

Week 1

Dharma talk on The Middle Way

Reading assignments:

The Heart of the Buddha's Teaching Ch. 4, 5, & 6

What the Buddha Taught, Ch. 1

The Discourse on the Middle Way (pg. 71 in the Mountain Lamp Sutra book, or pg. 279 in the Plum Village Chant Book – soft cover edition)

Topics for discussion:

Doubt: How has doubt been an obstacle in your practice?
Has doubt been helpful to you in some ways?

Faith: They call faith confidence. Have you seen ways that faith has strengthened your practice?

The Middle Way: How have you understood the Middle Way in your own practice? In your thinking? In your emotions? In how you treat your body?

Practice commitments:

1. When you find yourself completely scheduled during a day, let something go. Give yourself a sense of spaciousness even during a busy day.
2. Spend ½ of a day following your own rhythm. Let those hours be spacious, free and completely unscheduled, and follow your heart.
3. Let yourself be touched by beauty once each day.

Journal:

1. Each evening before going to sleep, reflect on your day. When were you mindful, spacious and joyful? Can you touch more mindfulness, spaciousness and joy in your life during the next day?
2. Note what moved you with a sense of beauty.