

## Some intriguing quotations

There cannot be the slightest doubt that the Hindus and probably the Buddhists of earlier days did regard the taking of psychedelic drugs as part of the wide range of *sādhana*s which lead to ecstasy.\*

The mythological and iconographical corollary to this is, apart from the personification of *soma* as the quintessence of all mind-affecting beverages, the frequent epithet of Śiva as the Lord of Herbs (*auṣadhīśvara*).

*The Tantric Tradition*<sup>1</sup>

With a single drop of *bDud.rTsi* [*amṛita*]... one becomes pure and immortal, possessed on the five eternal wisdoms... and receives, as a result, the highest enlightenment.

*The Vessel of bDud.rTsi*<sup>2</sup>

The fourth method of awakening [*i.e.* enlightenment] is through the use of specific herbs. In Sanskrit it is called *auśhadhi*... knowledge of the herbs is a closely guarded secret...

*Kundalini Tantra*<sup>3</sup>

By mere consumption of these pills... [one may] plunder from the Buddhas and enjoy sublime celestial girls. With vajra eyes one will see as many Buddhas and their pure realms as there are grains of sand in the Ganges...

*Māhāmāyā Tantra*<sup>4</sup>

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\* “Enstasy” a neologism for “enlightenment”.

## PREAMBLE

**T**here was a certain sadhaka who frequented forest glades where he thought there were no other people. When he felt he was in total isolation, he wrapped his siddhi pills in three types of metal and secreted them beneath the roots of a tree... The acarya [Kṛiṣṇācārya] discovered them and steadied his mind. About an hour later sounds and light spontaneously arose from the pills. When the acarya put them into his mouth he was able to see the realms of the gods and yaksha, and he also found that he could travel to those places in a flash if he wished to.

*Life of Kṛiṣṇācārya* <sup>5</sup>

**A** traditional Tibetan doctor in Khatmandu had told me that there are particular mushrooms in Tibet that “bring bliss to the body and realization to the mind.”

*The Heart of the World* <sup>6</sup>

**T**he gods love that which is hinted at darkly and hate that which is uttered directly.

*Bṛihadāranyaka Upaniṣad*, IV, 2, ii <sup>7</sup>

**T**his idea of primitive secret societies reminds us of the Buddhist [tantra called] Guhya Samāja – the name itself has the same meaning [*i.e.* “secret society”]. Tantric converts to early Buddhism, although they professed a belief in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, they did not give up the traditional beliefs and rituals they used to practice in secret.

*History of the Tantric Religion* <sup>8</sup>

**R**ecently a Western student asked her guru whether such practices were still used.

“They’re secret practices,” the learned *khenpo* replied, “so how can I know?”

*The Buddhist Handbook* <sup>9</sup>