



**TriYoga® Center of Philadelphia  
at Mind-Body Services**

**301 West Chester Pike, Suite 102  
Havertown, PA 19083  
[www.mindbodyservices.com](http://www.mindbodyservices.com)  
610-664-6446 x3**

**"SATSANGA, DIET, MEDITATIONS IN CHARNEL GROUNDS,  
AND FREEDOM FROM IGNORANCE"  
BY CHRISTINE (CITRINĪ) WARE, Ph.D., E-RYT**

As part of our third anniversary celebrations, we will have two wonderful opportunities to gather together to sustain ourselves through fresh, local, vegan food and social interaction. Here are some related contemplations.

**Satsanga**

*When two or more are gathered together for the benefit of upliftment,  
the light becomes brighter.*

*- Kaliji*

Kaliji (2003) has explained that the word satsanga, from truth (sat) and company (sanga), means "keeping company with those who seek truth" or "seeking company with the wise." In seeking the company of teachers and of a community of seekers, as well as the knowledge that comes from one's personal practice, we can work to improve ourselves and to bring light and health to the planet.

The potlucks are opportunities to connect with one another outside of yoga classes, to get to know one another better, and to support each other in our growth and yogic path.

## **Diet and food choices**

*This food is the gift of the whole universe — the Earth, the sky, and much hard work.  
May we eat in mindfulness so as to be worthy to receive it.  
May we transform our unskilled states of mind and learn to eat with moderation.  
May we take only foods that nourish us and prevent illness.  
We accept this food to realize the path of understanding and love.*

*- The Five Contemplation from Plum Village (Thich Nhat Hanh, 2000)*

There is good evidence that if we eat lower on the food chain (as in a vegan or vegetarian diet), if we eat locally-grown and produced food (that does not require preservatives or as long of a journey to transport the food to us), if we eat organic food, and if we eat less processed food, we and the planet are healthier. Kaliji (2011) has states that "pure food is to the body as positive thought is to the mind. Both forms of nourishment are the basis for a peaceful life." She's also said that "a light, nutritious diet is a must for real spiritual development."

In the upcoming potlucks, we have the opportunity to come together to eat fresh, vegan, home-cooked (and perhaps homegrown) food, thereby supporting our own and our planet's health.

## **Meditations in Charnel Grounds and Freedom from Ignorance**

*I am not I.  
I am this one  
walking beside me whom I do not see,  
whom at times I manage to visit,  
and whom at other times I forget;  
the one who remains silent while I talk,  
the one who forgives, sweet, when I hate,  
the one who takes a walk when I am indoors,  
the one who will remain standing when I die.*

*- Juan Ramon Jimenez (1881-1958)  
trans. Robert Bly*

The yogic and Buddhist traditions include tales of priests and wise men gathered and/or meditating in charnel or cremation grounds. The charnel ground is full of transpersonal significance, as it represents the death of misidentification, the death of ego or I-ness, and the end of attachment, craving, ignorance, aversion, and clinging to life/fear of death (Cope, 1999).

In the yogic tradition, the legend of the tandava recounts that Shiva visits such a group of wise men who continue to cling to beliefs about I, Me, and Mine. Since he has transcended the pair of opposites, Shiva confronts them with their ignorance, illusion, and false beliefs about death and impermanence. Through Shiva's dance, the world dissolves into light, challenging the way we ordinarily experience the world and revealing this experience to be a construct of consciousness. Shiva then restores the world out of nothing (Cope, 2006). Yogis identify four erroneous beliefs: the belief in the permanence of objects, the belief in the ultimate reality of the body, the belief that our state of suffering is really happiness, and the belief that our bodies, minds, and feelings comprise who and what we really are (Cope, 1999). In the yogic view, suffering has its roots in our misidentification with the material plane of existence, including the physical body, the mind, and our personality. Yoga practice is ultimately about returning and connecting with the ultimate, awake Self, beyond time and space (Cope, 1999).

Since the Friends Community Garden is within (and behind) the Old Haverford Friends Burial Ground, we have the unique opportunity to contemplate and examine these yogic views while being immersed in the experience of being both in a cemetery and surrounded by the life and freshness of homegrown produce.

### References

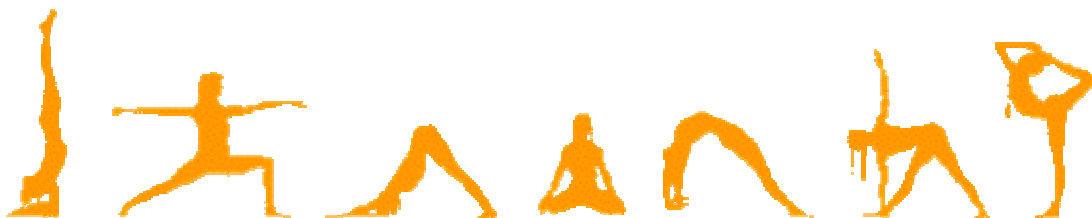
Cope, S. (1999). *Yoga and the Quest for the True Self*. New York: Bantam Books.

Cope, S. (2006). *The Wisdom of Yoga*. New York: Bantam Books.

Kali Ray (2003). *hOMe: Community on the Yoga Path*. Malibu, CA: Kali Ray TriYoga.

Kali Ray (2011). <http://www.triyoga.com/GardenDiet/gardendiet.php>

Thich Nhat Hanh (ed.) (2000). *The Plum Village Chanting and Recitation Book*. Berkeley: Parallax.



Visit our facebook page:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Havertown-PA/TriYoga-Center-of-Philadelphia/101063532486>