

Jewel Mirror Sesshin

The Middle Way

The Middle Way is the basis of Buddha's teaching. Shakyamuni understood from his own experience that neither indulgence nor asceticism would free him from suffering. He taught his followers to avoid the extremes and discover the Middle Path which leads to peace.

Later teachings warn us about clinging either to existence or non-existence. As Zen practitioners we are constantly reminded of the non-duality of reality: "Form itself is emptiness, emptiness itself form" (*Heart Sutra*).

In this sesshin we will spend seven days practicing the Middle Way. In zazen, work, study, meals and rest, we will experience what it is to let see both sides of reality yet not to get stuck in either. Hokyoji's natural environment will help us to find the freedom to encounter and take care of all aspects of our lives with equanimity, neither grasping nor pushing away.

One way to understand the Middle Way is that it is the middle point, which is equal in distance from both ends of a line. This means when you get to the middle point you can see both sides, one on the left and one on the right, equally distant. In other words, you can see equally both good and bad, right and wrong. If you stay on the side called "good," or in the side called "evil," you cannot see either of them. In Japan, this is called tan pan kan, a board-carrying fellow. A man who carries a board on his shoulder can see only one side. The other side is the aspect of life he cannot see. Human life exists in the dualistic world of good and bad, right and wrong. We cannot stay on either side.

—Hokyoji founder Dainin Katagiri



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For more information and to register,
please visit www.hokyoji.org

Led by:

Dokai Georgesen, *Hokyoji Zen Practice Community*
Reirin Gumbel, *Milwaukee Zen Center*



Suggested contribution:

Members: \$45/night; non-members: \$55/night.

If camping:

Members: \$30/night; non-members: \$40/night.