

Sex, Magic, and the Police: The Saga of Guru Jára

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ABSTRACT: The Guru Jára Path is a Czech new religious movement, founded in 1995 by Jaroslav (Jára) Dobeš and teaching an esoteric system mostly based on Shivaite Tantrism. Although teachings on sexuality are but a part of the Path's doctrine, rituals involving sexual practices led to slander by anti-cultists and police action. The movement's two leaders, Jára and Barbora Plášková, were sentenced to jail penalties (although a recourse to the Czech Constitutional Court is pending), and are currently detained in the Philippines, awaiting a final decision on their requests for asylum. What the Czech media describe as a legitimate police action against sexual abuse is denounced by the Path as systematic religious persecution.

KEYWORDS: Guru Jára Path, Guru Jára, Jaroslav Dobeš, Barbora Plášková, Sex Magic, Anti-Cult Movements in the Czech Republic, New Religious Movements in the Czech Republic, Neo-Tantrism.

The Making of a Guru

On June 23, 2019, I was trying the tofoiegras (a tofu meat-free foie gras) at Lehká hlava (Clear Head), the esoteric-themed vegetarian restaurant in Prague, and listening to the incredible stories told by members of the Guru Jára Path, a Czech new religious movement. They were professionals, and one of them was an academic. They reported they had been systematically harassed by the police and discriminated in their workplaces because of their faith. Their leaders were detained in the Philippines, in rat-infested detention centers for immigrants and refugees. The media would not leave them alone, and they keep being described as members of a perverted sex cult. They were quite surprised to learn that sex magic had in fact been seriously studied by scholars, including myself, that I understood their cultural background, and was willing to listen to their story

without prejudices. Although there were no academic sources about their movement, they generously shared their internal documents, and were willing to be interviewed even about very personal details. They also shared with me the most relevant hostile sources, including lurid articles published by the Czech media. Slowly, an extraordinary tale emerged, involving Tantra, sex magic, and the police.

Jaroslav (Jára) Dobeš was born on January 4, 1971, in Příbram, Czechoslovakia (present-day Czech Republic). As he later reported, he started seeing ghosts and experiencing other supernatural phenomena at age 5. At age 9, he decided to record his paranormal experiences in a journal, which was discovered by his parents. They believed he was suffering of some form of mental illness, and doctors prescribed heavy medications, which had a devastating effect on the young Jára. In November 1982, he tried to hang himself on a tree, but was saved by his best friend and taken to the hospital. There, he went through what he later described as a near-death experience, which oriented his life towards spirituality.

After the incident, he escaped from what he perceived as the oppressive, materialistic domestic atmosphere by devoting his time to rock climbing, in which he soon became quite proficient. In 1989, a few months before the fall of Communism in Czechoslovakia, Dobeš escaped to Italy, where he studied Roman Catholicism and monastic traditions. He also became acquainted with several esoteric teachings, from Kabbalah to Feng Shui, and met disciples of Julius Evola (1898–1974), whose teachings on Tantra “inspired him immensely” (Plášková 2019). He spent time in Rome and in climbing areas and natural hermitages in Italy, including Porto Venere, on the Ligurian coast, Lumignano, near Vicenza, Sperlonga, located between Rome and Naples, and Arco, in the Province of Trento.

Arco was both an important spiritual center, with a famed Marian shrine and esoteric legends connected with its castle, and a place where Jára could cultivate his passion for rock climbing. In 1991, he started working as a professional rock climber and instructor in Italy, Spain, and France. He claimed he met in Italy, in 1992, a mysterious spiritual teacher he referred to as “Cagliostro the Second,” under whose guidance he spent four months studying “seals, symbols, and evocations,” and was introduced to magical texts of the Renaissance (Guru Jára 2016a; Guru Jára 2018; Plášková 2019; for the story of the movement, I also rely

on Manek 2015 and on interviews I conducted with mentors and students of the Path in Prague in June 2019).

His spiritual interests, however, led Jára to seek the ancient wisdom in what he regarded as the spiritual centers of the world, although followers later claimed he had already reached enlightenment in 1991 in Arco, at the fountain in the village of San Martino when he was returning from weeks spent in the caves of the famous rock climbing area of Massone. In 1995, on the Dune of Pilat, in the French Arcachon Bay, he received a revelation commanding him to go to Jerusalem, where another revelation sent him to Egypt. There, he reported that he received his higher initiation, in 1995, from a spiritual entity, while spending a night inside the Pyramid of Menkaure, the smallest of the three pyramids of Giza, realizing his own status was divine. In the same year 1995, he started offering his professional services as an astrologer and gathering the first disciples, and taught his first summer school in Fontainebleau, France.

After his initiation in Egypt, he received again “instructions in form of an apparition” that he should go to India, where he would meet his guru. He also traveled around Asia and in South America. In India, he spent time in the ashram of Swami Nagananda (1951–2006) in Bukkapatnam, Andhra Pradesh. He performed austerities and pilgrimages, and developed a special connection with the Mahakaleshwar Jyotirlinga in Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh, one of the twelve Jyotirlinga shrines honoring the generative power of Shiva.

Nagananda recommended that he continued the study of Tantric Shivaism, his main interest, under Guru Anahdan (?–2005) in Haridwar, Uttarakhand. This part of the story has been disputed by critics, who suspect that Anahdan (unlike Nagananda, a well-known historical figure with followers also in the West) may be a figment of Jára’s imagination, the more so because Jára signed some of his own texts with the name of Anahdan, both to claim his heritage and for more subtle “energetic, karmic reasons” (Guru Jára 2016a). However, I interviewed in Prague, in June 2019, early members of Jára’s organization who claimed to have been to India and met Anahdan in Arunachala, before he died in 2005.

Jára claims to have been initiated as a *sadhu* in India, and to have experienced (and later solved) some problems with Anahdan, who did not approve of his teaching Westerners hopelessly immersed in a consumerist culture. In 1996, upon his return to the Czech Republic, Jára started teaching regularly a group of disciples, who later formed the Guru Jára Path. The first meetings took place in

the home of Dr. Mila Plášková, a well-known astrologer, in Zlín, whose two daughters Barbora and Kristýna will later play an important role in Jára's movement.

On May 30, 1996, Jára offered his first public lecture in the Czech Republic, also in Zlín. He took some followers to a pilgrimage to India, and offered a second summer school in Tatranská Lomnica, Slovakia. Evening meetings in clubs and tea houses were conducted around Czechia, together with more ambitious seminars and festivals.

The festival entitled “Days of Spiritual Activities,” held on 15 and 16 September 1997 in the Museum of Natural History of Olomouc, attracted considerable attention and was later regarded as a crucial step towards the formation of the Path as an institutionalized spiritual organization (Manek 2015, 10–1). 1997 also saw the first seminars, in the Beskids Mountains, where the themes of Tantric sexuality and reincarnation were openly discussed and formed the basis of spiritual practices.

Among the early disciples was Dr. Eva Bučková, then a judge at the Zlín branch of the Regional Court of Brno. She displayed remarkable telepathic powers, and became a lecturer and a close associate of Jára, before turning against him in the 2007 crisis. By 1998, the courses and seminars had already proved so successful that, after a new successful pilgrimage to India, a monastery was inaugurated in the village of Odrlice, near Olomouc. Other smaller centers called *kitakus* or *tao ki tak* (playing on both the Japanese word for “place of welcome” and the Czech expression “tak i tak,” meaning “either way”) followed, in 1999 in Zlín and Olomouc, Czech Republic, in Dharamshala, India, and in the village of Horní Bečva in the Beskids Mountains, the latter a smaller, secluded branch of the Odrlice monastery.

This was the tolerant Czech Republic of President Václav Havel (1936–2011) and Jára's Tantric teachings about sexuality were not regarded as scandalous, or at least were permitted within a general framework of tolerance. Jára launched projects that resonated with the liberal, alternative subculture of the post-Communist students and professionals, including the *čajodárné putování* (tea wanderings), which visited and mapped some hundred Czech teahouses, which had become a preferred place for free discussions about politics and culture. The project was favorably reviewed by the Czech media.

Some disciples started coming from other countries, and in January 1999, Jára organized his first international seminar in the island of Mindoro in the Philippines. Pilgrimages continued—in 1999, to Egypt—as well as seminars and lectures. Even some Czech universities invited Jára to speak about Tantrism and alternative spirituality.

In 1999, Jára published his first book, *Pilgrims to Immortality*, edited by Barbora Plášková, who had emerged in the meantime as his closest disciple. The book will be followed by many others, one of the most important being *Casanova Sútra* (2011), an esoteric novel including Jára's main teachings. In 2000, the movement launched its first Web site and in 2001, its own magazine, *Poetrie*. Seminars and festivals around the Czech Republic gathered thousands of followers. They were organized from 2002 by a foundation called The Little Prince, and after 2004, on a smaller scale, by the newly established Poetrie Esoteric Institute, which functioned more like a university with classes in various esoteric disciplines. In each year 2000 and 2001, four festivals lasted for several days in Zlín, Olomouc, and Prague, generating considerable attention.

With the new millennium came the founding of the Czech Telepathic Association, devoted to study parapsychological phenomena in the Czech Republic. The Association became well-known for the championships of telepathy it organized every year. The tea wanderings extended to Slovakia. Books were supplemented with CDs including music and guided meditations. Jára also founded the Ateliers of Soul (for men) and the Ateliers of Women's Souls (for women), to prepare “mentors,” i.e. teachers authorized to deliver his teachings to a growing number of students.

The Time of the Trials

Jára's activities did not go unnoticed from the Czech anti-cult movement. The political climate was changing, and the Czech society was becoming more conservative. Tantric teachings about sexuality were interpreted by anti-cultists and the media as sexual license and orgies. Although anti-cultists had started targeting the movement in 1999, the year 2001 marked the starting point of a massive campaign against the Guru Jára Path that extended from the anti-cult movement and some media to the police, and eventually led to the arrest of Jára

and a significant reduction of the number of the movement's members. These incidents are discussed below, in the concluding paragraph.

While the media had reported the festivals favorably in 2000, as the pressure from the anti-cult movement mounted, they remained largely silent about Jára's initiatives in 2001 and beyond. The activities, however, continued. In 2002, a set of Tarot cards designed by Jára was put on sale and became a bestseller. In the same year, a new form of festival known as the Symposium of Esoteric Science was inaugurated in the Olomouc area. Another *kitaku* was opened in Hampi, Karnataka, India.

In 2003, in part because of the new, less favorable political climate at home and the attacks of the Czech anti-cult movement, Jára moved to Asia (Thailand, then Nepal), but until 2007 he still returned periodically to the Czech Republic to teach and to introduce his books and artistic photographs. It is also reported that Jára interpreted the election of conservative Václav Klaus as President of the Czech Republic in 2003 as an omen of persecution for alternative spirituality and worldviews. "It's over. We are not going home," he said when he learned of the election while he was in Malaysia (Manek 2015, 74). Klaus will remain President for ten years, until 2013, and gain international notoriety for his criticism of the European Union, praise of the repressive policies of Russian President, Vladimir Putin, and opposition to the Prague Gay Pride.

Under media pressure, the Path decided to cancel the larger festivals and to focus on the preparation of mentors, the internal activities, and the pilgrimages, with Jára leading personally the members to discover the mystical heritage of France, Spain, and Morocco as well as Thailand, Laos, Nepal, and Japan. A new center was open, the first in Prague, in 2003, to be followed by one in Brno, but the monastery in Odrlice was closed in 2005 and sold, and plans to build another national center in the Czech Republic had to be postponed indefinitely.

Even after 2007, Jára continued teaching Czech students via the Internet, and many went to visit him in Asia and participated in further pilgrimages organized and led by the master. Meanwhile, in the Czech Republic and elsewhere, successful exhibitions of Jára's art works continued to be organized, some of them in 2011 in connection with the promotion of his novel *Casanova Sútra*.

Some of the Asian retreats were organized in the Philippines, where in 2011, Jára and his main co-worker, Barbora Plášková, opened an ashram in remote

Siargao, a part of the island group of Mindanao. The ashram offered a variety of spiritual and sport activities, and became the center of the movement. It continued in this role even after 2015, when Jára and Plášková were arrested and detained in the Immigration Detention Center of Bagong Diwa, near Manila, where they remain at the time of this writing. Retreats still take place in Siargao, and courses are taught in the Czech Republic under the leadership of seven senior mentors. However, police and media pressure have reduced the number of members from 4,000 in the early 2000s to less than 500 in 2019.

A Tantric System

The main source of the teachings of Guru Jára is Shivaite Tantrism, although his books also include references to Egyptian, Tibetan, Christian, and Kabbalistic teachings. In Jára's books, the readers meet a plethora of Christian mystics, some regarded as orthodox and some as heretic by the mainline Christian churches, as well as such classic Tantric masters as Padmasambhava (8th century), Tilopa (988–1069), and Tilopa's disciple, Naropa (11th century). Some of the more recent authors mentioned are Julius Evola, Aleister Crowley (1875–1947), Wilhelm Reich (1897–1957), Paul Brunton (1898–1981), and Theos Casimir Bernard (1908–1947?), the American "White Lama" whose uncle was Pierre Arnold Bernard, aka "Oom the Omnipotent" (1875–1955), the flamboyant founder of the Tantrik Order of America who had nonetheless an important role in introducing postural yoga to the West (Laycock 2013). Theos Bernard disappeared in Punjab in 1947, and was reported killed during the riots connected with the Partition between India and Pakistan. His body, however, was never found. The novel *Casanova Sútra* argues that perhaps the "White Lama" did not die in 1947 and was living in the Himalayas in the 1990s—or perhaps not, as the story is told in a way to leave room for doubt.

While he quotes several authors and masters, Jára believes that all genuine esoteric teachings can be traced to one source, which started being spread throughout the world during the reign of pharaoh Nyuserre Ini, the sixth ruler of the Egyptian Fifth Dynasty, who lived in the second half of the 25th century BCE. Jára discusses how the Sun Temple of Nyuserre Ini included hieroglyphs with a penis penetrating a triangle, an allusion to what would be later known as Tantric

teachings. From Nyuserre Ini proceeds a line of initiates, the “last historically documented” of whom was Pythagoras (569–495 BCE).

Crowley is an important reference for Jára. He believes that, as Crowley taught, we are living since 1904 in a qualitatively new time, the Aeon of Horus, and that Crowley was actually the reincarnation of Sir Edward Kelley (1555–1597 or 1598), the co-worker of British magus John Dee (1527–1608 or 1609). Both Dee and Kelley lived for several years in Bohemia. Jára claims that John Dee saw Nyuserre Ini in a magical mirror, and was commanded to establish the Eight League, a first attempt at reuniting the esoteric teachings scattered through Asia, Europe, and the newly discovered America (Guru Jára 2011, 265). Dee’s attempt was left unfinished, but was completed by Crowley in Cairo in 1904, when he received through his wife *The Book of the Law*, the holy scripture for the new aeon. Jára claims that the “inspiration of Crowley” played a role in his own mystical experience in Egypt in 1995 (Plášková 2019).

Jára’s magical system includes doctrines similar to Crowley’s about incubi, succubi, and “magical children,” as well as the repeated use of the word “Abrahadabra” to produce specific magical effects. More important for the Path, however, is the mantra “AleluJahRa,” which both includes the name of Jára, and celebrates him as a spiritually accomplished master, and refers to the Egyptian god Ra, as it can be translated as “Praised be the Holy Ra.” Since “já” in Czech means “me,” the mantra also remembers the initiates that God is inside them, and every human being is the center and co-creator of his or her own universe.

Just like Jára, all the teachers he mentions were controversial. Those who heard about Jára from the Czech media only, may easily believe that his teachings deal exclusively, or at least mostly, with sexuality. However, the majority of the Path’s courses are not about sex. Among the members I interviewed in June 2019, some had been attracted to the Path by the teachings on sexuality and couple relationship, but the majority mentioned courses on personal self-awareness, Tarots, Feng Shui and astrology as more important in motivating their decision to join the group. Astrology, in fact, emerged as the single most important factor.

Jára’s system of astrology is called “Astrofokus,” and incorporates Egyptian and Indian elements. According to the Path,

Astrology serves as a system of mutual communication between humans and the divine. All astronomical phenomena—the movement and cycles of planets and stars represent the visible dimension of divine forces. The particular planetary constellations at an

individual's time of birth form a divine time map for one's life. Knowledge of this cosmic resonance becomes a tool for maintaining the perpetual interaction between heaven and earth (Guru Jára Samadhi 2018).

Astrofocus is presented as a technique that can identify and transfer relevant information about the constellations directly into the student's subconscious.

Eventually, Astrofocus art emerged as an important part of Jára's teachings and public image. Jára himself produced collages built around his artistic photographs of women (and occasionally men), both naked and dressed, capturing their astrological personality and at the same time their "essence" or "soul." Jára claims that,

these collages can speak [to] and heal not only the woman they mirror, but also individuals who deal (in their profoundly different lives) with similar feelings, moods, inner restrictions or life situations (Dobeš 2007a, 2).

He has produced hundreds of Astrofocus portraits (Dobeš 2007b), and the course teaching how to express themselves through Astrofocus art is one of the most popular among the Path's students.

A parallel development is Astrofashion, which teaches students how to select clothing in harmony with their astrological identity. The Astrofashion faculty developed its own collections in Nepal and Bali, and popular female magazines such as *Elle* noticed the novel idea of women dressing according to astrology.

As mentioned earlier, in 2002, Jára offered for sale to the general public his own set of Tarot cards, built on three symbolic layers and including references to Tantra, Taoism, and the *I Ching*. They were appreciated by collectors for their artistic value, but within the Path, as one mentor told me in my interviews, they "are used for everything," from reading the flow of energies to assess the situation of each student (and of non-students, who also ask for readings) on the karmic journey through multiple reincarnations. Curiously, some of the cards depict vampires. In fact, Jára considers psychic vampires as a threat, and teaches techniques aimed at strengthening the aura, thus creating a magical protection against them.

Another subject attracting students to the Guru Jára Path is Feng Shui. The original variation of this classic Chinese art or science taught by Jára is known as ARTantra. It teaches that the five elements of the Taoist tradition—water, wood, fire, earth, and metal—are the basic components of both the human microcosm

and the universal macrocosm. The harmony of the five elements guides how homes and workplaces should be properly arranged but goes beyond that. Even relationships, romantic and others, can be properly arranged and harmoniously lived by applying the principles of ARTantra.

Tantra Yoga, also known as Aurarelux and culminating in what Jára calls SurfTantra, is the third main part of the Czech master's teachings. Based on Indian Tantra and other sources, Jára teaches that the material world is guided by energy. Energy, in turn, is guided by the human mind. And the human mind is guided by human will, faith, emotions, and the soul.

Contrary to popular preconceptions, Tantrism is a complex system that does not deal with sexuality only. Jára's Tantric teachings include meditation, visualization, physical exercises, and Tantric healing. In 2012, for example, Jára taught his European followers from the Philippines a technique of "bungee jumping meditation," to be practiced during a pilgrimage to the mountains of Switzerland. Meditating during the bungee jumping was supposed to teach "meditative calm of normal practice in stressful situations" (Manek 2015, 118–19). Bungee jumping meditation is part of a wider set of techniques, devised by Jára to customize traditional meditation methods in a way understandable by contemporary Western disciples.

Meditation is part of the "dry path" in Tantrism, while sexual techniques and rituals are part of the "wet path." Jára is a master of both paths, but the wet path is not about sexuality only. As Jára explains,

Tantra is unique in that, unlike in Vedanta or Buddhism which consider the world and the body as an illusion (*maya*), Tantra considers these as expressions of the Mother Goddess, Shakti impregnated by the reflection of Shiva (Guru Jára 2016b [English transl.], 39).

In the wet path, the material world is not "the irreconcilable enemy" but a tool that, aptly used, may lead to enlightenment (Guru Jára 2016b [English transl.], 39).

Although they were not in the majority, some of the students I interviewed did report that they joined the Path trusting that its teachings on love and sexuality may rescue a relationship that was going downhill, or improve the quality of their sexual life. Tantric sex is different from recreational sex: "in sex, you want to see even more sex, but in tantra you want to turn sex into divine light" (Guru Jára 2011, 411).

According to Jára, several problems in these fields are due to “hooks” and “thorns.” These concepts have not been invented by Jára. They have a venerable tradition in both Tantrism and esoteric Buddhism and Taoism, and are present in the teachings of other contemporary neo-Tantric groups. Jára mentions a quote attributed to Kūkai (Kōbō-Daishi, 774–835), the Japanese monk who founded esoteric Shingon Buddhism:

When you visit your former mistresses, you will see white worms eating through the vagina and blue flies flying in her mouth. This scene will give you deep regret and unspeakable shame.

Jára’s interpretation is that,

in cases where new life was not conceived during sex, the “living” remnants of this union of the two bodies will remain in the mistresses through a life-giving act. Only those who have attained at least a degree of samadhi through meditation can see it (Jára 2013).

The Path also quotes comments by Taisha Abelar, a former associate of Carlos Castaneda (1925–1998), who argues that male lovers leave “energy filaments” or “larvae” inside the women’s bodies, to be cleansed by respecting chastity for at least seven years (Hlavinka 2019). Simply explained, hooks (for women) and thorns (for men) are invisible marks left by previous sexual relationships. These marks are different, and the Path warns against considering and treating them as if thorns and hooks were of the same nature—they aren’t.

Even after the relationship has ended, the previous partners, consciously or unconsciously, may still exert an influence through the hooks and thorns and, in the worst cases, act as psychic vampires, drain the victim of her energy, and poison her present sexual and romantic life. In these cases, rituals of “unhooking” and “cleaning up of thorns” are needed. They are the most controversial aspect of the teachings of the Guru Jára Path and are discussed in the following section.

Unlike in other Tantric paths or movements, such as the Romanian MISA, coitus reservatus or karezza (sexual intercourse without ejaculation) is taught but not prescribed as mandatory. One feature immediately noticed by the observers of the Guru Jára Path is the presence of many children. Conception is at the center of several esoteric teachings. Depending on the sexual positions during the intercourse (so that students of the Path may be able to ascertain from their horoscope in which positions their parents produced them, the most favorable being the one with woman on top) and other factors, the energy of the couple’s

Tantric connection may attract spiritual beings (incubi and succubi), or “aliens who live near a certain star,” who will either simply “pay a visit” or incarnate on earth (Guru Jára 2011, 410). In fact, if a human child is conceived, the incubus or succubus return to the astral world, their mission fulfilled. If there is no conception, these beings create a hook, around which they start building an “astral nest,” their “home,” which can manifest itself physically, creating problems for the woman, or cause her to be “fertilized by astral forces” (Guru Jára 2011, 422–41).

These teachings should be understood through the Buddhist doctrine of the four different types of conception, of which Jára finds hints in the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṅgīti*, a text attributed to Buddha Shakyamuni himself. A soul could enter the uterus “completely unconsciously, blindly, animally.” These are souls who were in a previous life on Planet Earth animals or low-level humans. In the second case, the souls enter the uterus consciously, although they often believe it is “a cave or some kind of shelter,” but lose their memories. Half of these souls are of aliens from other worlds. The third group are souls that “enter the uterus consciously, are aware of everything throughout pregnancy and often tell the mother about the world they came from.” The fourth category includes the avatars, who consciously control all the process of incarnation (Guru Jára 2011, 415–17).

Periods of celibacy are also important tools for the Tantric disciple. Jára teaches that,

Paradoxically a fundamental tantric exercise is celibacy for four months, during which men wait for a first nocturnal emission. If they occur regularly, between twenty-seven and thirty-three days, the lunar phase in which the ejaculation occurs should be noted. ... If the emission is more often ..., it means everything is healthy, though the energy is a little erratic, like a thunderbolt...The worst diagnosis is if the emission doesn't arrive until the thirty-fourth day or beyond, because it means that the chi energy is weak or the kundalini is blocked (Guru Jára 2016b [English ed.], 39).

Hooks and thorns do not exhaust Jára's teachings on sexuality, which are deeply connected with astrology. Saturn corresponds to the “Don Juan type,” and Jupiter to the “Casanova type.” The first is named after the literary character of Don Juan, based on the historical Spanish aristocrat Miguel Mañara (1627–1679), although at the end of the opera of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791) Don Juan is taken to Hell by the Devil, while in fact the real-life Mañara converted to a strict Catholicism, devoted his last years to charity, and is even

being considered by the Catholic Church for beatification. The second refers to the Venetian adventurer Giacomo Casanova (1725–1798), who was also interested in alchemy and spent the last part of his life in present-day Czech Republic. Simply speaking, the sexuality of the Don Juan type centers on penetration, and of the Casanova type on orgasm. Women may also belong to the Casanova or Don Juan types, and determining a person's type is crucial for examining his or her relationships, sexual life, and Tantric exercises best suitable for each student.

Jára believes that Tantric teachings, no matter under what name, secretly exists also in Christianity, and include both the dry and the wet paths. He suggests that, although Christian scholars normally attribute connections between Roman martyr St Valentine (226–269) and love to legends created several centuries after he died, in fact the saint deserves his popular fame as the saint of love, since he secretly taught his disciples both the dry and the wet path, with practices similar to the later Indian Tantrism (Hlavinka 2019).

Confidential teachings of the Path also concern the divine status of Jára and Plášková. They are proposed as hypotheses rather than as dogmatic teachings. Most students believe that Jára is an avatar of Shiva, in the same position of Jesus, who was also a manifestation of Shiva. Guru Jára is thus “divine” but is part of a hierarchy reminiscent of Theosophy, which includes higher entities. He volunteered to incarnate in a Communist country, Czechoslovakia, which he describes as one of the most materialistic countries in the world, and to understand gradually his own divine status, answering a call from some unidentified Higher Powers in the spiritual world. Plášková is regarded in turn as a manifestation of the fierce Hindu goddess Durga.

Rituals—and How the Path Got in Trouble

Every Friday, members of the Path engage in meditation. Friday was chosen in 2010 at the times of the police raid, as Friday evening is the quietest time in Czech jails. Members can visit a center but can also meditate at home, spiritually united with the mentors and other students. The first Friday of each month, the Path proposes the “Star Meditation,” a collective ritual offered in the movement's centers. Gatherings are organized to celebrate dates relevant in the master's life or of astrological significance.

As mentioned earlier, the mantra “AleluJahRa” has a special position in the Path, and its recitation is recommended daily. Many students learned the Satva sunrise ritual (short yoga and meditation session, followed by prayer) in the Philippines, and keep performing it every day. Tantric rituals for individuals and couples are performed for days of full moon, new moon, eclipses, or spiritual feasts. Additional sets of exercises are prescribed for long-term retreats. Some form of daily spiritual practice is recommended to all students, but each can choose a personalized formula.

The festivals and public events of the early 2000s are organized on a smaller scale, usually twice a year, due to the media campaigns and the reduction in the number of members. The average attendance dwindled from several thousands to 150–180.

Students, however, regularly gather in the Philippines, where most Czech members go at least once a year, and several more than once. There, collective events and festivals can still be organized.

Although no longer personally led by Jára, pilgrimages, a key feature in the life of the Path, also continue to destinations such as Egypt, Jerusalem, Santiago de Compostela, India, and Nepal. Another important teaching in the Path is the “spiritual trekking.” Spiritual trekking is regarded as the original spiritual teaching of Jára, who was a professional climber in his youth. It refers to the symbolic climbing of the ten highest mountains on the earth, i.e. the ten major chakras of the world. “Spiritual trekking” may refer to an individual journey through life, but is also the name of one of the most popular courses offered by the Path and open to everybody, including non-members and even atheists. “Spiritual trekking” may also be learned through actual trekking, preferably in areas where the energy of the environment may interact with the student’s own energy in a special way—holy mountains, forests, traditional pilgrimage sites.

The Path is known, and controversial, for its teachings and rituals of sacred sexuality, particularly the “unhooking” of women. All kind of physical sexual relations create hooks, the strongest coming from intercourse with ejaculation (see AuraRelax.com 2011, a rare complete description of the unhooking of one particular woman), but not all hooks are negative. And not all women have hooks damaging their normal life. In its heydays, the Path had some 3,000 female members. Only some 300 of them, or 10%, were counseled, or they asked, to go through the unhooking ritual.

The ritual first requests that horns be detected. Jára claim to have

studied the “diagnostic divination” of the state of *vasanas* (hooks, thorns), e.g. from a shape that herbs thrown on the chest creates or water spilled in the area of the abdomen, both of which are energetically charged and “incandescent” for many hours. Herbs and water then not only show problems of spiritual energy in the body, but also heal them (Hlavinka 2019, quoting words from Jára during an interview he gave in the detention center in the Philippines).

For clairvoyant persons, as Chinese and Japanese esoteric masters had already mentioned some one thousand years ago,

“hooks” look like luminous worms, which take the best life energy from the woman’s womb and transfer it towards her former partners (Hlavinka 2019).

Unhooking involved the sexual penetration of the woman by Jára, with sacred energy thus flowing in, without orgasm or ejaculation by the master, preceded by breathing exercises performed by the woman. Objections that this was simply a way for Jára to enjoy the company of many women are dismissed by a Czech academic who is himself a member of the movement, Pavel Hlavinka, by arguing that, first, by definition in an enlightened master “there is no residue of human ego bound to bodily desires.” Second, for him,

it is certainly no kind of fun because all negative energies from the former partners of the concerned woman are being passed onto the Guru and he must subsequently undergo a lot of cleansing lasting for many days (Hlavinka 2019; see also AuraRelax.com 2011).

In addition,

fourteen is the maximum number of hooks that the initiated tantric can remove during one session. A large number could kill him. His karma would get “over-burnt” and he would have an accident, or another fatal event would happen to him (Guru Jára 2011, 63).

Women with more than fourteen “bad” hooks (i.e. who had more than fourteen partners, as each partner creates one hook only, no matter how many intercourses he had with the woman) should go through the ritual more than once. In some cases, Jára decided to remove only the worst hooks, leaving the others (AuraRelax.com 2011).

Based on my interviews, it is true that Barbora Plášková, as reported by the dissidents to the police, often attended the rituals (although some of the unhooked women I interviewed reported she looked to the other side, to avoid

any potential embarrassment), her role, as a high-level Tantric initiate, being to concentrate the energy and keep the magic circle sealed.

I interviewed several women who went through the unhooking. They described their experience as exhilarating, but in the sense of a “spiritual orgasm” rather than in common sexual terms. Some reported that this status persisted for several weeks. Some requested to be “unhooked” because of problems in their lives. Others simply wanted to speed up their spiritual progress.

Unhooking has been stopped in the Path, since only Jára is authorized to perform the ritual and he is in a detention center in the Philippines. Before being arrested, he was taking steps to teach advanced Tantra to other mentors, which may have enabled them to unhook female students, but the severe and difficult training could not be completed because of the events in the Philippines. The devotees hope that Jára’s legal problems may be solved and he may both teach other male mentors the unhooking techniques and perhaps start performing again the ritual himself. On what would happen otherwise, or after Jára’s death, members can only speculate, as the master has not yet offered clear indications. It is also important to note that unhooking is not an essential part of the Path’s doctrine, neither a mandatory part of the spiritual activities. In fact, as some of my interviewees pointed out to me, the Path has now survived for several years without any unhooking ritual taking place.

If women have hooks, men have thorns. As mentioned earlier, they have a different nature from hooks. They are invisible, but can be seen by adequately trained female Tantric initiates. Thorns are located at the level of the first chakra of the Hindu tradition, i.e. between the anus and the penis. Female initiates can help men by locating the thorns and “cleaning up” them with their hands or tongues.

Perhaps because male students represented only 25% of the Path’s membership, the cleaning up of thorns was somewhat less controversial than the unhooking, and largely eluded the attention of the anti-cultists and the police.

A Struggling Community

In its heydays, the Path had 4,000 students, some 3,000 of them women. As mentioned earlier, persecutions reduced the number to circa 450. Most of them

are in the Czech Republic, but there is also a functioning community in Japan, and members in Australia, Germany, the United States, Italy, France, Spain, Bulgaria, and other countries.

Guru Jára is considered the source and the leader of the movement. He continues to write books and to give instructions from the detention center where he is detained in the Philippines. There are two main centers of the movement, in the Czech Republic and in the Philippines. In Czechia, there are functioning centers in Prague, Brno, and Ostrava, under the national leadership of a body of seven members, known as the Lodge of the 12 Ra Initiations, under which operate a lesser directional body of 24 members. In the Philippines, the ashram has four permanently resident nuns, and “temporary monks” (and nuns) coming from other countries to stay in Siargao for some weeks or months. Most Czech members visit Siargao once or twice a year.

In 2011, in view of the controversies, an extraordinary measure (which was later repealed) was taken. For Czech (and Bulgarian) women participating in the Spiritual Trekking pilgrimage to Asia (that year, to Thailand), in addition to having attended the Path’s courses where the nature of the movement’s Tantric rituals was clearly explained, it was required “the written permission of their senator (each senator has an office in its [sic] district, where he/she regularly officiates),” authorizing the female devotee to participate in a pilgrimage where a Tantric ritual involving sexual intercourse “may happen” (Manek 2015, 109). Indeed, Czech senators *were* approached: some were sympathetic and four or five even signed the statements for multiple female students, others reacted with hostility or did not even understand what exactly was going on.

An important part of the Path’s activity is promoting the books and the Astrofocus artistic works of Jára. Even after the police action against the movement and its leaders, new books were regularly published and art exhibitions organized, and some media distinguished between the controversy surrounding Jára as a spiritual leader and his praiseworthy artistic achievements. After the police had raided the movement in 2010 (see below, under “Issues/Challenges”), the devotees were able to organize nine Astrofocus exhibitions throughout the Czech Republic in 2011, followed by one at the University Library in Olomouc in 2012, one in Stockholm, Sweden, in 2013, and a yearly one in the Castle of Letovice from 2012 to 2015. Two exhibitions had been previously organized in Athens, Greece, in 2009 and 2010.

The settings of these exhibitions are also significant. In 2010, photographs by Jára were exhibited in conjunction with a seminar in the Castle of Litomyšl, a few blocks from the Portmoneum, the extraordinary home of art collector Josef Portman (1893–1968) that Czech esoteric artist Josef Váchal (1884–1969) decorated with murals depicting demons, Theosophical masters, and Christian images (Introvigne 2018, 218–20). In 2011, Astrofocus collages were exhibited at Duchcov Castle, where Casanova spent the last thirteen years of his life between 1785 and 1798.

Two exhibitions, at the Rock Café in Prague in 2011 and in the city of Jablonec nad Nisou in 2013, were cancelled by the local organizers due to media attacks, but in general at least a part of the art community remained willing to celebrate Jára's artistic achievements even after he was convicted for sexual abuse in Zlín and detained in the Philippines.

In 2011, the Path organized a workshop in the island of Siargao in the Philippines. Echoing other religious leaders of the past, Jára expressed his opinion that “this was the place,” and that the search for a spiritual center of the Path outside of the Czech Republic had ended. Land was acquired, and a swampy jungle was gradually transformed into the Rishikesh Retreat Center, thanks to the voluntary labor of the devotees. Retreats and spiritual activities went initially through a “Vivaldi period” (2012–Winter 2014), as they followed a rhythm inspired by the group of violin concerti *The Four Seasons* by Italian composer Antonio Vivaldi (1678–1741), and a “Sengai period” (2014–2015), when Jára explored the various elements of the painting *Universe*, by Japanese Zen monk and artist Sengai Gibon (1750–1837).

After 2015, for reasons explained in the next paragraphs, the activities in Siargao should continue without Jára and Plášková. But other mentors direct the retreats, and Path members from the Czech Republic and other countries continue to visit the island regularly.

A Never-Ending Legal Saga

As mentioned earlier, the first massive attacks against the Guru Jára Path by the Czech anti-cult movement date back to 2001, although the Path had already attracted the malevolent attention of the quite active Czech anti-cultists a couple

of years earlier. In the same year 2001, the branch monastery in the Beskids Mountains was burned to the ground by arsonists. Those responsible were never identified. Another branch monastery, called B7, was quietly opened to replace it in 2002; it was eventually sold in 2011, to finance the construction of the ashram in the Philippines. In 2004, arsonists attacked the main monastery in Odrlice. The devotees managed to save the building, but the property of a neighbor was destroyed. Physical violence continued to be a feature of the anti-cult campaign. Jára himself barely escaped two attempts to assault him in 2005, which he regarded as consequences of the campaign.

This is hardly understandable in the heart of the European Union, but relates to a narrative that the very active Czech anti-cult movement managed to sell to most local media and ultimately to the police as well. Rituals such as the unhooking were presented as simple pretexts to satisfy the lust of Jára. What for the Path was a Tantric ritual became for the anti-cultists and the media simply glorified rape. Jára was depicted as a pervert and predator, and the women in the movement as either accomplices or “vulnerable,” brainwashed victims. Jára had noted himself that certain Tantric rituals with a century-old tradition he witnessed in India “may appear to an uninitiated person like a sexual orgy” (Guru Jára 2016a). His own rituals encountered the same fate.

The anti-cult movement had put the police on the track of the Guru Jára Path since the early 2000s, but the situation precipitated after Jára and Plášková announced that they were leaving Europe definitively in 2007. A preliminary investigation of Jára had been started based on the complaint of a woman who had been unhooked but, rather than to the ritual, objected to Jára’s alleged misrepresentation of his own Tantric qualifications and initiations. Although before their departure Jára and Plášková had been interrogated, but no charges had been filed at the end of the preliminary investigation, the police placed both Jára in 2007 and Plášková in the 2009 in their wanted list since their whereabouts were unknown. Only later (2010) the police claimed Jára and Plášková had fled abroad to escape arrests. In the case of Plášková, the police wanted to interrogate her about a defamation charge filed by a female doctor, who had been accused in an article published by the Path of willingly killing her patients. Although it was unclear whether Plášková was in fact the author of the article, Jára later claimed that the ghosts of the victims had asked him to make the

case public, thus preventing further homicides. Be it as it may be, nobody was indicted in the defamation case.

Realizing that the leaders will not come back to the Czech Republic, some dissidents tried to take control of the movement, with the purpose of converting it into a milder for-profit New Age school. Their efforts were defeated by Jára loyalists, but the conflict determined the end of the Poetrie Esoteric Institute, whose students had been contacted one by one and harassed by the ex-members. The latter also supplied the list of the students to the police, although they did not file any complaint—perhaps because, if there had been illegal activities, the dissidents had been very much part of them.

The police started identifying and interrogating all the women who had been unhooked, trying to find evidence of sexual abuse. For whatever reasons, men whose thorns had been cleaned up by female mentors were left alone. Some 300 women had been unhooked. More than half of them were interviewed, some in person and some by phone only, by the police, which found eight cases of women claiming that the unhooking had been an unpleasant experience. Six of them, however, never testified in subsequent court cases. Hlavinka claims that it is possible that some really experimented bad consequences of the unhooking, but this often happens to women who do not respect the prescription of living in chastity for 40 days after the ritual (Hlavinka 2019). Women I interviewed also remember the treatment they were subjected to by the police, and believe the eight women finally gave up under heavy pressure,

Prosecutors eventually regarded the case of L. N. as the more promising. She was the daughter of a senior police officer, told her story to the police, and successfully resisted further attempts by Jára's and Plášková's defense asking that she testifies in court, claiming post-traumatic stress and finally leaving the Czech Republic. Ultimately, the Zlín branch of the Regional Court of Brno argued that her presence in the trial was not necessary, as her story can be reconstructed on the basis of the police records. Police documents argue that L. N., before participating in the ritual, had not understood what the unhooking was all about (although it was clearly described in the Path's publications), tried to stop the process, and was forced to conclude it by Jára and Plášková. The latter, she said, even kept molesting her after the ritual had concluded. Plášková's and Jára's attorneys objected, offering photographic evidence, that, after the first

unhooking, she came back for a second session the next week, which would be strange if she had felt raped.

On October 19, 2010, the elite security force of the Czech Police (SROC), in cooperation with the Zlín branch of the Regional Court of Brno, raided the premises of the movement and the homes of senior members in the Czech Republic. 13 female mentors were detained. Over 200,000 euros were confiscated and not given back to the movement until this day. The involvement of the media and the fact that the raids were carried out in the early hours of the morning by elite police corps, as if they were dealing with terrorists, are similar to what happened in other “cult” cases. As Wright and Palmer (2015) have argued, the raids are a sort of baroque theater and mostly serve a propaganda purpose. They show to the public opinion that the authorities are ready to punish “cults” and that religious deviance would not be tolerated. The movement believes that it was no coincidence that the raids followed a successful seminar on “Spiritual Trekking” held in Brno on 25–26 September. For the anti-cult “experts” who were advising the police, the Path argues, it was inconceivable that a movement they believed they had successfully liquidated through massive media slander was still able to organize successful events (Manek 2015, 107–08).

On May 28, 2012, the Zlín branch of the Regional Court of Brno issued an international arrest warrant against Jára and Plášková, for all the eight rapes allegedly committed between 2004 and 2006. On October 7, 2014, the same Zlín branch of the Regional Court of Brno sentenced Jára and Plášková, in absentia, to jail terms respectively of 10 and 9 and a half years. Consequently, under pressure from the Czech authorities, Plášková and Jára were arrested in the Philippines, respectively on April 14 and May 15, 2015. They applied for political asylum, claiming they were persecuted in the Czech Republic because of their religion. Their first requests were denied in 2015, based on negative information the Czech Embassy forwarded to the local Ministry of Justice, and, pending appeals, they remain detained to this day in the Immigration Detention Center of Bagong Diwa, near Manila, in circumstances international NGOs have described as unsanitary and dangerous, separated from children they both have in the Philippines (Human Rights Without Frontiers 2017; Fautré 2017). On June 10, 2015, the Czech police even tried to forcibly deport Jára back to Prague from the Philippines, while his asylum case was pending. Paradoxically, the failed attempt, which had obviously been programmed before, occurred a few days after,

on May 21, the High Court of Olomouc had cancelled the Zlín decision of 2014 and remanded the case to the Zlín branch court.

After a long delay, on January 26, 2018, the Zlín branch of the Regional Court of Brno ruled on the case of eight women, and sentenced again both Jára and Plášková, to a slightly reduced jail penalty of seven and a half years.

On October 10, 2018, on appeal, the High Court of Olomouc divided the case into two separate branches. It ruled about the alleged rape of one woman, L. N., sentencing Jára and Plášková respectively to jail penalties of five and a half and five years. The case of the other seven women was sent back to the Zlín branch of the Regional Court of Brno.

On March 27, 2019, the Czech Supreme Court confirmed the appeal verdict of Olomouc in the L. N. case and the jail penalties for the accused. Jára and Plášková filed a recourse with the Czech Constitutional Court, claiming that their right to defense had been violated, as they were not served with proper notices of the trials in the Philippines, and their lawyers were not able to interrogate L. N. and confront her with what they believed were her contradictions. The recourse is pending at the time of this writing.

The Zlín court realized that the evidence on the case of the other seven women was very weak, yet it did not want to withdraw the original accusations. Instead, it decided to “freeze” the case of the seven women, and the prosecutor did not appeal this decision, while the defense of Jára and Plášková asked for a new trial, hoping it would clearly establish their clients’ innocence. The case of the seven women will be reopened in Zlín in Fall 2019. The lawyers for Jára and Plášková believe that the decision on this case, at any rate, would mostly have a moral value since, in their opinion, not having contested the “freezing” of the case when he might have done so, the prosecutor in Zlín would not be in a position to obtain from the court further jail penalties against Jára and Plášková, even if they would be found guilty.

In retrospect, anti-cultists basically succeeded in stopping the growth of the Guru Jára Path and almost destroying the movement. After the police action and the court cases, members were discriminated in their workplaces and disavowed by their families. Some were physically assaulted. Most got scared and left, and the Path lost between 80 and 90% of its members. Many reported severe

psychological problems as a consequence of the police raids. Kristýna Tomanova, née Plášková and Barбора's sister, reported that,

Since the raid, I have been on antidepressants for 5 years. I wanted to die... I was in a dreadful psychological state ... and I began thinking about suicide... I would say that the police raids and the media campaign succeeded. They disemboweled me being alive (Guru Jára Path 2017, 17–9).

That anti-cultists enjoy a privileged relationship with Czech authorities was confirmed when, in 2015, the Guru Jára Path applied for registration as a religion in the Czech Republic with the Ministry of Culture, which appointed as an expert Zdeněk Vojtíšek, a professor in the Hussite Faculty of Theology of Prague, who is both the most famous Czech anti-cultist and Jára's arch-nemesis. Not surprisingly, registration was denied on January 26, 2017. In the process, Vojtíšek had obtained the confidential list of the members of the Path, enclosed with the request for registration, which allowed his anti-cult organization to contact and intimidate them.

However, the movement did not disappear. Some 450 members remain, and many who would not participate openly in activities of the Path do follow its teachings via the Internet. For example, some 20,000 are part of the Internet community discussing the Path's Feng Shui teachings, although the name of Guru Jára is not used and some may not know about the connection. As for Jára, he continues to write intensively and spread his teachings even in his difficult conditions and has published a journal about his life in the detention center, where apparently trivial incidents serve as opportunities for esoteric meditations, in an ascetic environment of sort (Guru Jára 2016b).

APPENDIX: A CHRONOLOGY OF THE GURU JÁRA PATH

1971 (January 4): Jaroslav (Jára) Dobeš was born in Příbram, Czechoslovakia (now Czech Republic).

1976: At age 5, as he later reported, Jára first experienced visions of ghosts and other supernatural phenomena.

- 1980: Jára started recording his supernatural experiences in a journal. Believing he was suffering of mental illness, doctors put him under heavy medication.
- 1982 (November): Jára tried to hang himself on a tree but was saved by his best friend and taken to the hospital. There, he went through what he later described as a near-death experience, which oriented his life towards spirituality.
- 1985: Jára became a proficient rock climber.
- 1989: Jára escaped to Italy, where he studied Roman Catholicism and monastic traditions, as well as Kabbalah and other esoteric teachings.
- 1991: Jára started working as a professional rock climber and instructor, and spending time in natural hermitages. According to his disciples, he achieved enlightenment in Arco, Italy.
- 1995: Jára started offering his services as a professional astrologer and spiritual master. In the same year, he claimed to have received the highest initiation, from a spiritual entity, inside the Pyramid of Menkaure in Giza, Egypt, and instructions to go to India, where he would find his guru.
- 1990s: Jára traveled repeatedly to India, where he studied under Swami Nagananda and Guru Anahdan.
- 1996: Jaroslav Dobeš, now known as Guru Jára, started teaching in the Czech Republic and gathered his first followers, with whom he will eventually establish the Guru Jára Path.
- 1997 (September 15–16): Jára organized the festival “Days of Spiritual Activities” in the Museum of Natural History of Olomouc, Czech Republic.
- 1998: Jára and his followers established a monastery in Odrlice, Czech Republic.
- 1999: Jára published his first book, *Pilgrims to Immortality*. Centers were inaugurated in Olomouc and Zlín, Czech Republic, and Dharamshala, India. A small branch monastery was opened in Horní Bečva, in the Beskids Mountains, Czech Republic. The first international seminar was held in the island of Mindoro, Philippines.
- 2000: Jára established the Czech Telepathic Association.
- 2000–2001: Large festivals organized by the Path in the main Czech cities attracted widespread attention.

- 2001: Jára launched the magazine *Poetrie*. His Tarot cards deck was offered for sale to the general Czech public and became a best seller.
- 2001: First massive attacks against the Guru Jára Path by the Czech anti-cult movement. The Path's branch monastery in the Beskids Mountains was burned to the ground by arsonists who were never identified.
- 2002 (November 22–24): The Symposium of Esoteric Science was organized in Olomouc.
- 2002: A new center was opened in Hampi, Karnataka, India.
- 2003: Jára moved to Thailand, then to Nepal, while his followers in the Czech Republic numbered in the thousands. The Prague center was opened.
- 2004: The *Poetrie* Esoteric Institute was established, with Barbora Plášková as co-director.
- 2005: Anti-cult campaigns and violent assaults against Jára and his students. The monastery in Odrlice was closed.
- 2007: Last seminar taught by Jára in the Czech Republic. Jára and, later, Plášková permanently left Europe for Asia.
- 2007 (May 14): After a preliminary police investigation against Jára had been started, based on a complaint by a female member, he was put in the wanted list because his residence was unknown to the Czech police.
- 2009 (February 18): Authorities in the Philippines admitted Jára into the country. Plášková will follow in March, and will in turn be put in the wanted list by Czech authorities in October, since the police wanted to question her about a defamation case and her residence was unknown.
- 2009: In the absence of Jára and Plášková, some dissident students tried to take control of the movement. As a result, the *Poetrie* Esoteric Institute was closed, and the ex-members supplied the list of students to the Czech police.
- 2010 (October 19): The elite security force of the Czech Police (SROC), in cooperation with the Zlín branch of the Regional Court of Brno, raided the premises of the movement and the homes of senior members in the Czech Republic. 13 female leaders were detained and over 200,000 euros confiscated. Hundreds of female members of the Path were interrogated, some in person and some by phone only.

- 2011: Jára founded his ashram in the island of Siargao, Philippines.
- 2011: Jára published *Casanova Sútra*, an initiatory novel including his key teachings. Several exhibitions introduced his Astrofocus collages in the Czech Republic.
- 2012–Winter 2014: “Vivaldi Period” in the Siargao ashram.
- 2012 (May 28): The Zlín branch of the Regional Court of Brno issued an international arrest warrant against Jára and Plášková, for eight rapes allegedly committed between 2004 and 2006.
- 2014–2015: “Sengai Period” in the Siargao ashram.
- 2014 (October 7): The Zlín branch of the Regional Court of Brno sentenced Jára and Plášková, in absentia, to jail terms respectively of 10 and 9 and a half years.
- 2015 (April 14): Plášková was arrested in the Philippines, following a request by Czech authorities, who had cancelled her valid passport.
- 2015 (May 15): Jára was also arrested in the Philippines. He and Plášková requested asylum in the Philippines, claiming they were persecuted in the Czech Republic for their religious beliefs.
- 2015 (May 21): The High Court of Olomouc cancelled the decision of 2014 and remanded the case to the Zlín branch of the Regional Court of Brno.
- 2015 (June 10): Czech police attempted to forcibly deport Jára from the Philippines back to the Czech Republic, but the attempt failed.
- 2015 (June 15 and 16): The asylum requests of Jára and Plášková in the Philippines were denied for the first time. Pending appeals, they remained in detention centers for immigrants.
- 2018 (January 26): The Zlín branch of the Regional Court of Brno ruled again in the case, and reduced the sentences for both Jára and Plášková to seven and a half years.
- 2018 (October 10): On appeal, the High Court of Olomouc divided the case into two separate branches. It ruled about the alleged rape of one woman, L. N., sentencing Jára and Plášková to jail penalties respectively of five and a half and five years. The case of the other seven women was sent back to the Zlín branch of the Regional Court of Brno.

2018 (December): The Zlín court decided to not to rule on the case of the seven women, but rather “froze” it. The attorneys of Jára and Plášková appealed this decision, hoping for total acquittal.

2019 (March 27): The Czech Supreme Court confirmed the appeal verdict of Olomouc in the L. N. case. Jára and Plášková filed a recourse with the Czech Constitutional Court. The case of the remaining seven women was scheduled to be re-opened in Zlín in Fall 2019.

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