

Schisms of Swami Muktananda's Siddha Yoga

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Abstract:

Although Swami Muktananda's Siddha Yoga is a relatively new movement it has had a surprising amount of offshoots and schismatic groups claiming connection to its lineage. This paper discusses two schisms of Swami Muktananda's Siddha Yoga, Nityananda's Shanti Mandir and Shankarananda's Shiva Yoga. These are proposed as important schisms from Siddha Yoga because both swamis held senior positions in Muktananda's original movement. The paper discusses the main episodes that appeared to cause the schism within Swami Muktananda's Siddha Yoga and the subsequent growth of Shanti Mandir and Shiva Yoga. Nityananda's Shanti Mandir and Shankarananda's Shiva Yoga may be considered as schisms developing from a leadership dispute rather than doctrinal differences. These groups may also present a challenge to Gurumayi's Siddha Yoga as sole holder of the lineage of Swami Muktananda. Because of movements such as Shanti Mandir and Shiva Yoga, Muktananda's Siddha Yoga Practice continues and grows, although, it is argued in this paper that it now grows through a variety of organisations.

Introduction

Prior to Swami Muktananda's death in 1982 Swami Nityananda was named his successor to Siddha Yoga; by 1985 he was deposed by his sister and co-successor Gurumayi. Swami Shankarananda, a senior Swami in Siddha Yoga, sympathetic to Nityananda also left the movement around the same time. However, both swamis with the support of devotees of Swami Muktananda's Siddha Yoga, developed their own movements and today continue the lineage of their Guru and emphasise the importance of the Guru Disciple relationship within Swami Muktananda's tradition. Both of these groups could be described as schisms of Siddha Yoga in that they broke away from the original movement and continue to practice in the same tradition. Schisms are generally understood as breakaway movements from a larger organization (Lewis & Lewis 2009). Schisms are known to arise out of leadership disputes or over doctrinal differences (Rochford, 1989; Wallis, 1979). Both Nityananda's Shanti Mandir and Shankarananda's Shiva Yoga may be considered as schisms developing from a leadership dispute. Doctrinally, Shanti Mandir and Shiva Yoga appear consistent with Swami Muktananda's Siddha Yoga. This paper highlights the main episodes that appeared to cause the schism within Swami Muktananda's Siddha Yoga and the subsequent growth of these two groups.

The materials presented in this paper come from a combination of in-depth interviews with 32 individuals and participant observations with Nityananda's Shanti Mandir and Shankarananda's. Interviews were conducted with ex-members of Siddha Yoga, which some are present members of Shanti Mandir and Shiva Yoga. In an attempt to gain some history of the movement first hand, most of the participants were chosen purposely because of their affiliation with Siddha Yoga during the time of the original leader Swami Muktananda, including at the time of his death, the change of leadership to the co-successor Swami Nityananda and Swami Chidvalasananda (Gurumayi) and the subsequent schism. Participant observations for the study took place throughout 2006 and 2007 in Australia at Shanti Mandir centres in Sydney and Melbourne and the Shiva Yoga Ashram, Melbourne. Most of what I have learnt from my participants, along with my observations, is woven into the following narrative. For a complete outline of the methodology for this study see Healy 2010. Because there is now more than the single movement of Siddha Yoga claiming a lineage to Muktananda, I have found it useful to use the term Swami Muktananda's Siddha Yoga Practice or the shorter, Siddha Yoga Practice, to locate the branches of this tradition and individual involvement under a common term. These offshoots and schisms of Siddha Yoga include: Swami Nityananda's Shanti Mandir; Swami Shankarananda's Shiva Yoga; Master Charles' Synchronicity; Jivanmukta Swami Ganapati's Siddha Shiva Yoga; Acharya Kedar's Supreme Meditation; Mark Griffin's Hard Light Center of Awakening; and Sally Kempton.

I had a five-year affiliation with Siddha Yoga in the early 1980s from the age of 17. Eventually I drifted from Siddha Yoga as other competing interests took over, a theme which is common to many with past affiliation to New Religious Movements (Barker, 1997). It was not until my PhD research that I revisited this community as an insider-outsider researcher (Kanuha, 2000) and discovered the schisms of Siddha Yoga that occurred after Muktananda's death which became the main sites of my fieldwork. Because of the limitations presented by the purposeful sample this study does not claim to be the definitive story but to add to the growing knowledge of these movements. All names of participants quoted in this paper have been change or left out to protect their privacy. Observations at yoga centre and Ashrams were undertaken with permission of Shanti Mandir and Shiva Yoga. Because of the limited room in the present paper and the particular focus on schisms see Healy 2010 for a complete presentation of the larger study of Siddha Yoga Practice.

The following sections discuss Swami Muktanada's Siddha Yoga, his death, the succession, subsequent schisms and the papers conclusion.

Swami Muktananda's Siddha Yoga

Siddha Yoga practice was introduced to the west by Swami Muktananda (1908-1982) in 1970 as part of his first venture outside of India (Thursby, 1991). After his visit, devotees established centres and Ashrams. In his lifetime he conducted three tours to the west passing on the teaching of his own Guru Bhagawan Nityananda (1888-1961) in what he considered a lineage of Siddha's, or perfect masters. The concept of guru Bhakti or guru worship is the major emphasis within this tradition influenced by Vedanta and Kashmir Shaivism (Wessinger, 1993). Siddha Yoga's practices include Shaktipat initiation (the awakening of the spiritual energy known in this tradition as Kundalini awakening by the grace of the Guru), meditation, chanting and seva or service to the Guru (Melton, 1993, p.935). The Guru- Disciple relationship has been identified as possibly the most central theme in Siddha Yoga (Conser, 1984; Ippolito, 1996; Martin, 1993; Wilcox, 1984; Williamson, 2005). Understanding the Guru-Disciple relationship in Siddha Yoga Practice is central to understanding the charismatic foundations of the movement.

The masters felt presence rather than any particular technique is the key to the Siddha meditation that Swami Muktananda brought to the West. Siddha Yoga affirms a "charismatic" rather than a "technical" approach to meditation (Thursby, 1995, p.206).

'Charismatic authority is widely held to be a defining mark of new religious movements (NRMs)' (Dawson, 2006, p.3). Although Weber (1968, p.52) asserts that 'pure charisma is specifically foreign to economic considerations' and often in opposition to the regime of daily life. Therefore an attempt to establish a community of followers or devotees, the charisma of the leader must eventually become routinized (Weber, 1968, p.54). Muktananda's Siddha Yoga evolved into a world wide movement. By stressing a claim to his own Guru's lineage and naming his own successors some time before his own death, the tradition or lineage of the group became the ground for legitimate authority and the '...purely personal characteristics of leadership is eliminated' (Weber, 1968, p.54). This includes attention to the material interests of the devotees and the creation of administrative positions to continue the charismatic relationship through an organisation. Weber (1968, p.55) acknowledges 'these interests generally become conspicuously evident with the disappearance of the personal charismatic leader and with the problem with succession, which invariably arises'. Not long after the death of ISCKON's founder and leader Prabhupada in 1977 there were growing numbers of factions, defections and finally schism (Rochford, 1989, p.165). In relation to succession, Melton (1991 p.10) asserts 'the more preparation is made for a smooth transition, the more likely an orderly succession is to occur'. Muktananda did attempt orderly preparations for the continuation of his lineage and for a time it was smooth, however competing interests of followers and co-successors eventually led to conflict and schism. 'Among scholars, while little has been written on the succession question, the strongly held opinion remains that the death of a leader is a crisis event of major proportions for a new religion' (Melton,

1993, p.106). Melton also notes that the reason the many groups make it through the crisis of succession is the routinization of charismatic authority, which usually happens within the lifetime of the leader and therefore the focus has already shifted to some extent from the leader to the newly formed institution (Melton, 1993, p.107).

The Death of the Leader

It is important to know why and when schisms occur and what were the issues leading up to the schism (Pitchford, Bader & Stark, 2001, p.381). This section highlights some of the significant events that began with the death of the founder and leader of Siddha Yoga, Swami Muktananda.

By the time of Muktananda's death in October 1982 Siddha Yoga had grown into an international movement with Ashrams and centres around the world. Before Muktananda died, he installed two of his devotees to lead the group as co-Guru's (Thursby, 1991). Swami Nityananda was named first and six months later Nityananda's sister Malti, Chidvalasananda (now known as Gurumayi). After Muktananda's death, although most devotees accepted Muktananda's initial decision, oppositional camps started to form around the new Gurus. Some preferred Nityananda and others Chidvalasananda; others reported not being sure of either of them. Even though Muktananda had left behind two successors, many of the devotees were still grieving the loss of their Guru.

(Mark) It just felt funny to me at the time, it just seemed, here we are still grieving Baba's death and they are setting themselves up immediately giving darshan. And even using the feathers the same way Baba did. And you know, it was like I felt like what we needed was a little bit of time to just deal with the loss of Muktananda.

While there appeared to be growing tensions around the different camps, the new Guru's nevertheless attempted to consolidate the followers of Siddha Yoga after Muktananda's death and added a new vitality to the movement as they began to visit centres and Ashrams around the world, sometimes together and sometimes individually. Nityananda on one occasion in front of many devotees took Gurumayi's hand, held it up and said with some emotion, 'No matter what you do, no matter what you think of us, we won't split' (Harris, 1994, p.102). This speech appeared to be in relation to the growing division of loyalties among devotees and possibly also reflected something about the nature of Siddha Yoga's main practice, the Guru Disciple relationship. Devotees were making their own minds up as to who would be their guru. As Thursby (1995, p.206) has noted, it is the Guru's 'felt presence' that is key, not so much the practices. Given that the movement had two Gurus, they could conduct two tours at once which made the Siddha Guru more accessible to the devotees. Possibly reminiscent of the early years of Siddha Yoga where devotees had close contact with Muktananda in often small intimate settings. The new Guru's travelled extensively in their three years together as co-leaders until the 3rd anniversary of Muktananda's death which was held at the Ashram in Ganeshpuri India.

The 3rd anniversary of Muktananda's death in October 1985 attracted thousands of western and Indian devotees, it also appeared to be a high point of the movement. Siddha Yoga became a multimillion dollar corporation (Caldwell, 2001, p 26). It must have been somewhat of a surprise for devotees when at the end of the celebrations Nityananda and other Swamis appeared in white. Suddenly Nityananda was no longer the Guru and Gurumayi became sole Guru of Siddha Yoga. It was not until the 10th of November 1985 that there was a formal ceremony in which Nityananda renounced his vows of a sannyasin monk (see Kottary 1986 for Nityananda's account of these events). In a letter to devotees the trustees of the Siddha Yoga stated '...you should know that the SYDA foundation recognizes Gurumayi Chidvilasananda as the sole spiritual leader of Siddha Yoga' (Chidvilasananda, 1986).

What actually happened during this time is at best murky. Melton (1993) has referred to this event as Nityananda retiring as Guru and Thursby (1991), a leadership dispute. Both may be to some extent correct. Siddha Yoga first suggested to their followers that Muktananda had only intended Nityananda to co-lead the group for three years and then step down. After Nityananda left the movement it was reported in the Indian press and the *Indian Illustrated Weekly* that he had been forced to stand down as co-leader (Harris, 1994; Kottary 1986). However, Caldwell (2001, p.28) asserts that 'SYDA later pressured *Illustrated Weekly* into a full retraction of all charges with the clout of their powerful lawyers'. At the same time Siddha Yoga reported that Nityananda had allegedly fallen from his sannyasin vows of celibacy by having affairs with some of the female devotees (Chidvilasananda, 1986). Allegations which were not denied by Nityananda in a latter interview for *The New Yorker* (Harris 1994). A video of the women involved in the affairs with Nityananda was distributed to Siddha Yoga Ashrams for devotees. Some devotees appeared to find it difficult to understand the conflict between the Guru's and opted to leave the movement.

(Angie) They showed us this video and I just didn't believe it and it just didn't ring true to me and he didn't, the whole look of the thing just didn't seem right, and then we got smuggled in newspapers from India, after he had been released from captivity and gone back to India and went to the papers, well his family went to the papers. And as soon as those papers hit, people left the Ashram in droves.

Some devotees I interviewed were also asked to send in any books, magazines, photos or videos that included images of Nityananda to be destroyed.

(Arjuna) What was that night when the Nazi burnt all the books? We had a similar thing in Siddha Yoga. Burning all the photos and all that and videos. Yeah serious, there was like a big bon fire in Ganeshpuri and heaps of Nityananda photos and videos.

After Nityananda's departure from Siddha Yoga he reinstated his sannyasin vows in the tradition of Adi Acharya, with the support of a Mahamandaleshwar, and began to continue his role as a successor of Muktananda by creating his own organisation of Shanti Mandir in 1987. Nityananda was then reportedly harassed by supporters of Gurumayi for what they considered his insolent claim to the lineage of Siddha Yoga (see Harris, 1994 for a full account of these years). Thursby (1991, p.178) also noted that Siddha Yoga experienced Nityananda's reassertion of his succession to Muktananda as a threat and that the SYDA Foundation and 'in order to protect the right to lawful use of basic terms, practices, and materials utilized in the movement against unexpected challenges...registered them'. The protection of the name of Siddha Yoga seemed important to Siddha Yoga's asserted sole claim to the lineage of Muktananda (Brooks, 1997; Williamson, 2005). Nityananda was all but erased from the history of Siddha Yoga except for a few pages in Siddha Yoga's *'Meditation Revolution: a history and theology of the Siddha Yoga Movement'* (Brooks, 1997, p131-134). Caldwell (2001, p. 29) was critical of Siddha Yoga history in that it omitted the ill treatment of Nityananda, which had already been revealed to devotees in 1986. Caldwell (2001) also notes the omission of the alleged sexual misconduct of Muktananda which Caldwell herself explored in her own writings in relation to Kula Tantra. Siddha Yoga appeared to successfully continue under the sole leadership of Gurumayi throughout difficult periods of the 1980s and latter challenging allegations of abuse a corruption presented in *The New Yorker* article (Harris 1994).

A number of the uprooted and disenchanting devotees of that time have also continued Muktananda's Siddha Yoga Practice in their own way. Obviously many have done this very privately. During my study I met many ardent devotees of Muktananda with no affiliation to Siddha Yoga or other similar paths. There are of course many groups in the west that have sprung from Muktananda's Siddha Yoga Practice. Although Swami Muktananda's Siddha Yoga was a minor new religious movement compared to the likes of ISKCON or Osho, it is interesting that since its first appearance in the west in 1970 it has given birth to offshoots and schisms. The groups that I am considering specifically schisms of Siddha Yoga for this paper are Nityananda's Shanti Mandir and Shankarananda's Shiva Yoga. These are considered to be important schisms because both swamis held senior positions in the original movements and that their subsequent groups grew out of Siddha Yoga around the time of the leadership disputes. Nityananda and Shankarananda also seem significant because they seemed to have had support within the original movement for the creation of their own movement which made their claim to the tradition possible. These groups also present a challenge to Gurumayi's Siddha Yoga as sole holders of the lineage of Swami Muktananda (Brooks, 1997; Williamson, 2005).

The Schism

Nityananda's Shanti Mandir

When I met Nityananda at the end of 2005 I asked could I do some participant observations with his group and contact participants for my study who were once followers of Siddha Yoga and now with him. I also asked Nityananda about the time he was harassed by Siddha Yoga devotees. Nityananda was not interested in talking to me about that time, he only stated that he had a difficult time for ten years but now it is ok. Nityananda had by the time I began my study established his own Ashrams and centres around the world. In 1987 he established his organisation Shanti Mandir and in 1995 at the age of 32 he was installed as the youngest ever Mahamandaleshwar in the Indian Hindu tradition of Adi Acharya (Shanti Mandir, 2009). When I was nearing the end of my fieldwork in late 2007, Nityananda was undertaking a world tour entitled "In the Footsteps of Bliss" that is, following in the footsteps of his guru Muktananda and celebrating a 100 years since Muktananda's birth. The main focus of the tour was on Muktananda, who was visible on most of the promotional material. However, this tour appeared an attempt to place Nityananda solidly within the tradition of Muktananda's Siddha Yoga and re-enforces his position as successor to that tradition. In reference to Nityananda's "In the Footsteps of Bliss" tour in Australia, one of his devotees said to me,

(Bruce) This time I really had the experience of Nityananda being Muktananda.

Bruce's comment was interesting considering Weber (1968, p.20) has noted that it is the obligation of the follower to recognise the charismatic authority of the leader. Nityananda being recognised as Muktananda by his devotees was a common theme in my study among his followers. It was presented as part of a narrative by participants proposing the authenticity of his claim to Muktananda's lineage.

On my first visit to meet Nityananda and his group at the end of 2005, I was suddenly struck by the intimate setting. In the house there were about 30 devotees sitting around the Guru asking questions. Nityandanda seemed very accessible to his devotees. When I had the opportunity to interview some devotees this accessibility and intimate setting was something they found attractive about Nityandanda's Shanti Mandir. I often asked devotees how many people were involved in his movement and they would invariably say that Nityananda had no interest in a big organisation, he wanted to keep it small. I did consider how sustainable that could be, but I also noticed that this comment was often in relation to how large Siddha Yoga became and the problems that come with large organisations. Nityananda told me himself that Siddha Yoga was not the only organisation in the world to have conflict, and that it is the nature of organisations. The group did appear to be conscious of the problems of growth and considering most of the devotees I interviewed had been around Muktananda in the early seventies there was also a sense of regaining and enjoying that physically close relationship with the Guru. During Nityananda's "In the Footsteps of Bliss" tour to Australia in 2007, although the group appeared to have grown and become more organised than the previous year when we met, it was still never more than a couple of hundred people around the

Guru. Also the tour included public programs and intimate meetings in devotee's houses. This pattern of the tour appeared reminiscent of Muktananda's 1974 tour of Australia (see, Muktananda, 1975). In a way it may have been a purposeful strategy considering the tour was following the foot steps of Muktananda and emphasising Nityananda's claim to Muktananda's lineage.

Nityananda's very public successor-ship claim evidenced by his "In the Footsteps of Bliss" world tour did not appear to create hostilities from Gurumayi's Siddha Yoga that was present in the past and reported by Harris (1994) in *The New Yorker*. This may be have due to the nearly 25 years that have past since the leadership dispute, and the changing nature and affiliation to Gurumayi's Siddha Yoga. From reports by participants in my study, her Ashrams in Australia only have a hand full of residents and few public programmes. While visiting Ganeshpuri India in July 2007 I was told by a local guide that there were only 30 western devotees living in Gurumayi's Ganeshpuri Ashram. In 2002 Williamson (2005, p.149) reported (quoting Siddha Yoga Foundation figures) that Siddha Yoga had eight hundred meditation centres world wide and seven Ashrams. Today out of the seven Ashrams, three are now no longer open to the public acting only as retreat venues for committed devotees. Williamson's study (2005, p.163) did highlight that Siddha Yoga's membership was in fact declining and that some of the groups facilities were being shut down. However, the shifting culture and new and innovative directions of Gurumayi's Siddha Yoga that are presented by Williamson (2005) does appear to reflect a committed group, although diminished, who are reassessing their present and future priorities.

Nityananda was not the only follower of Muktananda's Siddha Yoga to be challenged by the death of Muktananda and subsequent events over leadership. Many devotees interviewed in my own study found it difficult to make the move from following Muktananda to following the new Guru's. This was especially true for many of the swamis in the movement and those devotees who had been with Muktananda since the early 1970s, many of which left the movement around the time of Muktananda's death, or in the following years.

(Cathleen) Well I went into sort of shock because many of the swamis, that I had a lot of respect for, started leaving and getting married and having kids... It was the like the whole thing just went phuuurrrrrffff. And there was all this awful stuff about Nityananda and Gurumayi.

The death of Muktananda in 1982 and the following turbulent years was difficult for many in the movement. Each individual devotee possibly felt to some extent that they were part of the movement and had contributed much time and resources. Muktananda's Siddha Yoga was developed in conjunction with the devotee's time, money and labour. As Cathleen stated, some swamis left and married as did many devotees, but Swami Shankarananda, one of the senior swamis, who appeared to have some support of the devotees in the Melbourne Siddha Yoga Ashram decided to continue Muktananda's lineage himself, ultimately establishing his own Shiva Yoga Ashram in Melbourne Australia.

Shankarananda's Shiva Yoga

Swami Shankarananda was known as a charismatic teacher in Swami Muktananda's Siddha Yoga, and at the Siddha Yoga Ashram in Melbourne, where he was the swami in residence in the early 1980s, he had gathered around him a popular support base. Participants in my study discussed that his evening talks at the Siddha Yoga Ashram attracted up to 500 hundred people in the early 1980s. Shankarananda's popularity during his residency at the Melbourne Ashram conceivably constituted another threat to succession in the movement. Shankarananda was also sympathetic to Nityananda and left Siddha Yoga around the same time as Nityananda to live in America. One swami I spoke to stated that because of her association with Nityananda she was also forced to leave her Ashram and Siddha Yoga. I do not know the full circumstance why Shankarananda left Siddha Yoga and during our meetings we did not discuss this, however, he and Nityananda kept in close contact at that time and continue to have a close relationship.

There were also some devotees who also left the movement and kept contact with Shankarananda and eventually invited him back to Australia. One group of ex-devotees called themselves, informally, the 'All Souls Group' and held informal chanting sessions dedicated predominantly to Muktananda. A founding member of this group discussed that the intention of the group was to be open to all comers, even current member of Siddha Yoga. This group of some 50 or so ex-Siddha Yogi's successfully invited Amma (the Hugging Guru) to Australia for her first visit and then in 1990 they invited Shankarananda. Shankarananda soon became a regular fixture at the 'All Souls Group' and with their support base began his first centre in Melbourne. The members of the informal chanting group eventually drifted in different directions, some became devotees of Shankarananda, others devotees of Amma and some devotees of Nityananda. From the small beginnings of a group of ex-devotees of Siddha Yoga sprang the nucleus of three new movements to Australia, Shankarananda's Shiva Yoga, Nityananda's Shanti Mandir and Amma. (I have briefly mentioned Amma because many participants I interviewed informed me that there are now many ex-Siddha Yoga devotees with her, I interviewed one of these for my study, and met Amma, but have not conducted any field work with her movement).

In 1996 Shankarananda opened a permanent Ashram in Mt Eliza Melbourne (expanded to a second property in 2007) which from my own observations on a Saturday evenings attracts up to 300 people. There is also a centre in Adelaide with a resident Swami. Shankarananda has initiated several teaching swami's and many lay teachers. The Mt Eliza Ashram is also a residential centre with many of Shankarananda's devotees consisting of a new generation of followers with only a small minority of ex-Siddha Yoga devotees. This is considerably different from those who now follow Nityananda, especially in Australia, who are predominantly ex-Siddha Yoga devotees.

The two schisms of Siddha Yoga presented here follow broadly the teachings and rituals developed during Muktananda's leadership. Bainbridge (2007, p.208) asserts, 'schismatic movements tend to adhere to existing traditions, so their capacity to innovate is limited'. Like Muktananda they honour their own Guru and emphasize the Guru Disciple relationship as one of the main practices of Siddha Yoga. Through their example of devotion to their Guru they appear to model the behaviour that is required from their own devotees. This devotion also includes the concept of seva or selfless service to the Guru. Because seva is considered a spiritual practice, helping out at the Ashram, even taking part in doing the dishes is elevated from a menial task to a service to the Guru. Both Shanti Mandir and Shiva Yoga, like many groups these days, promote themselves through the internet. Offering downloads of music, photographs, videos, meditation programmes and up and coming events.

Although Both Nityananda and Shankarananda follow closely the practical and practice elements of Swami Muktananda's original movement these teachers have some elements of their own style I have termed as the Musician and the Academic.

The Musician the Academic

The reason that I initially went to meet Shankarananda was because during my first meeting with Nityananda I asked him about the philosophy of Siddha Yoga and he told me to speak with Shankarananda. So I did. Shankarananda was always considered to be an intellectual within Siddha Yoga and during his early life he had been a University Lecturer and a Chess Master (Beck, 2000, p.8). Shankarananda, like Muktananda, discussed Kashmir Shaivism influencing his philosophical perspective, a perspective he had integrated into his courses and general teachings. Nityananda however regularly told Indian folk tales similar to those presented in Narayan (1989). Nityananda also spent much of his time in Siddha Yoga as a musician. As an accomplished Tabla player he often led the chanting and during his time of co-Guru instigated dancing saptas (dancing chants) which were subsequently discontinued after he was deposed. Today Nityananda regularly leads the chanting with his tablas and has other accomplished musicians travelling with him. Although Nityananda's and Shankarananda's own styles in teaching give a different flavour and focus to their movements, what Shankarananda and Nityananda do have in common is that they tell stories of their time with their Guru Swami Muktananda and how important this relationship was to them.

Siddha Yoga Practice is predominantly a Guru Disciple tradition, and within this tradition it appears that the most important aspect of the spiritual practice is a personal relationship with a living Guru. The followers of this tradition are part of a movement that worships a living Deity from a tradition of living deities. Therefore, it does seem important for these movements to firmly connect with the source of their own tradition, and for Siddha Yoga Practice, this is in the village of Ganeshpuri India.

Visiting the source, Authenticity and Lineage

What could be seen as an attempt to affirm a lineage connection to Muktananda's Siddha Yoga Practice for Nityananda and Shankarananda has been their pilgrimages made to Muktananda's Guru Bhagawan Nityananda in the village of Ganeshpuri India, a few kilometres from Muktananda's original Ashram. Recently, both Nityananda of Shanti Mandir and Shankarananda of Shiva Yoga have brought their followers to visit the village of Ganeshpuri and the temple of Bhagawan Nityananda. In many ways this pilgrimage is a pilgrimage to the source of the tradition of Siddha Yoga Practice. In bypassing the difficulty of access to Muktananda's original Ashram, where both Nityananda and Shankarananda spent many years with him, they attempt to affirm a connection with authenticity, that is, the source of their own Guru's tradition, for themselves and their followers. Since 1986 Muktananda's Ashram has been in the sole possession of Gurumayi and in recent years closed off to all but invited devotees of Gurumayi. Casual visitors to Gurumayi's Ashram are only allowed to visit the Mahasamadhi shrine of Muktananda at certain times of the day leaving the rest of the Ashram closed to the public acting only as an organised retreat centre. Possibly because of the inaccessibility to Gurumayi's Ashram, Indian and a growing number of westerners interested in this tradition now go to the Mahasamadhi shrine of Bhagawan Nityananda in the village of Ganeshpuri, where access is permitted.

There is a clear sign of devotion presented by the pilgrimage to Bhagawan Nityananda. For those who are part of a Siddha Yoga Practice, it does seem that lineage and tradition are important towards informing what may be a legitimate Guru or movement. Returning to the source of the tradition may be for Nityananda and Shankarananda, or others from this tradition, a reclamation of the institutionalised charismatic authority of their Guru's tradition. A tradition that may not solely belong to Gurumayi, but also to others who were devotees of Swami Muktananda and wish to take up the banner. 'Many new religious bodies are created by schisms' (Stark & Bainbridge, 1979, p.117). Muktananda was of course not the only devotee of Bhagawan Nityananda to become a Guru in his own right, schisms within this relatively young tradition that these groups belong to are not new. There are others who uphold the same tradition of devotion to Bhagawan Nityananda separate from Muktananda and have their own devotees (Kodikal & Kodikal, 2005).

Conclusion

There are continuing connections between these two movements that extend from their prior affiliation with Swami Muktananda's Siddha Yoga. Most recently these connections have been shown through Nityananda's "In the Footsteps of Bliss" world tour. During Nityananda's tour Shankarananda's group Shiva Yoga hosted him and his followers in Melbourne. The movements discussed in this paper today seem firmly established in the tradition of Muktananda's Siddha Yoga Practice. It is now 25 years since the initial schism in Siddha Yoga occurred. Each group member I had the opportunity to interview or speak with was primarily concerned with their own Guru and tradition. Other manifestations appeared to add flavour to the family tree, however, because this

tradition is a Guru Disciple tradition, each individuals Guru and group appeared most relevant to them. Some of the newer devotees of these groups would have little knowledge of the period of schism in Siddha Yoga and others might even find it irrelevant to their present affiliation. The Guru's of the schisms appear also to emphasise the positive connections they have with each other through their devotion to Muktananda and his lineage rather than the differences of the past. In many New Religious Movements the loss of the leader is a difficult time of transition and upheaval of something the devotees and the leader have built together. Schisms represent a type of solution for some and having an intimate relationship with the Guru seems to have been beneficial for the devotee and the leader. These schisms, to some extent differ from the original movement, most notably because of the orientation or style of the Guru. Also the original movement is not left unchanged. Because of her own orientation and style, Siddha Yoga today, lead by Gurumayi, would appear to be a very different movement than that which Muktananda lead. Gurumayi's Siddha Yoga, although a continuation of the original movement has changed over time as much as the schisms it has given birth to. However, because of movements like Gurumayi's Siddha Yoga, Shanti Mandir and Shiva Yoga, Muktananda's Siddha Yoga Practice continues and grows, although, it now grows through a variety of organisations.

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