



## Living Yoga

Issue 2, 2014

In this issue you will be introduced to a young Czech woman who was searching the world in quest of spiritual guidance and is now deeply into the YDC; a talented young musician from France who is living his learning from the Young Adult Program by taking small steps with faith that they will add up; and an elder who moved to the Ashram in her 70s and took the leap into sanyas at age 85. Each of us has what Swami Radha called our "divine appointment," and we each live it in a unique way. This month, we honour Swami Radha's example of living yoga. On February 2nd we celebrated her initiation into sanyas 58 years ago. From her commitment has sprung Yasodhara Ashram and teachings that have helped many of us face ourselves, live courageously and shine brightly.

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[Relaxation Retreat \(Spring Equinox\)](#): As winter turns to spring, find balance and renewal within yourself. Focus on going inward, stilling the mind and body, connecting to your inner source of peace, harmony and joy.

*March 21 - 23*

[Hatha Yoga Teacher Certification](#): In this ten-day course you will learn how to teach classical asanas and integrate spiritual practices into the classroom.



Successful completion of the Yoga Development course is a prerequisite.  
*April 18 - 21*

[Easter Weekend](#): Celebrate the coming of spring in this weekend of Karma Yoga, special activities and quiet reflection time.  
*April 9 - 19*

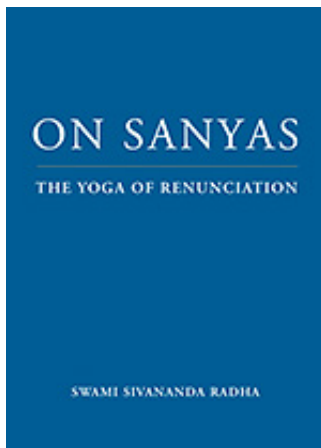
[Power Pack: Life Seals & Straight Walk](#): This special five-day program gives you the opportunity to gain perspective on your life through two of Swami Radha's most powerful self-development workshops - Life Seals and Straight Walk. Integrated in the program is personal retreat time to review and synthesize your learning so that you can apply insights to your daily life.  
*May 2 - 7*

[Personal Retreats](#) and [Artist and Professional Renewal Retreats](#) are available year round at the Ashram - take time to renew spiritually and creatively.

Visit our [2014](#) program calendar.

TIMELESS BOOK  
OF THE MONTH

**Accessing Your Potential**  
*Swami Radhananda, February 2000*



*On Sanyas*  
Swami Sivananda Radha

"Two important lessons to learn on the spiritual path are control of emotions, and the courage to accept just and unjust criticism in stride." (p 51)

[www.timeless.org](http://www.timeless.org)



Swami Radhananda talks about ways to challenge our minds using the metaphor of dance and the spiritual practice of tapas.

[View the video](#)

**Sanyas In Old Age**  
**Swami Vimalananda**



[Roasted Root Vegetables](#)



*Swami Vimalananda was initiated into sanyas by Swami Radhananda in November 2013, close to her 85th birthday.*

When I came to the Ashram to live as a resident, I was already in my 70s and that was many years ago. As I worked and did some teaching, I felt very proud of myself - thinking I was doing these things on my own and forgetting Divine Mother. As I kept getting older I realized how much I took for granted. In old age I am deeply grateful for all I can still do. Because of this, I have changed. I am learning to surrender and ask the Divine for help.



So why take sanyas in old age? Because when I am old, I feel that only if She is with me will I succeed. Sanyas is the best framework for remembering Her.

[Make this photo my desktop image](#)

[Meet our Spiritual Directors and Teachers](#)

**Checking in with the Yoga Development Course**







*The seventeen participants of the 2014 YDC are six weeks into the course. We asked Michaela Poulouva (left) and Kyra Valentine (right) to describe their divine appointment and to share what is emerging.*

### **Michaela Poulouva, Czech Republic**

After five years of working in the hospitality industry in England and Prague, I followed my inner voice and initiated my search for a sustainable and authentic way of being. I started with a road trip through BC, including the Kootenays, then across Canada, a few weeks on a Caribbean Island and finally a five-month backpacking trip through Central America. As I travelled, I read and did yoga and I realized that no matter the label, everything I experience is based on ancient truths. My desire was to find the source and immerse myself. At this point the Ashram road sign popped into my mind - I must have passed it on my BC travels. Soon I was accepted into the Young Adult Program where I began to see the true meaning of yoga. A few months later, I began the YDC. As my choices become more conscious, I am taking responsibility for myself and learning to see myself in a new light.

### **Kyra Valentine, Wisconsin, US**

Many factors aligned to create an opening for me to take the Yoga Development Course: changes in my personal life, a desire for a time-out, reading the compelling *In Durga's Embrace* - a book my housemate purchased and left on the coffee table! - and an inner knowing that I was ready to take the next step and discover who I am in relationship with *myself*. Listening to my inner voice brought me here. And now in the YDC, through the practice of mantra and the reflective group process, I am refining my ability to listen - within and without. I'm experiencing greater clarity, awareness and a sense of emerging Light.

The [2015 YDC](#) is scheduled from January 8th - April 8, 2015. Is the time right for you?

## Yogic Decision-Making at the Ashram Paris Marshall Smith



In our ongoing effort to move towards greater transparency and awareness, the Ashram has embraced a group of indicators to guide our planning and decision-making process. We're calling these the 5 P's: People (social), Purpose (why), Process (how), Planet (environmental) and Profit (economic).

One of the key principles in yoga is balance. By considering each of these five perspectives, balance and accountability become evident.

At the moment, in the garden we are focused particularly on planet and profit, trying to further understand how the produce we grow can lower carbon output by reducing travel distances, and increase economic input by growing higher value crops - a formula we are continuously refining. Intern Bryn Bamber calculated the overall value of the garden and summer kitchen's contribution to the Ashram food flow to be about \$75,000 - valuable information that will impact our 2014 seed order. When the garden team sits down with the seed catalogues, we'll consider the top producers of the garden (salad and cooking greens), review the current state of the world (drought in California) and determine how we can increase our local resilience by supporting the greater sustainability of our community. Next we will turn our focus to people, purpose and process as we launch the 2014 Internship Program.

[Learn more about our garden](#)

## Sustainable Giving



*Monthly donations are an easy and affordable way to give, and they provide a sustainable cash flow for daily functioning. Christophe Musset, a 2013 Young Adult Program participant and Carol Putnam, a Yasodhara Yoga Teacher, share their experience as monthly donors.*

### **Christophe Musset, France**

I support the Ashram through monthly giving because the teachings helped me change my life and make decisions I never thought I could make. I discovered my own quality as a human being and as a musician, and the quality hidden in everything, thanks to Karma Yoga and daily journaling. I want others to benefit as much as I do. Through my time at the Ashram I came to understand the power of small steps. Giving \$25 monthly is something I can do, and I trust that it makes a difference in the long run. To me, giving is both an act of symbolic importance and an act of faith in the small steps.

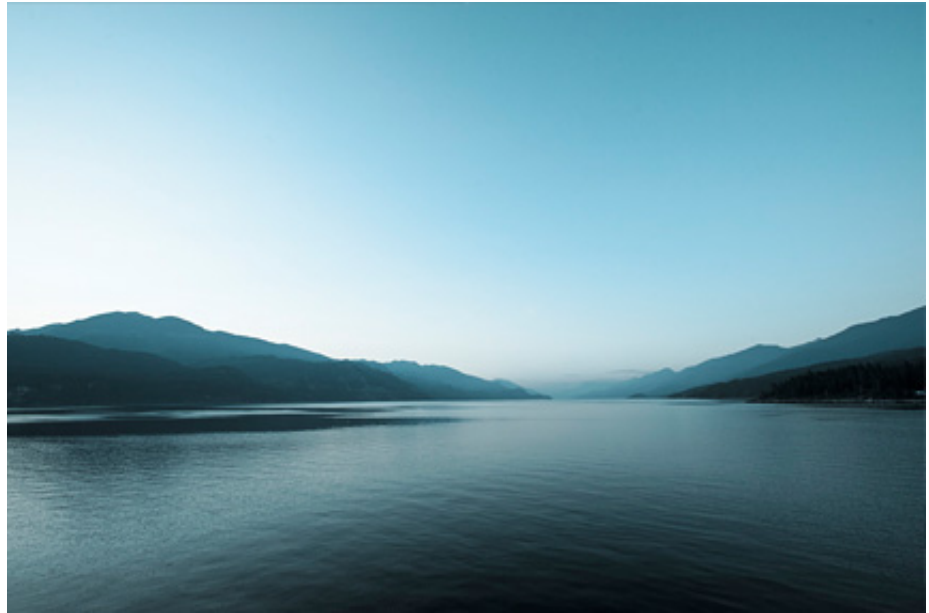
### **Carol Putnam, Nova Scotia**

Yasodhara Ashram has given me so much and I feel so supported by the swamis and residents while I am there and in-between my visits. Being a donor is one way I can give back. Making a monthly donation gives me regular contact with the Ashram, helps to solidify my commitment and helps to make the Ashram a part of my life. I also know that charities need a predictable source of income to organize day-to-day operations. And at the Ashram those operations are carried out with a quality I can see - in the way the land is cared for and in the way people approach their work with care, respect and commitment.

*In 2013, 146 monthly donors contributed 43% of all funds raised to help sustain the Ashram. [Become a monthly supporter](#) and help us maintain this sacred space that inspires quality in life.*



## Can You Unplug?



New! A weekend dedicated to quieting digital distractions and going inward. Examine who you are without the constant stream of Internet information. Using meditation, mind-watch and mantra, this retreat gives you a chance to observe yourself unplugged. And, we promise to return your digital distractors at the end of the weekend. Learn more about [Unplug: A Tech-free Weekend](#).

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## NEWS AT A GLANCE

**Chinese New Year - Friday, January 31st:** Lunar New Year 2014 welcomed the Year of the Green Wooden Horse and karma yogis, Yoga Development Course participants, residents and guests marked the celebration with dancing, noise-making and a delicious Chinese dinner. Many blessings to all as we gallop into the dynamic Year of the Horse! [View the photo album](#).

**Sanyas Puja - Sunday, February 2nd:** On February 2nd we celebrated the inspiration of Swami Radha's sanyas initiation. At the Temple, the swamis spoke, and each participant offered a candle and a personal ideal. Obstacles to the ideal were burned later that evening in a fire made from the broom (invasive species) that had been gathered on Karma Yoga days. A feeling of liberation and new beginnings ignited. [View the photo album](#).

**Bhajan Blast, Sunday, March 16th from 7 - 8:30 pm PACIFIC:** Generate positive vibrations through sacred song and dance. Please plan to [join us](#) for the first Bhajan Blast of 2014. (Note - new length 1.5 hours)

**2014 Program Brochures:** [Help spread the word](#) on Ashram courses and retreats by giving brochures to friends or by dropping them off at your favourite stores and cafes. To request copies please contact [Swami Samayananda](#) with your mailing address and quantities. Thank you!

## Yasodhara Yoga Outreach Update:

- Swami Jyotihananda will be at the *Women's Spirituality Conference* in Williams Lake on March 28th and 29th; workshop March 30th.
- Rebecca Dale
  - *Body as a Temple* workshop in Victoria, February 23rd
  - *Sacred Dance* workshop in Vancouver on February 20th
  - *Sacred Dance* workshop in Victoria on February 25th
- Swami Matananda recently led a Life Seals workshop in Spokane.

Stay connected to the Ashram's outreach. View the schedule [here](#).

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## PERSONAL PRACTICE GUIDE



### Swami Radha - Yoga and Devotion

*In this candid conversation, Swami Radha engages us in questions about yoga, devotion, awareness and desire. How do we develop and sustain a desire for the Divine? What role does devotion and worship play in today's world?*

▶ Watch the video

### Swami Radha

*Swami Radha uses the Divine Mother mantra to show us how we can transform our everyday life into a practice of awareness, the essence of yoga.*

🔊 Listen to the audio

## "What is Yoga?"

### Reflection Questions

January beginnings move into February questions, and the big question this month is "What is Yoga?" - an ever-unfolding question for a lifetime.

1. Yoga is sometimes defined as a path of Liberation, a path of Light, a path to Higher Consciousness, a path of Self-Realization. What does "path" mean? What do any of these expressions commonly used to define yoga actually mean to you? Can you approach "beyond mind" through the mind? Through devotion? Through work? What is your way?
2. "Tapas" in Sanskrit refers to a burning away, a purification. Choose a tapas and see what you learn. Renounce a habit or start a particular practice. Set a length of time and follow through. Examples are giving up coffee or sugar for a month, creating an extra waking hour and devoting it to a spiritual practice, or consciously restraining speech. Follow up by writing your observations. What happens to the mind when you direct your will in this way? What is self-will?
3. Choose a text, such as Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras* or Swami Radha's *Kundalini Yoga for the West* or Woodroffe's *Shakta and Shakti* and explore, What is yoga? from this perspective. Choose a sutra or the kundalini mantras and make your



own commentary. Or create your own yoga sutras, stringing the pearls of your knowledge into a guiding text.

4. Focus on living the Divine Mother mantra. Choose a line every day and bring attention to it. Or choose one line for a month and observe what happens. What is yoga from this understanding?

For more Teaching and Reflection ideas, [click here](#).



**Yasodhara Ashram**  
Box 9 Kootenay Bay, B.C.  
V0B 1X0 Canada

phone: (250)-227-9224  
fax: (250)-227-9494

[yasodhara.org](http://yasodhara.org)

## NEWSLETTER ARCHIVE

