

WHAT TO BRING AND EXPECT AT A MADISON VIPASSANA, INC. RETREAT:

Retreat with Ayya Medhanandi May 21-24, 2017

Pine Lake Camp, Westfield, WI
Check-in, 8:30-9:30 AM May 21
Retreat ends 4:00 PM, May 24

Directions to **Pine Lake Camp**, Westfield WI, Driving time from downtown Madison is approx. 1 hr, 20 min.

From Madison:

Take I-90/94 to I-39 (also called US- 51) toward Portage/Wausau (exit 108- B),
From I-39, take the Westfield exit (Exit 113)

Turn left toward town (County Hwy E west /County Hwy J west, also called East 2nd St.)

Take the first right, on Pioneer Park Road. Go past McDonalds and Pioneer Inn, and Pioneer Park.

At the intersection after the park, turn right (McCarthy Carpet Store will be on the corner). This is

County Hwy CH/ County Hwy M (also called North Main St.).

Go past the High School and look for **County Hwy M** on your left. **County Hwy M is only about ¼ mile past the high school** and it's easy to miss, so be alert.

Turn left onto County Hwy M and go 6.1 miles. Pine Lake Camp is on the left. Look for the stone marker.

If you get lost or have difficulty call the Pine Lake Camp office at (800) 648-9630.

What to Bring:

Arrival: Please try to arrive to register and settle in between 8:30 and 9:30 AM.

Pine Lake Camp is a smoke free facility. If you smoke, please use the areas designated by the Camp.

Orientation: There will be a brief orientation at 9:15 AM for those who are attending their first Eight Precept retreat. If this is your first retreat with a monastic or on the Eight Precepts, you may find the orientation beneficial in order to hear about what to expect during the retreat and ask questions.

Clothing: Please be mindful to dress *modestly* even though it may be warm in June. Please avoid wearing tank tops, short shorts, or clothing that exposes bellies or chests. Bring loose fitting, comfortable clothing for sitting, warm outer wear and rainwear for outdoor walking, and you may want a blanket/shawl to put over your shoulders or on your lap while meditating.

Essentials: You should bring an alarm clock, a flashlight, shampoo, toothbrush, etc. Towels and bed linen will be provided. Please avoid the use of any strong smelling perfumes, soaps or cosmetics, as some people may be reactive or allergic to the odor.

Please bring your own meditation cushion or bench, and zabuton or blanket. Chairs will be available for those not wishing to sit on the floor.

Questions: Prior to the retreat call the registrar, Ann at 608-843-7531, during the retreat leave a note to speak with the retreat manager.

Retreat schedule: The schedule of retreat activities will be posted and will involve meditation instruction, 45 minute periods of sitting meditation alternating with periods of walking meditation, talks by the teacher opportunities to ask questions of the teacher. We ask that you follow the schedule as closely as possible to get the maximum benefit from the retreat. There is usually a period of rest after each meal. You are free to use this time to shower, sleep, exercise, or continue sitting practice.

Noble Silence: In keeping with Buddhist traditions, the retreat will be held in silence, except where it is absolutely necessary to speak. It is recommended that retreatants also avoid intentional eye contact and other forms of non-verbal communication. This will help minimize distractions so that each person can turn inward for the work of meditation.

As a part of noble silence please also disconnect electronically. Please plan to not send or receive email, check social media, search the internet, read the news etc on your phone, ipad, or laptop. You are encouraged to leave electronics at home or locked in your car. Please plan not to make or receive phone calls during the retreat except for emergencies.

NOTE: Many cell phones do not receive a signal at Pine Lake so it is recommended you bring a phone card so you can use the land line at the retreat center in an emergency. There will be a bulletin board for necessary communication with the teacher or the retreat managers. Also please remember to turn off alarms on electronic watches.

Sitting: Please remove your shoes before entering the meditation hall. Please be on time for group sittings and stay for the entire period. Please do not bring food or drink into the meditation hall.

Meals: All meals will be vegetarian. A breakfast and main meal at noon will be served each full day of the retreat. In keeping with the eight precepts, solid foods will not be served from the end of the main meal at noon until breakfast the next morning. In the late afternoon there will be clear juice available. Breakfast and a main meal will be served on the final day. Silence will be ended before the meal on the final day so that people will have an opportunity to meet and share experiences during the lunch period.

Eight Training Precepts: We ask that you observe the tradition and the spirit of the Eight Training Precepts during the time of the retreat. It is a way of maintaining a purity of body, speech and mind.

1. Non-harming: Honoring and respecting all sentient beings (including insects), and not acting out of hatred or aversion in such a way as to cause harm to any living being.
2. Non-stealing: not taking that which is not freely given, respecting the property of all beings.
3. Refraining from false speech: Speaking only what is true and useful, speaking wisely, responsibly, and appropriately. In the context of this retreat this involves keeping noble silence.
4. Refraining from sexual activity: This means refraining from all sexual activity.

5. Refraining from the use of intoxicants and drugs which lead to carelessness: Abstaining from the use of alcohol or other non-prescription drugs. Please continue to take any medically necessary prescription or over-the-counter medications.
6. Refraining from eating at the wrong times. This means not eating after the sun has reached its zenith, or from noon until dawn the next day.
7. Refraining from entertainment, beautification and adornment. This means not indulging in entertainment, or adorning the body with jewelry, makeup, or other means that distract attraction of others or take focus away from turning inward.
8. Refraining from lying on a high or luxurious sleeping place. This means not overly indulging in sleep or using sleep as another means to distract the mind.

Dana: In the Pali language, which was spoken at the time of the Buddha, *dana* means “generosity” or “gift giving”. It is intrinsic to the 2500 year Buddhist tradition that the teachings are considered priceless and are thus offered freely by the teacher as a form of *dana*. The early teachers, who were monks or nuns received no payment for their instruction. In turn, the lay community saw to it that the basic needs of food clothing and shelter were provided for the teachers.

Beyond this practical dimension, *dana* also plays a crucial role in spiritual life. It is the first of the ten *paramis* or qualities of character to be perfected in many lifetimes. When the Buddha would give a discourse to lay people he would almost always begin with the importance of generosity.

The act of giving itself is of immeasurable benefit to the giver, for it opens the heart, diminishing one’s self-absorption, and places value on the well-being of others. The simple gesture of offering a flower, a kind thought or a simple meal is in itself a sincere form of practice. The size or value of the gift is not important.

In keeping with Theravada tradition, this retreat is being offered on a *dana* (freewill donation) basis. There will be an opportunity to offer *dana* at the end of the retreat. Your generosity supports Ayya Medhanandi, the Sati Saraniya Hermitage, and the ability of Madison Vipassana to offer retreats. The bare costs for this retreat (use of the facility, including sleeping rooms; meals; supplies; and teacher transportation, room, and meals) are \$300 per person for a double room and \$442 for a single. These costs do not include any payment to Ayya for her teachings and time. The *Dana* collected will be used to pay for the retreat facility, Ayya’s travel costs and to send a donation to Sati Saraniya in appreciation for Ayya’s teachings.

May you have a beneficial retreat.