

DO YOU READ BOOKS?

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I am surrounded by friends and family who are deeply attached to books and reading. Of all people, I should know the beauty of books and reading, because I not only have read way too much for my own health, but I have amassed several large libraries over the years, and am the curator of what is perhaps the largest astrological library in the world. So I am not throwing stones here, but I am looking at books and what we do with them, at least briefly.

Books capture so much beauty and they can contain such great knowledge. That is for sure. Yet books are and will always be one step away from actual experience. They are a product of “The” mind, but filtered through some other “personal” mind than our own. I am reminded of what my first dharma teacher would tell me again and again, when he saw me carrying a book, and I was always carrying a book in the 1960s. “Michael,” he would say, “Someday, you will have to BE the book.” I would ponder his words and wonder what could he mean?

Books are like a doorway into life experience, but also a bit of a keyhole through which we peer. I am reminded of the actor Charlton Heston’s line about not wanting to give up his rifles and others guns, to the effect that “They will have to pry it from my cold dead hands.” I sometimes worry that books are like that.

Another analogy I indulge is that reading books overmuch is like trying to look in the rear-view mirror and back a car into the future. There is always the middleman, the author (or compiler) between us and the actual experience. I know, I know... books are an experience in themselves, but indulge me here please.

Years ago, I began to wean myself from books. It was not easy. Instead of searching through books for sheer entertainment or answers to my questions, I began to learn to look in my own mind for the answers. They are all there, you know.

Every idea that is in a book first came out of the mind. No argument there.

I am not going to go on in this blog about this, but I do offer this video called “Mind Treasures: Reading in the Mind,” for those who might be interested in a little more detail.

It contains some information about the Tibetan ‘terma’ (hidden teachings), and also ‘mind terma’, literally treasures hidden in the mind, and the tertons, those who are able to find and retrieve these treasures.

And, of course, in the video there are more suggestions on how to read in your own mind.

I also talk about my trip to Mt. Wu-Tai-Shan in China, where as legend has it, all of the 84,000

astrological dharmas first appeared in this world system we live in. And other stuff.

Aside from being a kind of experience all their own, books are a prequel to life experience. Someday, as my teacher explains, we all have to be the book.

The link to the video is here:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1l8BSBqCZxs>