



Buddhism in the Digital Era: Mediatization and the Reconfiguration of Mindfulness

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Abstract

Digital media has played an important role for the globalization, adaptation and practice of Buddhism. The impact of digital media in globalizing Buddhist practices has tried to explore in this article with actual kindness paid to how it changes rituals, transforms communities, creates new forms of material and disembodied practice which has presented both prospects and challenges. This research article examines the development and global diffusion of Buddhist mindfulness and applies in the context of modern media platforms. Digital platforms such as social media, livestreaming and thought applications have attracted the openness of Buddhist knowledges while at the same time interested on the established ideas of spiritualism, social reality and collective services. The research discovers the transmission, insight and submission of mindfulness diagonally in several global circumstances by means of a qualitative approach that participates digital expressive anthropology. The main findings of the study opines that the digital media encourage openness and they also challenge personified ritual practices which help to aid in the commercialization, secularization of mindfulness, giving to research findings. This study impulses a critical comprehension of moral and spiritual inferences of mindfulness in the digital age and underlines the complicated relationship between tradition and novelty in digitally facilitated Buddhism. The study advances information in the grounds of mediatization, digital religion and globalization of religiousness concerning Buddhism practices.

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Introduction

The word, 'Buddhism' is historically transmitted via face-to-face teaching, monastic extractions, journeys and ritual gatherings which is now used to gradually mediated through digital platforms. It shows live streamed discourses and rituals, meditation apps, social media, virtual communities and digital archives (Bell 45). The current literatures on digital religion and mediatization of religion frames religious practices. It brings changes with the help of media technologies (Cheong et al. 12). Digital media share the information on mediation and mindfulness among the audience, difference agencies, authorities and experiences.

Digital media have become increasingly more influential in the dissemination, variation and internationalization of religious practices in recent decades in Nepal. According to Choe Buddhism has been localized rituals, monastic transmission and in-person instruction which has based on its roots (Choe 4). However, it is becoming popular on digital platforms like social media, online forums, livestreamed experiences and meditation applications in 21st century's for safeguarding global peace and prosperities in present world (Helland 10). In addition to make Buddhist teachings more effective and widely available from communication perspectives, this digital revolution changes the definition of ritual and mindfulness which is redefined religious authority, personification and community.

A prime example of complicated relationships between media, religion and international cultural flows are widespread appeal of "mindfulness". It is frequently lacking for the formation of Buddhist ethical groundwork (McMahan 12). The rapid growth about the global adoption of mindfulness practices in secular, healing and business settings have made possible with the digital technologies. It is frequently transferred as a tool for raising efficiency and well-being (Purser 28). Falcone notes that different Buddhist communities in the world (both traditional and modern) are using digital media to preserve religious continuousness and create transnational networks and modify rituals for online involvement (Falcon 6). It has seen true during disturbances like the latest recent Ginz protest and consequences in Nepal for providing peaceful message to maintain calm to have inner peace during Curfew period imposed by Nepal Army.

The emphasis in practicing mediation through intra-personal communication to create the atmosphere for mindfulness for discourses analysis is prominent. This study has explored that digital media help to mediate Buddhist practices in the context of globalization of Buddhist message in present world. It looks that digital platforms bring change in religious authority, ritual efficacy and common belonging with the frameworks of mediatization theory (Hjarvard 15) which has insisted digital religion, ritual and religious studies (Campbell 70). The complete case studies of virtual communities, online meditation groups and Buddhist social media proactiveness have seen in the study. It has also indicated that digital technologies bring both reservation and changes in Buddhist traditions for disseminating proper message to have mindfulness in their daily life. It also raises problems concerning moral dignity and personification in a spiritual environment facilitated by technology.

This study has tackled number of research issues based on the nexus of digital media and Buddhism. First, it explores how the dissemination of Buddhist messages and understanding of essential teachings

are impacted by the digitization of mindfulness and other Buddhist practices which is especially separated from conventional ethical and philosophical frameworks. Second, it looks at the shifting dynamics of religious professional in online settings for practicing mediation of Buddhism, where the reciter and unprofessional teachers frequently surpass monastic figures through its messages.

Third, the study has to explore about the personified aspects of Buddhist rituals, which is changed by digital mediation with the effectiveness of computer-generated connection. Fourth, the study also tries to concern about the effects of worldwide media-driven propagation on the cultural identity and localization of Buddhist practices to maintain global peace and happiness. Particularly, it has to focus in light of the commodification of religiousness and “McMindfulness”. At last, it has to observe the digital division variances in representation, literacy and access that might marginalize specific Buddhist communities, thereby influencing inner peace and mindfulness in intra-communication level that practices and defines modern Buddhism in contemporary world. The objective of the study is to examine the role of digital media in the mediation and transformation of Buddhist mindfulness in contemporary global contexts.

This study has several limitations. Due to the excessive range of Buddhist traditions and digital platforms, the study does not seek to provide an entire overview of all types of digital Buddhist practice internationally. Instead, it has focused on some of the selected case studies and examples, which may not be fully represented the experiences of all traditions in regional situations. The study has depended on secondary literature and digital ethnography, which may constrain the deepness of insight into the personal experiences and intentions of Buddhist practitioner. The linguistic constraints may limit access to non-English or regionally sole internet content, hence dominating important local behaviors and addresses. Finally, the speedily developing nature of digital media means that findings may develop outdated as platforms and practices.

There is very limited empirical research in Nepal to explore digital platforms to examine digital mindfulness and mediatized Buddhism such as YouTube, Facebook and other meditation apps to reshape Buddhist teachings, practices and interpretations among Nepali Buddhist practitioners. Similarly, the concept of mindfulness has extensively discussed in Western contexts, but the emergence, adaptation and consequences to practice in Nepali traditional Buddhist communities has still under explored. There are also some gaps to shift from monastic leaders (lamas and monks) to lay practitioners who are influenced from the online teachers in their teaching carrier.

So, the existing studies are rarely able to address Buddhist rituals for adapting online formats in Nepal. Likewise, there are inadequate and participation in digital religious life in Nepal, global digital Buddhist content has influenced within the local traditions in Nepal to support localized interpretations of Buddhist philosophy and practice. It has also lacked on minimal focus for the youth engagement and digital Buddhism in Nepali society. So that the role of Nepalese youth in adopting and reshaping digital mindfulness practices are unexamined in spite of the central role in digital media usage.

This study adopts a qualitative research design to explore how digital media mediate Buddhist mindfulness practices globally, uses of mindfulness with Buddhist social media practitioners. Data has gathered from secondary sources of information like different literature, journal articles, books and

documented case studies on digital religion and Buddhism. The study analyzed thematically to focus key issues like transformation of mindfulness, ritual reconfiguration, shifts in religious authority for Buddhist practices. However, the study has relied on secondary data as well as the evolving nature of digital content and thematic analysis of mindfulness has applied to identify patterns in the data, using both inductive and deductive methods (Braun and Clarke 79).

Scenario of Digital Buddhist Practices among the Virtual Communities in Different Countries of the World

Buddhist practice has been deeply transformed in this digital age, completely with the development of online groups and the livestreaming get-togethers for mediation to with the way of intra-personal communication level to seek inner peace. However, Buddhist groups have two aspects, one that is completely online and the other that trusts digital media and intra-personal level to communicate the message (Falcone 5). Falcone furthermore stresses on digital tools that support preparation by cooperative and attractive openness of information. She also shows her arguments which has given platforms to have the potential for diminishing the physical and worldly aspects that are essential for the traditional Buddhist rituals. Similarly, livestreamed meditation indorses Buddhist tradition and community to make proper connection to flow global message entire the world society (Sorensen and Kuznetsov 8).

Mindfulness, Digital Life and Secularization

Buddhist way of recitation to disseminate philosophical message for the promotion of Buddhist activities and to inspire the people towards peace and happiness which has gained popularity among the different religious people that makes Nepali society more secularized. Criticizing this practice, naming as “McMindfulness,” claims that it is often promoted as an efficiency tool that is divided from its spiritual and moral foundations (Purser 30). In contrast Uthaphan and Phutawang finds that people have used Buddhist mindfulness in more thoughtful ways, for achieving it with their social media uses which has reduced digital interferences and support towards the spiritual well-being (Uthaphan and Phutawang 105). It has given the perception for the purpose of systematic review, it can help to create online mindfulness programs for the disciple of Buddhist Monk as well, even it focuses for maintaining inner peace of a person. It helps to reduce stress and anxiety, predominantly in college students (Battulga et al. 7).

Religious Authority, Legitimacy and Mediatization

According to the mediatization theory digital media has interacted as a social communication factor instead of disseminating religious content (Hjarvard 12). Likewise, Jin study on Korean Buddhism, whereas he demonstrates Buddhist cosmology, which is reconfigured to have proper media formats (Jin 140). It has prioritized the visual appeal, concision and interaction among the religious communities. From the same token, monastics and experts from Russian-speaking Buddhist communities frequently has avoided traditional institutional chain of command in favor of using blogs and social media to define religious authority for spreading the peace message globally (Ostrovskaya and Badmatsyrenov 1188).

Diasporic Preparation and Cultural Durability

Additionally, the diasporic Buddhist communities fully depend on digital media to preserve their cultural identity, customs, uses and traditions. Thai Buddhists study conducted in Australia opined that computer-generated meditation practices has provided emotional relief with spiritual connection in spite of cultural and geographic coldness (Chankrajang et al. 48). Rather than it is being substandard alternatives too. These findings have given the credibility which generate the idea on digital formalities, which brings vital changes to the realism of global elasticity and power shift.

Religious Practices in Digital Era and Mediatization

The concept of unconventional religion has encompassed the impression of spiritual presentation and identifications which brings the personal responsibility through mediation. It is the part of considerable changes in current digital era. It stimulates online media independently to promote Buddhism as a form of religion. A reconfiguration of religious practice within the framework of digital media has multifaceted communications between tradition, technology for invention and character formation (Campbell 25). Similarly, the simple adaptations of traditional religion are involved transformations and spiritual terminologies, principles and societies in a new technological context (Tsuria 40). Campbell further has emphasized that digital religion encompasses to have vibrant communications between traditional religious practices and modern technologies. This is to lead for the emergence of new forms of enthusiasm, spirituality and religious identity that help for balancing the physical and digital realms (Campbell 68).

Mediatization of Religion

The mediatization theorist has given suggestions about the mediatization of religion to flow proper Buddhist philosophy around the world (Hjarvard 18). In this way, media are known as a full of life representatives which helps to rearrange religious norms, practices and institutions. Similarly, traditional chain of command of religious authority has to be turn over for creating digital spaces. Charismatic leaders have to know the value of social media to flow precise information. Rituals and traditions use to adapt to fit digital platforms for demanding interactive communication strategic to reconfigure experience for a digital audience (Hutchings 52). The connection of religion and digital individuality are a key surface of advanced religion (Grieve 136). In these prospects, every individual is negotiated their religious characteristics in dynamic and varied ways. It has comprised to share personal religious experiences, participating in global religious discussions to create new online religious practices (Tsuria 33).

The findings of this study reveal that digital media have transformed the practice and understanding of Buddhism which links Buddhist philosophy in relation with mindfulness. The study has redefined mindfulness from traditionally ethical and philosophical framework perspectives. Digital platforms, like meditation apps and social media present mindfulness as a tool to stress reduction and well-being that often apart from its original Buddhist context. The study also recognizes a major shift in religious authority and legitimacy. Traditional monastic authority has progressively challenged practitioners, influencers and online teachers who sees visibility through digital platforms. This has focused on decentralization of religious

knowledge, whereas authority is based on digital presence and communication skills than recognized affiliation. Similarly, Digital media have enabled for the dissemination of Buddhist teaching cultures. This process leads towards the commodification of mindfulness, that commonly referred to as “McMindfulness.”

The study also reveals the occurrence of a digital divide, access to technology and digital literacy, that limits participation for certain communities. So, it has influenced computerized media not for communication but it also improves Buddhist efficiently which supports to restructure for making cross type shapes for the resolution with development. Its collective value stands in its the forward-moving part of Buddhism with feeling sensibly and organized world which humanize moral roots of Buddhist lessons. It also enhances the spirit of intra-personal communication as a whole for developing Buddhist philosophy. It also investigates advanced partitions, social diversities and long-term professional impact on Buddhist mindfulness practices.

This study raised the issues of mindfulness that is understood, practiced and shared by the mediatization of Buddhism in the digital era. The study indicates that digital media actively can shape religious meanings with the experiential features of practices rather than serving as neutral channel for the dissemination of Buddhist teachings. As per the mediatization theory, media technologies have been serving as transformative agents which has to restructure religious communication for individual and collective Buddhist expressions as well. The separation of mindfulness from the conventional ethical and philosophical reinforcements is key concerns of this study. Mindfulness spreads via digital channels like social media, online courses and meditation applications, it is frequently reframed as a tool for productivity. Buddhist teachings have historically been passed down through monastic establishments and family-based networks. On the other hand, digital environments consent for a decentralization of authority which gives self-described teachers, influencers and lay practitioners a chance to rise to prominence. Digital media has strengthened people for undermining long-standing religious institutions. Another aspect of the study is to reconfigure on ritual and communal experience in virtual spaces also. The digital participations that across geographic boundaries can converge livestreamed rituals, virtual communities and online meditation sessions for the diasporic communities, who depend on digital platforms to preserve their religious identity and cultural continuity.

Similarly, the globalization of Buddhist practices via digital media has accelerated localization and cultural hybridization processes to disseminate Buddhist values globally. Mindfulness becomes a universal issue which can be appreciated by people with different cultural backgrounds to make prevail online discourses. The essence of mindfulness has depended on individual awareness and inner transformation. Such challenges can be seen in balancing technological mediation with the preservation of contemplative depth and ethical integrity. So, the mediatization of Buddhism represents multifaceted process that has considered as a continuity and change to support digital world. Digital media has expanded the reach of Buddhist teachings that creates innovative forms of practice.

Conclusion

The globalization of Buddhist mindfulness improves with computerized media to have serious changes for acquiring deep information about the community which has built and experienced. Current computerized

periods have prolonged about the mindfulness educations from past conventional geographic and social limits for empowering religious experts on Buddhist philosophy to maintain universal peace and prosperity in modern ways. This forward-thinking involvement has to face basic challenges, related to the authenticity of lessons, the illustration of customs and commodification of mindfulness.

This study opines that the mediatization process of Buddhism in the digital era has fundamentally reshaped three core dimensions of mindfulness. They are known as practice, interpretation and dissemination of Buddhist message to the world. Likewise digital media have prolonged access on Buddhist teachings that has enabled connectivity among the global community who are fully Buddhist believers. They are always in favor of the reconstruction of mindfulness along secular and commercial lines to follow different roots in traditional Buddhist ethics that empowered the followers to challenge the monastic hierarchy. Digital media play as an enabler and a disruptor to construct dynamic interaction between Buddhist tradition and modernization.

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