

∞ Second Edition ∞

SECRET DRUGS of BUDDHISM

PSYCHEDELIC SACRAMENTS AND
THE ORIGINS OF THE VAJRAYĀNA

Mike Crowley

Foreword by Ann Shulgin



PRAISE FOR *SECRET DRUGS OF BUDDHISM*

Mike Crowley has manifested a delightful book on a topic rarely spoken of, and certainly never explored with such depth. With a combination of personal anecdotes, detailed historical research, and a large collection of traditional art, this book will encourage modern-day Buddhist yogis and mind-explorers to see their practice and its roots in a new way.

—**Rev. Kokyo Henkel, Head Teacher, Santa Cruz Zen Center**

Writing clearly, in the fashion of an investigative reporter, Mike Crowley unlocks the mystery of *amrita*, and answers, with previously unseen certainty, the question of whether or not psychedelics were part of historical Buddhist practice.

—**Allan Badiner, co-editor of *Zig Zag Zen: Buddhism and Psychedelics***

Psychedelic drugs in ancient Buddhism? Believe it. Don't believe it? Read this book.

—**Clark Heinrich, author of *Magic Mushrooms in Religion and Alchemy***

Secret Drugs of Buddhism sets out to remedy this 'blind-spot' in the understanding of ancient Buddhist practices, pointing out the importance of *amrita* to the Vajrayāna Buddhist tradition and even offers suggestions for the ingredients of the original, psychoactive potion. The book is full of fantastic insights and speculation, such as the proliferation of 'parasol' imagery and multi-armed deities fanning their limbs about in a circle in Buddhist artwork – both rather close analogs to the distinctive shapes and anatomy of mushrooms (it seems so obvious once it is pointed out.)

—**Greg Taylor, Daily Grail**

This book is not the product of academic scholarship; it is the remarkable result of one man's private research, curiosity, and intelligence. He is clearly at ease with his subject matter whether it be strange Tibetan gods or exotic flora of one of the remotest regions on Earth and is sharing his own enjoyment of exotic nature with the reader. It may well attract comparisons with Carlos Castaneda's well-known canon on the use of plant psychedelics among the Hispanic *brujos* or sorcerers, but Mike's exposition is different. There is no mythologizing his experience of psychoactive drugs and lamaic initiations.

—**Bob Rickard**, *Fortean Times*

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SYNERGETICPRESS

regenerating people and planet

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In memory of Steve Moore, F.R.A.S.
“No finer friend”

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FOREWORD

ONE AFTERNOON in the mid-1980s I received a phone call from a young man who expressed his admiration of my late husband Sasha's work and asked if he could take us both to dinner. Instead, I suggested that he come and dine with us at a potluck we had planned for the coming Friday.

That was how we came to know Mike Crowley. Since that dinner party three decades ago, he has been a dear friend. He and Sasha shared a delight in strange words but, for myself, I was fascinated with the depth of his knowledge of Eastern religions. Both Sasha and I found him to be a fount of obscure information, which he is apt to impart in the course of amusing anecdotes. I well remember, for instance, his remarkable account of an elaborate, week-long wedding ritual conducted on the banks of the River Ganges at Benares. I admit that, on the face of it, this does not sound particularly extraordinary, but in this case, the bride and groom were both potted plants!

On numerous occasions, Mike has held our rapt attention as he recounted his traveler's tales. These remarkable encounters range from seeing an actual sword fight between Tibetan tribesmen to renting a pair scissors from an ancient recluse on Ilkley Moor, England, for the price of one dead pigeon. He also claims to have met a thousand-year-old Buddhist monk in a Chinese monastery. I'm not sure what to think about that one – you'll have to ask Mike.*

Mike Crowley has long been the first person I turn to when I have any question regarding matters of religion, East or West, especially when it comes to obscure religious teachings. Naturally, in our conversations he has revealed bits and pieces of his research on Buddhist drugs but, until he handed me this volume, I had no idea of the depth and scope of his discoveries. You will find that his writing is a sheer joy and (if you're anything like me) his revelations will knock your socks off.

* The monk was said to be 1,300 years old. Kim Gyo-gak (born 696 CE), a Korean monk, founded the Huachen Temple on Mount Jiuhua, China. In 795, at the age of 99, he entered meditation and has not yet emerged. Still sitting there, his robes are hanging off him in shreds, and apart from some gold leaf applied to his face centuries ago, he looks like a perfectly healthy, middle-aged man. The abbot of Huachen, having treated my friend Steve Aldridge and me to afternoon tea, formally introduced us to the Venerable Kim in October, 1989. - MC

So, what are you waiting for? Start turning pages and read the rest of the book. You won't regret it.

Ann Shulgin
Lafayette, California
November 13th, 2014

