



Karma Yoga Service & Study Program ORIENTATION

"Yoga is not one particular method. As soon as a person starts thinking 'I want to be a better person', that is the start of Yoga." – Baba Hari Dass



Welcome to the Salt Spring Centre of Yoga. We trust this guide will answer some of your questions about our operations and the KYSS program in order to make your visit both meaningful and harmonious. We are excited to have you here with us, and look forward to working with you!

Inspired by our teacher Baba Hari Dass (affectionately known as Babaji), a small group of people formed the Dharma Sara Satsang Society in 1974 and started a yoga centre in Vancouver. The first summer yoga retreat was offered in 1975 and has been held every year since then — 2010 will be our 36th retreat. Dharma Sara also started a clothing store, Jai, in Vancouver, which helped make mortgage payments for the Centre. Under Babaji's direction we bought 69 acres of agricultural land on Salt Spring Island in 1981. The run-down house and land have been enthusiastically improved by hundreds of volunteers, and now the Salt Spring Centre of Yoga is a thriving spiritual retreat centre with a large organic garden. We offer our own yoga-related programs and also rent the Centre facilities to other like-minded groups for their own retreats. We teach ashtanga yoga, the traditional eight-limbed system of yoga as taught by Babaji, and also the path of selfless service, karma yoga.

The Salt Spring Centre of Yoga is a non-profit charitable organization with a small number of residents and a large diverse community of individuals from all lifestyles, whose common aim is to attain peace through the practice of yoga and related disciplines. The day-to-day functioning of the Centre requires considerable organization, and it could not operate without the great help of many people. While some of these are paid because of the need for expertise and continuity (e.g. kitchen and garden managers, office staff) most offer their work in the spirit of karma yoga. There are several types of karma yogis; some have worked selflessly for decades at the Centre, others are seasonal and return in the spring for the start of the program year. Others like you come for a specific period of one or two months, though many apply to either stay on or return later for an

extended stay. Many come to regard the Centre as a home away from home. We offer the Karma Yoga Service and Study Program to those of all ages and backgrounds who are interested in deepening their understanding and practice of ashtanga yoga, contributing unselfishly to the ongoing activities of the Centre, and learning to live in a spiritual community. Our sincere wish is for you to take away with you an indelible imprint of the yogic way of life that will help bring a deep peace to you and others in your life.

We are also home to the Salt Spring Centre School (K-6) and the Chikitsa Shala Wellness Centre. Our school operates independently of the Centre, but under the umbrella of Dharma Sara Satsang Society. Our wellness centre's goal is to nurture, strengthen and support your journey in wellness care by offering a sanctuary where holistic touch enhances your own healing energies.

Background

Baba Hari Dass

"The best way to attain peace is through Karma Yoga. It serves two purposes. First it takes care of the world and second it creates non-attachment to the world." – Baba Hari Dass



Baba Hari Dass is a silent monk who has not spoken since 1952 and communicates by writing on a small chalkboard. This verbal silence is a process which gradually quiets the mind and eliminates unwanted thoughts. While this concept may be initially difficult for most of us to understand, the example of Baba Hari Dass is ample expression of the potential for peace that lies within each of us as the result of spiritual discipline and devotion to helping others.

Babaji is first and foremost a master yogi, having practiced the disciplines of yoga from childhood. In addition he is an accomplished author, builder, philosopher, sculptor, and proponent of Ayurveda (the ancient Indian system of health and healing). He is also conversant in several languages. Babaji gives his time unstintingly in service to

others and has been the inspiration for a variety of service projects.

In his presence it is evident that he has found a way to be at peace. His writings, his actions, and more importantly—his example—communicate the realization that this peace is available to each of us, if only we make the effort.

Selfless Service

"To serve others with no selfish motive is sacrifice. To give what others need with no strings attached is charity. To live a disciplined life is austerity. Sacrifice, charity and austerity together in action is called Karma Yoga." – Baba Hari Dass

The basic principles in practicing Selfless Service are (i) performing action with enthusiasm and concentration, but with no self-interest, and (ii) having no attachment to the fruit of one's actions. These are high ideals and Babaji makes it clear that virtually all of our actions contain some self-interest - our task is to recognize this and slowly remove it. Over time this results in selfless actions that have at their foundation a deep peace and joy that is unaffected by adversity. Karma

yogis who stay here for longer periods of time are guided by these principles, not as external rules, but through the understanding that they bring about the reduction of the ego, the “I-me-mine” concept, as the motivating force of all of our thoughts and actions. We have included in your orientation package a small booklet on Selfless Service written by Babaji. There will also be occasions for the discussion of this central practice of yoga.

General Guidelines & Rules

We ask that you familiarize yourself with our basic rules and guidelines, and that you support the community by co-operating with them. Our individual choices affect the whole community.

- This is a **drug-free** community. Since yoga practices encourage positive ways of altering our consciousness, the use of alcohol or drugs is not needed nor tolerated. Smoking is not allowed on the property and those in the residential KY program are expected to be non-smokers.
- Due to **fire hazard**, naked flames (e.g. candles) are not permitted in rooms, tents, or anywhere on the property, with the exception of Sunday Satsang. Incense is not permitted since it is an issue for people with allergies.
- **Dress Code:** Paid programs provide our livelihood, and we want to present a professional image to our program guests. Please be neat, clean and modest in your appearance. If you have been working in the garden and intend to go back to the garden after your meal, please eat on the side deck. If you are coming into the house after working in the garden, please make sure that you have washed your hands and feet and are wearing clean clothes
- We are a **vegetarian** community, so please do not bring meat, fish or eggs onto the property. Garlic and onions are not used in the Program Kitchen because they stimulate the mind, thereby hindering the yogic goal of stilling or quieting the mind during meditation.
- If you are or become involved in a romantic relationship, we ask that you be discreet in your conduct.
- **House Observances:** Please respect that the Program House and Garden House (and campground) quiet time is observed from 10:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. unless special ceremonies or programs dictate otherwise. If you wish to play music in your room during these times, please keep the volume low, remembering that the floors are not insulated to the upstairs. Please turn off the lights and make sure that all electrical heat is turned off when you leave a room.
- **Guests:** Requests for permission to have guests are to be directed to the karma yogi task coordinator. We ask that approval for guest visits be obtained prior to your guest's arrival. Guests are welcome to visit during the day; however, please arrange those visits on your days off. If guests are having meals at the Centre, they must be paid for. Guest rates for accommodation are two hours of karma yoga per day, for tenting (plus meals at the KY rate). For in-house accommodation includes \$10 per night, plus two hours of karma yoga per day (plus meals at the KY rate).

Should you wish your guest to stay for a meal, there will be a charge of \$5 for breakfast, \$10 for lunch and \$10 for dinner (for which you are responsible to pay in the office before the meal), and they will be asked to assist with clean-up. Overnight stays may be possible, and should be approved in advance by a KYSS Coordinator.

- **The sauna** is available for community use with at least one person who has been trained in its use, with a minimum of three people in the sauna. The sauna is not to be used during moderate

to high-risk fire season. Please clean up after yourself. As the sauna is a public place, please wear a bathing suit.

- **Work Requirements:** We require a minimum of 30 hours per week, including weekly check-in circles, community meeting, and yoga philosophy class. However, please do not feel restricted by the minimum of 30 hrs.

- **Scheduling:** A weekly schedule is created for each KYSS participant based on the individual's skills and the Centre's needs. This is always a juggling act and there may be times when you are assigned to more dish shifts than you would like or asked to clean more bathrooms than you enjoy. However, this is what is needed to run the Centre. It is also when the opportunity to maintain a positive outlook is the greatest! During your stay we will make sure you have some time in the garden and on the grounds, or helping to prepare meals whenever possible. Karma yogis are scheduled for 30 hours per week, including meetings.

"I had come to the Centre to experience living in community, living and working on the land and to explore what it really meant to be of selfless service...I enjoyed my time so much that I am back again this year."

- Daniel Shevchuk, 2008/09 KYSS Participant

- **Scheduling Policy:** If you wish to switch a shift, you must find someone appropriate to switch with (who has been oriented for the work). You then must confirm the switch with the karma yogi task coordinator, who will make the change on the schedule and initial it. In order to simplify the process, no one other than the karma yogi task coordinator is to write on the schedule.

- **Time Off:** It will not always be possible to have two days off in a row, and during most weekends we have an event scheduled, which we are relying on your help to facilitate. All hands must be on deck during this time. Once the schedule has been created and you wish to make changes, it will be up to you to find someone appropriate to switch with (who has been oriented for the work). You then must confirm the switch with the karma yogi tasks coordinator, who will make the change on the schedule and initial it. In order to simplify the process, no one other than the karma yogi task coordinator is to write on the schedule.

Community

"Be persistent in withdrawing your mind from the world, from anger, fear, hate, jealousy, attachment and pride. Remove malice from your heart. Be friendly to all. Establish love in your heart for everyone. Be selfless in your thoughts and actions." – Baba Hari Dass



What is the foundation upon which our community is built? Peace is cultivated by practicing the restraints of non-harming, truthfulness, non-exploitation, non-hoarding, and moderation in all aspects of one's life, and by developing the positive qualities of cleanliness, contentment, self-discipline, right-company, devotion and surrender to The Higher Self. It is these ideals which we try to live up to as we go about our daily lives and duties. The most important of these is SERVICE. In Sanskrit it is called "Karma Yoga," which means "Selfless Service – Union Through Action."

Classes: Everyone is encouraged to attend asana classes, as well as the Bhagavad Gita study class when not scheduled for work.

Satsang: Please feel free to join us for inspirational readings, devotional songs, and chanting on Sundays at 3:30 p.m. After Satsang on the first Sunday of almost every month (though not during the busy summer months), we hold a community meal and encourage you to attend.

"Integrating spiritual practice into daily life is a breeze when you regularly hear people singing kirtan and see people sitting in meditation."

- Kiva Bottero, 2008 KYSS Participant

Communication

While the endeavours of our community keep us all very busy, making time to communicate is essential to a harmonious community life. We would like you to feel comfortable accessing any of the following options we have in place to address your questions, concerns or issues, as well as ideas that arise.

Weekly Community Check-In: This is a time for the community to come together to share how everyone is doing overall and to discuss program needs and work projects. All KYSS and KY participants are expected to attend and are also welcome to bring a short reading to share as part of our group encouragement/enrichment. Check in circles will be just for KYSS participants one week, and then together with the rest of the staff and volunteers on alternating weeks.

Personal Check-Ins: You may arrange a personal check-in with one or more of the KYSS facilitators (Sharada and Indica). Occasionally more time is needed to communicate or talk than is available in the group sessions, or the matter may be of a more personal nature. We can be contacted by e-mail, telephone or written messages although depending on whom you wish to reach some means will be faster than others.

KYSS Coordinating Team

All KYSS coordinators are available to speak to you at any time. Please feel free to approach them with any questions or concerns. They are happy to support you in any way they can.

Sharada is the Centre's designated mediator and mentor. She lives on land and is frequently here during meal times, and when attending other meetings and classes throughout the week.

E-mail: sharada@saltspringcentre.com or KYSS@saltspringcentre.com

Home phone: 250.537.9596

Indica is the Office Manager, KYSS Co-coordinator and Marketing Coordinator for the Centre. She lives off site, and is typically in the office Monday to Thursdays, 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

E-mail: indica@saltspringcentre.com

Shankar is the Centre Director. He lives off site.

E-mail: shankar@saltspringcentre.com

Home phone: 250.653.4842

Margaret is the karma yogi task coordinator. She lives on site. She will generally have Tuesday and Thursdays off.

E-mail: Margaret@saltspringcentre.com

The mailboxes of all coordinators are located in the basement of the main house, just outside the office.

Department summary:



1. Kitchen

Please refer to the kitchen orientation document in this folder for a detailed overview of the kitchen department.

2. House Keeping

"Many hands make light work." While scheduled in housekeeping you will be sharing in many duties that range from simple daily cleaning tasks, to preparation and take down of program accommodations, as well as partaking in special projects. There will be times when you will work by yourself,

and times when you will work in a team. General duties include maintaining the cleanliness of our main building, the yurt, the garden house, Chikitsa Shala—and even the pond dome, garden dome and two camp grounds as the season permits. You will have a housekeeping orientation to familiarize yourselves with supplies and procedures, as well as signs to refer to. Our housekeeping manager, Kaliyani, is on site to answer questions as needed.

3. Garden

Our garden is a beautiful experiment in growing good food. We are growing diversified vegetable and flower crops organically on several acres, both for the Centre and for the Salt Spring community in general. General gardening tasks include seeding, planting, transplanting, and harvesting flowers and vegetables. Other gardening tasks include tilling, weeding, working with irrigation systems, fixing fencing, and painting.



Karma yogis will need work clothes. They can expect to work hard and get earthy! And be prepared for hot and cold weather, as well as sun and rain (e.g. bring rubber boots, raincoats, layers, sun hats, sunscreen and water bottles!). You will also need to let Sofya, our garden manager, know about any back or knee injuries, as well as allergies. Happy gardening!



4. Other tasks

While the kitchen, housekeeping and garden departments are our main areas, we often have a need for more general maintenance and landscaping duties available depending on the priorities of the Centre. Maintenance duties can include minor repairs of leaks, windows, machinery, water supply, as well as electrical work and lawn maintenance. Sometimes special projects require skills in carpentry, building, cabinetry, renovations, installation, lawn maintenance, automotive mechanics, finishing, plumbing and/or painting.

Some Practical Details

Mail: Our mailing address is 355 Blackburn Road, Salt Spring Island, BC, V8K 2B8. Incoming mail will be placed on the KY shelf in the basement, outside the office.

Laundry: KYSS laundry can be done before 9am and after 4pm. Soap is supplied. Please use the sign up sheet for KY laundry which is posted on the laundry room door. Program has first priority when in session and the day after. Please use the clothesline for drying your clothes whenever possible.

Phone use: The resident line is 250-537-2726 and is available for incoming and outgoing calls in the garden office. Please let your family and friends know that they can reach you at this number, and not through the office. You can use the resident line for long distance calls if you call collect or use a calling card. Messages are collected and posted in the phone room (located in the garden office).

“I worked with lots of joy, met such beautiful people, shared a peaceful time and many smiles with everyone...I loved being at the Centre!”

~ Akemi Takano, 2008 KYSS Participant

E-mail/Internet use: The computers in the basement are for your internet use. Please be sensitive to others' needs and limit individual use at peak times. If you have a laptop, you can access the internet through our wireless network.

Extension fees: If you have applied for and are accepted for an extension, please ensure your monthly fee is paid on time. The office staff will be happy to assist you, and a receipt will be issued upon request. A one-month extension is \$100. Every month extended thereafter is \$25 per month.

Chikitsa Shala Wellness Centre: When the “Treatments in Session” sign is in the window, this means that we should be quiet around that building. Re: please avoid weed whacking, mowing the lawn, etc. in the general vicinity.

Recycling: Residents are responsible for washing and separating materials for recycling at the recycling centre located in the kitchen and under the deck. Please observe the *Recycling* and *Garbage* signs. Items we recycle include: paper, glass, plastic (including bags), tetra packs (milk and juice), refundable bottles, cardboard, tins, and metal.

Compost: Residents are responsible for composting all food scraps into the kitchen compost, located in the kitchen. This compost bucket is to be emptied twice a day (after lunch and dinner), and taken out to the front field compost pile. (Follow the signs and/or ask the gardeners along the way for direction.)

Recreation: Residents can make use of the fields and courts at the school after school hours. There is a volleyball net which can be set up across from the Garden House. Blackburn Lake is close by although not accessible through our property (gain access by the highway). There are many hiking trails on and around the property.

Vehicles: Please drive very slowly when entering and exiting Centre property. During busy program times, please park your vehicle in one of the lower parking lots near the yurt or toward the school.

Bicycles: The bicycles on the property are not maintained on a regular basis. If you wish to use a bicycle, please do so at your own risk and use a helmet. If you are familiar with bicycle maintenance, please feel free to service the bikes.

Bring your own mat during the summer: Because our programming is extremely busy during the summer months, it would be a good idea to bring your own yoga mat if you have one for this time frame.

When you depart: Please note that once your term with us concludes, you are welcome to come back and visit us at the Centre. If you decide to stay for a meal it is \$5 for breakfast and \$10 for lunch/dinner. If you wish to stay over night, this must be pre-arranged with Indica.

General Kitchen Guidelines & Rules

Our kitchen functions as a community kitchen during the week and a program kitchen on weekends. This can be confusing as the rules change in each situation.



- **Anytime** you are working in the kitchen on food preparation or clean up, your hair must be tied back, hands washed in the sink room (please do not use the kitchen or back deck sinks for personal hygiene), aprons on, and inside or clean shoes worn.
- No one is permitted to use the oven or dish sterilizer until the operation of these has been fully explained. Sheets explaining procedures are posted in the kitchen.

- We do not use onions, garlic, eggs, meat, poultry or fish in our kitchen.
- During program time the house kitchen is not available for any personal use as it functions as a commercial/restaurant kitchen, nor can any food be eaten in the house kitchen during program time.
- ***When there is only enough seating for our guests, we ask all staff eat on the Satsang room floor, and when weather permits outside on the back deck or picnic tables.***
- Please show up for your shifts on time for both cooking and dishes. This helps everyone fulfill their jobs harmoniously. Please do not leave until your shift is done. (Note: ask the dish in-charge before you leave after a dish shift to ensure all tasks are complete.)
- Music in the kitchen should be at an acceptable volume and not too harsh. Everyone in the kitchen should be happy with the album being played. If you're on a dish shift, please do not continually stop doing your tasks to flip CDs. This helps the shift flow and finish on time
- When putting food away, please put things away in an organized fashion. For example, group like things together.
- It is important to be mindful in the kitchen at all times. If you don't know what this entails, please ask the kitchen manager for information. We want you to feel comfortable and prepared, and to be able to perform your duties with ease and knowledge.
- The kitchen is closed after dinner clean-up.

Community Meals & Kitchen Use:

Breakfast during non-program time is available until 9:00 a.m. from foods marked for that purpose. Everyone is responsible for their own subsequent clean-up, and one person is assigned each weekday to complete the clean up by 9:30 am. If you are attending a yoga class that finishes mid-morning we encourage you to eat early or to be mindful that the lunch prep shift begins at 10:00 a.m.

Lunches and dinners are prepared by the community and are usually served at 12:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. each weekday. A conch shell will be blown to signal when the meal is ready. We ask that everyone be prepared to come to eat as promptly as possible. If you are going to be away during a meal and would like a plate put aside for you, please let the cook know. Please note that cooking and dish shifts are assigned.

We prefer that you do not bring food to your room, unless you are not well. Two to three meals a day are available to Centre residents. You are welcome to keep some perishable items in the fridge during non-program time, if there is space and they are well marked with your name and date-in.

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The Centre provides a wonderful environment for personal and spiritual growth for individuals who work honestly and strive to be positive and helpful members of the community.

“The Centre holds a space to allow transformation to happen. It’s a wonderful, nurturing, peaceful place where I had a lot of fun and formed wonderful friendships in the process.” - Lauren Riley, 2008 KJSS Participant

“Living in a community with an attitude of selfless service alone can bring peace.” – Baba Hari Dass