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Buddhism
Mirth, Myth & Mysticism

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The Tambolian Map

Some of the stories are based on the Tambolian Map, an ancient Buddhist visualization of your mind with all the lights turned on. The original Tibetan pictographs are in the Appendix.

Dedicated to

*Those who know and know they know
Map Masters
Pilgrim Wanderers,
Teacher Friends
Mystic Hermits
and
Shaman Healers*

Introduction

Mirth, Myth, and Mysticism are styles of storytelling that often start in the middle and wander about from there. Occasionally numinous, they intermingle a bit but eventually find a beginning somewhere.

Mirth, from Masters, is more poignant than humorous, but this frequently complements insights in unusual ways. Organizing Buddhist Humor is like organizing the Buddha's teachings; it meanders about and is pretty much everywhere you look.

In 2010, my advisor, Venerable Phramaha Somphong Santacitto, Ph.D., at Wat Arun in Bangkok, Thailand, suggested that I write a book on Buddhist Humor. I thought there must be many books on Buddhist humor, but he said no. Then, I asked him why he thought I could write a book on Buddhist humor. He said, "You have been studying Buddhist traditions for forty years. You would have never lasted that long if you did not have a good sense of humor."

Myth stories have a long history and are passed down through the ages. One can forget that once these stories were new, unread, and unappreciated. Mythical incidents happen all the time. It is noticing these compelling events that is the challenge. I'd written these stories for quite some time before I noticed they were myths. The myth seems to be an enduring insight into a deeper part of our minds or a different understanding of our world. Myth stories come from the gaps between here and there, between what is and what might be, and sometimes the insulated inner space between different ideas.

Mysticism is noticing differences. Mirth, Myth, and Mysticism have a special place in the human character. Historically, there was only mirth, myth, and mysticism, and not as long ago as one might expect. Mystics propose that we

are only Mirth, Myth, and Mysticism.

Mystical practices are ancient meditative insights handed down by many cultures from both the East and West, encompassing mystical and philosophical traditions. Fire, Earth, Air, and Water are the four-element practices related to the Buddhist pantheon's five families. The fifth Buddha family element is Tranquility, designated in the center of the four-element doorways on a traditional Mandala. With traditional meditational practices, the fundamentals are often overlooked or ignored. These meditations are also known as Fertile-Ground practices. These practices are usually realized in insight realizations or mindfulness practices. They include healing oneself and others, as well as compassion and patience for others, conditional awareness, and so on; these are quite valuable practices.

I propose that the Elemental Practices help us understand and relate to the obvious, the normal, and the expected. People who watch the sunset, walk in the rain, stoop down when talking to children, sit under trees for no reason, and watch sleeping kittens are essential.

One of the stories mentions the Tambolian Map, which is a translation of two Tibetan Visualizations, the Bhavachakra and the Ling Chen Tying Tigie visualizations.

People live their lives as if they were in a dark room, bumping into things about which they learn very little. An epiphany is when someone turns a light on in that room. The Tambolian Map is a map of your mind with all the lights turned on.

This manuscript is not a translation of any published or historical text. These stories are about what I've noticed over the last sixty years or so, having survived a unique and

compelling pilgrimage through a labyrinth of mystical and metaphysical obscurities that arise simply from being alive.

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The Psi symbol is used in science for wavefunctions, and the dot symbol is a scalar product between two vectors. We have chosen this logo for our company to encourage ethics and sustainability in a matriarchal world village.

The Tambolian Map

Most people wonder if Tambolia exists. It might be better to think, given all the time the universe has had to establish something like a Galactic Library, why wouldn't it exist? Of course, access is the key and the most challenging part. The Galactic Library has two initial conditions: one is the Mark of Emptiness; the other is Self-Secret. Once you understand these conditions, you can enter this library.

The Mark of Emptiness is defined as unchanging regardless of time, access, or application. Self-secret is defined as inaccessible until one is qualified to manage the outcomes.

A Tambolian Mysticism

The Tambolian Map and the Akashic Records are similar yet distinct, as found in Theosophy and Anthroposophy. Both describe a compendium of all universal events, thoughts, words, emotions, and intentions that have ever occurred in the past, present, or future, encompassing all entities and life forms, not just humans. The difference lies in ancient strategies for accessing this information.

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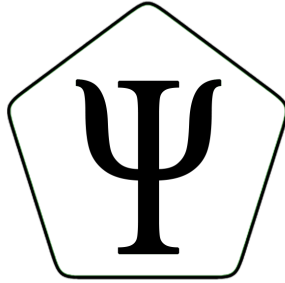
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Buddhist Humor often employs mindfulness, impermanence, and the nature of reality to achieve desired outcomes. It can involve paradoxes, koans, and stories that turn expectations into insights.

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Mirth

Buddhist Humor

Mirth from masters is often more poignant than humorous, but this does not detract from the insights. Organizing Buddhist Humor is something like organizing the Buddha's teachings; it encompasses a wide range of topics and is present everywhere you look.

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Chapter 1

Sensuality, Relationships, and Whatever

Many people think relationships all disappear when you become a Buddhist. Remember that several Buddhist traditions allow their Sangha to marry, and that most Monks and Nuns were ordinary people at some time in their lives. And still have to answer questions about sex, sensuality, relationships, and all sorts of conflicted choices.

1000 Wives

“How many wives do you have?” a student asked.

“About a thousand,” answered the Lama.

“Is that one of your wives over there?” the student gestured, indicating an extravagantly beautiful New York woman walking her jeweled collared dog up an eastside parkway.

“Yes, I think so,” replied the Llama.

“Wow! You must have many children?” the student concluded.

“No,” answered the Lama.

“No! Why not?”

“She says yes, I say no. I say yes, she says no.”

Meditation People and Lay People

Buddhist countries are composed of two types of people: Meditation people and Lay people.

Meditation people list the conditions they value like this:

- *Quiet harmony*
- *Happy family*
- *Pleasant eating place*
- *Chit chat*
- *Loud music*
- *Staying up late*

Lay people list the conditions they value like this:

- *Staying up late*
- *Loud music*
- *Chit chat*
- *Pleasant eating place*
- *Happy family*
- *Quiet harmony*

In Buddhist cultures, lay people always marry meditation people. Meditation people always marry lay people.

Relationships

A Buddhist definition of relationships is that none isn't enough, and one is too much.

Children

All Buddhists are obsessively interested in your relations, families, and how many children you have; do you need a wife, husband, girlfriend, boyfriend, or something else?

“Are you married?” the Master queried.

“Yes,” replied the visiting Layman, “We get along quite well. She laughs at everything I do.”

“That's exceedingly good,” replied the Master. “Do you have any children?”

“No,” answered the Layman.

“Why not?” questioned the surprised Master.

“My wife laughs at everything I do.”

Bulls and Cows

The first part of this story is old and well-known, but it's essential to remember that bulls are male and cows are female.

Two bulls came to the top of a hill and looked down on a herd of cows.

“Let's run down and have sex with one of those cows,” the younger bull said excitedly.

Hum, thought the older bull, “Let's walk down and have sex with all of them.”

This is where the Buddhist part begins.

A much older bull had just reached the top of the hill and looked out over the herd of cows. “I suggest that we stay here and let them come up and have sex with us.”

There was a much older bull that, puffing heavily, had just

arrived. “Wow,” said the bull with a haggard expression. “That looks like a lot of work. I tell you what, my fantasies are quite wonderful; I can do what I want, stop when I feel like it, and no one complains. So, I think I’ll sit under this tree and enjoy my fantasies.”

Now, there was an older bull that had recently died. The meditating bull, under the tree, and thinking about his friend, decided to visit heaven.

“How is heaven?” he meditated.

“Wonderful, the sex is great!”

“How so?”

“Well, first of all, I’m a cow, and second, I am surrounded by very young bulls.”

Abstinence

“Master, is it easy to give up sex?” a Nun asked.

“Oh, yes,” answered the Master. “I’ve done it many times.”

Spiritual Celibacy Versus a Nonexistent Option

Fundamentalist Christians’ attitude about sex goes like this: Sex is bad, dirty, wrong, evil, the first original, terrible, discussing SIN, even if you just think about it. Sin will send you down, down, down. If you touch it, you are lost, damned to burn, burn, burn in hell forever and ever. Amen. Praise the Lord.

The Islamic fundamentalist’s attitude is a bit different, such that men can do pretty much anything sexual, they can imagine, and they may have as many wives as they can afford. All of them must be virgins, and if you suspect that they aren’t or have been unfaithful or even thinking about it, seen in public unchaperoned or with their head uncovered, you can have them whipped, mutilated, stoned to death, their heads cut

off or sold into slavery. Allah is kind; all praise be to Allah.

The Buddhists are much easier to get along with and say that sex is not bad or wrong, and indeed not sinful: Buddhists do not believe in sin. The worst they can say about sex is that you might lose your reputation, or for a few minutes of pleasure, there might be nine months of heartache and headache. Also, sex is undoubtedly distracting from your meditation. If you happen to acquiesce to perfectly natural physical impulses, you must go to the back of the Sangha meditational line.

These ideas contrast sharply with the extinct Matriarchal Goddess Cults of ancient Anatolia, Crete, and many other places, which believed something similar about sex.

Abbess, “Really, guys, sex is one of the few things you do well. The priestesses and novices are well-trained and very enthusiastic, and best of all, you have no responsibilities. Our liturgy: Heaven now - why wait?”

Older Woman

“Master, do you like older women?” A novice solicited.

Hum, let’s see, thought the Master, “I’m in my sixties, but when I was your age, I thought forty-year-old women were quite old. Now I think forty-year-old women look especially nice.”

Misconceptions

An old Forest Mystic called his Master on his Cell phone from his wilderness retreat.

Mystic: “Hello, Master. We haven’t spoken for such a long time. How are you doing?”

Master - “Ah, it’s good to hear from you again. And I’m doing well as usual, but one of my students tells me you’re the father of her child.”

Mystic - "Well, that's amazing; who is this student?"

Master - "A Miss _____."

Mystic - "That's nice. Is she pretty?"

Master - "Yes, she is quite lovely."

Mystic - "It is nice to know that I make love to attractive ladies; how old is the child?"

Master - "About four years old."

Mystic - "And what is the child's name?"

Master - "Robert, I believe."

Mystic - "Tell her that she had better change his name to Houdini."

Master - "You mean Houdini, the escape artist; how come?"

Mystic - "It would have been a rather remarkable conception since I had a vasectomy 25 years ago."

The End of Sex

A frustrated young novice who had recently noticed that girls had suddenly become more interesting asked, "Roshi, when does this sex thing go away?"

The Roshi brooded momentarily, "Hum, I'm sixty-seven years old, but I can't answer your question. You are going to have to ask someone older than I am."

"Argh!!" gasped the young novice, feeling overwhelmed.

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Chapter 2 Enlightenment

Everyone wants to know about Enlightenment and suspects deep down somewhere in their mind that they are already enlightened. I suspect many of these people will be surprised to discover they are correct; unfortunately, it will take some time for them to believe it.

Knowing

“What is the meaning of life?” a conflicted student solicited.

“You came here; you might as well be here,” answered the Venerable Phra.

“I don’t know what that means.” The student responded.

“Yes, I know,” answered the Venerable Phra.

Meditation

Three monks are sitting in the forest.

“Life is like a pizza,” stated the first Monk in a flash of insight.

A year later, the second Monk replied, “No, it’s not.”

A year later, the third Monk gets up, exclaiming, “I’m leaving; all you do is argue.”

Meditation 2

“How long should I meditate?” a novice asked.

“I think half an hour should be enough,” answered the Master meditatively. “Unless you are quite busy, it takes an hour.”

Thinking

“What is Enlightenment?” a student inquired.

“Enlightenment is easy. Keeping it is difficult.”

“I thought Enlightenment was difficult?” The student responded.

“Stop thinking,” answered the Master.

Good Idea

“What is Enlightenment?” a student inquired.

“You can’t get there from here,” answered the Roshi.

“I don’t know what that means?” the student answered.

“Sometimes you have to be there before you get there,” answered the Roshi.

“I don’t know what that means either?” the student sadly responded.

“Sometimes there is no there, there,” answered the Roshi.

“I’m still confused,” countered the student, still struggling.

“It will be there when you get there,” answered the Roshi.

“I think I want to kill myself,” replied the frustrated student.

“Good Idea,” answered the Roshi.

Prophecy

“Master, are you enlightened?” the Nun asked.

“Yes,” responded the Master instantly.

“Then why don’t more people know about you?” the Nun enquired.

“There is an appalling lack of prophecy concerning my birth,” concluded the Master.

Creativity

“What is Enlightenment?” the student asked.

“All possible things are optional,” answered the Roshi.

“I think that helps, but I don’t know how,” answered the student.

“You create your disqualifications,” responded the Roshi.

Your Purpose in life.

“I am too busy to meditate,” stated the Layman.

“Breath,” replied the Master.

“I have many responsibilities,” replied the Layman.

“Relax,” encouraged the Master,

“I need a purpose in my life,” anguished the Layman.

“Forget your purpose in life.”

I Don't Know

“What is the Truth?” the student inquired.

“The Truth eventually catches on,” answered the Venerable Phra.

“So?” The student replied.

“The Truth is not hidden, just deeply unnoticed,” continued the Venerable Phra.

“Ok,” continued the student.

“The Truth makes sense,” he encouraged.

“This all seems true,” the student persisted. “But why do we have so much trouble with it?”

“I don't know,” answered the Venerable Phra.

Future Lives

A Buddhist Siddha Yogi observed, “I see that you have only five more lives to live.”

“Ah,” replied the Mystic Buddhist. “Then there is no need to rush!”

Misha, a Russian Siddhartha

Misha was a boy who grew up kind. He didn't remember when he made this decision or that it was a decision at all. What it looked like to him was that this was a good way for people to

live, and he expected that everyone had chosen more or less the same.

Kindness got him through school with little hassle. It mostly got him into the woods and streams, on top of mountains, and in quiet meadows. It got him into and out of marriage. It brought him children and took them away.

Finding himself alone, he went into a monastery to think things over. The Master saw more clearly what kindness was doing and encouraged him to formalize his meditation. After six years, they protected him as much as possible and sent him back to where he came from.

He saw that not many people have chosen to be kind. For many years, he encouraged those who had not chosen to consider kindness, but eventually, everyone left him alone.

He returned to his practices and waited. From time to time, he would come out and say hello, but people were very busy. One day, kindness decided to move on. It could not leave him in an ordinary place, so he was taken to a special place, Tambolia, where forgotten things go.

Ordinary people thought he had gone crazy, and they shunned him, saying that everything he had told them must have been wrong.

The Problem

A nun asked her Abbess, “Why were there so many monks?”

“At Enlightenment, the Buddha noticed many things; one was that women and children were not the problem.”

A Layman’s Guide to Enlightenment

What the Buddha taught is wonderful. What the Buddhists did with what the Buddha taught is confusing at best. Enlightenment is an example. All traditions have established

that enlightenment is the ultimate goal, although it is often considered exclusive and largely unattainable. The Buddha did not say this. The Buddha began with Enlightenment. Then, the Buddha learned and eventually taught the Dharma for forty-five years. What the sutras say about what the Buddha thought at enlightenment was (and I paraphrase generously), “Wow, this is amazing. I want to know more.”

If you have read a single book on the Dharma and said to yourself something like, “Wow, this is amazing. I want to know more.” You are enlightened in the same way as the Buddha. Unfortunately, there are comfort zones in the Land of Enlightenment.

First, everyone begins in the Land of Enlightenment as a tourist. Tourists can do whatever they want, study any doctrine, and go anywhere. To get more involved, you must take refuge in some orthodox tradition.

If you take refuge, you are now a Citizen in the Land of Enlightenment. There are obligations; if someone asks you if you are a Buddhist, you have to answer “yes.” Also, orthodox people will expect you to behave traditionally.

Eventually, they will ask you to become a Monk or a Nun. If you say “yes,” you disappear into the system. If you say “no,” they will eventually ask if you want to be an instructor or sponsor. If you say “yes,” there are all sorts of projects you get to do that don’t have anything to do with your meditations. If you say, “No, I just want to do my meditations,” the traditionalists can’t do much with you except to be patient.

What can happen to you at this time is that you discover all sorts of meditational choices that the orthodox folks never told you about or didn’t even know about. Also, you are no longer a citizen but part of the Bureaucracy (as are the traditional Monks and nuns), though this is a bit odd and suspicious.

You can now choose from several options; one is to become a Mystic. No one knows what a Mystic Buddhist actually is,

but they always cause trouble by pointing out to the traditional Buddhists the silly things they do. So, if the traditional people like you, you're probably not a Mystic.

Another option is being a Hermit or Forest Monk, sometimes referred to as a yogi. These people get out of town and away from the monastery as fast as they can. You are very far away if you find a Hermit, Forest Monk, or any other kind of Yogi.

Another option is to be an actual teacher of the Insightful Dharma. Students think there are not very many good instructors, which is true. Real teachers know there are very few actual students. Few enlightened people decide to be teachers.

The next category makes you exceptional, and if there were an Aristocracy in Buddhism, these people would be there. One is a Fair Witness (A bodhisattva, possibly). This is someone who can look at you and know everything there is to know about you. Nothing is hidden from them. If you happen to find one, be respectful. If someone knows everything there is to know about you, they can be intimidating, and are if you give them trouble.

Women can choose to be in any of these meditational disciplines, and they do. They are immensely inspiring when you find one and are probably better at it than you are. They have an option where men cannot go or understand. Women who create life can also break it. Men only pretend to do these things. When a woman understands how this is done, she may decide to become a Rainbow Walker and possibly explore other aspects that aren't typically discussed.

The next category in the Land of Enlightenment is the First Speaker. These people don't necessarily speak first, but they are always the first to ask tough questions, such as, "What are you doing here?" What is a sanctuary? What are your graces? Where does the power come from? Who sees? And many more.

If you can answer all of these questions, you get to go to

the door at the far end of the Land of Enlightenment, where there is a sign that asks,

“Where do people go when they figure it out?”

If you pass through this door, no one is sure if you are still in the Land of Enlightenment.

Tambolia

“Buddhist Meditations are quite difficult,” commented a Nun.

“True”, replied the Mystic stoically.

“Is there a simpler way to get me to where I need to be?” the Nun pleaded.

“There is a Map of Your Mind that some Buddhists use,” said the Mystic.

“There is?” asked the Nun, surprised. “I’ve never seen one or even heard of such a thing.”

“It’s a meditation that is not hidden but deeply unnoticed,” replied the Mystic.

“How do you happen to know about it?” the Nun asked, intrigued.

“The Great and Grand Mystical Mystic tells this story,

“Most people live their lives as if they were in a dark room. They keep bumping into things they know nothing about. An epiphany is when someone turns a light on in that room. The Tambolian Map is a map of your mind with all the lights turned on.”

“Do you have a Tambolian Map?” the Nun asked hopefully.

“Probably,” replied the Mystic shyly.

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Chapter 3

Thinking, Busy Mind, and Logic

Everyone seems to struggle with their busy, thinking mind and the many voices in their head. Please notice that Buddhist Humor is simply another voice in an odd part of your head. Be at ease; it's a chronic condition of humanity, and I suspect of all living things. We should be aware of a couple of points: one, you should not believe everything you think, and two, thoughts don't think by themselves.

Emptiness

“Where does thinking come from?” the student inquired.

“A busy mind,” answered the Venerable Phra.

“But where does that come from?” the student continued.

“Being out of balance.”

“But why would I be out of balance?” the student persisted.

“Craving and ignorance,” continued the Venerable Phra.

“But where does that come from?”

“Emptiness,” said the Venerable Phra patiently.

“But what is emptiness?” the student badgered.

“The absence of students,” smiled the Venerable Phra, walking away.

Minds

“Roshi, could you please help us?” the novice asked, then continued. “We have been trying to read each other’s minds, but we don’t think it worked.”

“What did you do?” the Roshi asked politely.

“We sat quietly in a dark room and focused on each other’s mind,” explained the novice. “All that happened was that it seemed to get darker.”

“You did fine. That’s exactly how it is done,” answered the Roshi.

“I don’t understand?” questioned the novice, deeply confused.

“Well,” continued the Roshi. “You visit his mind and nobody’s home; he visits your mind and nobody’s home.”

Right Understanding

Two Asian Monks walk into a Western hardware store. The first Monk asks in broken English, “We want four by twos, please.”

Smiling a bit, the salesperson suggested, ‘I think you mean 2x4s?’”

A short foreign conversation began when the first Monk responded, “Yes, we want 2x4, please.”

“How long do you want them?” the salesperson asked politely.

This time, the conversation between the two Monks lasted much longer, and the first Monk finally said, “We want them for a long time; we are going to build a temple, please.”

What people think

Some people wince, cringe, and shrink,
At the very thought of what people might think.
Others are much more at ease,
To let people think whatever they please.

The Hole

“Master, I have fallen into the hole and injured myself rather badly,” whined the student.

“That hole has been there for ten years or so; why did you decide to fall into it now?” the Master asked.

“I don’t know. I just did. What are you going to do about my leg?” the student whimpered.

“Well,” said the Master. “If you had fallen into the hole a month ago, you would be all better by now.”

Excuse me

Beginning meditation centers is often a humble affair. One evening, during Puja, someone knocked on the front door, which was also the door to the ceremony room.

The Master got up to answer it.

“Oh! Excuse me for disturbing your meditation,” explained the startled visitor.

“Oh, no,” said the Master. “They are not meditating; they’re just sitting there.”

Tabloids

“Reading and studying the Dharma is hard work,” explained a novice.

“True,” agreed the Venerable Phra.

“Tabloids and television are much more exciting,” continued the novice, a bit worried about where the conversation was heading.

“The existence of tabloids is proof that we are not going to survive as a species,” the Venerable Phra insightfully responded.

“That’s quite grim,” said the novice.

“Not so,” said the Venerable Phra excitedly. “The next species might be able to avoid tabloids and TV, but the Dharma will still be here.”

The Journey

“Where am I?” the student requested.

“Let’s see,” said the Sensei, meditating for a moment. “The spiritual journey takes you from where you are to where you are supposed to be. Unfortunately, you only notice you are not where you are supposed to be when you’re lost!”

The Universe

“Why do people keep bringing us food?” a novice asked.

“So that we might do meditations for them, they aren’t able to do for themselves,” answered the Venerable Phra.

“But where do they get the food?” pressed the novice.

“They have to work quite hard to provide food for you.”

“But doesn’t the earth ultimately provide the food?” the novice concluded, pondering hard.

“The earth and the sun as well.”

“Is that the total source of our food?” the novice pushed.

“In order for you to eat your rice,” said the Venerable Phra thoughtfully. “The whole Universe has to exist.”

Thinking

Western Philosopher, “I think, therefore, I am.”

Buddhist Mystic, “I think, therefore, I think I am.”

Worry

“Do you worry about your reputation?” the student inquired hesitantly.

“What people think of me is none of my business,” responded the Master.

Verse

“Sensei is the Universe, the only verse?” the novice asked teasingly.

“When I think about it, yes; when I don’t think about it, no.”

“That is a really lousy answer,” criticized the novice.

“Well then, let’s try this: what is the first question you ever asked?” The Sensei pressed.

The novice thought for a moment, “Why? I suppose.”

“What was the answer?”

“I don’t know,” said the novice forlornly.

“How many universes is that, and how far apart are they?”

Yes

“Master, are you enlightened?” asked a student mischievously.

“Yes,” responded the Master.

The student, somewhat surprised, asked, “Do you have a degree or some kind of certificate that confirms your Enlightenment?”

“No,” the Master responded calmly and continued, “and what difference would it make; having the fools consider you no fool is a distinction hardly worth pursuing.”