



Ancient Teachings, Modern Technology

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche Taps Into the Internet to Transform Lives

By Bob and Marina Felix



After a Webcast: Rinpoche and other lamas view the chat screen The Tibetan Buddhist teachings today are touching hearts and minds in every recess of the globe. This is not just because teachers are traveling widely, or because Buddhist-related books are accessible to wide audiences; it's also because of the infinite reach of the Internet. Anyone with a home computer and Internet access now can find a few minutes between pressing work and family obligations to sit in the quiet refuge of their home and view a Buddhist master's teachings, via live Webcasts, YouTube videos, or online workshops.

A home laptop may seem a world away from the traditional setting of the Buddhist gumpa; yet the ancient Buddhist teachings delivered via Internet can remain in their essence true to their ancient origins; and their effects in students can be profound.

Remote Yet Intimate

One Tibetan spiritual teacher who has embraced such new modes of communication with success is renowned Tibetan lama and author Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. Tenzin Rinpoche regularly posts his teachings to YouTube (www.youtube.com/ligmincha), translated in a variety of languages; and this year he has scheduled six teachings and guided meditations via live Webcast (see www.ligmincha.com)

mincha.org

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Last January and June for the first time he gave his Tibetan Sound Healing teachings as an interactive online workshop in association with Bob and Marina Felix of GlideWing Productions (www.glidewing.com). This well-received three-week workshop will be repeated again in September 2010, and in coming months two additional online workshops will be added to Rinpoche's schedule: one on contemplative Tibetan meditation, another on Tibetan yoga.

One might expect teachings delivered remotely would engender a remote understanding of the dharma, but post-workshop comments by participants reflect experiences that are decidedly intimate, often life-changing. Students also have discovered they receive something unique from this medium: the opportunity to immediately apply to their daily lives what they are learning and internalizing during the workshop, each day as they are learning it, all with close guidance and support from the master.

A small sample of post-workshop comments: *"These teachings have deeply touched my entire being."* *"I am calmer and more positive in the face of negative encounters."* *"To have this result in so little time – no one would believe me."*

"It has been a supremely gratifying experience, for both the students and myself," Tenzin Rinpoche says. "Having been teaching in the West for many years, I have never felt quite content sending students home after a weekend or a weeklong retreat, knowing the challenge they face in integrating the meditation practice into their stressful home lives where there may be little space for spiritual work."

This aspect of integration, Tenzin Rinpoche insists, is the most important aspect of the learning process.

In these three-week workshops students can view on their own time prerecorded videos in which Rinpoche gives in-depth teachings and guides the practices. As practice-related questions arise, students may submit them to Rinpoche via the Ask a Question forum. All participating students receive by email each question submitted, as well as Rinpoche's direct,

personal answer.

“I am usually able to reply to questions within a day or two,” Rinpoche says. “The main consideration is my busy travel schedule, but having access to a computer is all I need to be available to my students.”

Three Online Workshops

[Tenzin Rinpoche’s course in Tibetan Sound Healing](#) draws from a fundamental ancient Tibetan practice in which the vibration of the sound is used along with breath and intention to dissolve energetic blockages and other patterns of negativity, while bringing joy, love and happiness into the practitioner’s life.



Rinpoche with Bob and Marina Felix “The Tibetan Bon Buddhist tradition is one of the oldest unbroken lineages of wisdom that uses sound for the well-being of its practitioners,” Rinpoche says. “This practice initiates changes at a very deep level, and you could say that a practitioner undergoes five stages of inner transformation. A process like this does not happen over a weekend. The format we chose allowed for both the time needed for the process to unfold, and for the teacher support throughout that entire time.”

The three-week format similarly lends itself to Rinpoche’s upcoming workshop on contemplative meditation, to be based on a simple five-line set of pith instructions that are the essence of a heart teaching by Dawa Gyaltsen, an eighth century meditation master. Reflecting on these lines helps to guide one directly to the open, clear and blissful experience that is the nature of one’s own mind. A third online workshop on Tibetan yoga (*trul khor*) will guide students in a distinctive physical yoga practice that incorporates breath, awareness and physical movement. A wonderful support for all spiritual practitioners, Tibetan yoga can clear long-held blocks in the practitioner’s body, energy, and mind, supporting the spontaneous arising of awareness during formal meditation and in everyday life.

What did Tenzin Rinpoche like most about his first experience with an online workshop?

“First of all, it was a great pleasure to be able to take each step of the journey together with my students, seeing them through the entire process — from gaining understanding of the teachings, to making the practices a part of their lives, to helping interpret and make sense of the experiences that the students were going through.

“I was also amazed to see this group of people, from all over the globe, over three weeks evolve into the most supportive and caring community. Students were writing to each other, sharing thoughts and experiences, giving encouragement when needed, and delighting at each other’s success. But, undoubtedly, the most gratifying part was to read about the transformation that was taking place in lives of the participants in the course of the workshop.”

Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche is the spiritual director of Ligmincha Institute in Nelson County, Va., and author of *The Tibetan Yogas of Dream and Sleep*, *Tibetan Sound Healing*, *Wonders of the Natural Mind*,
and
Healing With Form, Energy and Light,
all available at

[Ligmincha Institute's Bookstore and Tibet Shop.](#)

For more information about his online workshops, visit the Website of Glidewing Productions,
www.glidewing.com

Photographs by Rogelio Jaramillo Flores

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Workshop Sharings

Messages shared with and by Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche in the Ask a Question forum of the Tibetan Sound Healing workshop*:

Dear Rinpoche, sometimes while doing the practices I begin experiencing thoughts that cause emotions, which could be followed by a feeling of some physical discomfort. All this creates a sort of an inner disquiet, making it more difficult to do the practice. How should I deal with it? — M.

Dear M., it is not uncommon for obstacles to come up during the practice, and the answer is simply to try to be more aware of the mind that is drawing attention to these things. Throughout the instructions for the practice and for pranic breathing, the emphasis has been on drawing clear and open attention to the location of one of the chakras. The reason that attention must be clear and open is that you want to relax the location with no ego involved. So whenever a thought arises or the inner commentary begins, instead of judging and criticizing these inner voices, just be with them and feel the stillness and space around them. In particular listen to the silence within that inner voice. When you begin to hear the silence within yourself, the voice will stop. — TWR

Dear Rinpoche, I am able to integrate the practice more and more into the everyday life, which gives me the feeling of safety, that I need a lot these days. I also started to sleep much. Is it possible to integrate the sacred syllables practice into our nighttime state of mind? — K.

Dear K., the Warrior Syllables can definitely be used as a practice when falling asleep at night. Consider which syllable you want to work with the most, relax your body, do some pranic breathing in and out of the chakra associated with that syllable. Then, as you are falling asleep, if you are working with *OM*, for example, draw clear and open attention to the throat chakra and enter directly into the experience of *OM*, as you remember it from your formal practice. Think of the chakra you are working with as being like a nest, and think of yourself as a bird. You are going to this very comfortable nest, connecting with the quality of the syllable, and just falling asleep there. The wonderful thing about putting the mind in a good place as one falls asleep is that it can beneficially affect sleep and dreams all night long. This way the night as well as the day becomes an important opportunity for practice. — TWR

Heartfelt greetings of gratitude Rinpoche. For the first time since I can remember I've had a conversation with my mother that did not involve my worrying and longings for her happiness. I was able to just talk with her and connect heart and soul without any interference. Time and space and issues dissolved and were cleared and the love just flowed.□ This isn't the specific issue I picked but from doing the practice informally, this has been a direct result and is a huge breakthrough for me in my continuing work. — J.

** Edited slightly for clarity; names have been removed to maintain confidentiality*