

## Everyday Life is the Path

I've been reading this koan almost daily, partly because it leaves me with such an easy, free feeling -- the sky in the late spring particularly clear and blue, fathomless -- an easy connection to a less "being-bound" way of being. I don't seem to have any disagreements with this koan -- it all sounds right to me, though I can't quite say why either. But this morning I was faced with the need to write something more about this koan than just "I really like it!", and at first that kicked up a bit of over-thinking: What does he mean by not perception and not non-perception? Does "non-cognition is senseless" mean it's silly to take non-thinking as the goal of practice, or is it a reference to the Daoist story about the lump with five holes in it? Maybe I need to study more after all?

After a little of that, I decided to back up to Joshu's original question, and remembered a time when when everyday life did not seem like the path to me; I decided to look into that more seriously as a way of forming a personal interpretation of Joshu's question. For me, what came up was the sense of everyday life as a complicated mishmash of sacred and mundane, glimmers of understanding all mixed up with samsara / boredom / bad feelings / etc. So yes, how are we supposed to sort the muddle without some serious application of study or practice or \*something\*?

Nansen's advice seems to be about letting go of concepts, of notions of good and bad, of trust in our senses, of all those things that we normally use to build up our stories and the solidity of the world, and instead to allow our confidence to rest in something so boundless and available as the sky -- or everyday life. Mumon seems to remind us that even a "hinderance" such as study can be of this boundless nature.