



Yasodhara Ashram

YOGA RETREAT & STUDY CENTRE

# 2021 Annual Review

Living Our Purpose







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## President's Message: Living Our Purpose

**In 2021 Yasodhara Ashram continued to live its purpose, adapting to the ever-changing times and offering the yogic teachings in every way we could imagine within the limitations of public health protocols and dramatic climate events.**

Residents and Karma Yogis worked together to generate a warm feeling of spiritual community. We welcomed onsite guests who had been isolated in cities, and they reminded us just how much the Ashram is a refuge—with the beauty of land and lake, the harmonious atmosphere and like-minded people. At the same time, we appreciated staying strongly connected to those at a distance through online courses.

BC's extensive wildfire season called us to action, and we completed the first phase of a forestry plan that preserves older trees and clears the dying understorey. A land protector from the Ktunaxa Nation approved the project, then returned to teach us more about native plants and to gather materials for a traditional canoe. Later in the year we welcomed a representative of the Sinixt people who shared songs, stories, and updates on the Supreme Court victory that freed them from being labeled "extinct." The Ashram is on the unceded territory of the Ktunaxa and the Sinixt Nations, and we are committed to building these relationships.



As residents and teachers, we are learning to meet the moment through experimentation. We renew ourselves with the energy that channels through this lineage, and we recognize challenges as opportunities to increase awareness, to adapt, and to elevate our minds and hearts. The stream of the lineage continues to flow like grace through initiations.

We also recognize that many of our committed leaders now in their older years, need more space and amenities, and we were able to renovate two buildings to accommodate these needs. We continue to invite succession through programs like Pathways, which mentors younger generations toward leadership during longer stays. This year we also built efficiencies into our accounting system, automating and outsourcing, to make administration lighter now and for the future.

Your very generous donations, combined with the restructuring of our programs and reduction of operational expenses, led to a healthy positive financial outcome. Your support in so many ways—from attending courses to offering practices, from selfless service to offering donations—keeps the Ashram alive and serving its heart-centred purpose. Thank you!

With love, gratitude and Light from all of us.

*Swami Lalitananda*

SWAMI LALITANANDA







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# Who We Are

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SWAMI RADHA



SWAMI RADHANANDA



SWAMI LALITANANDA

## SPIRITUAL LINEAGE

**We are a women-led Ashram founded by Swami Sivananda Radha, a Western woman who went to India in the mid-1950s to meet her guru, Swami Sivananda of Rishikesh. Swami Radha was asked by her teacher to live on faith without working when she returned to Canada. Out of her dedication and courage, the Ashram grew into the flourishing centre it is today. Swami Radha is a role model who established a lineage of women leaders.**

Swami Radhananda was president of Yasodhara Ashram Society from 1993 to 2014, building on Swami Radha's work and creating her own legacy of outstanding leadership and innovative teaching. She passed away January 28, 2021 after a life dedicated to teaching, learning and community. On September 8, gurubais, family and disciples gathered to celebrate her life and give thanks for all she offered. Many people were touched and inspired by her living example, which garnered an outpouring of [tributes](#). One woman, who was mentored as a youth and throughout her life by Swami Radhananda says: "I am truly the woman I am because of her steadfast love, interest and commitment. I am blessed beyond words."

Swami Lalitananda, the current president, worked closely with both Swami Radha and Swami Radhananda and carries on the lineage with gratitude and innovation. She is creating awareness of diversity, equity and inclusion, and encouraged residents to participate in an anti-racism course in 2021. She is planning an Indigenous bursary program and a Reconciliation Fund, which will be donated to a First Nations non-profit organization to acknowledge the privilege of being on this land. Swami Lalitananda carried the spiritual lineage forward in 2021, giving initiations to three long-term teachers dedicated to Swami Radha's work.

Yasodhara Ashram is committed to bringing people together to know themselves and to recognize the Light in themselves and others.

### [Timeless Books](#)

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Our quarterly Board meetings provide dynamic interaction between the three residential sanyasin directors and the four professionals living outside the Ashram. The Financial Committee was also active and available on a moment's notice to help forecast and revise the budget in this extraordinary time.





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# Innovative Ways of Being

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In 2021 we learned that we had the

# resiliency

to adapt and change, listening to what was needed; we flowed once again around obstacles, seeing each as a teaching. The result? We focused on what was important to us and continued to seek how to serve others in a meaningful way during these times.

Our invitation was to create spiritual pathways, longer stays and mutual support. This focus brought us back to the Ashram's origins with Karma Yoga as a key building block.



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## ON-SITE PROGRAMMING

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With our increased experience and the continual changing landscape of the pandemic, we were able to invite people on-site in new and innovative ways. We continued to adapt our protocols to ensure the well-being of residents and guests.

The Yoga Development Course (YDC) in January brought 18 participants—all entering into newly arranged single rooms. We navigated how to hold each person through two weeks of quarantine that included a system of food delivery, online support, outdoor bonfires for interaction, and impromptu adaptations during a three-day power outage. Participants then transitioned into the transformative three-month course. Many stayed on for additional months, or the whole year, and we valued their presence and contributions to the Ashram.

[YDC Video](#)

Knowing how isolating and challenging the times were for people, we created a one-to-three-week Restorative Retreat program, which allowed participants to create their own experience while being held in community. We had 65 guests come and renew themselves—75% of them new to the Ashram. The nourishment and appreciation of community that retreat guests experienced is reflected in this comment: [Retreat Testimonial Video](#)

We continued our signature course, Yoga Journey, which had a robust attendance of 12 in the autumn. Many of them continued with online meet-ups.

Our Teacher Certification programs drew a total of 25 participants for Hatha Yoga, Kundalini and Dream Yoga, and Hidden Language Hatha Yoga training or recertification.



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## KARMA YOGA

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As a Karma Yoga Ashram, we realized how essential it was having people here to help throughout the pandemic. This year we stabilized the Two-Month Karma Yoga program and sent out invitations to newcomers and experienced Karma Yogis to join us. The result is that we had more than 60 karma yogis joining us and participating in these programs. Many people extended their stay—deepening their learnings of the teachings and often taking on leadership positions. Our Pathways Program—designed to encourage longer commitments—is becoming more established and playing a vital role with five participants in 2021.





## Karma Yoga Participants

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**26** Two Month  
Program

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**40** Returning

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Our success in receiving three  
Canada Summer Jobs grants  
provided much-appreciated  
additional people-power.



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## ONLINE OFFERINGS

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In our continuing online programming after a successful start in 2020, we introduced longer 10-week courses: one for professionals needing to experience more balance in their work and lives (Peace of Mind for Professionals) and the other for Yoga Development Course graduates wanting to deepen their study of the Kundalini system. We were pleased that people responded so well to more in-depth courses and we will continue this type of offering in 2022.

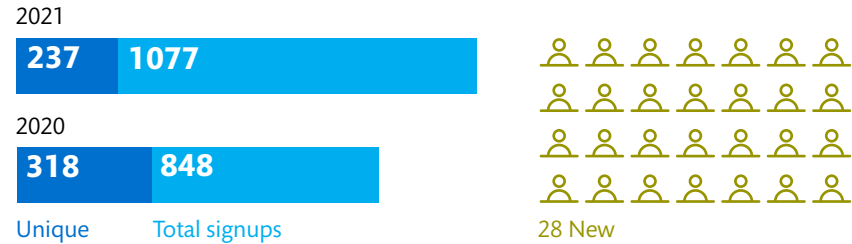
Additionally through the year, our teachers offered six sessions of online classes, which included one-day retreats and six-week series, and outreach workshops to specific geographic areas. New content was offered as well as core teachings such as Dream Yoga and Hidden Language Hatha Yoga. Online outreach to Germany and Hungary attracted many new people.

In addition we hosted Walking in the Four Directions of Love, a two-hour workshop offered by Grandmother Pahan Pte San Win that drew together many diverse people. Our free Information sessions—which we began in 2020, for the Two-Month Karma Yoga Program, Yoga Journey and the YDC—all attracted both new and experienced people. We also experimented with free two-hour classes for people who want to experience a taste of the Ashram approach.

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## Online Classes

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## Information Sessions

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# Protecting & Sustaining Sacred Lands

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In keeping with our dedication to continual learning, we have been putting into action initiatives on climate change, forest sustainability and Indigenous reconciliation. We have

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to leaders in their field and culture which has enabled us to renew our appreciation of the land. Food security is a priority and we continue to streamline our garden and orchard.



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## FOREST RESTORATION & WILDFIRE MITIGATION

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Significant parts of our forested property are breathing easier thanks to our focus on a sustainable logging project in 2021. The forestry work with a sustainable logger from Creston has helped us to create a healthier forest and mitigate wildfire. Using small-scale Scandinavian equipment—which has much less impact on the landscape than the conventional equipment typically used in North America—the forest thinning mimics the natural fire cycle, creating natural breaks in the canopy that contributes to forest diversity and species preservation. The aim is to give the forest a reset and allow it to create the ecosystem it needs. The project offered a net-zero outcome through the sale of merchantable logs.

Additionally, an in-house committee developed Enhanced Fire Evacuation Planning emergency precautions to prepare for evacuation in case of wildfires in the vicinity.



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## LEARNING AND GROWING WITH OTHERS

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### Highlights include:

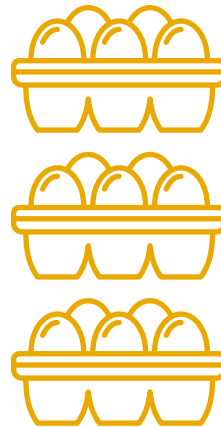
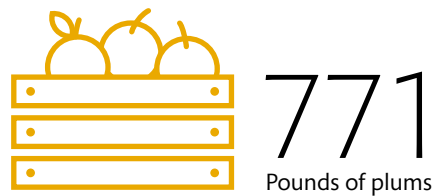
- The privilege of learning from Robin Louie, a member of the Yaqan Nukiy band (Ktunaxa Nation) by foraging materials from the land and beginning to construct together a traditional sturgeon nose canoe.
- Our treasured meeting and hosting Shelly Boyd, the cultural representative of the Sinixt nation.  
[Interview with Shelly Boyd](#)
- The opportunity to engage in an enlightening conversation about climate change forestry and mother trees with Dr. Suzanne Simard, bestselling author of *Finding the Mother Tree*.  
[Interview with Suzanne Simard](#)
- The honour of hosting Pahan Pte San Win, visionary and educator, in an online workshop where she reflected on the finding of the graves of children at the residential schools and what it means for her community. The proceeds of this workshop were donated to the Sundance of Women.  
[Pahan Pte San Win](#)



## FOOD SECURITY EFFORTS

Both the garden and the orchard flourished. The garden season was successfully extended with second plantings of radish, kale and first planting of Asian greens. Below are some highlights:

So our learning and teaching continue to grow here on the land that we recognize as a vital part of our spiritual home. The garden and orchard also are attracting skilled young farm managers and eager learners. [Sustainable Forestry Practices](#)



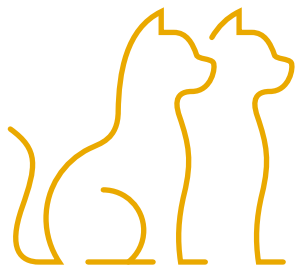
**The chicken coop** was upgraded and protected by an electric fence, to house laying hens who produced 7,461 eggs between April and September, with a market value of

**\$7,452**

—and that’s not including the savings on manure purchases.

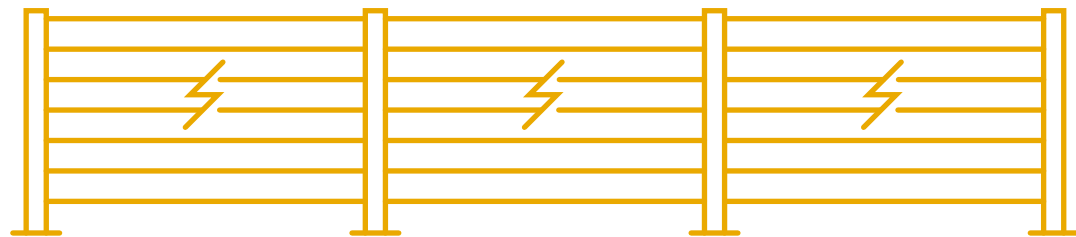


**Several new recipes** were added to the heritage cookbooks including—raspberry cordial, carrot orange marmalade, frozen zucchini pucks and kohlrabi pickles.



**The valuable addition** of two resident cats kept the mice population down in all areas, preventing damage to the trees and plants.

**A new electric fence was installed,** preventing access by bears and allowing the fruit to ripen fully before harvesting.





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# Solid Financial Footing

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2021 is Yasodhara Ashram's first year of substantial profit, which will be invested into much needed facilities upgrades over the next year. Revenue from our

## generous

donors, enhanced income from both on-site and online courses, and reduced operational expenses to match the smaller on-site population contributed to this good news.



**With the pandemic extending into another year, every Ashram department combed their budgets to spend only what was necessary. We called on our donors to continue to help the Ashram through this time of restrictions and limitations.**

The response from our worldwide community was once again a demonstration of how much the teachings and the Ashram mean to so many. The donation income for the calendar year was \$430,000 which included both loyal monthly donors and those who offered one-time donations. One of our donors also extended a very generous donation over a two-year period (2021-2022).

In addition, a growing number of people are letting us know that they have included the Ashram in their wills, helping secure the longevity of this sacred place.

Course income of \$461,000 also contributed greatly to the profit. We saw substantial growth in our online course revenue partially due to longer offerings. New in 2021 were our on-site Restorative Retreats that were well attended.

Profits from this year will support asset spends in 2022.

On the Administrative side, we forged forward this year with the intention to streamline and update our accounting system. We outsourced most of our bookkeeping functions and upgraded to a more efficient online financial system. Efficiencies continue to expand into 2022.

2021 saw the dissolution of the Friends of Radha Foundation (FRF), an associated Canadian charity established by Swami Radha in 1989, which donated its remaining funds to Yasodhara Ashram. The FRF served a wonderful purpose of holding centres located across Canada, which at various times were called Shambhala Houses, Radha Houses, Radha Centres and finally Yasodhara Yoga Centres. The Teachings continue to be offered by our valuable teachers, but all agreed that the structure of a separate charitable organization was no longer efficient or necessary. Thank you to all who contributed over these 32 years.

[See Financial Statements 2021](#)

We express heartfelt gratitude to all those who contributed to a successful year in so many ways.





# Moving Forward

—— Swami Lalitananda ——

The Ashram continues to live its essential purpose of passing along teachings, offering tools, teacher training and the deep commitment of initiations that links us to the gurus. This dedicated space demands care and presence, practice in the art of living together. The future means keeping on going and keeping the Ashram going.



# “Listen to the Ashram... it will tell you what it needs,” said Swami Radhananda. And we are listening...

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**The pandemic created an interruption that closed the Ashram for a year, and through our gentle re-opening in 2021, we discovered ways to offer less ambitiously—to do fewer but longer courses, to add the online layer, to invite in people to structure their own retreats while absorbing the atmosphere and being absorbed. Keeping alive that depth and spacious pace seems a good direction, expanding organically depending on capacity and opportunity.**

As the times change, we keep steering in the directions that open before us. We see shifting demographics, the need to prepare for aging in place or to take needed steps toward more care for older residents.

As we move forward we are extending to next generations, being flexible and finding out what will work for them at this point in their lives and at this time in the world—when housing prices have become prohibitive and many people feel dissociated from the land. Cooperation is key. Talking together, understanding personal needs and the needs of the Ashram, finding the meeting place and asking who is scheduled for Divine appointments.

In 2022, we are beginning to see that the Ashram is calling people home. Former youth program participants and YDC graduates now in their 30s and 40s are returning to work remotely part-time and to offer Karma Yoga part-time. We are hearing of their heartfelt connection and gratitude, their desire to give back.

In discussion as we move forward, the idea of cabins emerges for younger people; and independent units joined into one edifice for elders. Or some combination. Explorations are happening. We imagine people investing in their own accommodations, perhaps being here part of each year. We see possibilities for future enterprises and younger leadership.

If we can continue to generate profit as we did in 2021, we have potential to invest more in the directions that are opening before us.

As we learn more about inequity, racism and injustice, we are committed to helping dismantle systems that cause oppression and pain. We will keep learning through courses, consultations and through doing. Our intention is to invite diversity and to act on reconciliation. We are learning by asking, by coming to know individuals, by listening, by having our ignorance revealed and our kindness reflected back.



This Ashram is place-based on 115 acres of land with 22 buildings, multiple vehicles, equipment, technology. There is the practical need to update infrastructure—what is below and above ground, and to integrate our various strands of technology. There is an imperative to prepare quickly as the climate changes in ways that we have already experienced through surrounding wildfires, atmospheric rivers and heat domes. This means fixes like ventilation systems, high efficiency windows, doors and roofs, heating and cooling systems. Assessments are being gathered and action plans put in place.

The emotional distress that is surfacing from the pandemic and climate change inspires us to offer refuge. Our prayers, mantras and Light, vibrations of love, peace and healing will continue to emanate daily as we express our care and direct our energy. And we ask, how else can we give?

The future involves deepening, ripening, turning over with the desire to keep alive the teachings that help us evolve toward the luminosity of our own consciousness. The future involves inviting others in, welcoming them home.







# Yasodhara Ashram

YOGA RETREAT & STUDY CENTRE

527 Walker's Landing Road  
Kootenay Bay, British Columbia  
Canada V0B 1X0  
250-227-9224  
1-800-661-8711  
001-250-227-9224 (International)  
yasodhara.org

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## SINCE 1963

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We are a Canadian charity  
and active learning centre.

