On February 2nd we celebrated Swami Radha's fifty-seventh sanyas initiation anniversary and Swami Radhananda's twentieth. We also discovered that renunciation is for everyone! In a beautiful ceremony at the Temple, each person reflected on an ideal and placed a candle to represent it on the altar, which was festively decorated with spring flowers and images of our lineage. In the evening, we gathered around a bonfire on the beach and burned obstacles that obstruct the ideal. Watching the obstacles burn away, each person committed to a “tapas,” which is a yogic practice dedicated to burning away an old habit of mind or body. Some people gave up chocolate, refined sugar or coffee for a month; others negative thoughts. (See Swami Radhananda's video for info about tapas.)

What habit can you let go? How does renunciation lead to freedom?
- **Easter Weekend Celebration**: Celebrate the coming of spring. A weekend of Karma Yoga, retreat and time to reflect together. Join us for the Garden Blessing - the opening of the garden for the coming season. Enjoy our traditional Easter egg hunt and hike to Easter Rock. 
  *March 29 - April 1*
- **Power Pack: Life Seals® and Straight Walk®**: This special five-day program gives you the opportunity to gain perspective on your life through two of Swami Radha's most powerful self-development workshops. Working with symbols and walking meditation, develop awareness to understand yourself and your direction in life. 
  *May 3 - 8*
- **Personal Retreats** and **Artist and Professional Retreats** are available year round at the Ashram - take time to renew spiritually and creatively.

**Visit our program calendar**

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**Featured Book**

**Swami Jyotihananda - A Sanyasi on Sanyas**

"I am a swami because I love Swami Radha. When I first met her she related to me as though I were already manifesting my potential when I didn't even know I had potential! It was a tremendous experience to be treated with such respect by someone I respected. And as I practiced the Divine Light Invocation, I fell in love with the Light. I feel that the Light brought me to her."
I also became a swami because I was inspired by my friends who were courageous and took the step before me. It is a wonderful thing to see people move courageously towards their own Light, as if they are beckoning and saying, 'Come on, you can do it!' And I say to all of you, 'Come on, you can do it! Take the next step - whatever that is for you.'"

Meet our Spiritual Directors and Teachers

Life on the Spiritual Path
Swami Radha, Guru Puja - August 1986

Swami Radha talks about the stages of life on the spiritual path. Watch the video

Our New Website
Dan Séguin, Refresh and Renew Team Member:

"It's official! The all-new www.yasodhara.org has been launched. This is a significant milestone in the Refresh and Renew initiative to create a greater connectivity and access to information for all those drawn to the Ashram.

The site is all-new with more detailed information on how you can choose to be at the Ashram, expanded descriptions of all of our programs, inspiring visuals of the Ashram and so much more. Moving forward you will see additions and refinements to the website as it continues to evolve including elements like multi-media, a virtual teacher's room and a store!

Please take a moment to step through the virtual doorway into the Ashram website. Invite your family and friends to discover and experience the beauty of www.yasodhara.org!"

Checking in with the Yoga Development Course - What is emerging?
The YDC group is now six weeks into their personal journey through a series of workshops. We asked two participants, Rubina Jamal and Amy Allcock, "What is significant for you at the end of your first six weeks?"

**Rubina Jamal, Vancouver**
"I've discovered an awareness of the quality of my experience when I put my whole heart into what I do. This focus on my whole heart has shown me where the negative voices are in my life, where I hold back. My victories are those moments where my whole heart is present - no matter the outcome - versus the traditional and conventional success checklist. I sense my opportunity to move forward lies in being aware of and understanding my willingness - and moments of reluctance - to bring my whole heart to all that I do."

**Amy Allcock, Ottawa**
"At a certain moment, I realized that the value I place on my practical masculine qualities such as intellect, organization, etc. had essentially suppressed the gift of my feminine qualities. As I allow receptivity, openness, intuition, patience, trust and acceptance to enter, my experience has shifted to one where I want to honour what comes up and not judge it. An example of this has been my experience with Sacred Dance. When I approach Sacred Dance from a logical, mind-place, the experience is not fulfilling. But when I am open and receptive, my experience flows and I enjoy it! I am discovering a different way to be in the world."

If you'd like to take 3 months to concentrate on your development, sign up for the 2014 YDC scheduled for January 8th - April 8, 2014.
Different Ways of Being at the Ashram

The Ashram offers a variety of programs - from weekend courses to longer-term residencies. This year we welcome six YDC graduates who are participating in the residency program for periods ranging from three months to two years.

Fresh from last year's YDC, Judith Grob has returned from the Netherlands to start a two-year commitment. Judith completed her book reports and teacher training so is teaching as well as contributing Karma Yoga. Her Toronto YDC colleague, Anna Di Pede is an essential member of the Communications team and has committed to a one-year stay. Joanne Bellanger, founder of Radha Centre Cranbrook, recently sold her bookstore and is living her dream of being in community for the next year. Karin Scarth from Victoria is back to help teach the YDC - extending her in-depth self-study to four months. Satyadev (pictured above) offers many helpful skills and plans to complete his book reports during his eight-month stay. Niall McKenna accompanies his wife who is taking the YDC; he is covering IT while our usual techie also takes the course.

Each committed person adds spark to the diversity and strength of the Ashram; and by giving back they receive their own rewards. Yogis in action!

Learn more about Work & Service.
A Model for Sustainable Living: Planning the Garden

For gardeners, February is for planning and for seeing the first signs that spring is around the corner. Paris Marshall Smith talks about planning the Ashram garden:

"I have just finished placing the seed orders for the Ashram garden - it's taken me three full days to complete and every year I think, there could be another way to manage the staggering potential of what and how to choose.

What I've learned is that discipline and organization identify my priorities and a garden plan keeps me focused. Awareness of our ability to grow through four seasons with our new hoop house and the Ashram's significant consumption of greens has guided my selection.

Working in collaboration with the Ashram culinary team, our local growers, our residents, and referring to our garden records, has determined that this year the Ashram garden will be home to hardy and interesting greens, as well as our garden essentials. Our seeds will come from Stellar Seeds in Johnson's Landing, The Cottage Gardener (offering rare varieties such as Good King Henry, a garden staple in much of Europe from the time of the Romans) and Johnny's Selected Seeds (recommended by Alanda Greene, a highly successful gardener!)."

Planning to create our harvest - another reminder that with awareness, discipline and action, much is possible.
Learn more about Sustainability/Farm & Garden at the Ashram.

50th Anniversary Song & Dance Wish List

Throughout this special year we are inviting musicians and dancers to bring their joyful energy to the Ashram. Our guests and residents will watch them perform as well as learn and present our own offerings.

Last summer we found a beautiful outdoor setting for a stage -- under the chestnut tree below Kalis' Cafe. But dancing on a carpet over tree roots was precarious, so our vision is to buy a portable stage that can be used inside or outside. Cost $2,000.

We would also like to replace our 25-year-old harmonium with an excellent new instrument that can hold its key. Cost $1,800.

The stage and harmonium will contribute to music and dance offerings in our special 50th Anniversary and for years to come. Click here to make a donation. Every contribution, no matter what the size, makes a difference. Thank you in advance!

Other projects in the works: Help us convert Parvati into a refreshed family and retreat cottage. In keeping with our sustainability principles, we have decided to bring new life to this historic building, rather than tear down and rebuild! Click here to learn more about the ongoing Parvati renovation and to contribute.
Yasodhara Ashram Internships

We are excited to launch our refreshed and expanded Internship Program with new positions for this spring and summer.

Join our community for 4 to 12 months and practice selfless service as you gain professional skills and experience for your future. Internships are available on our Food Flow, Kitchen, and Infrastructure Teams, with specializations in organic gardening, food processing and preserving, food preparation, orchard management, local food procurement, building project coordination and management of our repair and maintenance shop.

Internships at Yasodhara Ashram are a unique opportunity to deepen your skill-sets at the same time as you offer service and expand your own self-understanding. This new program is open to all ages.

Founded on the principle of service, the Ashram is a living example of a generosity-based community. We are a carbon neutral organization and use sustainable/green practices.

Learn more about current Internships.

News at a Glance

- Live Bhajan Blast: [Tune in on Saturday, February 23rd](#) at 7 p.m. Mountain Time for live streaming of our second monthly Bhajan Blast. Join us in singing and dancing. Last month twenty-seven groups logged in, creating a wonderful feeling of being together with Ashram friends from all over the world!
**Dance is Yoga... Yoga is Dance!** This month we are practicing the Hare Siva Sankara dance to get in touch with renunciation through our Siva Nature. [Tune into the Bhajan Blast on Saturday, February 23rd](https://app.e2ma.net/app/view:CampaignPublic/id:35981.13019009209/rid:6f12854aab3a748e61e3fae48cfcb430) to view this dynamic dance.

**2013 Brochures:** They have arrived at last, and we think they are beautiful! Let us know what you think. Order brochures to give to friends, your favourite stores or cafes. Contact [Swami Samayananda](mailto:SwamiSamayananda) with your mailing address and quantities. Thank you!

**Radha Vancouver:** If you are in Vancouver on Saturday, February 23, drop by Radha from 5-9 pm, as we say goodbye to our venue at 728 Main Street. After nine years of service we want to thank the building that has helped so many of us evolve and connect. The final satsang will be Sunday, February 24 at 7:30 pm. Happily, the teachings will continue in Vancouver, moving to a new location. [Check the website for more info](https://app.e2ma.net/app/view:CampaignPublic/id:35981.13019009209/rid:6f12854aab3a748e61e3fae48cfcb430).

**Workshops in Ottawa & Montreal:** Swami Samayananda will be offering 2 workshops in the East: *Light & Liberation* in Ottawa on March 10 and *Transitions* in Montreal on March 17. For more information, please contact Joan Gamble in Ottawa (613.728.1609) and Jessica Earle-Meadows in Montreal (514.207.8987).

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**CELEBRATING 50 YEARS**

February's theme is **Renunciation**.

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**Historical Moment: Renunciation**

In 1963 Swami Radha moved to Kootenay Bay with seven young men who had gathered round her in her first Ashram, a house in Burnaby. In the city, the young men had worked to contribute the necessary funds to maintain the Ashram.

In Kootenay Bay, they continued their Karma Yoga by working to reclaim this old farmland with its few buildings that had been abandoned for seven years. Several also worked as surveyors to earn money to sustain the Ashram's daily needs. Swami Radha cooked, cleaned and offered the teachings to all.

She often said that these young men were the builders of the Ashram, their renunciation laying the foundation so that others could benefit.
This month's teaching theme is Renunciation

Many of you shared how you used last month's theme of symbolism in your teaching and personal practice. Thank you - this helps inspire us all! We enjoyed the clear sense of us all being connected in our common exploration. The theme for this month is Renunciation. Again, please join in by teaching classes using this focus, or by doing your own reflections on renunciation, or by sharing with someone you know.

"Renunciation" is the theme for this month.

Click here for ideas and suggestions on how to bring the theme of Renunciation into your daily practice. View Swami Radhanananda's video on 'tapas', listen to Swami Radha tell a short story on renunciation and consider the teaching examples that we have provided.

February Art Project: Altar Collage

We invite you to explore the theme of renunciation by focusing on limitation. How can I express myself within set boundaries? This project uses collage art as a way of limiting the mind.

Long-term karma yogi Judith Grob, an avid collage-maker says, "Making collages helps me to open up to new possibilities. Rather than work with a preconceived notion of what my work should look like, I am bound by the images I find. What is my eye drawn to? A picture emerges. Not a picture I could ever have imagined beforehand, but the picture that was waiting to arise."

Read the full text of Judith's experience and directions for creating your Altar Collage.
MAKE A DONATION

Box 9 527 Walker's Landing Road | Kootenay Bay, BC V0B 1X0 CA

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