

Shri Kapilnath*Interviewed by Sven Davisson*

Sven: So Kapilnath, I understand that Mahendranath appointed you as the leader of the International Nath Order in 1989. You must have known him very well. What was he trying to do?

Kapilnath: Well Sven, I did know Shri Mahendranath well. During a period of about seven years I discussed with him all aspects of his teachings and intentions regarding his Nath Order, the International Nath Order. Shri Mahendranath is an interesting subject on many levels. He was not only a “westerner” who became the Guru of two ancient “eastern” sects, but he was also well acquainted with the spiritual and occult patterns of the West. His background in spiritual and occult pursuit ranges from his first pagan initiation at age 11 by his great-great-great Aunt “Clay” the Witch of Rottingdean England, to his discussions with Aleister Crowley. It was actually Crowley who suggested, that Shri Mahendranath then known as “Mr. Miles”; travel to India to seek further teachings and initiation. What Shri Mahendranath was trying to do in establishing the International Nath Order, (INO) was to recreate the lineage of Naths in a pattern of understanding and Attainment, which had all but vanished in Indian Nath sects. These ancient patterns he reasoned could only take rebirth in a new and perhaps more open minded land and environment.

S: The connection with Crowley is fascinating from a western occult perspective. What was the nature of their relationship?

K: Shri Mahendranath met Crowley during the latter’s widely publicized court case against Nina Hammet. They developed a rapport based on their mutual occult interests, discussed and played I understand, more than a few games of chess. Actually, Mahendranath and I discussed Crowley in some depth. A few of his revelations regarding Crowley might shine a new light on some of Master Therion’s writings. In any case, the important point for this interview, was the final opinion of Crowley that in order to learn more of the occult patterns of meditation, magick and Tantrika, Shri Mahendranath should travel to India to study with qualified Gurus.



S: I notice that you always refer to Shri Mahendranath. Wasn't the gentleman's last name "Miles"?

K: Yes it was, but he was given a new name at the time of Initiation. After reaching India in 1953, Mr. Miles was Initiated into the Adi Nath sect or Sampradaya as a Sannyasin and given the initiation name, Mahendranath. Towards the end of his life, Shri Mahendranath requested that as an author he be known and referred to as "Shri Gurudev Mahendranath".

S: Who is "Dadaji" then?

K: Well, Dadaji could be just about anyone. In India it is a bit like saying, "daddy", "granpa", "dear uncle", etc. It is a familiar colloquial term of endearment. Some of Mahendranath's disciples addressed him as such, but it is not really a proper name, per se.

S: Ok, now we have Shri Mahendranath. What was the Adi-Nath sect all about?

K: The Adi-Nath sect was one of several streams or sects of the greater Nath tradition. Fundamentally, the Naths looked toward Lord Shiva as a kind of prototype. In this sense they were Yogis like Shiva and dressed or even undressed as such. The "Ideal" of the Naths was the concept and attainment of the Avadhoot. This concept of Avadhoot, "The Unfettered One" is a subject worthy of an entire volume. It remains inside of Hindu or Sanatana Dharma as the highest goal of human life and experience. It is the natural Attainment of Unity between Macrocosm and Microcosm—the radical and natural union of the individual and Cosmic Spirit, the summation of the higher Yogas. Shri Mahendranath was initiated into the Adi Nath sect as a sannyasin or world renunciate, by Shri Lokanath the Avadhoot of UttaraKashi (Uttara Pradesh) India in 1953.

S: Wasn't Shri Mahendranath also the Guru of the Northern Tantriks, the Uttara Kaulas?

K: Yes, Shri Mahendranath was initiated as a sannyasin into the Uttara Kaulas by Pagala Baba and became his successor and Guru of the Order, as well as the Guru of the Adi Nath sect. Shri Mahendranath did not feel that being the Guru of two distinct sects to be the cause of any conflict in either theory or practice. In fact, it was his understanding that at an earlier time in history, the paths of Tantrika and the greater stream of the Naths,



including the Avadhoot tradition were all One. In this regard we must look back to what what was called the “Siddha” tradition. The Siddhas (Adepts) are a very ancient phenomena. They were not usually seen as a “sect” in as much as each “Siddha” or Adept who had attained represented only themselves. While the Siddhas were also an “initiatic” tradition, it was the success of a few Siddhas and their disciples over many generations, which showed and reflected the power and utility of lineage. It seems that the Nathas were a particular offshoot or manifestation of the Siddha traditon. The word “Siddha” is intended to refer to “one who has Attained”. This in itself reflects the idea of the prototypical Yogi Wizard of ancient India. The Nath tradition at the time of Matsendranath, typified a distinct manifestation of the Siddha lineage which reflected much of what is now thought of as Tantrika, the secret yogas and also held the ideal of the Avadhoot.

S: Did Shri Mahendranath indicate any reasoning why the more overt aspects of Tantrika were rejected by most Nath sects?

K: I think it fair to say that the Tantrik aspects referred to, largely relate to sexual expression or worship, particularly Shiva/Shakti or the he and she business. One way of explaining this is to remind that initiation into any “Guru” sect or initiatic lineage of this type involved the renunciation of the earth, heaven and celestial regions. In other words, one was only initiated into a sampradaya such as the Uttara Kaulas or Adi Nathas as a sadhu or sannyasin (world renouncer). An age old requirement of sannyasa was the observance of “brahmacharya”. This Sanskrit term actually means, absorbed in “Brahmin” or the Divine, (Cosmic Spirit). At some point, this term was given the meaning “celibate”. It can only be considered that changes in Indian society caused this new meaning to catch hold. The upshot of this change was that sadhus, sannyasins or holy men or woman with “consorts” were looked at with very crossed eyes. In other words, normal relations on sexual levels became forbidden. In this way, overtly “Tantrik” cults suffered a lot of bad public relations and went totally underground or were suppressed into oblivion. Most Nath sects in India today continue only as “celibate” sadhu orders. Part of the intention behind the International Nath Order was to put into motion a form of ancient Nathism which was not bound by the cultural traditions or superstitions of the land in which it was developed. Instead, the ideal was to pass along an ancient Guru lineage and focus on the functional elements of understanding, practice and Attainment that would lead us to success. This was also intended to make



the possibility of participation in an authentic and ancient initiatic lineage more accessible to those interested.

S: Did Shri Mahendranath pass on the traditions of the Adi Nath and Uttara Kaulas?

K: As discrete and distinct sadhu sects, Shri Mahendranath was the last and final Guru of both the Adi Nath and Uttara Kaula sects. In other words, the Adi Nath and Uttara Kaula sects died with him and became defunct. What he did pass on was the Guru tradition and initiation into the International Nath Order which was intended to be a non-sannyasin amalgamation of these two ancient lineages. Shri Mahendranath was very interested in seeing the seed wisdom, initiation and ancient lineage transplanted in new soil. As such, the INO is in no manner intended to be a “westernized” form of any “Hindu” sect. In the International Nath Order, English is the primary language and even Sanskrit is used as little as possible. While India was the birthplace and motherland of the Naths, it in no way has a “patent” or exclusive on wisdom or spiritual progress and Attainment.

S: I had thought that the Adi Nath sect and the Uttara Kaulas still existed in the West.

K: It was not Shri Mahendranath’s wish, will or intention to give the impression that the Adi Nath sect or the Uttara Kaulas continued after his death. Shri Mahendranath was the final Guru of both of these sects. I am aware that a few people claim otherwise, though this claim has been refuted by Shri Mahendranath since 1985. In an effort to clear up this matter, I wrote what I believe to be a discrete explanation entitled, “The Occult History of the Nath Order 1984-2003.” Actually, the “Occult History” is now in its second edition. The first version I wrote in my own words. After writing it, a number of people loudly suggested that I had made the story up. So, the current version consists of only an outline in my own words and uses digital scans of letters I received from Shri Mahendranath to tell the whole story. You can find the “History” on my personal web space at www.mahendranath.org. Frankly Sven, the story isn’t pretty and I was loath to write about it. At the same time, I had received so many requests to explain the situation, I felt the need to create a document to refer people to. I simply got tired of telling the same story over and over. Since the second version of the “History” no one has publicly questioned its authenticity or brought forward any evidence that suggests or supports a different version of events.



S: Does this mean that there is now no renunciate tradition inside of the International Nath Order?

K: Initiates of the INO are free to renounce whatever they feel is important to renounce. There are however, no vows made at the time of initiation that require one to renounce anything. Initiates of the INO are encouraged to renounce the five Kleshas (or Obstructions): Ignorance, Ego, Repulsion, Attachment and Clinging to Life. One's success with the renunciation of these few obstructions has much to do with the individual's progress, both spiritually and inside the INO. We probably shouldn't forget that the purpose of renunciation, in any form or formality, was to bring us closer to the Divine.

S: Does the Nath tradition carried forward by Shri Mahendranath maintain a historical Satguru tradition similar to other sects of Shaivism? If so, how has this tradition been changed in the movement of the Adi Nath and Uttara Kaula sects to the West.

K: The idea and reality of lineage and lineage holder remains important. The Naths have been and remain a Guru-centric initiatic lineage. This means that "something" has been passed down and maintained from individual to individual. What is being passed down has little to do with quaint customs, the "book" of holy sayings or even the secret decoder ring. It has much more to do with the spiritual vibration of a Cosmic Continuum, which includes the connection with the Spiritual predecessors of the line. This connection is an unbroken living thing. It is a vital relationship between the past and the present, the earthly and spiritual realms. I think on functional levels, little has changed. On human social levels I think that current patterns reflect a great lessening of formalities and social role playing.

S: I've visited Shri Mahendranath's website at www.mahendranath.org. Do you have plans to expand its current content?

K: Yes, we do plan to include practically all of Shri Mahendranath's writings on the website. As it is, most of the major writings are already up and available for download in many file formats for personal study and use. We also have an e-list or mailing list. This e-list is to announce the publication of new works and also a forum for people to ask questions and discuss the INO and the writings of Shri Mahendranath. All of this is offered freely for interested people. The main idea is to create a webspace where people



from all over the globe can get a chance to know more about the INO from their own computer terminals, at their own pace and time.

S: What is the “initiation” into the INO and why is it important?

K: By definition, an initiation is the start of something. In the case of the INO, it is looked at as a part of a process. The first thing is for the individual interested in the INO to contact an initiated member of the INO and begin to develop some rapport with that person. This primary contact is probably the best way to learn more and a chance to discuss and exchange ideas. If the individual is still interested in initiation, they must request it from the person they are in contact with. The Nath who has received the request for initiation evaluates the persons potential. After the request has been made, at some point, it is made known whether or not the initiation is going to happen and if so, when. It is then the responsibility of the person seeking initiation to travel and meet their Nath correspondent.

The Initiation itself is in the form of a rather simple ritual. The details of this are discussed with the Candidate prior to Initiation. The main aspect of the Initiation is a mind/spirit transmission. This transmission is the vital link and experience of an ancient lineage and Cosmic Continuum. That is, the Initiation is a link to and with the current Adepts, those of the distant past and the Cosmic Spirit. The utility of such a link on magickal levels should not be underestimated. If the new Nath is able to properly align with the agencies of lineage, present and past, swift progress is likely. Many of the finest exponents of the INO do not currently reside in a physical body.

S: Who would benefit by contact with the INO?

K: This is very difficult to say really. I would like to say that everyone could benefit, but this is neither completely true nor practical. I do think that many people could benefit from a closer look at the core values and teachings of the INO. At the same time, the INO is not for everyone. While the INO is extremely simple in all matters, it is also difficult. A host of specific qualities and karmas are needed to get very far. Nonetheless, the INO remains open to all who are interested. Where there is a will there is a way.

S: Is the Initiation a form of Kundalini Awakening then?



K: I religiously avoid the term Kundalini. In the broader scope of Tantrika and the Naths, Kundalini is a rather modern term. It has also been written about repeatedly in modern times and not all of this information is very useful. Ancient Naths referred only to the “Shakti”. This term means in essence, “energy” and is not confined in proper understanding to be only an inner energy. The “Shakti” is conferred at Initiation and is to be understood as just as much outer as inner. The point or crux of understanding the distinction is that it is the limited perceptual mechanism, which creates the condition of “inner” and “outer”. While there are inner processes, no small part of the goal is to experience and understand the union of microcosm and macrocosm. In this sense, and as a part of ancient tradition, the term Kundalini is deprecated in the INO.

S: Can you say a few words about MAGIKOS.

K: Yes, MAGIKOS is the decision making body of the INO. It is comprised of only the most developed of the INO initiates. Shri Mahendranath instituted this prior to his mahasamadhi (death). While I remain the current leader of MAGIKOS and my voice has considerable weight, all decisions made by MAGIKOS that effect the INO are discussed and then decided by democratic vote. MAGIKOS remains a secret Order. It has some specific functions outside of the administration of the INO, but these aspects remain secret as does the identity of its members. The membership of MAGIKOS includes the influence of spirits of the supreme substance no longer exclusively inhabiting the earth plane. It is the inner court and truly spiritual core of the INO.

S: How do you see the future of the INO?

K: I see a concord of delightful men and woman working together in harmony toward progress and the supreme Awakening. I see a group of powerful Adepts working to facilitate that this vision unfolds. I think that is enough to say or see. Thank you for your interest and this interview Sven.

