



Yasodhara Ashram
YOGA RETREAT & STUDY CENTRE

CELEBRATING
50
YEARS
1963-2013

OPEN TO THE LIGHT - JUNE NEWSLETTER



Bright long days highlight lollipop lupins; wild rose fragrance sweetens honey warm air. Crunchy snap peas are snipped from the vine as summer hums with garden bees. Grounds are groomed; deck bedecked with green umbrellas; KidsZone primed with sari tent ceiling. Open to the light of Summer Solstice, reflect the fullness of the Light within. Saturated - the Ashram overflows with strawberries and circle dances, with songs and service and joyful beach satsangs!

Welcome to the Ashram's 50th Anniversary Summer! We look forward to seeing you here!

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- [Divine Feminine Retreat](#): Who is Divine Mother? Who is She in me? In this retreat, you will move closer to this feminine power through movement, drawing, reflection and mantra. Take time to seek Her in the natural beauty around you and to invite Her presence into your own heart. What is Her message for you?

July 5-7

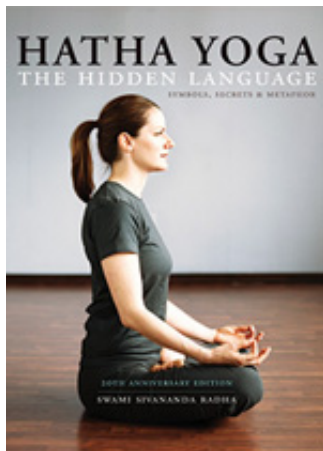
UPCOMING ASHRAM COURSES



- [Power Pack: Life Seals® & 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 - Life Seals® and Straight Walk®. Life Seals® can open doors of awareness and in Straight Walk® steps are taken, literally and symbolically, to understand your perception and gain a new perspective of your issues and choices.
July 13-18
- [10 Days of Yoga](#): One of our most popular programs for students of all levels, this course is designed to offer practices that support your personal and spiritual development. Instruction is given in a variety of traditional yogic practices combined with original courses Swami Radha created for personal development. Give yourself ten days to expand your understanding of who you are and who you want to be.
July 18-28
- [Personal Retreats](#) and [Artist and Professional Retreats](#) are available year round at the Ashram - take time to renew spiritually and creatively.

[Visit our 2013 program calendar](#)

Featured Book



Hatha Yoga: The Hidden Language

by Swami Sivananda Radha

www.timeless.org

Enlightenment

Swami Sivananda Radha - July, 1985



Swami Radha addresses questions such as, "What does Enlightenment mean? Are there signs of Enlightenment? Levels?" She stresses the importance of awareness and understanding to liberate ourselves from limitations.

[Watch the video](#)



Car Buying as a Spiritual Practice - Rebecca Dale



June Recipe:
[Strawberry Shortcake](#)
[Vegan Style](#)



As many of you may know, I live at Yasodhara Heights, which offers an independent living situation, and I work at Yasodhara Ashram, which is all about spiritual community. My ideal is to integrate my life and spiritual life.

Purchasing a car for the first time was a good opportunity to practice this spiritual/life integration. I started by accepting that my dearly beloved old car could not safely negotiate the winter climb to the Heights. Then I had to discern between desires and needs, and even choose which desires to accommodate. Straight Walk thinking meant gathering facts, asking questions, getting clear on priorities and accepting help.

"The process of attaining Liberation begins in daily living, in freeing oneself from attachments, desires, greed and passions..." (p 228)

Swami Sivananda Radha
Hatha Yoga: The Hidden Language



I observed doubt, which at times helped me question and at times became a nagging obstacle. In the end my decision came down to reviewing priorities and having the courage to take action. I also had secret help from my "car-buying Buddha." When I first announced my intention to buy a car, a friend gifted me with a Buddha statue who sat with me as I researched and joined me covertly on test drives.

Now I have a wonderful RAV4, which sparkles gold in the light. My Buddha sits beside me in the cup holder as I drive, a vigilant reminder that life and spiritual life are one.



Desktop Photo

On a road trip across Canada eight years ago, Rebecca discovered Yasodhara Ashram. She came to live at the Ashram in 2008, arriving in her beloved old

of the Month

[Make this photo my desktop image](#)

car. This 50th Anniversary year she celebrates her 5th Anniversary as an Ashram resident. Rebecca leads Human Resources, the Welcome Centre and the Young Adult Program. She is a Yasodhara teacher and a lover of sacred dance. At the AGM in May, Rebecca became the newest director on the Yasodhara Ashram Society Board.

Artist's Retreat: Creating Fearless Art, Yvonne Rezek



Recently, Yvonne Rezek of Edmonton, Alberta spent two weeks at the Ashram in retreat in order to focus on her work as an artist. Yvonne first came to the Ashram for the 10 Days of Yoga in 2008, returned for the Yoga Development Course in 2009 and makes time to visit on a regular basis.

When I saw the [Artist Renewal Retreat](#) on the Ashram website this winter, I knew it was the right program at exactly the right time. I felt I had misplaced my connection to the joy of creative discovery and that it was time to invigorate and rejuvenate my observation and drawing skills. My intent was to renew a dormant spiritual practice while sketching the inspiring surroundings and everyday life at the Ashram. But, as often happens, the Ashram had other plans for me.

It became apparent that I had unresolved questions about my processes and attitudes to art, creativity and imagination and what it means for me to sketch and draw and be an artist.

Halfway through my retreat, I took the [Music and Consciousness](#) workshop. The work revealed deeper aspects of my inner knowing and I rediscovered elements I must continue to cultivate in order to make art fearlessly. The days following the workshop were

productive as I relaxed some previously held, unrealistic expectations. More importantly, I reconnected to the teachings on an even deeper level. The insights I gained expanded my understanding of creativity and will benefit other aspects of my life. I am energized and excited about the projects and ideas percolating in my mind.

[Click here](#) to explore Yvonne's sketchbook.

Friends for 50 years at the Ashram's 50th



Katherine Sage from Kitchener, Ontario has made five trips to the Ashram. This year two lifelong friends joined her, Evelyn Connell and Janice Works. This trio of friends participated in the 50th Anniversary Signature Course, "Who Am I?". Katherine shares her experience.

Fifty years is a long time to be friends. Evelyn, Janice and I have known each other through early childhood, first boyfriends, careers, marriages and babies. Then there were the divorces, depressions and aging parents. Now we're on an upswing again - discovering new strengths, new love and a world full of possibilities. We are still the closest, kindest and funniest of friends.

When they decided to join me at the Ashram, I had some concerns. This was the "Who Am I?" workshop, and much of our friendship is based on our firm belief that we know each other completely. And we laugh too much. What would it be like to slow down the laughter, break up those images and see each other in a spiritual light?

I realized that fifty years ago, just as I was meeting my lifelong

friends, Swami Radha was walking the shoreline and planning the Ashram. Her life's work has helped guide me to a happiness I could only imagine. Now her guidance will be there for my friends as well.

I let go and trusted the process. Through the amazing workshop, we reached a deeper understanding of ourselves - and even more love and compassion for each other. We left the Ashram arm-in-arm. I could feel the miraculous sound of our laughter bounce off the balcony and dissolve into the Light.

You are invited to bring your friends, families, colleagues and students on a pilgrimage to the Ashram during our 50th Anniversary Year. A group from Cranbrook recently visited for karma yoga and a workshop, "Creating Sacred Space," especially designed for them. [Contact us](#) for more info!

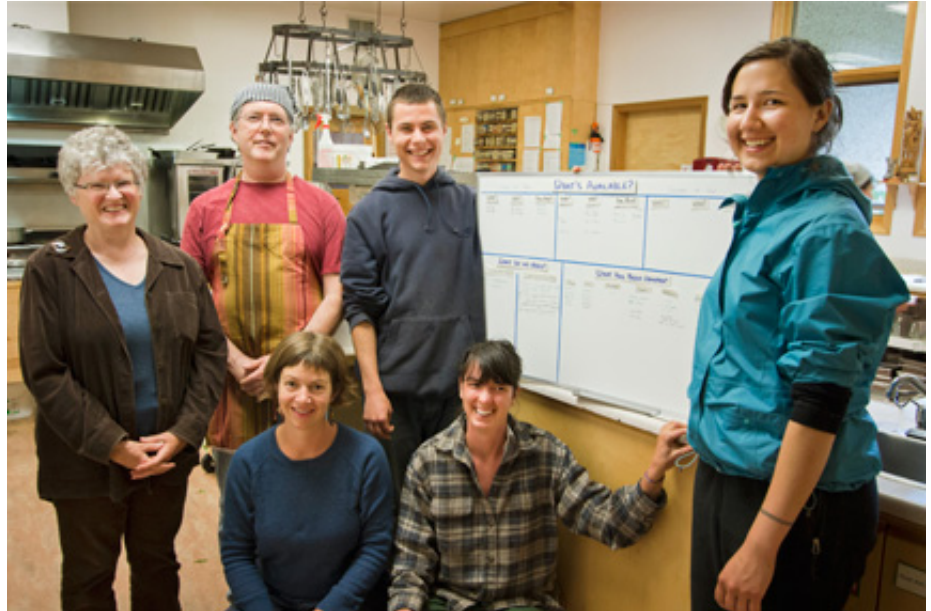
Generosity as a Spiritual Practice



People give to the Ashram in so many ways - through Karma Yoga, special donations, [The Circle](#). Recently, Elaine Pace gave a breathtaking dogwood tree to the Temple landscape project. The masses of large, long lasting white flowers of the "White Wonder" are an elegant memorial for Elaine's much-loved sister, Swami Radhakrishnananda. On Mother's Day, a lovely clematis was also donated and has been planted at the foot of the dogwood to create a second blossoming.

50 for 50 Update: The Ashram's Spring Fundraising Campaign has received almost \$16,000 - 32% of our \$50,000 target set for June 30th. Thank you! You can still help by [donating now!](#)

The Food Flow Dance: Conscious Procurement



Michaud Desilets, seen here with the food flow team, joined the group this spring after completing the Yoga Development Course (YDC). He is helping us systemize our local procurement, which has become increasingly complex as we engage with more small-scale producers requiring more phone calls, emails and visits. In building a local food system, the strength and resilience relies on its level of diversity. The greater the diversity, the greater the resilience. But resilience can only be harnessed and built upon if we are aware. If we are simply making orders, reactively buying food as it ripens without any sense of how much we need and who is able to best supply what, we end up wasting energy, money and time.

Fortunately we have kept records of how much has been purchased, how much we have processed, how much we eat. And we have clear principles. We know we are able to grow certain crops ourselves and we are committed to our local growers. Michaud's work has been untangling the information gathered over the past few years. We are seeing revealed a rich, meaningful system of relationships that is helping us become more adept at responding rather than reacting.

Purchasing from our bioregion is an investment in the future and the economy of the area that surrounds us. And as we clarify our process, the Ashram is also creating a [model for sustainable living](#).

News at a Glance

- **Strawberry Social:** The Ashram kicks off summer with fresh strawberries and cream at the 18th annual [Strawberry Social](#) on Saturday, June 22nd, from 1 to 4 pm. There will be music, great bargains at the used book sale (proceeds will go to the East Shore Ambulance Auxiliary) and face painting in the KidsZone under the Big Top Tent. All welcome!
- **Taste of the Ashram:** In honour of the 50th Anniversary year, we have introduced this short day program for visitors. It includes a Hatha Yoga class, lunch and a guided tour of the grounds. The [Taste of the Ashram](#) runs from 11am - 2:30 pm the first Saturday of each month through September. On June 1, our first group had a great experience and left promising to return!
- **Bhajan Blast:** You are invited to our sixth live streaming [Bhajan Blast](#) on Sunday, June 23rd, 7 - 8 pm Pacific. June's dance is the complete Kundalini Mantras Dance, choreographed by Swami Yasodananda. Join us!
- **Ashram Map:** The "Refresh and Renew" initiative continues to rollout designs with the latest Ashram [map](#). Attractive and useful to guests and visitors this map of the Ashram includes historical information. Can you spot the chickens, the ducks and Forest Kitty?
- **Crawford Bay School visit:** On May 27th, thirty-six students, ages 14 - 18, and their teachers had a field trip to the Ashram. Half the students were on an exchange from Quebec. Luckily the Ashram is filled with bilingual young adults who hosted them on tours and led them in Hatha Yoga class. The group also enjoyed what was probably their first silent lunch!
- **A Sufi Zikr at the Ashram:** On Friday, June 28 from 7 - 9 pm, [join us](#) and participate in a Zikr offering with Kabir and Mirabai. Zikr is a Sufi circle dance, a practice of "Divine Remembrance" that employs unified movement, rhythm, sound, breath, music, and singing of sacred phrases. It is a heart-centered moving meditation and all are welcome.
- **The KidsZone:** As we prepare for [Family Week](#), July 8 - 12, magical changes are happening in the annex across from the Mandala House service entrance. Sara Torrie of [Sartoria: regenerative design](#), transformed saris into an amazing, technicoloured "big top;" while Swami Premananda, with his son Reynold and daughter-in-law Saskia, put down a beautiful floor using scrap wood from Parvati. The end result will be a dazzling space that adults will want to spend time in as well!

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS

June's theme is **Liberation**.

Historical Moment - Karma Yoga

Today in the Ashram we see all around us the results of Karma Yoga, the yoga of action. In the 1960s, old homestead buildings were adapted for Ashram use, fruit trees were nurtured and the garden established. In the 1970s, huge efforts went into building



Saraswati Lodge, Radha House and Many Mansions, as well as into water and sewage systems. Acres of forest were cleared to provide pastures. In the 1990s, the Temple and Mandala House transformed the Ashram once again. On a more subtle level, five decades of Karma Yogis have transformed themselves through selfless service, reflecting and making choices with awareness - moving on the path of Liberation. Many blessings to all of Divine Mother's helpers!



Teaching Guide - Liberation

We are celebrating June with the theme of "Liberation." Whether you are at the Ashram or in our extended community, we invite you to break through your barriers to freedom!

"Liberation" is the theme for June 2013.

Click [here](#) for ideas and practices to assist you in breaking through barriers. View Swami Radhananda's video in which she offers an introductory look at the map of the Kundalini system that can bring us beyond our limitations to our most heartfelt goal in life. Listen to an archival audio of Swami Radha in which she emphasizes that liberation is an ongoing process that takes place step by step in our everyday life. Explore liberation through the variety of practices and reflections in this month's teaching guide.



June Art Project - Rose Petal Mala

Rose petals are often used in the worship of Divine Mother and in pujas. Roses have long been a symbol of love and beauty and the word "bead" originally meant "prayer".

"The practice of the *mala* has therapeutic value because of its effects of concentrating the mind, directing the emotions and focusing the body, all of which lead to the spiritual realm."
(*Mantras: Words of Power*)

Creating your own rose mala from rose petals is a practice of patience and devotion.

While living at the Ashram in the summer of 2011, Gordon

Matchett, a Karma Yogi and Yasodhara Yoga teacher, decided to make a rose petal mala. "The malas are pretty simple, but time consuming to make. It's lots of trial and error, some good intuition and a whole bunch of practice and patience. Kind of like our practice," says Gordon.

[Click here for Gordon's Rose Petal Mala how-to guide.](#)



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