

YONGEY MINGYUR RINPOCHE'S NEW BOOK

“IN LOVE WITH THE WORLD. A monk's Journey Through the Bardos of Living and Dying.”

This is a different sort of book by Mingyur Rinpoche than he has written before. I have met Mingyur Rinpoche and seen him a number of times, both in person at an interview at our monastery (KTD Monastery in upstate New York), and here and there. I remember standing with Mingjur Rinpoche in Toronto as a fierce storm, perhaps a small tornado, passed just about half a block away. My wife and I stood in a small bookstore with doors open to the outside where it poured rain, with Mingyur Rinpoche, Thrangu Rinpoche, Lama Namse Rinpoche, and my own teacher Khenpo Karthar Rinpoche, while the storm raged around us. I experienced Mingyur rinpoche “up close and personal.”

I had always been attracted to Mingjur Rinpoche. He seemed ultra-sensitive, very bright, kind, and open, and (from my point of view as an elder) young. I have read some of his teachings and listened to some You-Tube videos of his teachings. And I had identified enough with him to add him personally to my daily prayers as I recite the Precious Garland of all the key teachers of the Kagyu Lineage in succession. One of our retreat lamas had pointed out to me that Mingyur Rinpoches did not exactly belong in that list. I understand, but I always add him anyway. Why?

Because I have learned from his teachings in a very direct, grab my gut, manner. Most of these teachings were from before he went on his three-year wandering retreat documented in this book, but the teachings after he returned were even more inspiring. They turn up the volume. I feared for his life when I heard of his journey and felt sadness that he would not be around to hear about or see for some time. Yet, I understood. I had seen up close how very sensitive he was and how he almost clung to those rinpoches that were around him

during that storm. Here, thought I, was another type of rinpoche, a type I had never experienced.

Well, maybe I had experienced it once before, thus this story.

Years before, in our dharma center, Heart Center KTC (Karma Thegsum Choling) here in Big Rapids, Michgian, we had invited and sponsored a young acharya who was just out of school from the Nalanda Institute at Rumtek Monastery in Sikkim, India. He lived with us for something like six months, while he was learning English.

Later, I found out that this acharya had been appointed as the khenpo (abbot) of Nalanda Institute where he taught for two years. He then did the traditional three-year retreat under Kenpo Tsultim Gyamtso Rinpoche at Pullahari Monastery established by the third Jamgon Kogntrul .

After his retreat, he was appointed Drupon (retreat master) and today is known as the Very Ven. Dropon Khenpo Lodro Namgyal. I have a couple of stories about Khenpo Lodro Namgyal.

One of the times I visited Kathmandu, Nepal, Margaret and I walked from there (some distance) up to Pullahari Monastery, which is an aesthetically beautiful monastery, perfectly reflecting the incredible nature of the 3rd Jamgon Kongtrul Rinpoche, who passed away so early.

As we toured the monastery, we passed through one room where there were some monks. One monk was sitting up at a high level. As we came in, of course, we acknowledged his presence as we moved through the room. Suddenly, this stranger called out. "Michael, come up and sit with me." I was completely surprised.

As it turned out, this was Khenpo Lodro Namgyal, the acharya who had lived at our center years before. And so, we met again. He was so beautiful to meet and had changed so much from when I first knew him. He was now resplendent and the power of his countenance was awesome to gaze upon. And there is one other story when I again saw Khenpo Lodro Namgyal.

This was in Mirik, India (a village near Darjeeling) at “Bokar Ngedon Chokhor Ling,” the retreat center of the Ven. Kyabje Bokar Rinpoche, lineage master of both the Shangpa and Karma Kagyu and Heart Son of the Ven. Kalu Rinpoche, where we were briefly staying. We were there to meet Bokar Rinpoche and his translator (our friend) Ngodup Tsering Burkar. And the strangest thing happened, something that touched my heart in a way it had never been touched before or since.

As I was walking in the courtyard at Bokar Rinpoche’s monastery, a small bus pulled up. It turned out that it contained a group of three-year retreatants that had been brought here for some special empowerments. I’m not sure if there were done with retreat or actually had left retreat for these special ceremonies. But with them was their retreat master, this same Khenpo Lodro Namgyal.

In fact, Khenpo Lodro Nyamgal was the first to get off this bus and he then turned and helped each of the retreatants exit the bus. And this is what floored me. As each of the retreatants stepped off the bus, he was embraced by Khenpo Lodro Nyamgal. And I don’t mean embraced like we do, with a hug or even a warm embrace.

Khenpo Lodro Namgyal embraced each of the retreatants like a mother would her newborn child. He held each of the retreatant’s faces in his hands, pulling them close and touching their face. It was so open and so private that I could not even stand to watch and had to turn away. I had never seen (before or since)

anything remotely like it. And it struck me to the heart where, as mentioned, I had never been touched before or since. Impossible to forget, it opened in me a place in my heart that has never closed. Anyway, that's my other memory of Khenpo Lodro Nyamgal. But I digress. Back to this new book.

I am a confirmed photographer and one of the mythical photography terms is what is called micro-contrast. Some say it does not exist and others, like me, feel it is imperative. Micro-contrast is variably described, but one such definition by Yannick Khong is "Micro-contrast is the ability of the lens to communicate the richness and vibrancy of the inter-tonal shifts between the brighter to darker part of a very same color onto the sensor. A lens with a great micro-contrast has much richer colors and tone transitions compared to a weaker one. "

My point here is the Yongey Mingyur Rinpoches new book "In Love with the World," IMO, is an example of verbal micro-contrast. It's almost recursive in that its paragraphs seem to fold in on each other, causing the reader to slow way down until one is almost static, almost non-dual. I tried my best to skim over this volume, to get an idea of its scope and merit and found myself unable to do so. You have to actually read it and it is filled with micro-tonality. The book is just as sensitive and subtle as Mingyur Rinpoche himself appeared when I first met him.

And, as a Mahamudra student and practitioner of some 30 years, this book is absolutely filled with short comments and insights that are self-insightful and cut to the quick. I would go so far as to say that this is not even a book as you and I know it. It's a time bomb or like making pickles: the book works on you and changes you.

Of course, the story of a wandering monk is wonderful, but to me that is not what interested me most. It is this, as mentioned, recursive writing style, that by its very

language transforms your mind as you read it. At least, that is how I have received it. At first, it seemed so involved and ingrown that I didn't have time to read it and then, as I sampled any part, it did. I found the time (or it created the time I needed) and then it changed me. In other words, if you can stand to slow yourself down enough to read it, the book is self-instructing. It's not a book, but a teaching.

[Photo of the Ven. Yongey Mingjur Rinpoche after his wandering retreat.]

For those of you who would like to have access to other free books, articles, and videos on these topics, here are the links:

http://traffic.libsyn.com/spiritgrooves/Links_to_Michael_Erlewine-V2.pdf

“As Bodhicitta is so precious,
May those without it now create it,
May those who have it not destroy it,
And may it ever grow and flourish.”

