



Songs from the Center of the Well **Swami Chetanananda's first book!**

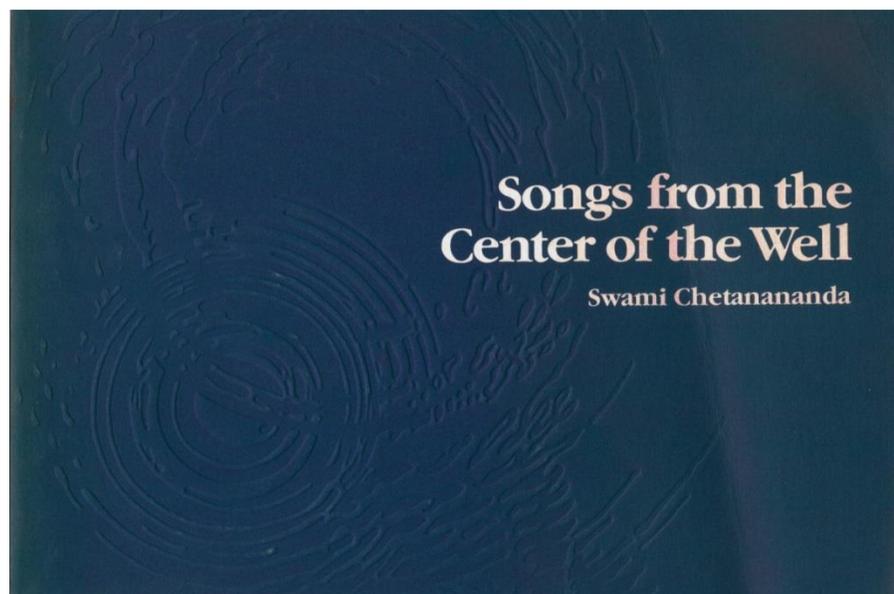
Our publishing division, Rudra Press, was launched in 1983 with the publication of Swamiji's first book of teachings to his students, *Songs from the Center of the Well*, excerpted from transcripts of the evening talks he gave after class each night.

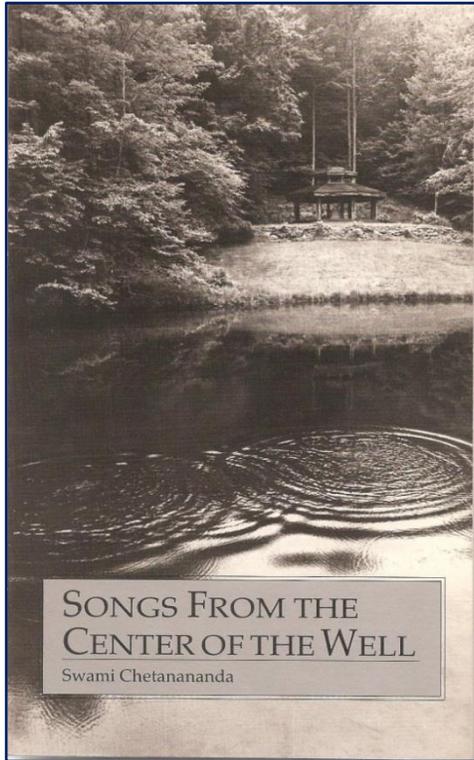
Editor Rachel Gaffney collected an array of pithy teachings and organized them loosely by topic—The Logic of Love, The Well, Wisdom, The Inner Friend, and The World. Each excerpt breathes on the page as a discrete poem in the tradition of the great mystical poets Rumi and Kabir. We recently asked for her recollections about creating the book, and here's what she had to say:

Of all the extraordinary things about Swamiji, what has touched me most is the love he has shown. A close second is the beauty and clarity with which he speaks. When I first heard him speak in 1980, I thought he was great—direct and funny and profound all at once. But I also thought he had a poetic cadence and delivery that I hadn't heard before in someone who wasn't reading a poem out loud. So when he asked me to edit some of his talks, poems is naturally what came out. That's why we choose the format of Songs. I had the great fortune just to slice up those already poetic passages into the wording you see in the book. To this day it stays with me as one of the more gratifying tasks I've ever been assigned.

The title of the book refers to the role of the teacher—one who knows the source, taps the fountainhead, and endlessly quenches the thirst of those who stop to drink.

The first edition had a beautiful embossed cover (showing ripples on the surface of water) and unconventional format to underscore its special quality. Even though this edition is no longer available, we thought you'd appreciate seeing what it looked like. (We're also looking for a clean copy to auction off at the summer Retreat. If you have one you can donate, please contact [Tom Fabrizio](#).)





The current edition, which is available through our web store, has a cover photograph of Rudi's shrine at Big Indian (where it was located in the late 1970s; today it's at the Portland ashram). A welcome addition to any library, it's a wonderful, easily read volume you can pick up and in a moment be inspired by even a single poem. And how wonderful to see the consistency of Swamiji's core teachings, even more than thirty years down the road.

Here's a sample poem to whet your appetite:

*Simple, pure situations become polluted
because we try to get some angle on them.
We try to grasp something about them.
There is nothing to grasp.
Life at its core is fundamentally simple, utterly uncomplicated.
It is only our tensions that pollute it.
Open your own heart
and you will see the purity in all things.*

This month ***Songs from the Center of the Well*** (regularly \$14.95) is available for just \$10. Click [here](#) for more details or to order.