



Buddha's Tooth

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Author's Note:

There are many quotations and phrases in every language, spoken at times when words of wisdom are required or to quote what is the obvious.

“The Kingdom of god and heaven will not be found in buildings or books. It is within each and every one of us and all around. You just need to stop and look.”

The Gnostic Gospels

“Religion, laws and money are all man made and have been put there to stop you discovering the previous statement.”

R. A. Webster

It's a beautiful planet.

“Think briefly about your past achievements and failures, learn from them, but don't dwell on them. You only bore the pants off people when you speak about them and besides, the present is tomorrow's past.”

R. A. Webster

Live for today.

“Grief is the price we have to pay for love.”

H.M. Queen Elizabeth II

“Son, if you worry, you’ll die. If you don’t worry, you are still going to die and you’re a long time dead, so why worry?”

Pearl Nielsen (1919-2004)

Thanks for all your wisdom and love, mum.



Foreword

Some people are born to be heroes. Some people earn it through years of trying. Allow me to introduce you to three likely lads who had heroism strangely dropped on their heads.

Please enjoy the first adventures of Nicholas (Nick) Godfrey, Stuart (Stu) Wilson, and Spock, three unattached, English, horny, thirty-something lads on holiday, as they almost battle with evil forces, almost rescue damsels in distress and almost save a country from total destruction.

They definitely do however, drink copious amounts of amber fluid and have lots of horizontal fun. The story is set mostly in the amazing city of Pattaya on the eastern seaboard of Thailand. Lush green palm trees, crystal clear waters, warm golden sand and herds of buffalo wandering aimlessly over grassy meadows, you won't find there. However, chrome pole molesters (Go-Go dancers), ogling dens, cheap amber fluid and beautiful, accommodating ladies more than make up for it.

Follow their hilarious antics through the many stages of intoxication; from 'juiced' through 'spannered' and 'shitfaced' up to the ultimate stage of being totally 'wankered', as they unknowingly enter into a chase between good and evil for the recovery of

an ancient holy relic. Enter into a diverse culture of South East Asian people, whose attitudes, traditions and lives have, and will always remain a mystery to the Western world. So, unless you like stories about buffaloes, please read on and enjoy BUDDHA'S TOOTH, an absolute must read survival guide for anyone travelling to 'The Land of Smiles'.

Korp khun krap
(Thank you)

And if you want something to do after you have read this epic. Think about this puzzle:

A man and woman marry and have a baby boy. One year later they have another baby boy, but the two boys are not brothers. WHY?

If you're stumped, the answer is revealed in Chapter 21



Prologue

The ancient stage is set. The delicate scent of spicy oriental fragrance drifts through the warm air of the candlelit main hall of the temple [*Wat*]. Inside, sixty monks of the *Tinju* order, ages ranging from ten to seventy, were kneeling with their foreheads touching the marble floor, arms extended in front of them. Deep in meditation and waiting for the moment; crouching lions waiting for the scent of their prey.

This *Wat* was said to be around 2000 years old, built by monks in *Salaburi*, a remote village not too far from the small south eastern Thai/Cambodian border town of *Pong-nam-rom*. Situated in a dense jungle, surrounded by jungle-encased mountains like a coral atoll, the *Wat* is small by temple standards. Gleaming domes and arches are covered in gold leaf and skilfully-carved statues depicting Buddha's journey through life, as both a prince and pauper, in order to obtain enlightenment.

The *Wat* is situated behind *Salaburi* village, against a mountain backdrop. The meticulously maintained temple building has a large door at the front, a small door at the rear, and a door at the side leading to a meditation room. On the outside of this small, windowless room are mosaic tiles depicting a nobleman

on a horse smiling down at a poor decrepit individual. It is believed this was the moment when Prince *Siddhartha Gautama* decided to give up his earthly possessions and begin his journey to enlightenment, eventually becoming the Buddha and entering *Nirvana* [heaven] whilst still alive.

Inside the meditation room lays an embalmed corpse, a foetus in a glass jar preserved in a clear liquid made from the bark of a local tree and a skeleton. The monks enter this room for intense meditation on the journey through life and to reflect on birth, death and the afterlife. Cut into the floor, a tunnel leads outside to a large cave with a heavy golden gate covering the cave mouth. One hooded monk guards either side, each carrying a small bow and quiver filled with menacing arrows. The handles on their sheathed swords sparkle, even through the dim light. This cave housed the teachings of the Lord Buddha and the Wat's most valuable possession; the four pre-molar 'wisdom' teeth of the Holy Buddha, kept in a golden box the size of a matchbox, adorned with rubies and sapphires from the nearby mines of *Chantaburi*.

The inner chamber of the main temple is very basic, with large smooth marble pillars either side of a three-metre wide aisle. Small mats lay on the marble floor to the side of the aisle for the monks to pray, receive teachings and meditate. Outside the main temple are the monk's living quarters and a large arena where they would learn fighting skills, both with and without weapons. Although the weapons are from an age long since a memory, in trained Tinju hands they are as deadly as any modern day weapon. Handed down from generation to generation, the monk's skills as great

warriors in all forms of combat are legendary. The early Kings of Siam ('Thailand' since 11 May 1949) had used Tinju monks as bodyguards and assassins throughout the centuries.

Due to the inhospitable terrain, the humidity and many biting insects, the approach to the village is difficult. With no roads or visible tracks, the only people with the knowledge to find their way are the villagers and monks. Through this anonymity the village and Wat has remained unhindered for millennia. They farm the land, tend their cattle and survive on medicines provided by the many trees and plants found in the surrounding forest, using knowledge passed down through the ages. They are totally self-sufficient and have no need for the trappings or indulgences of the outside world which had long since forgotten them.

The monks are chosen before birth. When a Tinju monk dies, the next first-born son of a villager becomes his replacement, believing him to be the reincarnation of the deceased Tinju. At just one day old, the infant is taken to the temple. There he would remain for the rest of his life, never knowing his real parents or family. The infant would be taken care of, taught and nurtured by the other monks. For the family it is a great honour to have a son a Tinju because they are known for their great wisdom and kindness in their search for enlightenment. They are born Tinju and they died Tinju.

There are currently seventy-five monks; the youngest, two years old, the eldest eighty-six. For monks of the Tinju credo, their duty is to guard the sacred relic, a duty which starts from the age of ten and stops usually at around seventy years old, with the exception of the 'Prime Master'.

A Siamese trader, and emissary to the King, acquired the holy remnants of Prince *Siddhartha Gautama* (Buddha) over five hundred years after his death, about the same time Christ was born. At the time it was widely believed any ruler who worshipped relics of Buddha was given the power to command and rule wisely. The trader brought the relics to Siam from China after searching for twenty years, but he was well rewarded for his endeavour. They were presented to King Bumnalonkorn of Siam who had a golden box encrusted with locally mined rubies and sapphires made to house the relics. In order to keep them safe he needed the most highly trained *Chang* [elephant] warriors from the Kingdom to guard them with their very lives. After many months of fierce gladiatorial competitions, fifty of the country's best warriors were chosen, along with twenty-five of the holiest Buddhist teachers. With their hair and eyebrows shaved and bedecked in the traditional bright orange robes, with the addition of a red sash, the Tinju monk was created. Their solitary role was to guard the holy relics and every year, on the King's birthday, escort them to the Imperial Palace so the King could ask for continued wisdom to rule.

The King chose a site he later named *Salaburi* in the heart of a jungle and brought in craftsmen from all over the Kingdom to build the Wat. Taking twelve years to construct, it was built next to a cave in one of the nearby mountains and made secure with gates and booby traps. The boxed relics were then placed into small gold statue of Buddha and locked. The key given to one holy man who was then given the title 'Prime Master', and only he knew the booby traps and only he

could hold the key. People from all over the Kingdom, families of builders, carpenters, teachers, doctors and farmers, were selected and brought in to take care of the new monks and make up the population of the village of Salaburi. A new civilisation was created, cut off from the outside world and developing its own culture.

Other than the King, his Chief of the Palace Guards, the head of the Temple of the Emerald Buddha¹ at the Imperial Palace and the Tinju, nobody else knew about the existence of the holy relics. The Chief of the Palace Guards had the responsibility to transport the Tinju to and from the palace. Large army transports would be driven to Pong-nam-rom. The monks would be waiting, load them silently into the vehicles, then precede straight to the Imperial Palace in Bangkok. The monks would then disembark and enter the Temple of the Emerald Buddha, forming rows either side of the aisle. The Prime Master would walk to the Emerald Buddha, remove the golden box from his robe and place it at the foot of the Buddha. He would then ask for blessing for several moments before joining the other monks to await the King's arrival.

In Salaburi, two hooded monks guarded the remnants 24 hours a day. The relics were only removed prior to the current monarch's birthday, in time to transport them to the Imperial Palace. When the

¹ The 'Emerald Buddha' is a large gold coloured statue of a sitting Buddha approximately 50 feet high. On its head is an emerald, approximately 4 inches high with the effigy of Buddha carved into it. This is mounted in a small gold and glass case. The Thais regard this as the holiest Buddha in Thailand. It is open to the public, as are some other parts of the Imperial Palace.

Imperial Palace was located in the former capital of Chiang Mai, the journey took weeks. After its relocation to Bangkok, it still took several days before the introduction of motor vehicles. Now the journey was only a five-hour drive. The monks removed the relics the day before in order to perform their own ritual, the 'Ceremony of the Great Journey'. This was the greatest day in the monk's year, as it meant the next day they would be going to the Imperial Palace and meeting their beloved monarch, *King Bhumipol Adulyadej the Great of the Chakri House*, whose birthday falls on the 5th of December.

Khun Somchay had been Prime Master of the Tinju for four years. Now at fifty-eight years of age, he had the strength of a lion, and the speed of a striking snake. His mentor, the former Prime Master, *Khun Vitthae*, had handed over the honour to *Somchay* after losing his sight and being unable to perform his duties. Within the Tinju society, monks ranked in order from Novice to Warrior to Master and then to Prime Master. Although *Somchay* was not the eldest Master, his merit and courage had convinced his peers he was the man for the job. He now stood in front of the large golden leafed statue of Buddha situated at the rear of the Tinju temple. The statue, approximately twenty-feet tall, was of the Buddha sitting in a cross-legged lotus position with his open hands joined and smiling face looking down at everyone below. In the Buddha's hands lay the small matchbox size gold and jewel encrusted box containing the sacred relic which had been ceremoniously brought from the guarded cave several hours earlier. *Somchay*, his head bowed and hands in the *wai* position, chanting a prayer for enlightenment,

wisdom and courage. His chanting continued for several minutes and then he fell silent.

Two hooded monks standing either side of the statue lit more of the heavily scented essence sticks positioned around the statue in small sand traps. This took a few minutes as small wisps of smoke started emanating from the sticks and the air was starting to fill with a fragrant earthy smell. After all thirty sticks were lit, Somchay took the small box from the Buddha's hands and turned to face the prone monks. He held the box high above his head and uttered a command in an ancient Siamese dialect, lost to the world except for those in this holy place. The monks now sat straight with their faces looking at the holy box and, in a singular crescendo, praised the Lord Buddha so loudly it seemed to resonate in nirvana. This carried on for several minutes all in perfect tone, perfect pitch, and perfect unison.

It was Somchay who first noticed the change in the aroma surrounding the temple. Somchay's sense of smell, as that of all Tinju monks, was honed to be the same as hunting or prey animal. The fragrant smell of the incense had been replaced by a smell he had come across before, similar to the sweet nutty smell given off by cakes made at the village bakery. It was almonds. But he knew this wasn't cake; it was something more modern and his senses told him, much more sinister. The wispy curls of smoke now turned into large plumes of smoke. He shouted out and clasped the box to his body. The other monks were now on their feet and were hurrying toward Somchay. The hooded monk standing to the right of the statue thought he saw the monk to the left putting on a black mask, but he ignored this and

went to protect his master. Confusion reigned, as one by one the monks fell unconscious to the floor. Somchay fell against the statue, the holy box tumbling out of his hand. He looked up at the smiling face of Buddha the last face he was to see in this life. The smoke filled the temple, as one by one the monks gave into this mortal coil and were dispatched to their nirvana.

The only figure standing was a lone hooded monk who quietly walked through the smoke to the lifeless body of the dead Prime Master, bent down and retrieved the holy jewelled box and placed it in a small pocket inside his tunic. He looked through the smoke at the blurred orange clad figures of the monks, now either dead still or writhing and convulsing on the marble floor. One monk caught his gaze and he stared for several moments until the monk's body ceased all movement. Slowly but purposely, he then made his way to the back entrance of the temple were, once outside, he removed his S16 respirator to take a gulp of fresh air. He removed his robes and stood in his camouflage under garment before picking up the remainder of his cyanide flares. *Don't want to leave any evidence*, he thought. Finally, he bundled up his robe into a crude rucksack, tied that and his deadly evidence to his back, took a last deep breath and ran off toward the jungle.

The back door of the temple was left ajar and a faint cough could be heard behind the door, followed by a dull thud as the other hooded monk came crashing through. He had used his robe to filter some of the gas and held his breath as the deadly cyanide billowed out around him. Somehow he found the strength to run out of the gas stream into the fresh air, letting out his breath in a loud throaty roar and inhaling deeply. Still wheezing for air, he

bent over and vomited. He turned his head and caught a glimpse of a figure running in the distance before disappearing into the jungle. He then collapsed into a comatose sleep.



– Chapter One –

The silence was broken by a high pitched screech, followed by several beeps. An arm came out from under a small bundle of blankets and a hand slapped the top of the alarm clock amid mumbling, the sound of breaking wind and the grating of a scrotum being scratched. Stu was finally awake, he pulled back the blankets and rolled out of bed. He made his way over to the light switch. Bloody freezing, he thought to himself, but never mind, this time tomorrow he would be basking in the sunshine. He looked over to an armchair, a white bundle of fur lay with its eyes open staring at Stu as he turned on the light.

“Come on lazy dog; get your useless carcass up. You are going on holiday.”

Stu had moved to Cleethorpes, a small northern English coastal town, and had been living in a flat above a hair salon for four years. Although born and raised there, he had moved away when he was seventeen to join the Royal Navy. After leaving the Navy, he spent several years moving around the country working before deciding to return to Cleethorpes and set up a furniture business. Once there, Stu purchased a dilapidated shop house, very cheaply, and fixed it up so it was habitable. He rented out the shop to a hairdresser and the downstairs flat behind the shop to his friend. He

lived in the upstairs flat with his old dog, 'Chunky', a white boxer bitch.

Although he'd had several ladies in his life, coming and going possibly due to the fact they didn't really like him, he remained alone with his faithful companion who he had dragged around the country for eight years. Chunky was purchased as an eighteen-month-old unwanted pet and, when brought from the animal rescue shelter to meet her new owner, thought she was in for an easy life. Poor misguided animal.

Chunky was well known for her stupidity and affection, both by the neighbours and local fire department, who had been called out many times to free her head from the many railings and obstacles she used to get herself stuck in.

Now into December, England was cold and the icy chill cut to the bone. Keeping extremities warm was a full time task. With the long periods of darkness causing deep depression among many of its inhabitants, England was not a nice place to live during the winter months. Which is why Stu had decided to take his holidays now. He had staff that could take care of his business and his friend Tony to take care of Chunky. He would be back before Christmas so he could spend time with his mum and friends.

Stu was thirty-five years old, short in height with a stocky build and a well formed beer gut. He would be the perfect weight for his height, if he was six feet five, but he fell short of that by over a foot. His mousy brown hair always looked uncombed, mainly because it was and although he thought he looked handsome, in reality he had the looks that only a mother could love. Not a rich man but never short of money, he worked

hard for what he had earned, and had the reputation of being thrifty; *'as tight as a ducks arse in water'* to be more accurate.

His friend, Spock, lived in the downstairs flat. The two had been friends since childhood and had always kept in contact through the years, sharing many drunken adventures whenever Stu was in town. Including having a neighbourhood closed off by armed police who was looking for a crazed man in a checked shirt waving a shotgun around. This was actually a shitfaced [very drunk] Stu who had borrowed Spock's air rifle with its telescopic sights to look for a comet which was supposed to be easily viewed in the northeast night sky. Due to the fact Stu didn't know which way was northeast, he searched the entire sky using the rifle's sights. After waving the gun around to no avail, he gave up, went inside and drank some more. Within ten minutes the street was swarming with police.

When Stu returned to Cleethorpes to live, the terrible twosome met up again. Spock had rented the downstairs flat after finishing with his long time girlfriend who had decided after ten years together she didn't really like him. She did however, like her boss at the fish processing factory where she worked. She even liked his new black eye and crooked nose, courtesy of Spock.

Stu had found a cheap deal on the Internet to Bangkok and Pattaya after finding out they were in a country called Thailand, advertised as the 'Land of Smiles'. The lads booked fifteen nights, flying from Manchester on 7th December and, after meeting several local lads who had already been to Pattaya and told

them some of what to expect, they decided they had made the right decision.

Stu had a hot shower, pulled on his jeans and thick shirt and made himself a cup of tea. He opened a tin of dog food which he scooped into a bowl and went into the living room, leaving chunky with her snout buried in the food. He sat in his armchair and went through everything silently in his mind. Bags packed - 'check'. Tickets, passport, traveller's cheques, - 'check'. Condoms - 'check'. Dog food, 16 days supply - 'check'. Train tickets - 'check'. He thought he had forgotten something but could not think what it was. Then he realised. Shit! He rushed out of his armchair and raced off downstairs.

"Spock are you awake?" he bellowed through the wall to the downstairs flat.

"Yes matey," came the muffled reply. "I'll be up there in ten minutes. What time you taking the dog and what time's the taxi coming?"

Spock, whose real name was Peter Harris, was the same age as Stu. A giant of a man, with his large build and shaven head he looked more like a large primate. He earned his nickname at school because of his unusually large ears. Although not pointed, his ears bore an uncanny resemblance to those of Star Trek's resident Vulcan, so he had been nicknamed 'Spock'. The name had stayed with him all his life and even he sometimes forgot he was called Peter. He loved his single life, loved the parties, and loved his work as a hygiene engineer. A dustbin man.

He was the life and soul of any party with his unusual party tricks. He would sit down, lift his legs to his neck, break wind and ignite this rather lethal gas

which produced a blue flame as methane met spark. His other favourite trick was to remove his top dentures. He had lost all his top teeth in a run-in with a lump of 4x2 wooden club wielded by an unhappy customer during his stint as a doorman ten years earlier. He would drop the dentures in some poor innocent drinker's pint of beer then, with a big cheerful laugh, apologise and offer to finish off the drink for them. This practice had all but ceased after one night at their favourite Indian restaurant, 'The Tiger of Bengal'. Totally spannered, Spock decided to remove his dentures and place them in a girls' drink. In went the teeth but instead of shrieking hysterically, the girl just calmly finished her drink, tipped out the dentures and promptly threw them across the restaurant. Everyone found this amusing except Spock. The dentures were passed around with Spock running around trying to find out who had them. The restaurant was in a humorous uproar. The dentures were eventually found buried in a half-eaten bowl of Bombay mix, taken to the kitchen, cleaned and brought back to Spock on a small silver platter by a very perturbed Indian waiter. The restaurant is now fondly known as 'The Teeth of Bengal'.

The terrible twosome were now on their way. Chunky was taken to her new residence for the next sixteen days and the lads were on the 12:40 train to Manchester airport. They were not due to fly out until 21:50 but they wanted to give themselves plenty of time to check in with China Airways and have a few drinks. They had made it as far as Scunthorpe, a small industrial town twenty minutes from Cleethorpes, when Spock opened his small hand luggage and produced a half-full bottle of whisky.

“Still three hours until we get to the airport so we might as well polish this off. After all, we are on holiday and it would be a shame not to.”

They arrived in plenty of time and checked in their luggage. They were allocated aisle seats and when told about the free drink service on the flight, they felt even happier.

On the plane they met Nick who was in the seat next to Spock and, as luck would have it, was also travelling to Pattaya. Nick was staying three weeks as he did not want to be in England over Christmas. He chuckled that he would have a better Christmas in Pattaya. He lived with his sister in Brighton, a southern English coastal resort, and made this journey many times a year, both for leisure pursuits and business which, as he explained, was buying copy designer clothes and watches to sell back in the U.K. He explained how it was becoming more difficult due to the Thai government’s restrictions on copy gear. He gave Spock and Stu some information of what to expect in Pattaya, the routine about paying bar girls, where to change money and how much to pay for things. The two lads listened intently, especially about the girls. The only time they spoke was when Stu asked about brothels, to which Nick replied chuckling, “There aren’t any. Wait and see.” That became his standard reply to all the following questions.

“Wait and see. Just remember whatever you do, fall in love with the place, do not, repeat, do not fall in love with the girls.”

Nick was a typical ‘Jack the Lad’. Fairly tall and lean, he spoke with a southern cockney accent which he explained he had picked up after spending many years