

Two Events with Ajahn Sona of Sitavana, Birken Forest Monastery

1. Non-Residential Silent Retreat

Dates: Friday, Oct 27, 8:00 am to Sunday, Oct 29, 6:30 pm

Location: 518 – 2 Street, Canmore, AB

Registration necessary. Go to the “Events” page of www.canmoretherevadabuddhism.ca to register online.

2. Public Guided Meditation and Talk

Date: Saturday, Oct 28, 7 - 9 pm

Location: Canmore Seniors Centre, 600 - 9 St.

No registration required....just show up!

Free. Donations are welcome.

Non-Residential Silent Retreat Information

Friday October 27: 8 am - 9 pm

Saturday October 28: 8:00 am - 6:30 pm (PLUS 7-9 pm at the Canmore Senior's Centre for the public event)

Sunday October 29: 8:00 am - 6:30 pm

We hope you can join us for this silent retreat with Ajahn Sona of Sitavana, Birken Forest Monastery. The retreat will include Dhamma talks, group question & answer sessions, and opportunities for both walking and sitting meditation. This will be the last live retreat that Ajahn is offering. Future retreats will be via skype!

The retreat is restricted to 23 people during the day, but we can accommodate almost double that amount for the Friday evening talk. For the public talk we can accommodate 200.

Cost

There is no cost to attend this retreat, however donations to Ajahn Sona's monastery are gratefully accepted. Donation envelopes will be available.

Billets

For out-of-towners, we have some beds in people's homes to offer. There is no charge, but please bring your own food. If you need a billet, you will be able to indicate that on the registration form.

Parking – *very, very important*

The retreat is taking place at a home in a residential area. Even though it is legally allowed to park in front of anyone's home, we'd like to show goodwill to the neighbours. Since there are

many people attending during the day and even more in the evenings, most of you will have to park a block or two away.

Please...

- Always leave one parking space in front of each house you might park in front of.
- Don't park in front of the brown single story home nor the gray home across the street from the retreat location, despite what looks like a lot of open space.
- Don't park in front of the barn-like house to the right of the retreat location, despite what looks like a lot of open space.

Dana Meals and Tea Table

At retreats we traditionally eat only breakfast and lunch, with a light snack in the late afternoon.

We ask that everyone contribute a food offering, either for Friday, Saturday or Sunday. There is a spot on the registration form to indicate which day you'd like to offer food.

There is also the opportunity to contribute to the tea table. If it ends up being unbalanced, we may ask you to change to a different day, or, to a different tea table offering.

Please arrive at least 15 minutes before the morning meditation and bring your food dana to the kitchen where the food co-ordinators will receive it. Please let them know any re-heating instructions and other pertinent information (wheat free, vegetarian, contains meat, fish, poultry etc).

Where to eat: If it is a nice day, feel free to take a folding chair onto the ground level deck or the meditation level deck. There is also a roof deck which has chairs in place. Or, feel free to eat in the front room or meditation area. The sunroom at the front is reserved for the monastic. As this is a silent retreat, please be mindful while eating and refrain from chatting.

Dana Meal Food Co-ordinators

We are looking for 2 volunteers on each day to receive food in the morning, and to re-heat and set it out for the meal at lunchtime. Interested people can volunteer on the registration form.

Silence

This is a silent retreat. Please enter quietly. Talk only when necessary. Please, no chatting.

Food co-ordinators: Even though there are two doors closing off the kitchen area, they do not block sounds. Talk softly if you need to communicate and move the dishes as quietly as possible. Thank you!

Arrival, Coats and Shoes

Please just walk in when you arrive....don't ring the bell, unless the door gets locked! There are coat hooks on both sides of the door, plus a closet directly in front of you as you walk in.

Shoes can stay on the entrance carpet. If you want slippers, they are hanging on the wall and under the bench. There will be a black shelving unit with free Dhamma books and CD's near the entrance. Feel free to help yourselves.

Setting Up Your Meditation Spot

For those attending the entire retreat, please find a spot to sit upstairs. For those attending just the evenings, please find a seat in the music room on the main floor, to the left of the stairs.

Because of the tight space, we have to consciously arrange people in order to create a good experience for all and to fit everyone in. It is also important that the monastic be able to enter and leave between the stairs and his sitting place without bumping into people.

When you arrive, please notice how the upstairs space is arranged and keep the area at the top of the stairs (to the left and to the right) free of bodies and gear. The idea is to have a walkway to the left for the monastic to come and go, and, to have a space to the right so people can leave or get to the washroom.

Within the meditation space, the goal is to have people organized by how they plan to sit:

- chair only - at the back.
- floor only - at the front.
- chair and floor combo - in the middle. When using the chair, please store your floor meditation gear completely under the chair or in the laundry room (hallway to the washroom, on the left) so your neighbour has space to walk past you and not disturb your meditation. When sitting on the floor, please fold your chair and put it against the NE wall (look back and right).

When staking out your spot, please deposit or arrange your items knowing that we may do a quick reorganization of the space for everyone's comfort just before the monastic begins.

Walking meditation

There is no room to walk indoors, so bring clothing appropriate for the weather for walking outside. Of course, you can continue with sitting meditation if you wish during this time.

If you walk 1/2 block west from the house, then turn left at the corner on 5th Ave, you will walk right into a park (1 1/2 short blocks away). Once at the bleachers in the park, turn right and you will come to the river with a walking path. It takes 5 minutes to get to the park.

Toilets

The retreat location is an environmental home with composting toilets. There are 2 available upstairs – one at the end of the hall and the other inside the bedroom to the right (go left when you enter the bedroom).

Downstairs is a “bucket” toilet. It has a regular toilet seat but is just a bucket, which needs to be emptied into one of the composting toilets upstairs. If possible, please use the upstairs toilets. But

if needed, use the bucket toilet. Then, either empty it during a break or let Sanghamitta know so she can empty it.

Questions?

If you have any questions, concerns, please email Sanghamitta at canmorebbc@gmail.com or phone: 403-678-2034.