

MIND TREASURES
Astrological Tertons and Terma
June 1, 2012

By Michael Erlewine (Michael@Erlewine.net)

I get asked all the time what books I am reading. I invariably answer "I don't read books, per se, anymore; I read some Buddhist texts, but that is about all." That is a bit of a smug answer. I am perhaps deflecting the question rather than trying to explain what it is that I am doing about my reading habits.

This is a topic I probably should take a pass on and not tackle. However, it fascinates me and has become an important part of my life, so here goes. Years ago my first teacher, a Rosicrucian initiator named Andrew Gunn McIver (who, born in Scotland, was in his eighties at the time I met him) often used to say to me when he saw me reading this or that book: "Michael, some day you must become the book." Hmmm, thought I, now what does that mean?

Well, I am gradually finding out what he meant. Believe it or not, I am learning to read what is already embedded in my own mind and it is good reading! Of course modern Western society has no words for what I am talking about, but the Tibetan Buddhists do. They call it "mind terma," which translates as something like "mind treasures."

The Tibetans even have a wonderful story about how astrology entered our world system ages ago in a place in China called Mt. Wu-Tai-Shan, five mountains in the shape of a square with the tallest mount in the center, a die. I have been to Tai-Shan in China, climbed to the top of all five mountains, and did puja, but that is another story. You can find it here if you have time:

<http://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.459543472657.245141.587252657>

The take away from that ancient legend is that the 84,000 astrological dharmas that are said to have sprung from the head of the Bodhisattva Manjushri at Mt. Wu-Tai-Shan were hidden in our world long ago, many of them embedded in the mind itself. And there they are, waiting to be found by us or someone like us. Indeed, I ask, why not us?

The operative question then becomes: just how can we do this? How can we learn to find the hidden astrological treasures within our own mind? And the answer seems to be, gradually, by becoming more aware of the nature of the mind itself in which these astrological 'terma' or teachings are hidden. IMO, it is that simple or complex.

And it is written that hidden 'terma' of any kind will be found when they are needed by humanity, always at the right time, when we most need them. And I am not speaking of the pure dharma treasure-teachings, but here just of the astrological dharma treasures that are also embedded in our mind.

In the Tibetan teachings, a treasure finder who finds a mind treasure and grasps its nature, must first fully absorb not only its concept, but also practice the essence of that mind treasure (often for many years) before sharing it with the community. It would make sense that astrologers find them or that anyone who finds them perhaps becomes an astrologer. I can't say that I know exactly how that works.

What I do know is that it does work because I have gradually been learning to read from the treasure-book of my own mind, and astrology is on the top of my reading list. Of course this can't be done by brute force, but rather slowly, like the old kid's game of Pick-Up-Sticks, through removing one bit of our mental obscurations after another. The tools to do this are those of mind practice, such as the various kinds of meditation, but I will not go into that here. I have written extensively on meditation and I can post a link if anyone needs it. Look for the free e-book "Training the Mind" here:

<http://astrologysoftware.com/books/index.asp?orig>

The theme of this blog is just to point out to astrologers that there are reading materials other than the New York Times Best Seller List or what you find in your favorite metaphysical bookstore. The mind itself is vast and wondrous. After all, every idea of value has, at one time or another, been found somewhere in the mind. Astrological ideas (terma) are no different.

I admit that it takes time, perseverance, and practice to read in the mind, but its rewards are virtually unlimited. And in this practice you are not reading the mind of another person, but rather in the mind that we all have access to, the true nature of our own mind. These astrological treasures are hidden close to us in our own mind.

I don't want to get too personal here, but almost all of the astrology techniques that I use in my work have been found and taken from the mind itself, rather than from pre-existing books. I could list them, and they would include techniques like Local Space, Interface Planetary Nodes, Heliocentric StarTypes (archetypes), Full-Phase Aspects, Burn Rate Retrograde analysis, and on and on.

I have also added on to some existing astrological terma that have been already revealed, like Grant Lewis's Saturn work, and there are others. Think about this please. I could write more on this topic, but for those of you reading this who resonate to this concept, I have this suggestion:

If you read from the mind, you are learning to focus not on the external outside world, but rather from the inside, the inner essence is what I am pointing out here. So don't get hung up on external and outer phenomena, like the personality of someone like me who is presenting this. Like yourself, my personality is just a collection of attachments I have gathered over the years.

Instead, read beyond my outer person to the oracle that speaks through the personality, through any person. Focusing on the outer personality of any one of us, that guardian-at-the-threshold of the mind, distracts us from reading what is beyond the personal, what is shining through.

What I write about here is not true because I say it; I say it because it is true. Read from the inside out, not from the outside in. I understand this is an esoteric topic, so you may have questions. Feel free to discuss.

FB-2012-199
Bloom
May 31, 2012

A flower blooms,
In its time,
Whether or not,

Anyone is there,
To receive it.

Alone,
And in silence,
It leaves only,
Its seed.

This is how it is,
And has always been.

Michael Erlewine
May 30, 2012

The above poem was written at 36,000 feet above the earth from a plane. The trip was not without its problems; there were delays and threats to re-route me to Atlanta, with an accompanying five-hour wait, and so on.

I am happy to tell you that most of that did not happen and I am at last back home again sitting in front of my computer. Needless to say my dog Molotov, who I am told has been spending most of his time waiting for me in my office since I left, was so happy to see me, and actually seem surprised. Of course he leapt up and down in the air about my arrival. Not many of my friends do that.

Margaret (my wife) has gone to New York to our monastery for some special practices that are taking place there, so Molly and I are here alone. After being with some 1500 astrologers for eight days, the absolute quiet is just fine by me. At the same time, there is a certain sadness that the conference is over. Part of me could probably do that forever.

Of course it was an exciting time in New Orleans surrounded by astrologers. It was like a dream. And for me the best part of the trip was meeting my Facebook friends. You were all so warm and friendly, and we already know one another; at the same time it was our first meeting. We were genuinely happy to see each other in person. Thank you for that.

Now let me see... how do I get on with my life?