fenced by a wall made of palm tree leaves. The term utilised as reference to entrance and life in this hut is nothing but "Tchin-dji."

Now deep into the meaning, "**Tchin** means to cut up in Ouêoulou. **Dji** means: panther. This animal epitomizes fight in Ouêhie society in Côte d'Ivoire.

Tchin-dji means therefore: **to cut up the panther and, by extension to gain victory in fighting present incarnation**, if every life situation is perceived as a sum of lessons necessary to be digested." Those victors are called in Kikongo idiom: "**Bakula ba nunga mu mvita**". (Forefathers that attained self-realisation through severe struggling in life).

When it comes to Buddhism, killing living beings is strongly prohibited. Look, and listen to this: "the **Tathâgathagarba** doctrine" shows in hidden terms the notion of sacrifice, tearing, struggle of life, etc making us think of a pregnant woman in child labour. Insight into "Tathagata-garbha" meaning is no surprise on vital organs: "**Buddha Womb / Buddha Matrix**" or "**Buddha Embryo**". ("True Self" or "Essence of the Self" within all sentient beings - the unconditioned, boundless, **nurturing**, sustaining, deathless and diamond-like Self of Buddha, refer to Wikipedia article for more details). To blossom with these virtues, follow **Lin Tsin's** advice "**If you ever encounter one Buddha on your way, kill him**". **Lin Tsin**, a great adept of **Chan Buddhism** employed a metaphor-packed language to talk about means of reaching Buddha nature. Killing here is taken in a figurative sense, of course. We have to symbolically "Kill the False Master within oneself" to emerge in the True Essence of the Self from the Buddha Embryo or Womb.

To end with, enjoy an African saying going like this: "**Ki dia Ngo mu Ngo kitukaka**", It means that what kills a leopard derives just from the leopard itself. The leopard also carries the poison of its own destruction.

I remember **Adam and Eve** fell in the Garden of Eden after eating an apple not a pal.

In a nutshell, **One man's food is another one's poison.**