

THE LONG TERM PROCESS OF MEDITATION: A CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

A single case study research format was used to understand what happens when Western people are involved in meditation over a long period of time. This research examines what problems are faced in integrating meditation into a modern Western style of living. In this single case study of the long term process of meditation, the co-researcher was interviewed for his account of his twelve year experience of meditation. Additional data was obtained from friends and family members as well as from the co-researcher's lifeline.

The co-researcher's account of his involvement in meditation highlighted several problems. The problem of obsessively trying to become enlightened and spiritual materialism was illustrated by the co-researcher's experience. Other problems illuminated were the problems of isolation and withdrawal in relationship, developing psychological blind spots in spiritual practice and dealing with intense kundalini awakening phenomenon. The vulnerability of different paths of meditation to these problems was considered.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Meditation with its origins in ancient India has now surfaced in all of its variety of forms to enjoy tremendous popularity in 20th century Western culture. With the Western world's discovery of Zen, Yoga and other forms of meditation during the early part of the 20th century, the "beatnik Zen" of the 50's, the tuning into altered states of consciousness in the 60's, the "me" generation of the 70's, and the coming of the "New Age" movement in the 80's, meditation has secured a significant role in Western society. There is a mushrooming supply of gurus, meditation centers and ashrams, retreats and meditation workshops. Thousands of Westerners travel to India to spend time with their guru. Others spend their holidays at meditation camps where they meditate sixteen hours a day. Meditation bookstores are crowded with those seeking the most helpful meditation self-help book, or the latest words of their guru. In psychology, a whole new area called "Transpersonal Psychology" has emerged dealing with the integration of meditation and contemplative traditions into a Western psychology framework. Meditation has come to have a role in the lives of a significant amount of people in Western society.

With the explosion of popularity of meditation has come an accompanying abundance of psychological literature on the subject of meditation. There are thousands of volumes of anecdotal literature available from "Eastern Masters" on the benefits and intricacies of long term meditation. There is an endless supply of "how-to" meditate books written by Western psychologists and laypersons. Western scientific research has struggled to incorporate meditation research into its analysis with over 1,200 studies of meditation analyzing the physical and psychological effects of meditation being conducted in the last sixty years (Murphy and Donovan, 1988, p.1).

Psychological research has pointed out some favorable effects of meditation. Murphy and Donovan (1988), in a review of contemporary meditation research, concluded that the perceptual and cognitive abilities that seem to be enhanced by meditation correspond with the various capacities described in the Hindu-Buddhist traditions. Research indicates that meditation appears to increase empathy for others (Lesch, 1970; Walsh, 1978; Kornfield, 1979), is effective in anxiety reduction (Delmonte, 1985), and is an effective adjunct to psychotherapy (Delmonte and Kenny, 1987). Research based on subject reports of

meditators has highlighted qualities of equanimity, detachment, ineffability, and bliss (Kornfield, 1979; Murphy and Donovan, 1988; West, 1980). Studies on the effect of meditation on creativity and self-actualization, however, have produced mixed results (Murphy and Donovan, 1988; West, 1980).

A relatively ignored area of research has been the negative possible effects of meditation. Walsh and Roche (1979), Lazarus (1976), and Kennedy (1976) reported clinical cases where the indiscriminate use of meditation has contributed to psychotic episodes, severe depression, and schizophrenic breakdown. Carrington (1977) observed that extensive meditation may induce symptoms that range in severity from insomnia to psychotic manifestations with hallucinatory behavior. Maupin (1969) warned that the practice of meditation produces withdrawn, serene people who are not accessible to what is actually going on in their lives. Psychological research around the "kundalini awakening" meditation experience points out that this experience in most cases is very beneficial to individuals but in some cases can be very disturbing (Sannella, 1987).

Because of the potentially mixed interplay of positive and negative effects of meditation, models

incorporating the contemplative traditions are being proposed (Brown and Engler, 1986; Wilber, 1986). These models propose a spectrum of possible development and pathology. Because these models accept the theoretical framework of the contemplative traditions, a gaping hole in meditation research is left. What is missing in meditation research is an understanding of what happens when Western people are involved in meditation over a long period of time, an understanding of how meditation is integrated into a modern Western style of living.

By focussing on the changes in an individual's lived experience, this case study research attempts to highlight the problems, contradictions, and insights that a long term Western meditator can experience in order that some of the potential problems can be acknowledged and brought out in the open. The case study approach is being used as it is a sensitive approach to complex phenomenon (Yin, 1989). This research is conducted by selecting a co-researcher who has the experience of being involved in the long term process of meditation. The co-researcher's account of the experience is obtained. Additional data is obtained to illuminate the experience as it is lived. Friends and family members are contacted to provide

additional information. Other techniques such as a life-line are used to elicit additional information from the co-researcher.

This study begins with a review of theoretical models of the long term process of meditation. In comparing the different models of the long process of meditation, the issues illuminated by the life story of the case study will become apparent. This will lead to a discussion of certain key problems that have been encountered by our co-researcher in his long term process of meditation and the implications of these problems in terms of counselling.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, models of the long term process of meditation are examined. Three major models of this process are examined: Yoga, Zen, and Krishnamurti's "Choiceless Awareness." These models are examined because they represent a representative survey of a spectrum going from a very detailed, complicated, step by step model of the process of meditation all the way across to a perspective which argues that there are no methods, no steps, and no long term process of meditation. These models are also presented because the co-researcher in this study has had significant exposure to these models or similar variations in his meditation life story.

A fourth model of the long term process of meditation, Wilber's Spectrum of Consciousness, is also presented. This model represents a significant departure from the other three models in that this model attempts to merge the contemplative traditions with Western developmental thought in the form of a hierarchical developmental model. It is presented as it is the leading theory of transpersonal psychology's

effort to integrate spiritual fulfillment into a framework of human development. Washburn's dynamic-dialectical theory is also presented as it represents the most significant attack on Wilber's theory.

MODELS OF THE LONG TERM PROCESS OF MEDITATION

Patanjali's Yoga Sutras

There are many forms of yoga including physical yoga (hatha), devotional (bhakti), service or action (karma), philosophical yoga (jnani) and lastly what is called the royal path (raja yoga). Raja yoga represents a comprehensive and scientific system for developing awareness (Rama, Ballentine, Ajaya, 1976, p.2). Raja yoga, developed by Patanjali who wrote the Yoga Sutras over a thousand years ago, teaches the scientific psychology to control our mind and body, and to canalise all our bodily, mental, and spiritual powers towards achieving "samadhi" in ecstatic union with "Purusha, the Ultimate Reality." (Ellenjimittam, 1974, p.17). This path is known as the "eight-rung ladder" since it is a systematic eight-phase approach to mastery over all aspects of our functioning. It begins with habits and behavior, then proceeds to work on the body, and ends with mental functioning (Rama, Ballentine, Ajaya, 1976, p.2).

The purpose of the Yoga Sutras is to point beyond the levels, or layers, of psyche and cosmos for the essential nature of the human being, the "Self", which

is held to be an utterly transcendental reality (Feuerstein, 1989, p.176). This yoga philosophy provides the meditator with a map that allows him to traverse the different levels of existence until at the moment of liberation he leaves the orbit of nature altogether. The ideal of yoga is life in the eternal present in which one possesses a witness consciousness which is pure lucidity and spontaneity (Eliade, 1970). Feuerstein (1989) observed that the yogic path to self-realization has two main aspects. The first aspect is dispassion toward that which is not the self. The second aspect is the practice of identifying with the self through repeated meditative absorption and ecstasy.

Patanjali's system is set forth in his Yoga Sutas, a compilation of one hundred ninety-five aphorisms spread over four chapters. The first three of these sutras give the gist of the whole system, "I.1 Now the exposition of Yoga I.2 Yoga is the restriction of the whirls of consciousness I.3 Then the 'Seer' appears." (Feuerstein, 1989, p.171). Coster (1934) writes that these aphorisms explain that yoga is basically a matter of developing voluntary control and regulation of the thought processes. When this is accomplished, that consciousness which underlies the

thoughts becomes apparent. Ordinarily a person is lost in his or her own confused thought and feeling but when the personal consciousness becomes stilled, it is then possible for the embodied spirit to know itself as apart from the manifestations to which it is accustomed, and to become aware of its own nature.

Patanjali uses an eight step path for gaining self-mastery. The first four steps are restraint (yama), discipline (niyama), posture (asana), and breath control (pranayama). These four steps are the steps of hatha yoga (Rama, Ballentine, Ajaya, 1976). The first two steps, yama and niyama, help reduce unwholesome volition. The third step, asana, is essential for the immobilization of the body-mind. The fourth step, pranayama, involves energizing the body-mind through the practice of breath control. The practice of posture and breath control leads to a progressive desensitization to external stimuli. When consciousness is effectively sealed off from the environment, the fifth step, sense-withdrawal (pratyahana) is obtained. This step has been likened to a "tortoise contracting its limbs" (Feuerstein, 1989, p.191). On mastering the first five steps, a meditator is ready for the last three important steps of Patanjali's approach.

Concentration, the sixth step of the eightfold path, is a direct continuation of the process of sensory inhibition, the fifth step. In this step, the mind is held in a motionless state by the focussing of attention to a given point which may be a particular part of the body or an external object that is localized. This one-pointedness or focussed attention is a whole-body experience and has an extraordinary dimension of psychic depth (Feuerstein, 1989, p.192). The Yoga Sutras (I.30) lists nine obstacles that can arise in the attempt to pacify the inner world, including illness, doubt, and inattention. Yogic concentration is a high-energy state and the psychic energy mobilized can easily backfire on the unwary practitioner.

Prolonged and deepening concentration leads naturally to the state of meditative absorption, or "dhyana," the seventh step. Just as one-pointedness of attention is the mechanism of concentration, "one-flowingness" is the underlying process of meditation (Feuerstein, 1989). Clark (1983) characterized dhyana as a "method by which a person concentrates more and more upon less and less. The aim is to empty the mind while, paradoxically, remaining alert" (p.29). The purpose of yogic meditation is to intercept the flux of

ordinary mental activity as well as thought processes activated in conscious ecstasy and supraconscious ecstasy states (Feverstein, 1989).

The eighth step, the ecstatic state (samadhi) ensues when all the "whirls" of the waking consciousness are fully restricted through the practice of meditation. Patanjali elaborated a phenomenology of samadhi that was distilled from centuries of yogic experience. He distinguishes between two major species of samadhi, namely conscious ecstasy (samprajnata-samadhi) and supraconscious ecstasy (asamprajnata-samadhi) (Feuerstein, 1989). Conscious ecstasy has a variety of experiential states in which the ego-personality is partially transcended whereas supraconscious ecstasy coincides with temporary self-realization which if maintained over a long period of time can lead to ecstatic unification in which the liberated being abides in perfect aloneness (kaivalya), "a transmental state of pure presence and pure awareness" (Feuerstein, 1989, p.198). It is by conscious realization of the true relation between spirit, mind and external phenomenon that the yogi gains his goal of liberation (Coster, 1934, p.125). Here, all attachments are broken, even to the experience of bliss, and the highest pinnacle of pure

consciousness is reached (Rama, Ballentine, Ajaya, 1976, p.213).

Patanjali's Yoga Sutras are divided into four books. The first book deals with the subject of samadhi and the nature of the goal to be aimed at. The second book which refers to the eight-fold path, gives rather detailed directions intended for those who wish to attain the goal but require preliminary training. The third book deals with the last three steps of dharana, dhyana and samadhi. The term "samyanana" is used to denote the three collectively considered. The bulk of this chapter deals with the spiritual powers that can accrue to a yogi. The fourth book deals with liberation (kaivalya) (Coster, 1934).

Feuerstein (1989) made the observation that as opposed to the experience of ecstatic unity expressed in the Upanishadic tradition, the realization of all-embracing unity is more difficult to accommodate in Patanjali's dualistic framework. Patanjali seemed to recognize that there can be no ultimate salvation within nature and that true liberation means going beyond all of nature's dimensions including its transcendental laws to the realization of the transcendental self. Self-realization is considered to be awakening to one's essential being which abides

forever beyond the orbit of nature. Thus the ultimate goal for Patanjali is not an ecstatic union which overcomes duality but a process of self-realization of a transcendental self beyond nature.

A variation of classical yoga is kundalini yoga which focusses on a reserve of spiritual energy located at the base of the spine which when aroused travels up the spine through six centers or "chakras" reaching a seventh at the top of the head causing the meditator to feel a state of intense ecstasy and union with God (Goleman, 1988, p.78). A modern version of kundalini yoga is Siddha Yoga as taught by the late Swami Muktananda (Amma, 1969; Muktananda, 1970). While Muktananda used traditional yoga practices, he emphasized the guru-disciple relationship through a process called "shaktipat diksha" in which the guru initiates the devotee by look, touch, or word and transmits a direct, instantaneous transcendental experience to the devotee (Goleman, 1988, p.80).

The process of purification through "shaktipat" is said to take three to twelve years until the devotee attains a sense of "oneness with all-pervading Cosmic Intellect." Muktananda (1970) wrote that during "shaktipat" the meditator may experience a wide variety of involuntary reactions. These include powerful moods

of joy, dullness, or agitation; strange bodily postures, gestures, tremors or dancing poses; feelings of wonder or fright; a period of pain in all parts of the body; spontaneous deep meditation; visions of lights, deities, or celestial places accompanied by great joy and bliss; and an experiencing of a "divine light of indescribable lustre."

A disciple of Muktananda, Amma (1969) observed that the person who has his kundalini aroused and then stabilized in the topmost chakra, "has nothing to do and nothing to achieve" (p.11). In this state, one has become a "siddha", a name denoting the supernormal psychic persons which includes the capability of raising kundalini in others (Goleman, 1988, p.81).

Thousands of westerners became disciples of Swami Muktananda in the 1970's including the co-researcher of this case study.

Wilber (1986) pointed out that practitioners of both Raja Yoga and Siddha Yoga are susceptible to what he calls "pranic disorders" (p.122). The problems stem from a misdirection of kundalini energy in the early stages of its arousal, usually caused by improper visualization and concentration. Dramatic psychosomatic symptoms may develop, including barely controllable muscle spasms, violent headaches, and

breathing difficulties. The awakening of kundalini can also be psychological dynamite.

Zen

Zen is a development of the Mahayana branch of Buddhism, the "large vehicle" which holds that all men can attain salvation contrary to the Hinayana school which holds only a few are capable of it. The history of Zen begins about 520 A.D. when the 28th patriarch of the Buddha, Bodhidharma went to China from India. Out of a mixture of Mahayana Buddhism, and pre-existing Chinese Taoism, Zen was founded (Linssen, 1958). Later, Zen was transplanted to Japan which proved to be fertile ground for Zen with two schools of Zen being established, the Soto school and the Rinzai school. In the 20th century, Zen was almost brought single-handedly to the west by D.T. Suzuki (1949, 1958) who in his literary production touched on almost all the important aspects of Zen.

Zen is non-theistic, and has no dogma to accept. Ogata (1959) explained that Zen's attitude towards scriptures is that they are only a finger pointing to the moon. The following statement ascribed to Bodhidharma, the founder of Zen in China, is clear on

this point:

A special transmission outside the scriptures;
 No dependence upon words and letters;
 Direct pointing to the soul of man,
 Seeing into the nature and attainment of
 Buddhahood (p.13).

The third patriarch of Zen, Seng-Ts'an, left a poem entitled "Hsing-hsin-ming" which is thought to represent the essence of Zen. Below is a portion of the translation published by D.T. Suzuki (1960):

If an eye never falls asleep,
 All dreams will by themselves cease;
 If the mind retains its absoluteness,
 The ten thousand things are of one Suchness.
 When the deep mystery of one Suchness is fathomed,
 All of a sudden we forget the external
 entanglements:
 When the ten thousand things are viewed in their
 oneness,
 We return to the origin and remain what we ever
 have been.
 Forget the wherefore of things,
 And attain to a state beyond analogy....

The ultimate end of things where they cannot go

any further,

Is not bound by rules and measures:

In the Mind harmonious (with the Way) we have the
principle of identity.

In which we find all strivings quieted.

There is nothing left behind,

There is nothing retained,

All is void, lucid, and self-illuminating....

In the higher realms of True Suchness

There is neither 'other' nor 'self'.... (pp.79-
82)

In the journey to "the higher realms of True Suchness," Zen meditation or "zazen" starts with sitting meditation but attempts to broaden the focus to the meditator's whole range of life situations (Goleman, 1988, p.87). A wide variety of concentration techniques are employed from counting the breath, meditating while walking, and the use of "koans," a puzzle impervious to solution by reason. A more advanced method of "just sitting" is also used in which the meditator marshals a heightened state of awareness with no primary object. In this method, the meditator

just sits, keenly aware of whatever goes on in and around him or her, and is free from points of view or discriminatory thoughts. This watching can be carried into every action with total attention and clear awareness.

Suzuki (1958) warned that "Samadhi," a state of oneness in which things dissolve so they appear to the meditator in the aspect of "sameness" is only an intermediate stage on the path toward Zen's final realization. "When this state of great fixation is held as final, there will be no upturning, no outburst of satori, no penetration, no insight into reality, no severing the bonds of birth and death (p.135). Deep absorption is not enough. Zen teachers stress the need to open initial "satori" experiences through further meditation until it finally permeates the meditator's everyday existence. Suzuki (1949) described the final state of mind as one in which there is no need for further practice as all events of daily experience come into the meditator's awareness and are received with nonreaction. Blofeld (1962) wrote that this nonreaction does not mean trance-like dullness, but a brilliantly clear state of mind in which the details of every phenomenon are perceived, yet without evaluation or attachment. Thus the experienced practitioner does

not depend upon sitting in quietude on his cushion as states of consciousness at first attained only in the meditation hall gradually become continuous regardless of what other activities the meditator is engaged in.

In this final stage of "no mind," Goleman (1988) described how the clarity of satori manifests in all one's acts:

Here means and ends coalesce; the posture of mindfulness is built into the meditator's consciousness as full awareness devoid of self-consciousness. Having experienced the impermanence of all things, that "life is pain, that all forms are ku, empty or voidness, he ceases clinging to the phenomenal world yet continues to act" (pp.91-92).

Linssen (1958) wrote that it is in this awareness of the falseness of the "I-process" that the nature of things is revealed in its plenitude of riches. The person who realizes Satori "is at the heart of the beings and things of the whole Universe" (p.182).

Zen aims for that moment of instant enlightenment but recognizes progressive steps of awareness leading closer to that instant moment of enlightenment (Reps, 1957). In classical Chinese Zen Buddhism, there developed a story about the journey of Zen. In the

twelfth century, the Chinese master, Kukuan, drew "The Ten Bulls of Zen." This was the story of Zen played out in ten pictures with accompanying comments in verse and prose for each picture. The Bull in the story represents the true profound self (Dumoulin, 1979, p.155).

The story is about the seeker and the bull who are at first separate but become united in the course of the way (Hixon, 1978). The story starts out in the first picture with the seeker alone, lost in the vast jungle. In the second picture, he searches and catches sight of the tracks of the bull. These tracks are the wisdom teachings that all phenomena are the light of the original mind. In the third picture, the seeker gets his first glance of the bull. No longer is the answer thought to be somewhere out in the jungle. With fervent effort he catches the bull (fourth picture), and tames it (fifth picture) through zazen practice. By the sixth picture, the struggle is over and the seeker rides the bull home. The two have become one. In the seventh picture, the seeker forgets the bull and stands alone. He for the first time regards himself as the full expression of true nature. All spiritual practices and concepts are idle as the contemplative way has become undistinguishable from daily life. In

the eighth picture, both bull and self are forgotten, there is only the embracing nothingness of a circle. In the ninth picture, form reappears. Enlightenment is simply the blue lake and the green mountain. In the tenth and final picture, the enlightened one enters the marketplace with helping hands. He carries a wine gourd, a symbol of his ecstasy. The cheerful one who fully manifests enlightenment has come back to the marketplace. Rajneesh (1977) argues that this is an important contribution of Zen in that originally before the Zen pictures there were Taoist bulls but only eight. Zen's unique contribution in adding two pictures is the seeker is brought full circle back into the world to fully participate.

One tradition that uses a stage approach very similar to Patanjali's Yoga Sutras (Goleman, 1988) but whose goal of meditation is very similar to Zen meditation or zazen is the Insight Buddhist path as represented by the classic work of Buddhaghosa, the "Visiddhimagga," the Path of Purification" (Nanamoli, 1976). Like Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, the Visiddhimagga starts with preliminary stages of preparation, and then moves on to the path of concentration. The third stage begins with mindfulness (satipatthana), proceeds through insight (vipassana), and ends in nirvana

(Goleman, 1988).

Mindfulness entails breaking through stereotyped perception so that the meditator can witness the random units of mind stuff from which his reality is built. The practice of insight continues when mindfulness continues without a lag. In this phase, the meditator is attempting to know each moment to be impermanent, pointed, or without self. All mental phenomena is seen as limited and devoid of desirability. A consciousness begins to arise of the non-conditioned state, "nirvana", which is taken as the "signless, no-occurrence, no-formation" (Goleman, 1988, p.30).

In nirvana, desire, attachment, and self-interest are burned out. When the meditator's insight fully matures, all remaining fetters to liberation are overcome and the meditator is now an "arahant," an "awakened being." The arahant finds "by immediate knowledge that when one's heart was cleansed of the defilements of the ordinary ego-centered impurities and desires, nothing was left there to claim itself as ego-residuum" (D.T. Suzuki, 1958, p.293). Like in Zen, the Insight Buddhist meditator ends up with no "self" left.

Wilber (1986) has observed that meditators on the Zen and Vipassana Buddhist meditation paths may develop a problem which he calls "pseudo-duhka" (p.121). While

meditating on the very nature of consciousness in an early phase of awareness training, a meditator may come to a growing realization of the painful nature of manifest existence itself. This realization may become so overwhelming that the meditator goes sour on life. This may be a difficult problem as more meditation may be exactly what is not needed.

Zen in addition calls the mistaking of illuminations, raptures, ecstasies, and absorptions for final liberation as the "Zen sickness." Wilber (1986) pointed out that this is not a serious problem unless one is pursuing the ultimate level of consciousness.

Krishnamurti

The work of Jiddu Krishnamurti represents a much more radical approach to meditation and the quest for enlightenment. Born in India in 1895, he was adopted into the Theosophical Society by C.W. Leadbeater. He was trained by leaders of the Theosophical Society to be the new "World Teacher" or "New Messiah." While initially trying to fulfill his new emerging function, in August of 1929 he renounced this function, and stated that, "Trust is a pathless land, and you cannot approach it by any path whatsoever, by any religion, by

any sect...Truth, being limitless, unconditioned, unapproachable by any path whatsoever, cannot be organized" (Lutyens, 1975, p.272). Krishnamurti spent close to the next sixty years criss-crossing the earth giving talks to develop his "pathless" approach.

Krishnamurti suggested that the very structure of quest, which projects its own fulfillment into some distance time or state of consciousness further binds human nature (Hixon, 1978, p.17). The resolution to the problem of spiritual becoming and seeking for Krishnamurti is by choiceless awareness of "what is" and freeing oneself from "what should be", for "if you begin to be aware, choicelessly, that is without condemnation, without justification, without identification, which is extremely difficult, then self-knowledge becomes extremely creative" (Krishnamurti, 1947, p.45).

Self-knowledge to Krishnamurti is the only practical and effective approach to the problem of existence. This implies to Krishnamurti a rejection of the positive approaches to truth. The reliance on a guru is seen by Krishnamurti as a problem in itself. The guru-disciple relationship is very destructive as, "To follow another, no matter who it is, is to deny the understanding of yourself" (Krishnamurti, 1950, p.170),

"The only thing another can do is help you discern for yourself whether you are escaping from actuality into illusion" (Krishnamurti, 1935, p.57). In addition, Krishnamurti rejected the use of methods, systems and techniques as the result is only a projection of the mind towards the ideal (Shringy, 1976).

Krishnamurti (1958) saw the underlying problem as the whole process of self-improvement:

Essentially self-improvement is mediocrity. Self-improvement through virtue, through identification with capacity, through any form of positive or negative security, is a self-closing process, however wide...The mind can never be great, for what is great is immeasurable. The known is comparable, and all the activities of the known can only bring sorrow (p.241).

In Krishnamurti's view, the activity of self-improvement implies comparison which is an avoidance of "what is" while striving for "what should be."

Krishnamurti saw knowledge as a hindrance to direct experience as understanding is only possible with a silent mind. In having experience, a conditioned mind only strengthens its conditioning and thus perpetuates contradiction and misery. Sorrow, therefore in Krishnamurti's eyes, must not be overcome

through psychological escapes of one sort or another but it is only when the mind faces the fact of sorrow, of exclusiveness, of loneliness, without trying to escape it, or overcome it, that the true significance of sorrow, the ego, the whole structure of the "I" process is discovered and the cause of sorrow eliminated (Shringy, 1976, p.181). For Krishnamurti, the joy of meditation is in discovering the full significance of each thought as it arises.

Krishnamurti (1950) argued that the whole process of the long term process of meditation as an illusion as he saw freedom as the first step:

Freedom can never come through discipline though we think we must discipline ourselves in order to be free, the beginning determines the end, and if the mind is disciplined at the beginning it will be disciplined at the end; and therefore it will never be free. But we can understand the whole process of discipline, control, suppression, sublimation, substitution, then there will be freedom from the very beginning; for the means and the ends are one, they are not two separate processes, either politically or religiously (p.38).

To Krishnamurti, the means and the ends are the same.

An additional aspect of many people's spiritual endeavors is the process of renunciation in which one gives up the normal relationship to things, and to people in order to find God, happiness, and freedom. Krishnamurti (1936) felt that understanding cannot be acquired by imitating the outward forms of living a "saintly life" as he thought what is needed is the understanding of the significance of relationship:

You think by going away from actuality, from everyday existence, you are going to find truth. On the contrary you will find reality only through everyday life, through human contacts, through social relationships, and through the way of thought and life (p.45).

Thus, for Krishnamurti, self-knowledge and self-understanding only takes place in relationships as in relationships "through observing one's reactions, thoughts and motives, one can see, non-verbally, what we are" (Krishnamurti, 1973, p.110).

Krishnamurti pointed out a unique approach to silencing the mind. He argued that the mind can only modify its pattern of thought, it cannot act to awaken itself as any change sought by the mind is a change from what is. A person that understands that there is no method that silences thought awakens the

action of intelligence. The choiceless awareness of what is reveals the falsity of the duality of the thinker and thought, the process of craving, and identification, and the illusion of duality (Shringy, 1976).

In Krishnamurti's view, it is in choiceless awareness that the problem of existence is resolved. This approach is revolutionary in terms of the long term process of meditation in that the approach of "choiceless awareness" is not only the means but also the end, the first step and the last step. Krishnamurti is also unique in describing guru-disciple relationships and meditation techniques as barriers to meditation. Others have argued that Krishnamurti seems to advocate an end state only and is of very little help for someone trying to get there (Goleman, 1988).

Wilber's Spectrum of Consciousness

The developmental-stage approach is one of the most widely used tools in Western psychology as it has been fruitfully applied to psychosexual, cognitive, ego, moral, affective, object-relational, and linguistic lines of development (Wilber, Engler, Brown, 1986, p.5). These models in most cases claim to be

largely invariant, cross-cultural, and quasi-universal. The same type of developmental stage approach is exemplified in the world's contemplative and meditative disciplines (Brown and Engler, 1986). The Mahamudra from Tibetan Mahayana Buddhist tradition, the Visuddhimagga from the Pali Theravada Buddhist tradition, and the Yoga Sutras from Sanskrit Hindu tradition appear to be models that are sufficiently similar to suggest an underlying invariant sequence of stages, despite vast cultural and linguistic differences as well as styles of practice (Brown and Engler, 1986). The question remains what is the relationship between "conventional" and "contemplative" stage models. Aurobindo (n.d.) integrated these two ranges through his overall life cycle model which included the following stages: 1) Sensormotor; 2) Vital-emotional-sexual; 3) Will-mind; 4) Sense-mind; 5) Reasoning mind; 6) Higher mind; 7) Illumined mind; 8) Intuitive mind; 9) Overmind; 10) Supermind.

Wilber, Engler, Brown (1986) found that Aurobindo's first six stages seem similar to some of the stages investigated by conventional psychology, in particular Piaget (1977), Loevinger (1976), and Kohlberg (1981). Almost all conventional stage-models, however, stop around Aurobindo's stage 6 yet

Aurobindo's version gives a seventh account of this transition between the typical stages (1-6) and the transpersonal stages (7-10) (Wilber, Engler, Brown, 1986). Engler (1986) and Wilber (1986) have taken a similar perspective in that they point out that contemplative stages of development are not parallel to the normal, typical, or conventional stages of development but refer to higher stages altogether.

In looking at the contemplative stages of development, Brown (1986) discovered six stages of practice, two preliminary, two concentration, and two insight stages, these being: "I Preliminary Ethical Training; II Preliminary Mind/Body Training; III Concentration with Support; IV Concentration without Support; V Ordinary Insight Meditation; VI Extraordinary Mind and Enlightenment" (p.223). Each of the six stages was further broken down into three substages. Brown (1986) demonstrated how a Hindu, Theravada or Mahayana Buddhist meditator can progress through the different eighteen stages of meditation and yet have different experiences along the way because of the different perspectives taken. For example, "the Hindu sees the vicissitudes of mental events as all manifestations of the 'same stuff,' whereas the Buddhists see each definitely observable event in the

unfolding succession of mental events as being
'momentary'" (p.225).

Engler (1986) argued that meditation disciplines effect a transcendence of the normal separate-self sense, but the developmental prerequisite for this is a strong, mature, well-differentiated psyche and a well-integrated self-structure with a sense of cohesiveness, continuity, and identity. Wilber (1977, 1983, 1986) has attempted to develop an overall spectrum model of psychology which incorporates these two areas of human development. This model is developmental, structural, hierarchical, and systems oriented. It draws equally on Eastern and Western schools. The model is unique in that the spectrum of consciousness that it describes is also a spectrum of possible pathology. Wilber (1983) divided the principle psychic levels into pre-egoic, egoic, and transegoic levels. An account of the principle psychic levels and their corresponding basic structures is listed below:

WILBER'S HIERARCHICAL PSYCHE

Psychic LevelBasic Structures

TRANSEGOIC LEVELS

Ultimate Unity	Complete part-whole, individual-reality integration: unity of sacred and profane, samsara and nirvana.
Causal	Unitive consciousness; contemplation of unity of human and divine; radiant absorption in godhead.
Subtle	Paranormal psychic abilities; archetypal, visionary intuition; spontaneous devotional and altruistic feelings.

EGOIC LEVELS

Vision-Logic	Holistic-synthetic thinking; mind-body, thought-feeling integration; existential wholeness and authenticity.
Reflexive/Formal Mind	Formal operational (Piaget) or secondary process (Freud) cognition: abstract, analytical (inferential, hypothetical, etc.) thinking. Self-consciousness combined with ability to assume perspective of other.
Rule/Role Mind	Concrete operational thinking (Piaget); initial command of basic laws of the logic of classes and propositions. Ability to assume role

Psychic LevelBasic Structures

but not perspective of other.

Representational Mind

Highest level of preoperational thinking (Piaget); initial capability for language and concept formation.

PRE-EGOIC LEVELS

Phantasmic

Rudimentary imaginal cognition; the autosymbolic process.

Emotional-Sexual

Basic organismic dynamism (bioenergy, libido, prana) and its basic instinctual modes of expression.

Sensoriperceptual

Simple sensorimotor skills (as described by Piaget).

Physical

Basic physical substratum of organism (p.271).

Wilber has made a unique contribution by pointing out some of the unique problems of these transpersonal levels. For example, Wilber (1986) described how in the "transegoic" stage, possible psychic pathologies include unsought energies, psychosis and "spiritual channel" psychoneurosis, psychic inflation, structural imbalance due to faulty practice of spiritual technique, "dark night of the soul," and split-life goals. More advanced "transegoic" problems include

integration-identification failure, pseudo-nirvana, pseudo realization, an inability to accept the final death of the archetypal self, and a failure to integrate the manifest and the unmanifest realms.

Wilber (1986) has made the important observation that various treatment modalities or therapeutic interventions will be appropriate for each of the major levels of psychopathology. Meditation is contra-indicated for the early stages of development, but can be helpful in the later stages of development.

Washburn (1988) repudiated Wilber's structural-hierarchical paradigm of a step by step climb through ascending psychic levels as he sees triphasic development as proceeding by way of a dialectical interplay between two psychic poles, the ego and the Dynamic Ground:

- 1) The ego first emerges from the Ground and is still under the dominating influence of the power of the Ground (the pre-egoic or body-egoic stage);
- 2) The ego differentiates from the Ground and develops the structures and functions of the egoic pole, but only by disassociating itself from the Ground (the egoic or mental-egoic stage); and
- 3) The ego undergoes a regressive return to the Ground followed by a higher synthesis with the

Ground, which synthesis is at the same time a transcending integration of the two corresponding poles of the psyche along with their collective potentials, structures, and functions (transegoic stage) (p.10).

The two paradigms see ego-transcendence much differently. The structural-hierarchical approach sees this as a direct progression to a higher plane, whereas the dynamic-dialectical paradigm holds that ego transcendence involves a re-encounter with nonegoic potentials through a spiraling movement consisting of regression, restoration, and higher integration (Washburn, 1988). These approaches also see the ultimate end much differently in that the structural-hierarchical paradigm follows Buddhist thinking and sees the small self as an illusion that must be dispelled whereas the dynamic-dialectical approach prescribes a transcendence of the egoic self "that would reunite and 'alchemically' bond the egoic self with its missing, superior half" (Washburn, 1988, p.39). The choice between these two models is the goal of realizing the illusion of selfhood of the structural-hierarchical approach and the uniting of the two selves of the dynamic-dialectical approach.

CHAPTER III: APPROACH TO RESEARCH

The purpose of this research is to clarify some of the potential problems that can be encountered when an individual embarks on the long term process of meditation. Because of the complexity of this subject, the case study format has been chosen as it "allows an investigation to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real life events" (Yin, 1989, p.14).

Stake (1978) described important aspects of the case study which are relevant to this case study research. Firstly, the demands for typicality and representativeness yield to needs for assurance that the target case is properly described. Readers establish the basis for naturalistic generalization by recognizing essential similarities to cases of interest to them. Secondly, the case need not be a person or enterprise, it can be whatever bounded system is of interest. By giving great prominence to what is and what is not "the case" the boundaries are kept in focus. As a result what is happening and deemed important within those boundaries is vital and determines what the study is about. Thirdly, the best use for case studies appears to be for adding to existing experience and humanistic understanding.

Stake (1979) also recognized that the examination of a single case is advantageous as it allows the researcher to deal with complexity, idiosyncrasy, and richness of detail. Data can be collected from multiple sources to be analyzed inductively to find patterns of meaning.

Two principles in doing case studies as set out by Yin (1989) have been followed. Firstly, multiple sources of evidence which converge on the same set of facts have been used. This process of triangulation allows the findings of the case study to be more convincing and accurate as they are based on several different sources of information. Secondly, a case study data base has been kept which is distinct from the final case study report to help increase the reliability of the case study.

Colaizzi (1978) asserted that human experience is an essential and indispensable constituent of human psychological phenomena and that a phenomenologist must begin by contacting the phenomenon as people experience it. A similar attitude is taken here in this research in that the goal of this research is to understand the long term process of meditation as it is actually experienced. The focus is not on causal explanations but to "understandingly dwell" where objectivity is taken to be "fidelity to phenomena." "It is a refusal

to tell the phenomenon what it is, but a respectful listening to what the phenomenon speaks of itself" (Colaizzi, 1978, p.52). In addition, this research recognizes that experience is not merely an internal state but that "The person and his or her world co-constitute one another" (Valle and King, 1978, p.14). Thus, in this research, observations and interpretations of friends and family members are used to help understand the relationship implications of the co-researcher's experience.

As this case study covers events over time it uses a chronological structure in which the sequences of sections follow the early, middle, and late phases of a case history (Yin, 1989). In particular, a format from Cochran's (1986, 1985) dramaturgical approach is used in which the co-researcher's story is elicited in the form of a story with a beginning, middle, and end. The story format is used because of its power to illumine human reality (Cochran, 1986, 1985; Polkinghorne, 1988). Hardy's (1968) statement, "we dream in narrative, daydream in narrative, remember, anticipate, despair, believe, doubt, plan, revise, criticize, construct, gossip, learn, hate, and love by narrative" (p.5) is particularly relevant in understanding the long term process of meditation as this involves the

story of an individual trying to become "enlightened." Polkinghorne (1988) explained that "We achieve our personal identities and self concept through the use of the narrative configuration, and make our existence into a whole by understanding it as an expression of a single unfolding and developing story." In making our existence into a whole, the use of the narrative format allows the co-researcher to not only be a participant but also a spectator in searching more broadly and deeply for the meaning of events (Cochran, 1988). As "human existence takes place in and is figured by linguistic milieu, with narrative being the primary form through which humans construct the dimension of their life's meaningfulness and understand it as significant" (Polkinghorne, 1988, p.155), this research uses narrative to help understand the experience of the long term process of meditation.

SELECTION OF CO-RESEARCHER

The subject involved in this study is referred to as a co-researcher (Colaizzi, 1978; Mishler, 1986). This implies the subject and the researcher are working together in a search for the truth of the co-researcher's lived experience. In selecting the co-

researcher procedures from the existential-phenomenological approach to research were employed (Colaizzi, 1978). The co-researcher was selected according to two main criteria: 1) the person must have had the experience in question; and 2) the person must be able to articulate the experience.

Numerous people were referred to the researcher from his network of personal contacts. Only one of these had the target experience of being involved in meditation for at least ten years. A letter was sent to this person and was followed up by a phone call. This person agreed that he had the target experience of being involved in meditation for over ten years, he was able to articulate the experience, and he would like to participate in the research study.

PROCEDURE ADOPTED FROM THE DRAMATURGICAL METHOD

The following procedure was adopted from Cochran's (1986, 1985) dramaturgical method:

The co-researcher was requested to give an account of his experience of being involved in the long term process of meditation in the form of a story with a beginning, middle, and end. The beginning of the story was at the point that the co-researcher began to become

interested in meditation and committed himself to the long term process of meditation. The middle was the account of the experiences and turning points of the time spent committed to the long term process of meditation. The end was considered to be the present time.

CASE STUDY PROCEDURE

After the initial contact by letter and telephone, a meeting was held at C's home to explain the case study procedure, to obtain his consent to participate, and to begin the taped interview in which C gave an account of his long term process of meditation. Three more meetings took place, totalling approximately eight hours of interviewing. C was also asked to consider what other sources might be useful to illuminate his process such as journals, and observation of family members and long time friends.

C's story was elicited in dramaturgical form in which the phenomenological method for interviewing was used. As much as possible the researcher tried to "bracket" his own presuppositions about the phenomenon and allowed C to tell his own story. Empathic listening and paraphrasing were used to facilitate C in

telling his story with clarity and understanding. A special effort was made to avoid esoteric language by focussing on a description of the experience using ordinary English.

The tape was transcribed, deleting identifying information and initials were selected for the names of people mentioned in the account.

Two of C's family members and a long term friend were asked for their observations of C over the twelve year period that he had been involved in meditation to help highlight the problems C struggled with. They were asked for a written response to the following:

What are the most significant changes that you have noticed in C over the time that he has been meditating? This can include changes in personality, attitude, relating to people, or any other significant changes that you have observed. It would be helpful if you can give concrete examples to make your point more vivid, giving examples of situations which typify the changes in C's stance over the last twelve years that he has been meditating.

All three people replied with written accounts of their observations of C. Their replies have been included in the appendix.

To facilitate the understanding of C's story, a decision was made to use a lifeline. C was consulted and the lifeline graph with instructions was left with him to complete at his leisure. The instructions given to the co-researcher were the following:

Using the attached graph, draw a lifeline which depicts your experience over the last twelve years while meditating. Label the peaks, valleys, plateaus, obstacles, and breakthroughs.

This graph became a useful tool in highlighting major experiences, insights, realizations and turning points in C's story as well as organizing this material chronologically. A copy of C's lifeline is reproduced in the appendix.

The transcript, lifeline, and the questionnaires were then examined very closely to examine major areas of problems that C struggled with over his twelve year period of meditation.

A systematic analysis was conducted on all of the data collected. All statements significant to understanding problems encountered on the long term process of meditation were noted. These statements were then sorted into major clusters based on central themes. These problem areas were then described in terms of their theoretical implications in Chapter V.

CHAPTER IV: INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to summarize the co-researcher's story of his involvement in the long term process of meditation. This is done in the form of three acts to represent the beginning, middle, and end of C's story. The co-researcher's own words have been used where appropriate to highlight the co-researcher's experience. It is hoped that this summary will prove helpful in examining the major problems of the co-researcher's experience in Chapter V.

ACT I

Much like other adolescents, beginning at age twelve, C became very involved with exploring and experimenting with all kinds of new worlds that seemed to promise greater awareness, and altered states of consciousness. He tried pot, LSD, and mescaline. He read books on Zen, Yoga, and E.S.P., and he experimented with Hatha Yoga and hypnosis. Looking back, it surprises C that he became interested in spiritual matters at such an early age as there was no influence in his family to direct him toward a religious or spiritual life.

C remembers the years between when he was twelve and seventeen as being a time of feeling confused and insecure. Part of this time was spent at a private school which he had won a scholarship to go to. Near the end of this time, his family moved to Vancouver and C began to spend much of his time playing and performing.

C decided to leave home and high school at seventeen "with the urge to travel and see the world." This was a chance for C to further his exploration of new ways of being in the world. C spent his time wandering on the road, hitch hiking across North

America, "feeling great joy and learning about different ways of life."

During C's travels he had his first meditation experience, an experience of which C calls "the most ecstatic magical new experience" of his life. He was staying at a farm with what he calls "classical hippy type of commune people." He had picked up a book by J. Krishnamurti, the mystic philosopher, and was lazily reading it lying out in the field during a beautiful sunny California afternoon. He came across a passage in which Krishnamurti talked about sitting in a car with some other people going to a lecture and how these people were lost in their philosophical discussion while Krishnamurti was just sitting there being conscious of the experience of riding in the car. Krishnamurti noticed the contrast between the other people who were absorbed in their ideas versus his enjoyment of the present moment. C was seized with the thought that "I could live free in the present moment, become absorbed in the always vibrant new present moment, not being weighed down by the past and the future." C drifted off to sleep a few minutes later and when he woke up from his nap awhile later, he found himself in a new mental state. His mind was still with no mental activity. It felt like he had a great sense

of distance from his usual ego structure. C described his experience this way:

It was like a sense of spaciousness, stillness, emptiness and just experiencing sensations of my body, and there was a visual change: like the colors of everything I was seeing were very vivid: and also I had a sense of awareness of peripheral vision, much more. I was walking - it was as though I was inside a body and the body was just walking around, as though I was...like it was as though I was driving a car or something, what I felt in relation to my body. And there was just a still sense of getting up and movement and there was just this absorption in present moment phenomenon. I could feel my legs move, and I could feel also movements of my mind saying - some thought may come up and it would be very distant to come up and then pass away. And I remember going to do dishes - like doing dishes on the farm was like the most ecstatic magical new experience of my life. It was like every moment of it was filled with - well just freshness...I experienced a sense of joy, I experienced a sense of freedom, that the sense was all my life I'd somehow been bound to my mind and to my personality and

suddenly it was a sense of being blown free of that: and that I could live sort of ecstatic and spontaneously, unfettered by past worry and future worries. And it was a very exciting feeling and that state stayed with me for I don't know, maybe two or three days after that.

This experience nailed down one thing for C and that was that the nature of his own happiness or unhappiness had to do with his own mind. He intuitively sensed that being in the state of great freedom that he had just experienced was where he wanted to be.

Eventually, after a few days, C left the farm to hitch hike to New Orleans with a woman friend to visit the Mardi Gras. C began to experience the very ugly aspects of life. Truckers raped his companion while C lay locked in the back of their truck. To C the Mardi Gras festival "was like a big drunk" with drugs, alcohol and guns everywhere. After four or five days of this partying, C became extremely dissatisfied. C remembers that he "just became fundamentally dissatisfied with the nature of everything," that he had "some urge to experience happiness and fun through these activities" and that he "got a distaste for the shallow nature of all of this stuff." A sense of

renunciation set in for C in which he felt that he did not want this life anymore. He wanted to explore the Krishnamurti experience more. So, after four days he decided to leave town.

Because of his recent bad experience hitch hiking, C decided to catch a bus out of town. He met a woman K coming back from Central America on the bus and had a romantic fling with her. They both got off the bus around San Diego. C promised to look her up at Berkeley where she lived. In the meantime, C continued on his way hitch hiking up the coast taking his time. Eventually, C made his way up to Berkeley to rekindle his romantic relationship with K. Soon, C moved in with K and they lived together.

K had some experience in spiritual endeavors. She had been through the EST training and had done some meditation practice. She introduced C to the spiritual practice opportunities available at Berkeley. C was interested in pursuing meditation and yoga practice, so he joined a Hatha Yoga group right near the house. He also started to do a mantra to help him focus on the present moment as well as starting to do a technique which he had read about in one of Carlos Castenada's books of becoming aware of peripheral vision. Soon, C was experiencing that kind of freedom again which he

was looking for. The mantra repetition and the peripheral vision technique seemed to help him stay focussed in the present moment. With three or four weeks C reached "a high peak pitch of interest in the practice," so from the moment he first woke up in the morning "bang that desire or inclination to start really trying to be conscious was right there." He read Ram Dass's Be Here Now which nailed down for C the "magical nature" of his efforts to be in the moment. He read about Ram Dass's description of the enlightened state of his guru, and he wanted to experience that state. It was a time of excitement for C as he says "It was sort of like discovering the key to life all of a sudden, I'd got religion in other words." C wanted to work towards enlightenment. He could not possibly imagine ever getting involved in a regular life in the world.

During that summer, C and his girlfriend heard about a two day workshop in the beginning of September at an Ashram in Oakland. The advertised purpose of this workshop was to experience a Kundalini awakening. From C's readings, he knew that this could be a very interesting experience. He said to himself, "Wow!, That's what I want to do." He registered for the weekend workshop a month ahead of time. Then he really

intensified the pitch of his practice because he felt that this seminar was going to be a peak experience and he wanted to devote his heart and soul into everything it could be. He intensified his mantra practice, became completely celibate, did a lot of fasting and stopped smoking. He wanted to be "as good of a vessel for letting this experience happen" as he possibly could. By the time the workshop came he was ready.

The morning of the start of the workshop came and C and his girlfriend K went to the Muktananda centre in Oakland where the workshop was taking place. The workshop was put on by some senior Western monks of the Indian Siddha Yoga guru, Swami Muktananda. Three or four hundred people showed up to do the workshop. The routine consisted of chanting and meditation from nine in the morning until five in the afternoon. C immediately immersed himself in the meditation and chanting. As a central aspect of Siddha Yoga is the transmission of energy from the guru to the devotees, one of the senior monks' role was to act as a conduit of energy for the guru Muktananda who was not at the centre, but at his ashram in India. C noticed the senior monk circulating around "with much theatre" he calls it now, touching the meditators' heads with peacock feathers. C, with an air of

expectancy, meditated quietly awaiting his turn. After awhile, the monk came up to C and put his thumb between C's eyebrows, on what is known in Yoga as the "third eye" and then he bopped C several times on the head with the peacock feathers.

Nothing very much happened to C at first. He just felt himself drifting off. But then, suddenly, C switched to deep breathing. C describes what happened:

And then I broke spontaneously into deep breathing, that type of breathing started to take place spontaneously with no conscious control of my body. It was like involuntary movements were starting to happen. There was very strong breathing like that, and that went on for quite awhile. At the same time, there was this sharp pain at the base of my spine. I was with eyes closed now, and I was just kind of absorbed in this experience of the breathing. It was very powerful and it just kind of absorbed me. And I started to have other movements in my body like swaying, and movements of stretching the neck, like my neck would move around - and I always had kink in my neck for a number of years. And I started to have these spontaneous movements that appear to do with trying to loosen up that kink.

And for the next 45 minutes a variety of meditation phenomenon I experienced - strong shaking and shivering - I broke out in sweat - like really broke out in sweat. I started to experience a forcing of a sensation up the spine - like up the back - up my back...pressure and heat moving up what I would call the spine, the middle of the back there, and right up through my neck and into the head area. I experienced visual lights inside. I experienced a diffused sort of white light inside of my head...and other little lights within this diffused white light, like sparks of red or blue or things like this would arise. And this breathing continues to go on and the shaking of the body. I felt absorbed in the experience. It was just like it overtook me completely, and I certainly felt happy. Because it was fascinating what was happening - it was fascinating - I was fascinated by the energy phenomenon that was occurring. And then the meditation ended, and the lights go on, and I open my eyes, and I remember sort of like staggering to my feet because it was a very physical experience.

C had read a little about Kundalini phenomenon and he recognized this as probably Kundalini phenomenon. C

was very excited, "This really profound thing was happening to me, and my feeling was of great excitement and a corroboration of my belief system at that time." After this experience, he definitely believed in the existence of Kundalini or inner energy in the body. He felt very encouraged by this experience and wanted to experience it more.

After the first day of the workshop, people were invited to stay behind for evening chanting after dinner. C did that. C participated in the traditional Indian Hindu devotional chanting. As they were doing these psalms, C remembers "I felt a great opening of my heart, I felt a great sense of love, and also a great sense of primitiveness. It had to do with the drums, it had to do with never having experienced devotional singing like that before, and I remember being there and weeping in ecstasy." C recognized this as the start of a intense romantic phase of love for the guru Muktananda, "The opening of the heart experience and the chanting just kind of melted me or opened me to feeling like...it was like entering into a romantic love relationship with a saint or something like that in the Christian tradition or with Christ." C had just experienced a powerful kundalini awakening experience due to the grace of the guru acting as a channel for

divine energy and now C began to see Muktananda as a god. A powerful guru image was beginning to form in his mind.

During the workshop, C had been very impressed by the Muktananda monks in their orange robes, bald heads, happy demeanor, and total commitment to working on themselves. C desired to be like them. On the Monday morning after the workshop he abruptly gave his girlfriend the news. He was moving out to go live at the Muktananda center. Looking back on this now, C is ashamed at how insensitive he was to the needs of his girlfriend K and has since this time made amends to her for his insensitivity. But at the time, he was totally preoccupied with moving on in the spiritual path, so he simply bade his girlfriend goodbye.

ACT II

C was now a devotee of Muktananda, so he was welcomed to move into the Muktananda center. As C was "totally surrendered to being flexible" it did not take him long to fit into the ashram and be part of the spiritual group. C remembers the daily schedule was one "of arising at 4:30 or 5:00 in the morning for an hour of sitting meditation, and doing an hour and a half devotional chanting. And then the morning work period of an hour and a half or two hours for preparing food. And maybe another meditation before lunch; most of the afternoon free, and then dinner and more meditation chanting and then bed." C loved the life of being totally immersed in spiritual practice. He had more spiritual experiences. C had the experience of his whole field of vision bursting into sparkling light. A couple days later, while in meditation, C had the experience of falling way back from his senses to a place of deep still and calm. C likened this experience to that of "pratjahara," the withdrawal of senses in Patanjali's Yoga Sutras. C was feeling very positive about his spiritual progress as so many positive and exciting things had already happened.

C began to feel his deep internal emotional

connection with his guru, Muktananda, really begin to intensify. In connection with this guru, he had a very profound kundalini awakening experience and thus had cemented in his mind that Muktananda was a very powerful and enlightened being. This feeling of total devotion to the guru was encouraged by people at the center. It was emotionally a honeymoon phase for C, "kind of like mushy love." This experience of feeling very much in love with his guru felt very good to C as he felt it would be very beneficial to his spiritual future. C recalls:

What I'd got into was the view that through my intense feelings of love for this person and some surrender of my life to this person, my spiritual future would be grand. And I would experience wonderful states and after some time become enlightened.

This also led to an anxiety phase for C as he was really keyed up emotionally, fretful and anxious sometimes about whether he was experiencing the right stuff. The problem was for C as he recalls "the prescription includes not just technical stuff, say a particular way of meditating or concentrating, but also attitudes and feelings, like you know there is the promotion within this type of tradition to surrender to

the teachings and word of the guru." Feelings of doubt created tremendous conflict in C which he tried to deal with through what he now calls rationalization. "In my mind I would do a rationalization to reintroduce feelings of faith in my life, reflecting upon the meditation experiences, the energy phenomenon of truth experiences that I'd had, and by reflecting in this way I would support my faith, and eradicate doubt." C sees now that his whole mindset was in a "good/bad" dichotomy in that he was stuck in evaluating his thoughts in terms of good and bad for the path that he was on. It would be many years before C could pull himself out of this mindset.

Over the course of the next month at the center, C continued to experience new meditation developments such as being thrown into automatic body postures while meditating as well as occasionally bursting into devotional songs. C was treated very supportively by the people at the centre as he recalls:

Some of the people living at the ashram seeing some of these phenomenon happening to me thought this must be really wonderful, and so they thought it was great: they thought my sense of starry-eyed idealism was cute. And I think they could also sense my youth or naivete about things and

perhaps they were somewhat patronizing, maybe not quite the right word, but as one would treat a young child. And having these experiences they would treat me with gentleness and kindness and perhaps they would think I was spacey.

Not everybody, however, shared the same enthusiasm for the developments in C's life. C ran out of money so he wrote a letter to his mom telling her about all of these wonderful experiences he was having and all of these profound religious spiritual things he was trying to see. He asked her to send some money so he could stay down there. She wrote back enclosing a one-way bus ticket back to Vancouver. C discounted his mom's reaction as being that of someone not "plugged into the truth" but nevertheless because he had run out of money, he took the bus back up north to Vancouver.

The growing split between C's new emerging world and his former life was exemplified by C's actions when he got back home. C remembers:

We go back to the house, and one of the first things I did was I brought out a photograph of my guru's feet, which is considered very good in India - the guru's feet, top notch, and devotion to the guru's feet, top of the line. So with this picture of my guru's feet and with great love and

affection - the first thing I do is take it out and I show it to my mother and I tell her how wonderful this is.

C did not stop there. He dropped his old friends like a "ton of bricks" so he could devote himself to fulltime spiritual practice. He maintained a similar schedule to the one at the center, up at 4 o'clock in the morning, chanting and meditation, work around the house and then more chanting and meditation.

C remembers how independent and self-confident to the point of arrogance he was as he quietly worked away at his spiritual practice in his mother's house. "You could plunk me in the middle of the North Pole and I would become a beacon of spiritual radiance. To everything around me I had great self-confidence and arrogance about my own abilities."

After a month, it became clear to C that it was time to get a job and start making some money. C went out and got a job as clerk at a record store. His days became a combination of working at the record store and continuing his spiritual practice. His social life consisted of twice a week social gatherings at a local Muktananda center where followers meditated, chanted, and shared stories about their guru.

This pattern continued until March of the

following year when C decided he needed to go all the way and go to India and meet Muktananda at his ashram. C recalls how excited he was to actually arrive at Muktananda's ashram and meet Muktananda:

We go inside and after a few hallways and whatnot one enters upon this big courtyard, an open courtyard, with many mango trees and marble floors and up in the front is like a throne type of thing where the guru Muktananda sits. And people go up and bow to him and he'll hit them with a band of peacock feathers, and so he's sitting there and I remember idealistically my first glance at him. I remember noting, wow my first look at the master, the profound moment. And we all line up and go and bow to him, and I did that too. And I was feeling, now,...a feeling of tremendous awe, in relation to him. He wasn't a human being. In my mind, I'd set him up to be an extraordinary human being, and so I couldn't relate to him...I couldn't relate to him in a natural human way. It was like a god-figure. He was like a pedestal in my mind and um...ah we exchanged glances when I first went up to bow to him, and he smiled...and I thought that was a good man.

C could fulfill his complete fantasy of "being

like a cave-yogi" as the ashram was completely supportive of spending one's whole life in spiritual practice. The whole day was taken up with group chanting, meditation, work periods and sitting with the guru. C loved to sit close to Muktananda during Darshan period and feel the influence of his guru's energy:

I would experience really profound ecstasy states.

I would get very, very high, and that meant being extremely still of mind, feeling feelings of great love and ecstasy, and feelings like there were no problems. So for example, if I had any confusion or problem being physically close to him, there was a sense of that just melting away...a feeling of deep peace and profound joy.

This energy effect of Muktananda reassured C about the powerful enlightenment nature of Muktananda.

At the same time, however, C struggled with the ramifications of the overwhelming effect of thousands of disciples wanting to be physically close to Muktananda. The party atmosphere of Guru day in which between five and ten thousand people crowded around Muktananda to celebrate, hearkened back to C's feelings of being in New Orleans at the Mardi Gras. It seemed clear to C what was important was not the workshop or

celebration of Muktananda, but the affirmation of his own divinity, "Just as Muktananda is God, so am I." C began to recognize a glaring contradiction:

On the one hand, the guru Muktananda would actually encourage that philosophical position in his talks sometimes...about that the point of spiritual practice was to realize one's own divinity, and not just be hanging around with a guru. And yet the support of the environment and the encouragement from the whole socialization process was quite different. All of the devotees of the guru and the way the whole structure was set up, was really encouraging like being with the guru, and really just getting into like a personality worship type of thing with the guru.

C was also disturbed by seeing a Kirlian photograph of Muktananda's feet which was not the white color of a fully enlightened spiritual master, but was an intense blue color. This disturbed C deeply over a period of three to four days until once again being physically close to Muktananda washed away his doubts. This time Muktananda actually called C to come close to him, and Muktananda held C's hand and looked into his eyes. C found "to look into his eyes was kind of like looking into a galaxy, it was bottomless." C found

this a very touching moment. He was struck by how Muktananda seemed to be able to respond to his confused state, and just be with him for thirty seconds or so. Later that same day, while reading in the library, C came across a passage that said enlightened beings while alive have to operate from the sixth chakra and that seemed to C a logical explanation of Muktananda's blue feet.

C stayed at the ashram for three and one half months before he ran out of money. C felt he had to do something with his life. He asked Muktananda whether he should get a job or go to school. Muktananda, through a translator, recommended school. Having received this "direct direction" from his guru, C came back to Vancouver in August with the goal of going to university to study computing science.

C was accepted into SFU to study computing science in the fall. He began a period of combining his studies with meditation and chanting practice before and after school. C experienced seeing a beautiful electric blue dot in meditation at the time and felt this was a positive signpost of progress as his guru had written about the importance of this blue dot on the path to enlightenment.

C's social life, once again consisted of going to

the local Vancouver Muktananda meditation center. In addition to this, C presented a few seminars on meditation practice up at SFU. C presented these seminars "with a great sense of idealism that it would be a wonderful thing for people to experience meditation but it did not go far."

After three semesters, C went to work for a co-op term as a programmer. He moved into a house with two other people from the tradition of Siddha. C found his devotional chanting practice seemed to cause a great softening in his central chest area. The chanting practice appeared to be bearing fruit that whenever he chanted he would have a quick opening into the experience of the softening of the heart and the experience of love. C experienced an additional related psychological insight during this time. One of his friends made the comment to C that C's pattern of fighting with the mind was self-defeating as when you fight with your mind its very nature is to rebel in the opposite way. C was struck just how this pattern of fighting with the mind was so "self-defeating" and he eased off on beating his own mind with the "stick of yoga."

After a couple of months, a group of people decided that they wanted to open up a meditation center

right in Kitsilano. C became involved in running this meditation center. At the center, C began to use his Sanskrit name that he had gotten in India instead of his regular name. He hoped that the people who came through the meditation center would experience the intensity in which he was living his life and his relationships. Looking back, C feels that he was "just unconsciously manifesting behaviours of identification and pride and conceit and taking on the role of being a great yogi."

C stayed at the house for a year and a half, alternating semesters of school and work. The focus of his life, however, was his yoga practice, and wrestling with the non-spirituality of his sexuality.

Muktananda, in his writings, had pointed out the inappropriateness of sexual behavior and how much better it is for the yogi to be celibate. C wanted to remove any hindrances to the experiences of high states of spiritual consciousness and his sexuality appeared to be a big obstacle. In coping with this, C developed an aversion to women just to avoid this whole problem. Women became "like fire, something you don't touch."

C, nevertheless to his dismay, experienced sexual desire and masturbated. He had a hard time figuring out what to do. Eventually, C decided that he would

allow himself to masturbate once a month, and that would be it! C found that after dealing with sexuality in this way for six months, he still was uneasy. He really wanted this barrier to his spiritual progress out of his life altogether.

After much thought, C decided that the only solution was to take a vow of lifelong celibacy. He decided to write a letter to his guru informing him of his decision. This turned out to be a moment of comic proportion. C used the mainframe computer at work to write his devotional letter to his guru. The letter printed out in the printing room. When C went to pick it up, there was a group of people around the printout paper "killing themselves laughing," calling people over, "hey look at this." C experienced overwhelming embarrassment. He went home that night and shared his embarrassment with his house-mates. He went ahead and mailed the letter off to his teacher. A month later he received a letter of acknowledgement from his guru.

Even with this vow, however, C could feel his longing for a relationship. There was a woman who was very interested in Siddha yoga practice who spent a lot of time at the center. C got to know this woman quite well. C remembers driving her back to her house from the meditation center and visiting with her at her

house and feeling "a great sense of poignancy or longing for that kind of relationship, and yet being very confused about it all."

Nevertheless, C "soon was itching" to go back to India. He had saved up his money to allow him to stay for a long time. C remembers with regret an incident that happened while he was leaving for India. His mom was upset with his plans to go away for a long time as she didn't know when she would see him again. While driving in the car out to the airport, they were talking about the needs of people. C's mother said, "Well, I feel like I need you in my life and you need me." C declared, "No, I don't need anybody and I certainly don't need you." These were harsh words C spoke to his mother and C feels very uncomfortable about it now.

C deliberately went to India even though Muktananda was in America. In this way, he avoided the personality worship, the people, and the politics. At the ashram in India there were only 10 to 15 westerners. C shaved his head, wore a cloth around his waist, and went Indian, playing the role of the simple but serious yogi. C's days got back into a routine of meditation, chanting, and work. C found these times a "very sweet, very peaceful existence."

One morning just before lunch, C had a powerful meditation experience that he always will remember. C recalls:

In this stillness and like just absorbed in the sense of amness, the sweetest bubbling ecstasy started to arrive. I'd experienced joy in meditation before, meditative joy. But this was an order of magnitude greater. My heart was like bubbling with ecstasy and ah, I was just feeling like waves of sweet joy ecstasy - light and flowing freely and just flowing out of me. I remember having to breathe deeply...just to be with the existence of this sweet joy...and having trouble keeping from bursting out in laughter, just in laughter and laughter.

To C it felt that he had touched the core of divine ecstasy. He stayed absorbed in this state for about a hour. This experience was the "deepest most profound love, joy, peace" C had ever experienced in his whole life. He felt that this experience had shown him that our true nature is "fundamentally extraordinarily divine and beautiful." For C, it was this love and joy and not the development of insight and wisdom that motivated him to keep meditating.

Despite this experience, C had some meditation

problems to cope with. He began to experience a lot of pain in his buttocks while doing sitting practice.

After a number of months the pain was so bad that C could no longer sit in proper full lotus posture. C had to give up most of the time devoted to the sitting form of spiritual practice. This was quite a shock to C as his whole life was a drive towards enlightenment and this seemed to C to be contingent upon being able to sit in the full lotus posture.

C began to feel alienated from the others in the ashram who could sit more properly. Around this time, Muktananda arrived with a "circus of a thousand people." C began to have a cynical sarcastic bent to his humor, a sense of being an old-timer. He was amused by the thousands of naive young westerners in the ashram who reminded him of himself 3 or 4 years ago. In addition, he began to study teachers of other traditions, whose focus was not on the guru devotion path but upon mindfulness of the sense that "I am." Rather than cultivating mind states associated with mantra repetition C was now feeling closer to the practice of moment to moment mindfulness.

Sannyasin positions became open at the ashram. C decided to apply despite all of his doubts. All candidates were to be interviewed by senior sannyasins.

At his interview, C was shocked how nervous he was. The interview was a disaster! His anxiety and nervousness were apparent signs to the swamis that he was not ready.

C found the rejection of his life-long dream of becoming a monk very hard. A couple of weeks later, however, while walking around during his early morning security work, an important realization hit home. To C it seemed that he had been very hard and very rigid with himself for so many years in driving himself to become a monk and in living a very hard isolated yoga life. In this mind set, it seemed clear to C that he was rejecting people, rejecting facing aspects of his personality and excluding himself from intimate relationships in which he would have to give up and expose himself. His work towards the divine was coming out of a sense of hardness and toughness. C simply saw that "the path was not a path of hardness, but a path of softness." C cried deeply. C remembers how, "There was a sense of emotional relief and a sense of great lightness." Before long, C found a new sense of sensitivity and softness in being with people, an interest in kinship and friendship and a recognition of the community of man.

Very shortly after that, C decided it was time to

re-enter the world, leave the ashram life and become "like a regular householder." It seemed like it was time for a new phase in C's life. He would become married, have a regular job, and buy a car.

It didn't take long for C to fall in love with a woman. In fact, he was still at the ashram. During chanting, C played the drum and a lovely Western woman J, dressed in a beautiful silk sari, would play the harmonium. Thoughts of intense love for this woman filled C's mind. J was six years older than C and was longing for a relationship with someone who was really into Siddha yoga like her. C expressed his romantic love for J which captured her heart. They entered into a covert romantic relationship at the ashram, going for long walks together.

At the same time, C became very sick with stomach pains so this accelerated his plans to leave. C flew back to Vancouver, and waited for the arrival of his beloved.

J came in a couple of months and it was as C recalls "like Romeo and Juliet." C broke his celibacy vow in getting involved sexually with J. It was not long, however, before C was confronted with intense feelings of jealousy about the time J spent not being attentive to him but to the Siddha Yoga organization.

This really irritated C because he had started to see a lot of corruption within the Siddha Yoga organization.

C's feelings about the corruption of the organization were heightened by a scandal that had broken out in the ashram shortly after C left India. The guru, Muktananda, was seen by one of the night security guards making love to a woman. Muktananda had taken a vow of lifelong celibacy, and spent his time preaching about celibacy so this was quite a shock to the people of the ashram. C heard from sources that Muktananda was most likely involved sexually for 5 to 10 years with a whole variety of women.

This new information cut to the core of C's idealism. Even though he had developed a cynicism for the movement, he still had a great reverence for Muktananda. But now C had found out, "the guru, the world's greatest divine leader, ...lifelong celibate, master of the universe" was having sex with the women sannyasins. C remembers it was like finding out, "Santa Claus doesn't exist!" C tried to rationalize it all, saying his guru was beyond good and evil, or that it was tantra yoga. But to him it all seemed like trying to deny plain facts, like the "fact that the emperor had no clothes." Dealing with the revelations about his guru was not a simple thing to resolve as C

could not deny the fact that Muktananda was extraordinary as he "exuded an extraordinary subtle power from which one would feel great ecstasy, joy and peace." This was a paradox for C. Muktananda was an extraordinary being yet he was involved in all of this activity.

Back in Vancouver, J & C quickly got married. C returned to SFU to computer science but only lasted one semester because he was so sick to the stomach from a "bug" picked up in India that he could not carry on. J went to work as a travel agent. Because J wanted to still be involved with the Siddha Yoga movement, they lived at the local meditation center.

Spiritually, C was now floating in outer space. His whole structure had evaporated. The old belief system had been destroyed but it had not been replaced by a new one. C missed the sense of inner safety and security that his previous belief system had given him. Yet, he couldn't go back and he was alone as his wife was still very connected to the Siddha Yoga organization.

After a year and a half, the local center was closed down on orders from Muktananda's successors who were now running things as Muktananda had died. J and C moved into a house of their own. C decided to go to

B.C.I.T. to get his diploma in computer science. He dropped all connections with Siddha Yoga. The spiritual conflict between his wife and him, however, was deepening. It spilled over into other areas so they gradually were living separate lives while still clinging to the security of being together and their sexual relationship. Some part of C was casting about for some other spiritual path to get hooked into.

C graduated from B.C.I.T. with top marks, and got a job right away. He wanted to save money and eventually buy a home and raise a family but found pursuing these goals hopeless as he was living with a woman who wanted to spend her money on going to be with her guru. Over the next three years C worked as an assistant analyst, had no like minded spiritual friends except M, a friend in Victoria and continued to be involved in a very tenuous relationship with his wife, based on a lack of mutually shared goals.

Two years after being in this cycle, C decided that he would try to surrender, be supportive to his wife and get involved in the Siddha Yoga organization. So that summer, C decided to go with his wife to New York for a couple of weeks to be with the new guru. In New York, at the center with a couple of thousand people, C found the whole unquestioning mindset and

personality worship very distasteful. After three or four days, C, feeling that he could not take it anymore, decided to leave the ashram. After telling his wife that he was leaving, C rode a couple of miles on a bus, but "a profound sense of sadness and confusion" overwhelmed him. These feelings became so strong that C decided to get off the bus and go back to the ashram. He got back to the ashram and his wife and other people there said this surrendering was a great spiritual thing. But C knew in his heart that it just wasn't right. "It was not a surrender to wisdom. It was a surrender to not wanting to deal with the conflict anymore, and essentially a surrender to the side that I didn't fundamentally agree with."

Over the next few days, C focussed on the chanting and the meditation and was able to have a good time as he was not resisting. Then he and his wife left. For a couple of weeks back in Vancouver, C thought, "Now, I've got a new guru, just like Muktananda in the old days." But the conflict was still there. The unethical behavior, the devotion centered approach, the personality cult, the corruption cut deep and would not go away. After a couple of weeks it became clear to C that he was finished. He wanted to drop the whole Siddha Yoga tradition for good.

To bring things to a close, C decided to write a letter to the new guru. In this letter he said he was ending his relationship with this tradition forever. He was entering into a new phase, by starting to connect with the Buddhist Vipassana meditation tradition. He wished her great success in bringing people to the experience of divine love and asked for her blessings in moving on to his new life. He signed the letter and mailed it. To C this "was a clean positive ending in his mind psychologically with the tradition."

C was now free to move into a new phase of practicing in the Vipassana meditation tradition. The focus of this tradition was on being mindful. The emphasis on the practice of meditation was a relief to C. C also liked the fact that this tradition did not take a lot of emotional investment. C began to occasionally sit at various Buddhist settings and started to feel connected. C went on a nine day intensive Vipassana meditation retreat at Cortez Island and had a very positive experience. He noticed at this Vipassana retreat people who were having kundalini phenomena experience, and other profound mediation experiences. C laughed to himself because for so long he had been conditioned that you got these gifts from

your guru. At this workshop, it became apparent to C that this phenomena happens in many meditation traditions and is a "function of sincere spiritual desire and effort rather than believing in a particular guru."

During the Vipassana retreat, it became clear to C that he had a fundamental conflict with his marriage. He did not respect where his wife was at, and could not be supportive to her and neither of them were moving in their position.

A few weeks after he got back from the retreat, suddenly, over a two to three day period, it became clear to C that he could no longer be in this marriage. The double bind of the conflict was so deep. C had no choice but to deal with it. He typed a letter on the computer at work. In this letter, he wrote to his wife that it was too painful for him to be able to support her spiritual life, so they had to split up. He went home during the afternoon, dropped the letter off and picked up his clothes and went to be with his mother for a few days. C remembers his deep sense of relief:

Six years of this deep double bind, finished and it's a cutting of the relationship with Siddha Yoga. It's a cutting of our relationship with this deep double bind. And at the same time

finding the courage inside of me to deal with the fear of going through the pain of separation, the fear of an confronting loneliness, and sexuality, and not having someone to love, and wanting to be loved beyond you know just the insecurity stuff in the breaking up of a relationship. Finding the courage to deal with that and move on, it felt real healthy. It was such a great relief.

C experienced loneliness and depression during the divorce period. He dealt with these emotions by trying to be mindful in the present moment of these emotional states. In this way, he found that the heaviness of the experience would dissipate. He found that his occasional sitting practice helped him feel more calm, more still, and gave him a sense of strength and optimism about moving on.

After a couple of months after breaking up, C started to long for some kind of relationship with a woman and a spiritual tradition. He began to sit regularly with an insight meditation group that met on Sunday nights. He began to connect with people involved in the Vipassana meditation. He made some good friendships, one even with a woman who actually lived in Muktananda's ashram in the early 70's for many years.

C began to mix other traditions with his Vipassana meditation practice. He went to a two day Sufi workshop and enjoyed the Sufi singing and dancing. Next, at a Vipassana meditation retreat, he was encouraged by the meditation teacher to go deeper than meditation bliss, and stillness of mind, to an investigation of each moment. A couple of months later, C went to a two day devotional workshop with a woman from India, who spent her time chanting and hugging people. For C it was like "being in Hindu heaven." A little while later in June, C hosted the leader of the Sufi Order of the West for a couple of days. C sees this last year as one in which he has had fun with spiritual experimentation.

ACT III

Overall, C sees himself today as really enjoying having a lack of inhibition about being with a particular spiritual group or meeting a particular spiritual teacher. He can meet other spiritual groups in a spirit of openness. In meeting with different groups of people, he looks forward to observing the similarities in meditation and energy phenomena. He also enjoys appreciating the differences of how people approached spirituality.

C's recent positive experiences have helped heal in C some of the hurts that he has experienced on his spiritual journey. This has given C a sense of renewed vigor, a more optimistic outlook on life. Recently, within the last month C went to another eight day Vipassana meditation retreat on Cortez Island. Here, there was a reexperiencing of that deep ecstasy that he had experienced back in India. Touching that deep ecstasy again felt very satisfying for C. The release and joy and coolness of that experience is something C wishes other people could touch. For C "It's almost like the universe is calling me in a gentle way to be as aligned with softness and love and do meditation practice on a regular basis as I can in some little way

contribute positive energy to the universe."

As far as spiritual practice right now, C is not definitely committed to one perspective. He usually does the Vipassana meditation of sitting practice but is open to Sufi dancing and even to psychotherapy for as C sees it "anything that brings into consciousness those parts of him which are blind" is helpful. C sees his work as "to become free of blocks, and being in tune with solid love and clarity."

As C looks back on his journey with some sadness, "I am sad that I bought into spiritual materialism or I bought into belief structures so deeply and had to go through the experience of the shattering of those belief structures, ah, which was a painful experience, but I guess unavoidable." But through this process he feels "some inward kinks have been straightened out" and in a deeper way he feels "more wholesome and less confused."

C recently also has fallen in love with a woman L, who has a child and they have plans to become married. C sees this relationship as an important arena in which he can become conscious of those aspects of his personality which create conflict or pain. Through this relationship he wants to grow psychologically, as he sees it as a way to grow in consciousness. It is

quite ironic for C that what he now sees as "the most meaningful and essential aspect" of growth was at one time considered to be the most meaningless and unessential aspect.

An additional area of emergence is a growing sense of community responsibility. C likes to give money to charities regularly, he has a foster child in India, and he is starting to think about how he can contribute to our society in some way.

Looking back over the years, C appreciates his intensity, but wishes he had worked in a spiritual tradition which was more psychologically mature and healthy than the one he worked into originally. C also sees the value of not rejecting western psychological teachings. "It would be very good from the beginning of practice if people were aware of things like projection, or not willing to face intimacy." It seems like to C that individual and group counselling in combination with intensive meditation practice could have helped him and other people become psychologically mature more quickly.

C feels now that "sacred cows should not be held sacred, everything should be questioned. Rituals and practices are means and not end." One should have a healthy scepticism about all gurus and so-called great

divine beings who impose themselves upon seekers.

Looking down the road, C is planning to marry L and have a child. So he sees himself moving into a phase of family life and having responsibilities. He sees himself as continuing to be involved with the Vipassana meditation tradition but not so much as to interfere with L and the family. He wants to make sure that L feels secure and that he is not putting some idealistic monastic practice ahead of giving love and support to his wife and children.

C sees his life now as integrated "spiritual family life." He is aware that he needs "to be conscious of not just holding some new posture again." He sums up the purpose of his life right now this way, "Being free from the experience of pain and suffering and experiencing the highest ecstasy possible." C in his "spiritual family life" is still reaching out for enlightenment.

CHAPTER V: RESULTS

In this chapter, the problems of the long term process of meditation that the co-researcher in this case study has encountered are discussed. The problems discussed stem from the co-researcher's commitment to the long term process of meditation so he could become "enlightened." This obsessive desire to become enlightened has left the co-researcher C susceptible to other problems such as withdrawals and isolation from human relationships, psychological blind spots in spiritual practice, and dealing with unusual symptoms of his spiritual practice. Each of these areas will be discussed in this chapter.

BECOMING ENLIGHTENED

Krishnamurti (1960) observed that "The motive of search is of greater significance than the search itself. The motive pervades, guides and shapes the search" (p.35). While the object of seeking may be to find enlightenment, in Krishnamurti's view the seeker is really involved in a process of self-expansion and self-perpetuation as "life is a process of continuous expansion of the ego through power, wealth, asceticism or the cultivation of virtue and so on" (Krishnamurti, 1946, p.81). Thus the seeker involved in meditation is really desiring greater, wider, and more significant experiences.

After C had his first intense experience of the "here and now" on the farm in California he set up the goal of enlightenment, "You know in a romantic way I probably thought that well I'll now go to India and work really hard living in a mountain Himalayas and meet great masters and in a couple of years I'll be enlightened and I'll leave my body." C had read about Ram Dass and his guru and he wanted to experience that "state of freedom and magic." At the time, C was proud about "what a wonderful thing I was doing and what a wonderful commitment to practice I was making." The

process of self aggrandizement through spiritual practice had already started for C.

C was very excited when he had his "kundalini awakening experience" as he had read about the process in books by Muktananda and so his feeling "was of great excitement and a corroboration" of his belief system. His guru, Muktananda's teaching was based on the importance of the awakening of kundalini so this was a very significant sign of spiritual progress for him.

After spending six weeks in the Muktananda center in Oakland, C ran out of money and came back to Vancouver. He was feeling self-righteous about being on the path to truth. C described his state in this way: "A sense that most everyone in the world didn't know the truth: most everyone was ignorant of these profound things that went on inside me in meditation practice. The awakening of Kundalini, the types of visionary experiences of the immanence of god; and this type of thing which was so tangible to me, I thought basically everyone in the world was in a state of profound spiritual ignorance."

By the time C had been to Muktananda's ashram in India for three and a half months and was back in Vancouver helping set up a meditation center, he had a self-image of being a "great yogi." He enjoyed it when

people came to the meditation center and commented on the intensity in which he was living his life. Later, when he was in India for the second time, he had a meditation session of experiencing the "deepest most profound love, joy, peace" that he had ever experienced in his life. It was thus quite a shock to C when he applied to be a Muktananda sannyasin that he was turned down. It is only now, six years later, that his next phase as the integrated householder is starting to bear fruition. But now as he is moving into a new relationship with a long-term commitment where the relationship itself is seen as the most opportunity for growth, C worries that he is holding some new "spiritual" posture again.

Ram Dass (1987) after many years of exploring the Eastern traditions talks about the subtle ways the ego postures itself:

To go back to the point where I said I started out feeling very special, I was busy holding on to a myth about myself, a scenario about myself: 'Dick Alpert thrown out of Harvard, drugs, yoga, guru games..., ' what will happen next? It's very 'somebody-ish.' Then I decided that really the game was to become 'nobody.' So I went into nobody training, giving lectures, 'Nothing New by

Nobody Special'...So I was going to be nobody special like the big boys. But there's a sneaky 'somebodiness' in there (pp.147-148).

Like Ram Dass, C looking back in his years with Siddha Yoga sees now how spiritual practice can support one's ego tendencies, "Through a strong identification with this spiritual tradition and all of this paraphernalia and ritual there was a real spiritual materialism and a thick-headedness and a spiritual pride that grew up around all of this; and I was really living a fantasy of my own ego."

Trungpa (1973) writes that walking the spiritual path properly is a very subtle process in that "We can deceive ourselves into thinking we are developing spiritually when instead we are strengthening our egocentricity through spiritual techniques. This fundamental distortion may be referred to as spiritual materialism" (p.3). Our vast collections of knowledge and experience are just part of ego's display, part of the grandiose quality of ego.

Beneath our spiritual materialism, Trungpa (1973) points out it is our desire to secure ourselves, reassure ourselves that we are alright. To do this we are constantly looking for something solid to hang onto. We can force ourselves into the experience of

bliss, "We would like to get drunk, intoxicated, absorbed into the entire universe, but somehow it does not happen. We are still here, which is always the first thing to bring us down" (p.71). The whole process of continuously building rather than coming to an understanding of anything continues in Trungpa's mind "until you realize the futility of attempting to achieve spirituality" (p.71).

C looking over his years of meditation finds that it is the profound meditation experience that he had in India that motivates him. "I'm not really personally interested in insight, I'm interested in the experience of love and joy that I touched in that meditation, that's what motivates me to keep practicing." So although he recognizes the "spiritual materialism" behind the years he prided himself in being a "great yogi" he is still hoping to find a profound state through his meditation practice. At the end of his interview, he summed up the purpose of his life as "being free from the experience of pain and suffering and experiencing the highest ecstasy possible."

C seems to have been caught in what Trungpa (1973) calls "the heroic play," "If you involve yourself with the heroic way, you add layers or skins to your personality because you think you have achieved

something. Later, to your surprise, you discover that something else is needed. One must remove the layers, the skins" (p.97). The open way begins when we realize the futility of trying to get somewhere with aggression and speed. While C in his early morning security rounds in India, had a gestalt realization that his yoga practice had been the path of hardness and he needed to open up to softness, spiritual ambition of finding some special state of "ecstasy" still remains. Trungpa (1973) says that we must become wary of our ambition as "The idea is not to regard the spiritual path as something very luxurious and pleasurable but to see it as just facing the facts of life" (p.89).

Washburn and Stark (1979) wrote that common to many Eastern religions and philosophies is a distinctive conception of the self and its possible transcendence. The Eastern view holds that "(1) attachment to a separate self or ego is one of the main roots of human misery, ignorance, rebirth, etc.; (2) this ego can be transcended; (3) to transcend it is to awaken to the illusion that sustains it; and (4) consciousness thus divested of the ego illusion is experienced as 'empty' or 'void' and for that reason open to attunement with God, reality, the Tao, and so forth" (p.74). C appears to be caught in trying to

affirm his ego as he is still looking for the ultimate spiritual experience. To Krishnamurti (1950) this is a vital mistake as "It is only when the mind is free of the desire to become something, to achieve a result, and hence free of fear, that it can be utterly quiet; and only then is there a possibility of that creativeness which is reality" (p.21).

RELATIONSHIP

Leshan (1974) pointed out that a frequent trap in mystical schools has been the idea of withdrawal from relationship with others and from active participation in the world in order to develop one's own soul. This is similar to the viewpoint held in psychoanalysis for many years that all serious decisions should be put off until the analysis was finished, a grave error when one considers how important action and decision making are to a healthy emotional and mental life. "Similarly, one's own inner development, which exists in relation to others and the cosmos as well as to the self, is not furthered by a retreat from this relationship. To try to advance part of your development at the expense of other parts only fragments you more and makes you less rather than more complete" (p.91).

As he became involved in Siddha Yoga, C began a pattern of giving up on and withdrawing from his human relationships. When he was eighteen years old, after the kundalini awakening weekend at Muktananda's center, he announced on Monday morning to his girlfriend that he was living with, that he was moving out to live in the Muktananda center. Looking back on this C feels that he was extremely insensitive to his girlfriend's feelings. Not only had he given up a sexual relationship with her but now he just up and moved out of the house.

When C moved back to Vancouver after his initial phase of involvement in Muktananda's center in Oakland, he dropped his old friends "like a ton of bricks," as they were a part of the whole "worldly life" that he wanted to drop. C knew at the time his only interest was enlightenment. His life revolved around his practice. He had no time for any social life except with the those people at the local Muktananda center.

By the time C had been to India for three and a half months and back, his isolation and withdrawal from normal life relationships was intensifying. He had from the moment of kundalini awakening dropped all personal relationships but now he entered into a new phase. He actually developed an aversion to women.

The teachings of his guru and the socialization around C was that sexual activity is really inappropriate for yogis, a classical Indian view that can be traced back to Patanjali's insistence in the Yoga Sutras on the importance of "brahmacharya," the abstention from activities related to the sexual act. C discovered in the Indian yogi tradition many sorts of denigrating stories of women, and their ability to pull down a yogi into sensual delusion. C described his attitude this way, "I really bought that stuff at the time and so then women became for me like fire, something you don't touch."

It was also a teaching of his guru that the discharge of semen reduced meditation potency. Muktananda (1972) in describing the command of the Siddhas warned about the ways of the West:

Increase your radiance. Just as you save each penny, save each drop of semen. All of you should remember that one drop of semen can produce a radiant human being. Hence remain aware of its immense value. It is the seminal fluid that imparts lustre to you. If you lose this native glow, not even the best rouges, powders and creams can brighten your skin. This fluid is the vehicle of Chitshatki. You purchase Chiti by it, as it

were. It is a necessary agent for activating Kundalini and the highest means to stabilize the samadhi state. Minutely examine the condition of one who has wasted away his semen (p.180).

C allowed himself to masturbate once a month. After six months of dealing with his sexuality this way C wanted to be completely resolved about this issue, so he wrote a letter to his guru stating that he wished to take a vow of lifelong celibacy. This resolved for then his struggle with sexual desire, his masturbating and feeling guilt and his worries about depleting his energy through sexual preoccupation. This period was to last for over a year and a half only to be broken when he returned from his second trip from India to start his romantic relationship with J, a woman who eventually became his wife.

C's hardness to relationships and women in the time of his intense involvement in the Siddha Yoga tradition was exemplified by a memorable incident that happened on the drive to the Vancouver airport with his mother, when he was going to India for the second time. C remembers his mom telling him that she needed him in his life and she felt that C needed her. C declared to his mom, "I don't need anybody, and I certainly don't need you." Looking back on this incident, C feels that

he was very harsh and immature with his mother. This incident was symbolic of his attitude towards relationships at the time.

Both C's mother and sister in responding to the questionnaire commented on C's withdrawal from relationships for the first few years of his meditating. His mother wrote:

When C first started to meditate he was quite removed from his family emotionally. He had had a significant religious experience which I think started him on the road to meditation and such an overwhelming one that he seemed remote from the real world. It was only after being back home for a period of time that some of the initial trance like appearances disappeared.

Similarly his sister remembers:

Initially, he was quite self righteous about his spiritual quest totally detached from all that he had previously known and been involved in. It wasn't difficult to feel unsupportive of his quest when so many profound and negative (in our (his family's) eyes) changes occurred. A brother whom I had always dearly loved but always been a little out of touch with, (due to age/maturity) was, in my heart, almost betraying me - at a point where

we would have naturally started growing closer and getting to know one another better (our late teen years). I know this wasn't C's intent at all, but for several years it was tough to relate at any level.

It was only much later at the end of his year and a half sojourn in India that C's attitude towards relationship changed dramatically. C had just failed his oral exam to become a sanyassin a couple of weeks earlier, and was in the middle of making his early morning rounds of security at Muktananda's ashram, when suddenly what he calls a "gestalt realization" broke inside of him:

I had been very hard and very rigid with myself for many years. I had driven myself for these particular types of spiritual goals of becoming a monk and living a very isolated hard yogi life and the psychological dynamics around what had driven me in this mind set were around a sense of rejection and a sense of exclusion. And I saw clearly, that I was rejecting people. I was rejecting facing aspects of my personality and rejecting with having to deal with things like an intimate relationship and an opening up and exposing myself; and I had been rejecting these

major portions of myself and that my work towards the divine was coming out of a sense of hardness and toughness...as opposed to from softness; and to sum it up, very simply I saw that the path was not a path of hardness, but a path of softness for me now.

With this gestalt realization, C's whole attitude towards relationship changed. He had a sense of sensitivity and softness to being with people, a renewed interest in kinship and friendship, and a recognition of the community of man. He had an interest in intimacy and self-exposure. Soon after that, he decided to leave the ashram, and become what he refers to now as "the integrated householder." Before he left, he became romantically involved with J, a woman six years his senior and soon was "madly in love." This romantic phase was temporarily interrupted when C came back to Vancouver a couple of months ahead of his girlfriend, but resumed when she arrived in Vancouver, culminating in marriage shortly thereafter.

Over the next six years of marriage, C experienced what it is like to be in a relationship with someone who is heavily involved in a rigid spiritual group. C dropped Siddha Yoga but his wife was totally committed to Siddha Yoga. He found it a deep double bind to be

attached to a woman who represents all of that which he had just dropped. After his failed half-hearted attempt a couple years later in New York to get involved with the Siddha Yoga movement again, and decision six months later to formally terminate his relationship with the Siddha Yoga movement, C began to get interested in the Vipassana meditation tradition. The stress of relating to someone involved in Siddha Yoga eventually was a significant factor in the marriage's demise a couple of years later. It was ironic that C experienced from the outside the rigidity and exclusiveness of the Siddha Yoga movement with which he was once a part of.

Over the last year C has become involved with a woman who has a child, fallen deeply in love, and is engaged to be married. He sees his relationship as the most meaningful and essential way to grow in consciousness. Through his emerging relationship he wants to become aware of those aspects of his personality which create pain. It is ironic now that C finds being involved with his family and his work a very meaningful setting to integrate his spiritual practice as for a long time he considered this area the most meaningless and unessential aspect of spiritual growth.

Both C's sister and mother have noticed the change in C's way of relating to people over the last few years. His sister observes that, "C had little to share with people outside his spiritual circle for many years but now relates well to everyone. He seems to have come down from his position of judgement and simply accepts." His mother has found that since C loosened his ties with Siddha Yoga "he has been without question much easier to relate to and a much more comfortable person for his whole family to enjoy."

Krishnamurti (1948) observed that the problem of existence is relationship and this must be understood through involvement and not withdrawal from the world. You discover what you are through relationship and communication with another. Through C's journey, he has come to this realization that his awareness must be worked on while being involved with the world. Opportunity for growth exists in the interactions of the everyday world. Intimate, family, career, and friend relationships provide fertile ground for self-knowledge and awareness to grow.

Ram Dass (1987) in talking about the hard lessons he has learned in his spiritual odyssey recognized how he avoided relationships through a pattern of transcending which he called "vertical schizophrenia."

He found it easy to transcend and "go up" in dealing with problems of relationship, but this proved to be ineffective as all of the problems of human emotionality and relationships remained to be dealt with. Others argue that the paths of Eastern mysticism focusses too much on isolation and withdrawal which results in a psychology of estrangement rather than immanence in the day to day world (Starhawk, 1981). C in attempting to be an "integrated householder" has come to recognize the fertile ground of everyday life for spiritual transformation.

BLIND SPOTS IN SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Goleman (1985) wrote just as there are some major blind spots in our scientific psychological world view in regard to transformation and truth, similarly, it is important to consider the blind spots one finds in spiritual practice. Early in C's affiliation with his guru, Muktananda, C recognized a dichotomy. C became aware of a contradiction between the teachings of Muktananda and what was being encouraged:

On the one hand, the guru Muktananda would actually encourage that philosophical position in his talks sometimes about that the point of

spiritual practice was to realize one's own divinity, and not just be hanging around with a guru. And yet the support of the environment and the encouragement from the whole socialization process was quite different. All of the devotees of the guru and the way the whole structure was set up was really encouraging like being with the guru and really just getting into like a personality worship type of thing with the guru.

C recognized this dichotomy could be found in many guru traditions. A good example of a similar type of contradiction can be found in the Rajneesh movement.

James Gordon (1987), a psychiatrist studying new religions, visited the ashram of guru Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh in Oregon in 1984. He observed that Rajneesh, in his talks, skillfully dissected religious pretension and hypocrisy, attacked rigid and authoritarian political structures, but he was all the while permitting if not promoting what he attacked. "To be rebellious is to be religious, he said, but the day-to-day life of those who listened was becoming more and more conformist, increasingly constricted by ritual and ceremony, dogma, rules and regulations, and priests" (p.163).

The contradiction that C recognized within the

Muktananda organization and what Gordon (1987) observed within the Rajneesh organization is what Gregory Bateson and his associates described in the fifties as the double bind (Bateson, Jackson, Haley, Weakland, 1956). The essence of a double bind is a two-edged message with the obvious meaning contradicted by a covert one. The result is befuddlement as it is impossible to comply with both messages (Goleman, 1985, p.184).

Gordon (1987) wrote that similar bonds have been used by Zen Masters to help their pupils to find spontaneous novel solutions in which they gained a wider, freer perspective. Anthony and Ecker (1987) pointed out that there is a type of spiritual practice which they term the multilevel charismatic approach which is a process of deepening communion with the master through effacement rather than advancement. This approach which looks foreign to contemporary Western sensibilities "relies on the transformative potency of a personal relationship to a master who is regarded as God-conscious" (p.84). The "God-realized" master is assumed to have penetrated all limited identifications with matter, energy, and mind and is fully conscious of being the formless, divine reality, the infinite transcendental self. The disciple

attempts to become aware of the master's presence within as a way of experiencing the ultimate spiritual reality and thus is responsible for working towards deeper self-surrender to the master. "Self-surrender in multilevel charismatic involvements is not a matter merely of symbolic or ritualistic gesture, but of actually relinquishing attachment to mental, emotional and behavioral patterns that make one unavailable for the master's contact" (Anthony and Ecker, 1987, p.85).

Muktananda with his emphasis on "skatipat" is a contemporary example of the multilevel charismatic approach. Other contemporary masters who represent this form of involvement are Meha Baba, Niem Karoli Baba, Da Free John, and Sir Chimnoy (Anthony and Ecker, 1987, p.86).

Wilber (1987) warned that it is almost always a problematic sign when devotees consider their master "perfect," as perfection exists only in transcendental essence, not in manifest existence. The devotee in confusing essence with concrete existence projects his or her own narcissistic, omnipotent fantasies onto the "perfect" guru such as "The guru can do anything; how great the guru is; in fact, how great I must be to be among the chosen" (p.258). Eventually, the guru displays his or her human side and the devotee is

devastated, disillusioned, crushed.

While C struggled to resolve the contradicting messages of his guru, his regard for Muktananda as the world's greatest divine leader and master of the universe left him open for devastation when the reality of his guru's "humanness" could no longer be ignored. Muktananda had spent his whole life preaching about celibacy. The day after C left Muktananda's ashram, big news broke in the ashram that Muktananda had been involved for five or ten years in sexual activity with a wide variety of women. These allegations against Muktananda became widely known in 1981 when one of his American swamis sent a letter to numerous schools and centers including the Centre for the Study of New Religious Movements. Two other American swamis after Muktananda's death began to publicly disclose what they knew. The central allegation against Muktananda was that he regularly had sex with female disciples in their teens and early twenties. Because Muktananda's spiritual teachings strongly emphasized celibacy, the apparent hypocrisy rather than the apparent promiscuity is what seemed most objectionable in the transpersonal community (Anthony, Ecker, and Wilber, 1987).

C described his reaction to hearing the news of Muktananda's promiscuity this way, "It's like a major

major shock - like taking, like you know cutting to the very core of your idealism...deep down inside it was like SANTA CLAUSE DOESN'T EXIST!...the major cornerstone of my entire spiritual structure was being just pulled out from beneath me." C tried to rationalize his behavior, saying his guru was beyond good and bad, or it's tantra yoga, or his guru was involved in activity for reasons we are not capable of understanding. To C, however, these were empty rationalizations. He could no longer "deny the fact that the emperor had no clothes" but this was not an easy issue for C to resolve for "to be in Muktananda's presence, was extraordinary, the man exuded an extraordinary peace, it was a profound experience...and yet - he was involved in this activity. That was the paradox to be resolved."

The result of hearing these allegations about his guru was that C found that a major cornerstone of his entire spiritual structure was pulled out from beneath him, leaving him in C's words "floating in outer space." Wilber (1987) wrote that in this type of situation in which the guru's human side is exposed, "The devotee then either leaves because the guru can no longer support the devotee's narcissistic glamor or spends his time trying to rationalize the guru's

actions" (p.258). C tried to justify his guru's actions but eventually decided to leave the Siddha Yoga organization.

Goleman (1985) observed that to avoid anxiety we close off crucial portions of awareness creating blind spots that apply to both self-deceptions and shared illusions. The cure for blind spots is seeing things exactly as they are which means a comprehension that is undistorted by the defensive urge to avoid anxiety and becoming aware of "zones of information we might be better off knowing, even if that knowledge brings some pain" (p.243). C with the disclosure of his guru's sexual promiscuity and hypocrisy, lost his conception that he had the "perfect" guru, and had to deal with the pain of seeing the "humanness" of his own guru.

KUNDALINI AWAKENING

In investigating the kundalini experience through a series of cases drawn from diverse cultures and spiritual traditions, Sannella (1987) described the unusualness of the kundalini experience as being "outside the categories of 'normal' and 'psychotic'" (p.10). Krishna (1973) argued that the kundalini awakening experience is a transformative process in

which, "A new center - presently dormant in the average man and woman - has to be activated and a more powerful stream of psychic energy must rise into the head from the base of the spine to enable human consciousness to transcend the normal limits" (p.15).

The awakening of kundalini, however, can be a very disturbing experience as overpowering sources of energy are being opened up as evidenced by this description of a kundalini awakening (Sannella, 1987, p.7):

In a darkened room a man sits alone. His body is swept by muscle spasms. Indescribable sensations and sharp pains run from his feet up his legs and over his back and neck. His skull feels as if it is about to burst. Inside his head he hears roaring sounds and high-pitched whistling. His hands burn. He feels his body tearing within. Then suddenly he laughs and is overcome with bliss.

The recognition of kundalini symptoms is important as Sannella (1987) observed that the outcome of a kundalini awakening when handled appropriately was generally positive and creative but in some cases a schizophrenic-like condition can result if the person received negative feedback from others or is resistant to interpretations provided.

Greenwood (1990) in her extensive analysis of the kundalini experience divided conditions observed during kundalini awakening into seven categories (pp.29-30):

1. Pranic activity or krivas: intense involuntary body movements, shaking, vibrations, jerking, and the sensation of electricity, tingling, and rushes of energy flooding the body.
2. Physiological problems: these may include the activation of latent illness or pseudo illness, apparent heart problems, gastrointestinal disorders, nervous problems, eating disorders, and pains occurring in various parts of the body, especially along the spine and in the head and other difficulties that usually prove difficult to diagnose and treat.
3. Yogic phenomena: the body may involuntarily perform yogic postures (asanas) or hand movements (mudras) that the subject has never before seen, and the psyche may produce symbolic images or the mind produce chants, Sanskrit words, tones and a variety of specific sounds commonly recorded in the yogic tradition.
4. Psychological and emotional upheavals: there can be an intensification of any unresolved psychological tendencies and issues, fear of death

or insanity, mood swings, and overwhelming waves of anxiety, anger, guilt or depression as well as intense compassion, unconditional love, and heightened sensitivity to the moods of others.

5. Extrasensory experiences: these may include visual input (lights, symbols, images of entities, the reviewing of what appears to be other lives, and visions) or auditory input (hearing a voice, music or phrase) or olfactory (perhaps smelling sandalwood, perfume or incense).
6. Parapsychological experiences: psychic awareness, unusual synchronicities, healing abilities, and psychokinesis are the most commonly reported occult phenomena.
7. Samadhi or satori experiences: absorption of consciousness into mystical states of unity, peace, light or energy; less intensive trance states; tranquility, joy, and overwhelming waves of bliss occurring during or after meditation or spontaneously at other times.

Sannella (1987) gave the case history of a male psychiatrist who had his first kundalini awakening experience when he went to a weekend at Swami Muktananda's ashram in Oakland, California (p.80).

Upon being touched by the Swami, he went into a

deep meditation. Within ten minutes, his mouth automatically opened widely, and his tongue protruded. After a few minutes, he experienced a blissful calm and many inner visions, in which Swami Muktananda appeared to him and helped him experience a fusion with the guru. A few minutes later, he saw the interior of his abdomen, chest, and throat light up with a golden energy. Then his lower back began to ache severely. At the onset of the pain, a white light in his head became more and more intense. The back pain disappeared toward the end of the meditation and did not return.

The co-researcher, C, also experienced his kundalini awakening experience at Swami Muktananda's ashram in Oakland, when one of Muktananda's senior monks touched C lightly on the head with peacock feathers and within a couple of minutes C became aware of a very sharp pain at the base of his spine. C described what followed this way:

I broke spontaneously into deep breathing - that type of breathing started to take place spontaneously with no conscious control of my body. It was like involuntary bodily movements were starting to happen. There was very strong

breathing like that and that went on for quite a while. At the same time there was this sharp pain at the base of my spine. I was with eyes closed now, and I was just kind of absorbed in this experience of the breathing and it was very powerful and it just kind of absorbed me. And I started to have other movements in my body like swaying, and movements of stretching the neck...and for the next 45 minutes a variety of meditation phenomenon I experienced. Strong shaking and shivering - I broke out in a sweat - like really really broke out in a sweat. I started to experience a forcing of a sensation up the spine - like up the back...the middle of my back there, and right up through my neck and into the head area. I experienced visual lights inside. I experienced a diffused sort of white light inside of my head.

Later in Muktananda's ashram in India, C experienced more forms of kundalini awakening phenomenon including being thrown into automatic body postures. C described it this way:

I would sit in meditation, we might start by doing some chanting mantra. I would perhaps start to experience regularly after a few minutes this

experience of pratja-hara or a sense of withdrawal or going in automatically; in the sense of the mind going within: and I started to hear them regularly; and then fairly shortly, afterwards. I would get experiences like automatic breathing and then I would often experience a great power in my body a sense of energy surging through my body and I would be taken out of cross-legged meditation posture, and almost like thrown very powerfully into these different asanas, or yoga postures; and that might go on for 15 or 20 minutes with great intensity. And the types of stretching that would happen would be very powerful stretching much more stretching than if I was consciously performing these postures and that was a wondrous experience to see this kind of thing happening - it wasn't under my conscious control, it was nearly like my body was like on automatic pilot.

C's ability to handle his kundalini awakening experiences was enhanced by the context in which he experienced them. His initial experience took place at a "Kundalini Awakening" weekend at Muktananda's ashram in Oakland so the experience was encouraged and treated with receptivity by those around him. C acted with great excitement and felt it was a corroboration of his

belief system at the time. When he later began to be thrown into automatic postures while meditating this was received with receptivity and encouragement by people at the ashram. The guru, Muktananda, had written about similar types of experiences in his autobiography, and C also had read a book on kundalini awakening experiences which described these types of kundalini awakening experiences in great detail. So C reacted with a celebrating attitude to his kundalini experience. In fact, a close friend of his, B, in responding to the questionnaire, wrote that C's kundalini awakening experience was the central experience of his whole spiritual journey.

Siddha Yoga as well as some other schools of thought hold that the spiritual life is dependent on the kundalini power. These schools argue that the latent energy of the body-mind must be raised up the spine to the crown of the head before a real spiritual transformation can occur. This view assumes that kundalini is a fundamental evolutionary mechanism underlying all psychic and spiritual phenomenon (Krishna, 1971). Some people argue, however, that this emphasis on kundalini distorts spirituality as it makes spirituality only a matter of the evolving nervous system. Da Love-Ananda (1980) argued that most

spiritual accomplishments are experiences generated within the body-mind and are not therefore truly self-transcending. "Our obligation is to awaken beyond our selves, beyond the phenomena of body and mind into that in which body and mind inhere" (p.18). The awakening of the kundalini and becoming absorbed in the brain core is not the ultimate answer as the real problem is the avoidance of relationships, "You have been contracted upon yourself with emotional force, and no amount of thinking, considering, experiencing, desiring, exploiting, and manipulating yourself in the world can affect that contracting. No awakening of the kundalini touches it" (p.20).

Sannella (1987) observed that "No amount of mystical fireworks in the synopsis of the brain can help overcome the crunch at the heart. Once the vision or experience of bliss is over, the person simply returns to his or her state of emotional distress" (p.121). The real problem is that most people are "collapsed at the heart." One must be able to go beyond the wall of the ego and reach out and embrace life with an "open heart." Without this open embracement of life "psychic or mystical experiences are little different from orgasms" (p.121). C, although he found his kundalini awakening experiences

exciting, found it was those moments in which he opened at the heart and experienced ecstasy, love, joy and peace and saw our true nature as "fundamentally extraordinarily divine and beautiful" as the most important spiritual experiences for him.

CHAPTER VI: DISCUSSION

This case study has focussed on the twelve year journey of the co-researcher on the path of meditation. An attempt has been made to illuminate the major problems that the co-researcher faced in his twelve year commitment to the long term process of meditation. In this chapter, firstly the problems that the meditator encountered will be summarized. Secondly, the limitations of this study will be considered. Thirdly, the implications for meditation of this case study will be discussed. Fourthly and finally, the implications for further research will be considered.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This case study has shown that when the goal of meditation is "enlightenment" this leaves the meditator susceptible to many potential problems. Enlightenment in the eyes of a meditator can be a very idealized state. The co-researcher C perceived enlightenment as a magical state of ecstasy and love. C held preciously to his blissful experiences which were signs of coming closer to enlightenment and took a lot of pride in these experiences. He developed a self-image of being

a great yogi. It took C years to realize just how spiritually materialistic he had become and how he was living a fantasy of his own ego. Rather than going beyond his own ego, C got caught in a pattern of affirming his own ego.

In this case study, the danger of single-handedly pursuing meditation at the expense of other aspects of self has also been shown. As he became obsessed with becoming enlightened, C dropped his interest in human relationships. This left him insensitive and withdrawn from the normal demands and intricacies of relationships. Later, this developed to a full-scale aversion to women as he attempted to enhance his spiritual development by becoming celibate. It was only much later when C softened his position that he realized how much opportunity, growth, and value there were in relationships with family and friends who were not in the same spiritual path as him. He also realized that for a long time he avoided intimate relationships and now he has emerged to see his intimate relationship as a key central component of his life. C made the switch from seeing meditation as the exclusive path for self-transformation to seeing meditation as an important aspect which must be integrated into a whole person.

This case study research has highlighted the problems that the co-researcher C had in his disciple-guru relationship. While C recognized a contradiction between the self-reliance teachings of his guru and the devotional personality worship of his guru by devotees of Siddha Yoga, he did not see the danger in developing a spiritual belief system based on the perfection of his guru. Seeing his guru as "perfect" and a "Master of the universe" blinded him to the obvious human characteristics of his guru. When the news about his guru's promiscuity and hypocrisy could no longer be avoided, this left C devastated. Seeing his guru as "perfect" had given C a feeling of security that he is on the "chosen path" and his enlightenment is guaranteed. Once C had abandoned the Siddha Yoga path, he was able to see the blind spots in his devotional spiritual practice much easier.

The co-researcher had some very powerful and intense "kundalini awakening" phenomenon. Because this kundalini awakening was experienced by the co-researcher C in an environment which actively promoted kundalini awakening, C was very well supported and encouraged during this experience. The intensity of the experiences that C had, however, points out the danger of this phenomenon if it is experienced in an

environment which perceives the phenomenon with scepticism and sees it being potentially pathological. C's kundalini awakening experience was an important aspect of his meditation experience but it remains to be decided if kundalini awakening is the central experience of meditation or whether it should be looked upon as a by-product of evolving understanding and insight.

LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

This single case study research of the long term process of meditation can not be generalized to a polulation. The examination of a single case allows some of the potential problems of being involved in the long term process of meditation to be illuminated. The bounded system of interest is the co-researcher's experience of the long term process of meditation. No attempt has been made to trace the co-researcher's early childhood experiences to try to understand what influence these experiences had on his decision at seventeen to pursue meditation. Additionally, it is acknowledged that the experience of meditation will be greatly influenced by what type of organization, if any, a meditator becomes involved in.

IMPLICATIONS FOR MEDITATION

The co-researcher, C, in this case study experienced some difficult problems on his twelve year path of being committed to meditation. The major problems of becoming enlightened, relationship, blind spots in spiritual practice, and kundalini awakening were discussed in Chapter V. There would seem to be some important differences amongst the theories of the long term process of meditation such as those discussed in Chapter II as to their vulnerability to the types of problems discussed in Chapter V.

Most paths of meditation appear susceptible to the spiritual materialism and ego-inflation of the naive meditator. When a beginning meditator has a peak experience or kundalini awakening such as the one the co-researcher C had, it is difficult initially to bring the excited meditator back down to earth. Over the long term, however, there appears to be differences in how the different meditation paths confront the problem of ego-inflation and spiritual materialism. Paths such as Patanjali's Yoga Sutras or the Insight Buddhist tradition which focus on progressive mystical experience would appear to be susceptible to accumulation of spiritual experience. The co-

researcher, C, was very proud of his sense withdrawal experience, referred to as "pratjahara" in the Yoga Sutras. He also was very attached to his blissful ecstasy experiences at his Vipassana retreats. Additionally, the problem of ego-inflation seems to be heightened in personality worship organizations like Siddha Yoga in which the disciples strive to become divine and omnipotent like their guru and in the process develop narcissistic fantasies as to their spiritual grandeur.

It would appear the more a path emphasizes awareness of all facts, the less susceptible a meditator will be to ego-inflation and the obsessive desire to become enlightened. While Zen and Insight Buddhist meditation emphasize mindfulness and insight into all mental phenomena, it is the "choiceless awareness" path of Krishnamurti where the problem of trying to become enlightened is addressed head on. Krishnamurti recognized one of the central problems of meditation as being the meditator's desire to avoid what is in trying to reach out for the idealized, enlightened state. A meditator can drop the obsessive desire to become enlightened once the meditator sees he or she is caught in a process of self-expansion.

A characteristic of most spiritual paths of

meditation is that each path or group feels that its path is the exclusive path to truth and enlightenment. The co-researcher, C, showed how involvement in a meditation group which claims to have the shortcut to truth and enlightenment greatly inflates the disciple. C, as he dropped his exclusive attachment to Siddha Yoga, began to see the legitimacy and problems of many different meditation paths. This emerging openness helped overcome his spiritual pride. Thus, it would appear the more a meditator can appreciate different meditation perspectives such as Yoga, Zen, and Krishnamurti, the less vulnerable a meditator will be to the development of spiritual pride for being one of the "chosen few."

The focus on the exclusiveness and specialness of the group not only leaves a meditator susceptible to the problem of spiritual materialism but may also leave a meditator vulnerable to the problem of human relationship caused by the isolation, withdrawal, and separateness of the meditation path. The co-researcher, C, spent a prolonged period of time meditating at a Siddha Yoga ashram. This isolation removed C from the normal relationships of everyday life and left areas of his human development such as intimacy and friendship untouched. This would seem to

indicate that meditation paths such as certain types of Yoga and Zen which involve long periods of retreat from the everyday life of relationships and careers are particularly susceptible to the problem of isolation and withdrawal.

In addition, the meditation traditions which emphasize celibacy or brahmacharya would appear to be susceptible to the problem of the meditator developing a disturbed or repressed sexuality. The co-researcher, C, in trying to follow the Siddha Yoga tradition of celibacy, developed an aversion towards women. It would appear those traditions which emphasize participation in all aspects of life including intimate relationships, will not be as susceptible to these problems of sexuality. It would also appear that male dominated traditions full of denigrating stories about the ability of women to bring males down to sensual delusion need to be questioned intensely for their sexual discrimination.

Zen, with its story of The Ten Bulls of Zen, aims at eventual immanence in the day to day world. Krishnamurti recognized the importance of relationship as a way of working on oneself. The co-researcher, C, in seeing the everyday life of career, friendships, and intimacy as a fertile ground for spiritual growth,

shows that an intense commitment to meditation does not necessarily have to mean a meditator becomes isolated and withdrawn from human relationships. Hopefully, most meditators will not need the years of isolation and withdrawal that C did to come to this realization.

C's journey on the Siddha Yoga path which emphasizes suspension of anxieties and doubts in surrendering to the guru, shows that devotional guru-disciple paths may be prone to the development of blind spots in spiritual practice. The potential for blind spots is greatly increased when a meditative path involves an intense group think process in which the individual meditator's critical analytical processes are asked to be shut down in the process of surrendering.

Krishnamurti, in focussing on the "choiceless awareness" of all facts including the intricacies of the guru-disciple relationship, has an approach which brings more of the potential blind spots of the guru-disciple relationship out in the open. It could be argued, however, that Krishnamurti himself was blind to the fact that he served a guru function to thousands of people through his sixty years of giving public talks.

In dealing with the problem of kundalini awakening experiences such as the one the co-researcher C had,

Siddha Yoga proved to be very helpful and supportive. It would appear that Siddha Yoga and other forms of Yoga which recognize the chakras and kundalini energy are adequately prepared to deal with kundalini awakening phenomenon. In fact, the preliminary preparation of the first five steps of Patanjali's Yoga Sutras may help give the meditator the stability and discipline to more smoothly integrate kundalini awakening phenomenon.

Other paths such as Zen and Krishnamurti's approach do not emphasize the importance of kundalini awakening. It needs to be acknowledged that although kundalini awakening is not actually strived for on these paths, the occurrence of kundalini awakening phenomenon still happens. The co-researcher of this study, C, went to a number of Vipassana meditation workshops at which he noticed kundalini awakening phenomenon in a number of meditators. These paths, although they do not actively promote kundalini awakening experiences, seem aware of kundalini awakening phenomenon.

The danger of kundalini awakening phenomenon appears to be intensified when individuals are meditating alone or with other inexperienced meditators. Both Sannella (1987) and Greenwood (1990)

in their studies of kundalini awakening phenomenon studied numerous cases of individuals who experienced kundalini awakening phenomenon while meditating alone. The danger here lies in a lack of supportive context for the individual experiencing a kundalini awakening. If psychiatric professional help is sought, hopefully the professional would be familiar with kundalini awakening phenomenon as explained by Sannella (1987) and Greenwood (1990).

IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This research has highlighted some important problem areas in the long term process of meditation such as trying to become enlightened, isolation and withdrawal from relationships, blind spots in spiritual practice, and kundalini phenomenon. Much more case study research needs to be done on individuals living in 20th century Western society who have successfully integrated meditation into their lives so that the problems and issues that these individuals have faced are illuminated. The following areas are possible for inquiry. One might:

- 1) conduct other case studies to correct, refine, and elaborate on the problems of the long term process

of meditation involving a variety of different paths of meditation.

- 2) investigate the common pattern of problems across a number of different cases.
- 3) investigate problems specific to a type of meditation.
- 4) investigate the ultimate goal of meditation through case study research of "enlightened" individuals.
- 5) conduct case study research on the benefits of the long term process of meditation.
- 6) investigate the effects of variation in kundalini awakening experiences on the long term process of meditation.
- 7) examine in more detail the problem of isolating and withdrawing from relationship during the long term process of meditation.
- 8) examine in more detail the effect of guru-disciple relationships on the long term process of meditation.

The integration of the experience of the long term process of meditation into Western psychological thought is an important task. It is hoped that this case study by bringing out some of the unique problems

of the long term process of meditation has contributed to this process.

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APPENDIX I

QUESTIONNAIRE

What are the most significant changes you have noticed in C over the time that he has been meditating? This can include changes in personality, attitude, relating to people, or any other significant changes that you have observed. It would be helpful if you can give concrete examples to make your point more vivid, giving examples of situations which typify the changes in C's stance over the last twelve years that he has been meditating.

REPLY FROM MOTHER

When C first started to meditate he was quite removed from his family emotionally. He had had a significant religious experience which I think started him on the road to meditation and such an overwhelming one that he seemed remote from the real world. It was only after being back home for a period of time that some of the initial trance like appearances disappeared.

C has always been a deep thinker and I feel his

meditation practice has helped keep him focussed on issues he considered important. I don't think there is any question that it helped him in areas of concentration in his university studies.

Since C has loosened some of his ties with Siddha Yoga he has without question been much easier to relate to and a much more comfortable person for his whole family to enjoy. For a long period of time his keen sense of humour seemed to disappear and I am delighted to say is now once again present.

C is a highly intelligent person and he is well loved and respected by his whole family.

REPLY FROM SISTER

In the last twelve years since C started meditation practice I've noticed many changes in him. Initially he was quite self righteous about his spiritual quest and totally detached from all that he had previously known and been involved in. It wasn't difficult to feel unsupportive of his quest when so many profound and negative (in our (his family's) eyes) changes occurred.

A brother whom I had always dearly loved but always been a little out of touch with, (due to

age/maturity) was, in my heart, almost betraying me - at a point where we would have naturally started growing closer and getting to know one another better (our late teen years). I know this wasn't C's intent at all, but for several years it was tough to relate at any level.

But through the years, his spiritual search has helped him to grow into one of the most loving, mellow, caring people I know. In the last one half dozen years C has been like a bud or blossom coming into bloom. The years of "fertilizing" his mind with inner reflection and personal confrontation have caused a wonderful product. C had little to share with people outside his spiritual circle for many years but now relates well to everyone. He seems to have come down from his position of judgement and simply accepts (This I envy).

He is an individual that has grown to truly care about our planet and I think will be one of the ones who makes a difference on this earth. I think his current state of mind can be attributed to his many years of meditative practice. He seems at peace within himself.

REPLY FROM FRIEND

When C asked me to contribute to your study of meditation, I was very enthusiastic. I am a long time meditator myself and think everyone could benefit from meditation. Not enough "mainstream" people know enough about the benefits of meditation and spiritual life and I hoped, in the moment, that I could add a little valuable knowledge. However, having received your "questionnaire" I realize I really can't tell you anything about any one else's meditation, C included. I "registered" him for his initiation intensive in Oakland twelve years ago and visually observed he had received intense kundalini awakening at this two day retreat. He was 18. I didn't know him at all before then. I have know him in Vancouver for ten years and have lived with him in various group situations, as well as being friends with him and his ex-wife for about five years. But since I don't know what he was like before and since during the years I have known him any changes may simply be attributed to normal human maturation, I just can't say anything about him in terms of meditation.

The problem also lies in the question. In C's case as well as most of the "meditators" I know is that

the changes in our life are as a result of shaktipat - awakening of kundalini (literally translated as descent of grave) and not meditation per se - He now wants to deny this due to a "falling out" with his original path of Siddha Yoga, but we cannot say if we are even able to meditate at all without this awakening since we are awakened. If you know nothing of kundalini and especially if yours is still dormant, you can't really understand what I am saying. It just sounds like spiritual mumbo jumbo.

The unfoldment of a person's life and the changes in them as a result of shaktipat is a study in itself.

I am enclosing a brochure for a lecture by Joe Pearce which you may find truly beneficial if you truly want to understand meditation.

APPENDIX II

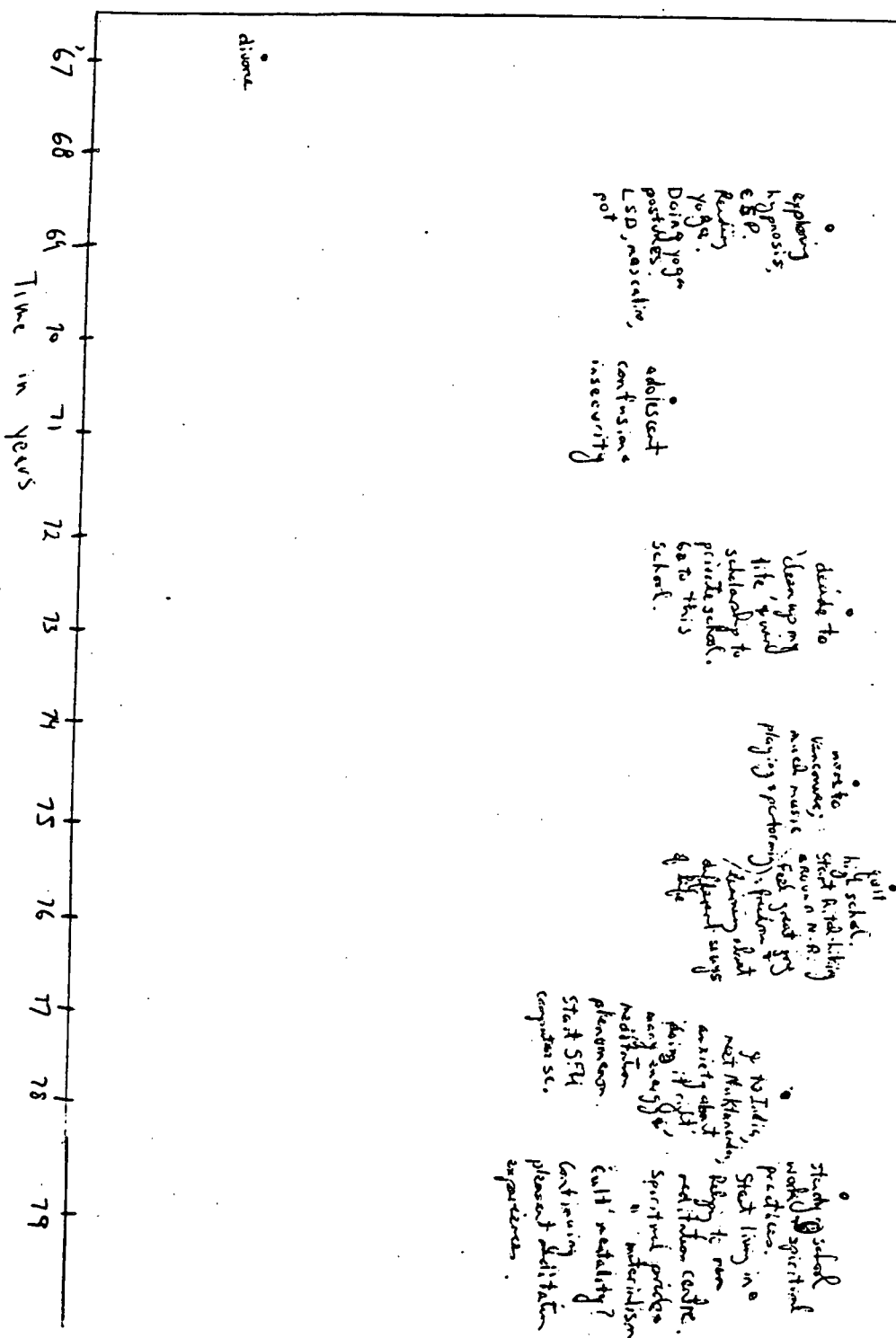
LIFELINE GRAPH

The co-researcher was asked to draw a lifeline graph using the following instructions: "Using the attached graph, draw a lifeline which depicts your experiences over the last twelve years while meditating. Label the peaks, valleys, plateaus, obstacles and breakthroughs." The co-researcher's handwritten response is reproduced over the following two pages.

CO-RESEARCHER LIFELINE (PART 1)

Lifeline graph - Instructions:

systematic with, associations with: things, pleasures, people, events, feelings, knowledge, knowledge, which depicts your experiences over the last twelve years while meditating. Label the peaks, valleys, plateaus, obstacles & breakthroughs.



CO-RESEARCHER LIFELINE (PART 2)

