

Goals, Intention, Attainment and Non-Attainment

Our topic is goals, but somehow a couple comments by others from a [conversation about faith](#) strike me as somehow relevant:

Calvino Rabeni: I heard faith described lately as a willingness to fully live, along with an existential condition that life is ultimately unknowable, and to come to terms with that not-knowing

Eliza Madrigal: "Not knowing is most intimate"

Dizang asked Fayan, "Where are you going?"

Fayan said, "Around on pilgrimage."

Dizang said, "What is the purpose of pilgrimage?"

Fayan said, "I don't know."

Dizang said, "Not knowing is most intimate."

Lately, goals are looking like a "best guess" about the unknown, the best "outcomes" are usually the ones that far surpass our imaginations, and even unremarkable events become very precious when noticed with appreciation. And yet it can be very comforting (enlivening?) to point ourselves in some direction, to feel guided, rather than feeling cast adrift. It's an interesting tension in my life, finding a sense of confidence in the unknown and unknowable (even in the seemingly known). I tend to think I know a lot about my goals, but where do they come from, really?

At the retreat I attended with Tenzin Wangyal, I met a lot of students who were fascinated with transformation -- it seemed a misplaced interest to someone (like me) coming out of a more Zen-like viewpoint that likes to emphasize non-meditation / non-attainment. I still think it's a bit too easy (for me) to fall into a fix-it fixation, but these days I'm considering that transformation is also empty, and can be guided by that emptiness.