

Surviving the Dragon

by
Arjia Rinpoche

I just finished reading, *Surviving the Dragon*, by Arjia Rinpoche. I found it to be a vivid and stunning story that is as inspiring as it is heartbreaking. It shares the true circumstances and complexity of difficult times, times in which the practicality and logic of a people must be in balance with religious dedication in order to survive.

Although we can all relate to the challenge of balancing our practical and spiritual lives, the complexity of this task is incredibly magnified by the fact that the author, Arjia Rinpoche, is a deeply revered Tibetan Buddhist lama. The story of his journey is, I'm sure, as difficult to share as it is, at times, to read. The suffering and injustice experienced by so many in Communist China brings out the best and worst of human nature. Physical and spiritual dangers abound. Yet, Arjia Rinpoche manages to maintain his integrity, his dedication to his religion, and his service to the Tibetan and Mongolian people.

Arjia Rinpoche's life has taken him on an amazing journey— from his identification as a reincarnate lama in Tibet at the age of two to his being named Director of The Tibetan Mongolian Cultural Center and Kumbum Chamste Ling in Bloomington, Indiana. His presence and, indeed, this book are an acknowledgement of the unique connection between the small, rural community of Bloomington and the people of Tibet and Mongolia. I believe Hoosiers lives have been greatly enriched by the presence of the center, its activities, and the cultures that it represents.