



Yasodhara Ashram
YOGA RETREAT & STUDY CENTRE

CELEBRATING
50
YEARS
1963-2013

ACTIVATION - NOVEMBER NEWSLETTER



November is planning month at the Ashram - a time to see where we are, to take logical next steps and the occasional breath-taking leap. Our key word for 2014 is "activation," recognizing that we are starting from a strong 50-year foundation and are now bringing energy into areas of potential. This is happening in deep ways through initiations essential to our lineage, where long-term seekers offer their promises to the Divine. It is happening in everyday ways, as we take a fresh look at each area of the Ashram.

Create your own personal planning session by asking questions, such as: What is my purpose and my process for getting there? Where am I now? What steps do I need to take to awaken the potential within me? How can I benefit myself and the world around me? What is my promise?

-
- [Relaxation Retreat](#): In this retreat, you will focus on going inward, stilling the mind and body, connecting to your inner source of peace, harmony and joy. Re-enter your life with sustaining practices to keep the relaxation, with all of its benefits, alive.
December 6 - 10
 - [Festival of Light](#): Step out from the pressure of the holidays and honour the

UPCOMING ASHRAM COURSES



Light in the tranquil and beautiful setting of Yasodhara Ashram. Join us at any point from the Winter Solstice to the New Year, as we celebrate the gifts of the year and enjoy the peace of the season.

December 21 - January 1

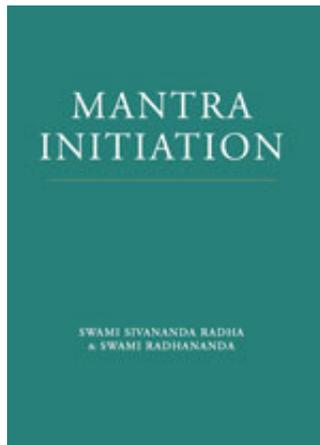
- [Yoga Development Course \(YDC\) 2014](#): The YDC is an intensive three-month program designed to give students an in-depth introduction to the major branches of yoga and a foundation in personal and spiritual development. The course is of lasting value not only to potential yoga teachers but also to all those who wish to deepen their yoga practice and make permanent changes in their approach to life.

January 8 - April 8

- [Personal Retreats](#) and [Artist and Professional Renewal Retreats](#) are available year round at the Ashram - take time to renew spiritually and creatively.
- [NEW! 2014 Yasodhara Ashram Program Calendar now online](#): Discover 2014 Signature courses, core programs and retreats as well as new courses that address contemporary issues such as [Conscious Aging](#), [Relationships: Challenge and Choice](#), [Unplug Retreat \(a tech-free weekend\)](#), [Ethics in Yoga: The Yamas & Niyamas](#), [Discover Yasodhara: Introduction to Spiritual Community](#), [Light & Vibration led by Swami Lalitananda](#), and more.

Visit our [2013](#) and [2014](#) program calendars

Featured Book



Mantra Initiation

by Swami Sivananda Radha &
Swami Radhananda

www.timeless.org

Opening to Cosmic Love

Swami Sivananda Radha, February 1994



In this 1994 talk, Swami Radha describes the *Radha nature* that is present in each of us. She encourages us to take action that "makes the world in which we live a better place, a happier place, a place of Light."



Find a
Yasodhara
Teacher
near you.

[Watch the video](#)

Initiation - the Unchanging Essence, Swami Lalitananda



November Recipe:
[Ashram Nut Loaf Roast](#)



"Chanting the mantra is one way to open the heart, to clear the way, to build a residence for the Divine on the foundation of character." (p 46)

Swami Radhananda
Mantra Initiation

 Find us on
Facebook

When I think ahead to the future of the Ashram, I am always impressed by the innovative fluidity of our process combined with the core of unchanging essence. At the core of the unchanging essence is the lineage. At the core of the lineage is initiation - passing on the heart of the teachings to those who are deeply dedicated to carrying it forward. Mantra, which is the first initiation, is a commitment to the teachings and to the individual's own highest purpose. Brahmacharya means dedicating all of our energy to the Divine through celibacy and by putting the Divine first. Sanyas, the renunciation of the three worlds, is the practice of non-attachment and selfless service.



**Desktop Photo
of the Month**

[Make this photo my
desktop image](#)

Over the past several months many devotees ripened to the point of knowing and promise, and came forward to receive initiation from Swami Radhananda. Pictured here are our three newest swamis - Swami Satyananda (Satya), Swami Vimalananda (Vimala) and Swami Sukhananda (formerly Jayne Boys). Much Light and blessings to them, as well as to the new brahmacharis and mantra initiates.

The Future is Now



Planning Month at the Ashram is being led by Paris Marshall Smith, Alicia Pace and Swami Sukhananda - three talented Ashram-based women skilled at planning and organizational development. We started by gathering the entire community together in the Radha Room to look at the overview of the Ashram and to review the year and our progress toward 2020 goals. One karma yogi remarked: "It's like walking through another door of the Ashram and discovering how vast it is."

We start on Mondays by meeting together and during the week divide into different hubs to activate our area to plan and to budget. Our ideal is to "listen to what the Ashram needs," the koan set by Swami Radhananda. How do we best respond to the limitations and the opportunities? What is the Ashram asking? Each hub reflects on the five "p's" that the planning group articulated to help direct us: purpose, process, people, profit, planet/place.

Planning is one way we are ensuring the ongoing health of the Ashram as we launch into the next 50 years. It is a practice of engagement and listening, leading to conscious and intuitive action. We are working with a quadruple bottom line - financial, social, environmental and spiritual - again, blending the practical with the transcendent!

**Yasodhara Outreach in the East,
Swami Samayananda**



The birth of an idea last spring manifested this fall in a nine-week Yasodhara Outreach program in Eastern Canada. The purpose of this initiative is to have more of an Ashram presence in the East.

This first trial was a great success!

I traveled and offered workshops and discussion groups in Ottawa, Montreal, Toronto, Peterborough, Kitchener and Halifax and even made a trip to southeastern Vermont. Groups in each area included people who had been to the Ashram and Yasodhara Yoga Centres previously and those new to the teachings. By the end of each day, the glow in participants' eyes appeared after being in the Light and connecting to the knowing part we all have. It was also special to bring together teachers from each region, who will be continuing to strengthen our network through collaborating and reflecting together.

A special thank you to all those who helped organize the events. Without all of your dedicated effort, this initiative would not have been possible.

Planning for Yasodhara Eastern Outreach 2014 has already started with a retreat weekend at an ecology centre in the Orangeville, ON area scheduled for the end of October. If you live in Eastern Canada or the US and would like to have the teachings offered in your area, please be in touch: samayananda@yasodhara.org.

Rural Alternative & Energy Resiliency



Energy resilience and renewable energy alternatives continue to be a primary concern on the East Shore of Kootenay Lake - a remote area vulnerable to frequent power outages and on the far end of a single line power grid.

On October 15th, Eva Snyder, a long time karma yogi and 2012 YDC graduate, presented her report on [*Rural Alternative & Energy Resiliency*](#), the result of a 2013 Teck Service Learning Internship grant. Local residents gathered at Gray Creek Hall to hear the highlights of Eva's work and to share their own experience, concerns and expertise. It was a great exchange.

Eva reviewed her assessment of available renewable energy alternatives such as photovoltaics, micro-hydro, bio mass, geo-thermal and wind, for residential and community scale systems. The discussion ranged from the BC Utilities Commission's imposed rate increase, stoves using pellets and energy logs as efficient alternatives, the importance of super insulation and the efficiency of LED lightbulbs.

Next steps for the Ashram's Renewable Energy Hub will be to review and select appropriate recommendations that are economically accessible and environmentally responsible options.

Read the full report [here](#) and consider your options for sustainable and renewable energy.

Yasodhara 108 - What is your 108?

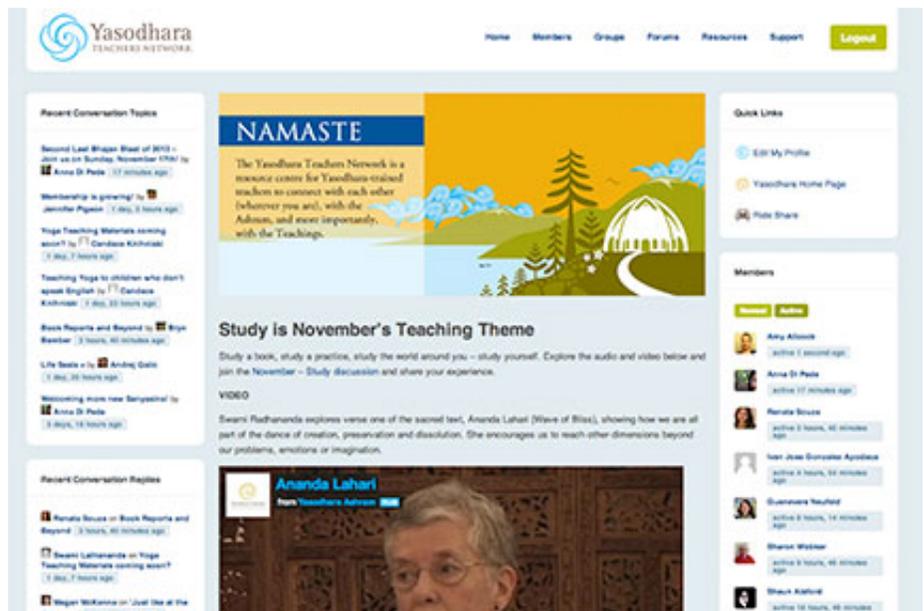


Palma, Tyler and Sofie Wedman are committing to 108 acts of creativity. Swami Matananda is sketching [108 drawings](#); Judith Grob is assembling [108 mini collages](#); Trine Mikkelsen is shooting 108 photos of Light; Julia Hambleton is dedicating 108 days to songwriting. Yasodhara Yoga Vancouver is chanting 108 minutes of mantra. Yasodhara Yoga Victoria is offering 108 acts of selfless service. This fundraising program not only raises money for the Ashram's Young Adult Program, but also offers its almost 50 participants the opportunity to bring out their talents and dedication.

On Sunday, November 24th - the last day of the program - the Ashram will hold its Yasodhara 108 day, which includes 108 minutes of chanting in the Temple and 108 minutes of Hatha Yoga in the Radha Room. Swami Saradananda will accompany the Hatha Yoga participants by playing his sitar for 108 minutes and raising funds for his 108!

With five days to go, over \$22,000 has been raised for the Young Adult program. Help us reach our \$30,000 goal by registering now to fundraise on the [Yasodhara 108 website](#). Or [donate](#) to your favorite [Yasodhara 108 participant](#). You can make a difference in the lives of young adults who sincerely want to bring out the best in themselves and offer the best back to the world. For more info [contact](#) the Yasodhara 108 team.

**The Yasodhara Teachers Network (YTN) -
Growing and Evolving**



Since the launch of the Yasodhara Teachers Network at the end of September, 116 active Yasodhara Yoga teachers have become members. Conversations are taking place, teachers are helping teachers based on their experience, questions are being asked, resource material shared...it feels just like being in a workshop with fellow teachers!

An example of teachers helping teachers is the recent post from Megan McKenna, YDC 2013, Edmonton, AB, reaching out for lesson plan ideas and thoughts on teaching Teen Hatha classes. Palma Wedman responded by sharing her experience with Radha Yoga Youth Outreach (RYYO) in Ottawa. As Megan says, "Forget Facebook, this is the supportive connection I've been looking for! It is just super."

The site itself is evolving to distill information in a concise and impactful manner. Recent conversations are now easier to follow with highlights on the homepage and the monthly Teaching Theme front and center. With each new forum post and profile photo uploaded, the many faces and voices that make up the Yasodhara Yoga global teaching community are emerging. If you're a Yasodhara Yoga teacher, visit <http://ytn.yasodhara.org/> and activate your membership. Join the worldwide conversation!

For more info contact YTN manager Amy Allcock at ytn@yasodhara.org.

Hosting Groups from Different Spiritual Traditions



This fall the Ashram provided the ground for several different spiritual traditions to gather. In September, we hosted the Venerable Losang Samten in a Tibetan Buddhist healing initiation into Green Tara and Medicine Buddha. We also participated in a ceremony led by First Nations women from Manitoba who came to release the spirit of a spiritual sister who had passed a year earlier. Held in the tipi, the experience was one of deep healing, loving kindness and generosity.

Swami Radha had a dream in 1961, long before the Temple was built, symbolizing that the future Temple "...will be open as a Temple of Light for those who want to find the Light in their own religion. We have to use whatever material we have to reach this inner Light. And if we remember the meaning of the gesture, Namaste - the Divine in me salutes the Divine in you - then how can we fight with each other? We have to make the effort to see the Divine in each other, whatever our name, colour, race or religion. It is our greatest reward."

And this is our experience. The Temple is symbolic of the Ashram's commitment of openness to all spiritual paths. We welcome the depth of other traditions through hosting group retreats and workshops. For more information, please [contact registrations](#).

**Artists in Residence - Cathy Hamilton, Winnipeg,
and Shelley Suzuki, Victoria**



This writer/illustrator team came to the Ashram to create a series of children's books based on their years of counseling children and families. Their children stories also encourage adults to be loving, caring and attentive. Cathy describes their experience.

Shelley and I have been collaborating for the last few years and we have known each other for over twenty years. Living 1900 kms apart makes the choice of our meeting place very important. We've tried hotels but this time we knew we wanted a quiet, sequestered place. The Ashram was everything we wanted and more.

Shelley and I spent two weeks working together at the Ashram and then I continued on for an additional four weeks. As a writer, I experienced great respect for the artistic process from everyone at the Ashram. The Ashram itself is so deeply congruent with the internal process that Shelley and I never had to explain ourselves. There is a reverence for life here that is so evident.

Ideas for stories came from many sources - from a simple walk on the beach to karma yoga in the garden's playful bean tipi. My recorder was always ready to capture ideas and insights.

The Ashram held us in a space rich in caring, love and understanding. Thank you. We will be back!

Learn more about [Artist and Professional Retreats](#).

News at a Glance

- **Swami Padmananda Passes:** Swami Padmananda (Rita Foran) was the first woman Swami Radha initiated into sanyas. She contributed to the work in many ways over the years-through

teaching, editing, overseeing the Ashram and Radha Centres in both Victoria and Mexico. She was instrumental in assisting Swami Radha with the writing of *Kundalini Yoga for the West*. Swami Padmananda passed away in Victoria on November 7th, 2013. We keep her essence in the Light.

- **Fire Preparedness:** On October 24, the Ashram's Emergency Response Team organized its annual fire fighting practice with the Riondel Volunteer Fire Department. The practice allows hands-on experience for the volunteer fire fighters (including our own Dan Seguin) and the Ashram's revolving team. Awareness, preparedness and collaboration are the essential qualities. Visit [Facebook for a photo summary](#).
- **Who are you?** Halloween was busy at the Ashram with pumpkin carving, treat preparations and a costume party. Visit the [Facebook photo album](#) to see if you can recognize our creative karma yogis.
- **Garden:** On November 9th, the outdoor garden was officially closed for the season. The beds have been weeded to minimize growth in the spring and covered with straw to protect the topsoil. This year we are continuing with a winter garden in the mobile hoop house, where many greens flourish and will be harvested to add local freshness to Ashram meals.
- **The Nelson and District Hospice Society, East Shore Workshop:** The Hospice held an art-therapy workshop at the Ashram on November 2nd and 3rd. Nine people attended and expressed gratitude for the space and the healing energy of the Ashram.
- **Bhajan Blast:** The last 50th Anniversary Bhajan Blast takes place on Sunday, December 15th from 7 - 8 pm Mountain. The bhajan list will be compiled based on your requests. Please let us know which songs you would like to hear and then [tune into](#) the live stream on December the 15th. Thank you to everyone who has participated in the celebration throughout the year!
- **Join us for the holidays:** Step out from the pressure of the holidays and honour the Light in the tranquil and beautiful setting of Yasodhara Ashram. [Join us](#) at any point from the Winter Solstice to the New Year, as we celebrate the gifts of the year and enjoy the peace of the season.
- **Yoga Development Course (YDC) 2014:** Is this your year to take three months to be with a group of like-minded people? In the YDC you will explore questions of meaning, identification and ideals, and learn powerful tools for transformation. Become the kind of person you want to be. Join us for the [2014 YDC](#). For more information, contact [Swami Samayananda](#).

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS

November's theme is
Study

Historical Moment - Guru to Disciple - Sixty Years of Study and Practice

Swami Radha first recognized her guru, Swami Sivananda, in Montreal in the early 1950s from his picture in one of the many books he published through the Divine Life Society. This was the Indian gentleman who had appeared to her in meditation!

She maintained her interest in study. Her books are based upon



years of intensive study, drawing on ancient texts and her experience of the practices. She always encouraged others, giving individuals books to read, inviting discussion, delving into Sanskrit with scholars and academics.

Since the 1960s a reading assignment has followed our Yoga Development Course. The 30 books on the list stay current through frequent updates from our senior teachers.



Teaching Guide - Study

What better way to illumine the darkening days of November than by feeding the mind through study?

How can the wisdom of ancient texts become a rich resource applicable to you now? What happens when you take one practice and go into depth with it? Or when you follow your curiosity by researching an area that stimulates your own sense of wonder?

Feel free to work with the ideas we have generated, or create an option that best supports your learning. Let's exercise the mind and open to its multi-dimensional reality.

[Click here](#) for reflections and practices.

"Study" is the theme for November 2013.

In this month's video, Swami Radhananda explores verse one of the sacred text, *Ananda Lahari* (Wave of Bliss), showing how we are all part of the dance of creation, preservation and dissolution. She encourages us to reach other dimensions beyond our problems, emotions or imagination. [Click here](#) to watch the video.

In this month's audio archive, Swami Radha ask questions around scripture. Who is the source? Is the wisdom that was true thousands of years ago still relevant now? [Click here](#) to listen to the audio.

November Art Project - Make Your Own Journal

"Take time to reflect, take time to be holy." With these words Swami Radha offers a way to return to the true source of



inspiration within.

This month's art project offers guidance on making your own journal. From sourcing materials to step-by-step assembly, access your intuitive self to transform paper and raw materials into a functional and beautiful creation.

There's something special about creating the journal that will hold your thoughts, insights and learning, especially during this month of focus on study!

A stylized landscape illustration in shades of yellow, orange, and blue. It features rolling hills, mountains, a winding river, and various trees. The sky is filled with blue, swirling clouds and white birds. The overall style is graphic and artistic.

CELEBRATING
50
YEARS
1963-2013

Box 9 Kootenay Bay
British Columbia
Canada V0B 1X0
(250) 227-9224
(800) 661-8711
yasodhara.org

NEWSLETTER ARCHIVE