

Buddhism Roles In The Metaverse Era

Rattana Panyapa

Social Studies Program, Faculty of Education, Ubon Ratchathani Rajabhat University, Thailand
Corresponding author E-mail: rattana.p@ubru.ac.th

Abstract

More people are entering the virtual world community in an era when the world is changing as a result of digital technology breakthroughs into the Metaverse. In the Metaverse, humans will be able to immerse themselves in the real world via VR glasses in the near future. As technology advances, humans will become increasingly absorbed in the virtual world. As a result, the purpose of this article is to present two aspects of Buddhism's role in the Metaverse era: 1) the role of Buddhism in the Metaverse era: Buddhism organizations must adopt the concept of Pātihāriya as a foundation for their adaptation in the Metaverse era, and The proactive adaptation of Buddhism in the Metaverse era; and 2) The two roles of Buddhist monks in the Metaverse era: (1) Buddhist monks, as Metaverse user members, should play a role with enlightenment, not dominated by the Metaverse, study the pros and cons and choose the creative side of the Metaverse, and seek opportunities to make the Metaverse useful to oneself and the public; and (2) Buddhist monks, as Metaverse members, should exist by propagating Buddhism, creating ritual services, and becoming spiritual guides in the Metaverse.

Keywords: Roles, Monks, Buddhism, the Metaverse

Introduction

The advancement of communication technologies in the world has enabled one-to-one communication without the use of intermediaries. Later on, humans began to utilize letters to express themselves with the introduction of the Internet, e-mails became personal representatives. The online community began to shift with the passage of time. Until a growing number of people are represented in the virtual world's community, particularly on online social media platforms such as HI5, Facebook, and Twitter, where human beings will have a user account that represents the virtual world on every platform and can communicate and consume various news (Edosomwan, Prakasan, Kouame, Watson, and Seymour, 2011). Nearly limitless, with numerous advantages and disadvantages. In terms of participation, a virtual environment like this is still in its infancy. However, there are also drawbacks, such as the propagation of false information throughout the internet

community and online crime including bullying on social media. The owners of user accounts are also affected when a virtual agent acts. A new form of bullying known as cyberbullying has evolved between the perpetrator and the victim or victim of online bullying. It is very common among high school students. It's becoming increasingly difficult for teachers to keep track of and handle problems (Kiriakidis & Demarques, 2013). In the near future, Virtual communities become more realistic as humans sit in front of computers or use mobile phones to consume the information that appears on their devices through AR technology combined with VR. The users will be able to participate as if in a 380-degree real event in the fictional universe known in English as Metaverse (Höllerer & Lécuyer, 2018), with the key equipment that will allow to enter the the Metaverse being VR glasses. The physical encompasses both the content and experiences created in the real world and the digital world (Plessis & Theron, 2016), making it possible to watch a concert as if it were in a real concert

and play the game as if running in the middle of a real battlefield in the case of playing online battle games. Consuming stimulating emotions on a simple platform is sufficient.

According to Fei-Yue Wang, Rui Qin, Xiao Wang, & Bin Hu (2022), any real enterprise or city will have one or more matching MetaEnterprises and MetaCities in the Metaverse with various functions, and they will be linked through CPSS. Before any major decisions or operations in real businesses or cities, numerous computational experiments in MetaEnterprises and MetaCities should be conducted to analyze, evaluate, and optimize the decision-making processes, as well as the master skills and resources required for a successful real-world execution in the shortest time, with the least energy and cost. This will considerably increase the efficiency and effectiveness of real-world business and city choices.

Furthermore, the Metaverse's virtual reality creates an extremely realistic experience in the imagined universe, with 380 degrees of realism, and may manipulate the human mind to be caught in the virtual world in a number of ways, potentially creating or squandering more time on the Metaverse. There's a chance that more individuals will be interested in virtual reality in the future. After deducting 8 hours of sleep and working time, humans may have fewer than 15 minutes to communicate face to face, and there is no guarantee that they will do so. Privacy and its dangers were also considered, because data privacy, security, and accessibility will become a concern in the Metaverse period. In this scenario, Facebook is the first to provide the groundwork for the Metaverse to create a control or a block to make hazards more manageable. This impending phenomenon will force humans to deal with the most amazing new things that are intriguing, provocative, meaningful, and absurd, while also necessitating intelligence, Dharma knowledge, and manipulation with a substantial impact on the psyche in the Metaverse.

This can lead to trapping and becoming a victim of the various forms of online crime and information that are associated with the imaginary domain. This is a litmus test for Buddhism as an organization dedicated to promote wisdom, knowledge, and ethics in order to live in peace. According to the author, monks and Buddhist organizations should be on the watch for this occurrence and help to

support it. People are still victims a lot in the virtual world of the cosmos, that is, two-way communication like as Facebook or Line, because it has been discovered in the past. When entering the 380-degree virtual reality sphere, the dangers may be compounded.

As a result, this article emphasizes two points in this article: the role of Buddhism in the Metaverse era, highlighting the introduction of the concept of miracles; it is a thinking base for adaptation in the Metaverse era and the proactive adaptation of Buddhism with the concept of cosmic creation in the Metaverse era; and the role of monks in Buddhism in the Metaverse era, highlighting two roles: the role of a Metaverse user and the role of monks in Buddhism.

Introduction to Metaverse

The Metaverse is made up of two words: Meta, which means "beyond" in Greek, and Universe, which refers to virtual reality technology that combines the physical world and technology. This word refers to the principles of a virtual world that may be accessible by VR (Virtual Reality), AR (Augmented Reality), and PC (Personal Computer) devices over internet networks. It is the prototype of Ernest Cline's sci-fi novel "Ready Player One", published in 2011, which was adapted into a film directed by Steven Spielberg in 2018 (Mystakidis, 2022). It is based on Neal Stephenson's work "Snow Crash", initially published in 1992, and was nominated for an Oscar for Best Achievement in Visual Effects.

The Metaverse becomes a virtual society in which the items and environments around them can be fused into one, Ar (Augmented Reality) technology combines real-world perspectives with virtual objects via various communication channels, resulting in unusual perceptions. By mastering this, the user will be able to combat virtual objects. The Virtual Reality (VR) segment is a 360-degree virtual reality simulation created by incorporating digital elements into communication instruments. If augmented reality is about generating, viewing, and responding to virtual items in the real world, virtual reality (VR) technology is about bringing humans into the virtual world via VR headsets, making it feel more lifelike. Users will be made to feel like they are a part of the virtual reality and will be able to respond to it to some level.

As a result of the advancement of the Metaverse technology, it is now possible for one person to become an agent in a virtual community simply by creating an account, signing in and interacting through tools, such as a computer or another device, such as a mobile phone, as if they were truly involved in such activities as watching concerts, sports, playing games, and participating in religious activities.

It creates one-way, one-world human communication that has no virtual counterpart. From the 1970s to the 1990s, Human communicated verbally, face-to-face, by letter, or phone, and progress to a stage where individuals are represented in a virtual community world called two-world person, that is, human beings exist in the real world and have more than one representative in the virtual community world, represented in various online communities, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and other social media platforms. The Metaverse will eventually transform people into true virtual reality individuals capable of experiencing and participating in an infinite number of virtual world communities, which is called “multi-world person or Metaverse/Multi-verse”. The challenge of Buddhism is to be a guiding medium to cultivate immunity and knowing intelligence in people in the Metaverse, as advanced technology challenges and seduces infinite human impulses.

Buddhism's Roles in the Metaverse Era

In the Metaverse era, Buddhism, whether as an organization or as a religious person, must have a conception principle to support and lead to the proper arrangement of organizational and individual roles. It is largely described as Iddhi-pātihāriya as metaverse as a conceptual basis for adapting the Metaverse era and proactive adaptation of Buddhism with a metaverse conception base in this paper.

1. Using the Iddhi-pātihāriya principle as a base for adapting the Metaverse era

According to the definition of Metaverse, it is a virtual world technology that creates a real world environment and technology together that indicates a virtual world that is created or embellished with technology in accordance with the inspiration or creation of a virtual world that appears in the Buddhist scriptures that Buddha created with miracles called Iddhi-Pātihāriya. Iddhi-Pātihāriya is composed of two

words: 1) Iddhi signifies succes, and 2) Pātihāriya implies reflexive action, expulsion or eradication of foes, thus combining Iddhi-Pātihāriya, which means miracles such as invisible, blackened, lice, and so on, as one of the Pātihāriya 3 in Buddhism: 1) Iddhi-Pātihāriya - marvel of psychic power; 2) Ādesanā-Pātihāriya - marvel of mind reading; and 3) Anusāsanī-Pātihāriya- marvel of teaching (Phra Brahmaganabhorn (P.A. Payutto), 2015). The visions or creation of a virtual world are found in Tripitaka as foolow:

When the Bhikkhu's mind is meditative and pure, undeterred, determined, unafraid, and not rattled like this, he commits his attention to 1) transform one body into multiple bodies; 2) transform multiple bodies into one body; 3) make it appear or disappear; 4) penetrate walls or mountains; 5) walk on water as if it were earth; 6) slip into the earth as if it were water; 7) sit and fly into the air; 8) stroke the moon and sun with hands; and 9) physically reach the Earth. (MCU, 1996)

It was discovered, according to the Tripitaka literature, that executing miracles, such as splitting one body into numerous people, appearing, disappearing, and breaking through walls or mountains are all things that have happened in the past. Getting out of the ground or diving in oIn water, walking on the air, hand-stroking the moon or the sun results in the creation of a virtual world. Furthermore, Buddha established a number of events and used the virtual environment to encourage the success of specific tasks as analyzed and summarized by Narumon Markman (2017):

1) It was used to bolster the Buddhist faith: after the Buddha's enlightenment, two merchant brothers, Tapussa and Bhallika, wished to offer food, but the Buddha lacked the black blow necessary to receive food. Four Jatulokapala Angels delivered four black blows to the Buddha at that time, and he took four baptisms and blended them into one with a miracle to support the four angels' and two merchants' faith.

2) It is used to lower Buddha's relative self-importance when he goes to visit his relatives; his relatives are arrogant, nationalists, and adherents to the family, so he flies up in the

air, sprinkles dust on the heads of holding relatives, and performs Yamaka-Pātihāriya or miracles in pairs, such as causing fire to rise from the body upwards and water to gush out of the lower body. Finally, the family paid their respects and believed him, and he had proven his worth to them. By listening to the Dhamma, the angels had gained arahant.

3) It was used to persuade people to become Buddhists and to encourage them to meditate: when Buddha ordained Nanda, he was thinking of his fiancée, Chanapadhakalyani, and wished to become a lay person. Nanda was escorted to Tāvatiṃsa heaven by Buddha, who made a virtual image of the monkey mother with ripped ears, nose, and tail for him. The Buddha then showed him 500 goddesses, instructing him to compare fairies, Chanapadhakalyani, and mother monkeys, and telling him that if he intended to meditate, an angel would appear. Nanda was later chastised for meditating by a group of monks because he wished an angel, so he retreated into solitude to practice the meditation and eventually succeeded.

4) It is utilized to aid mission management, such as when Buddha goes to Tāvatiṃsa heaven to teach the Dharma to previous mothers nonstop for three months. When he goes to alms, eats, or bathes, he will utilize his constructed body as a representative to teach the dharma until the mission is completed and he returns to Tāvatiṃsa heaven, at which point it will vanish. The Buddha was able to continue his dharma every day without the angels realizing it, and the angels were continually listening to Dhamma as a result.

5) It was used to combat Diaradhi sect, a non-Buddhist sect that ordered the removal of mango trees in the belief that Buddha would perform miracles there. Mr. Khandha, the royal garden's caretaker, has presented Buddha with mangoes. After drinking mango juice, Buddha instructed him to extract the mango seeds, plant them in the pit, and water them while washing his hands. Mango seeds develop and suddenly produce a large amount of fruit. Monks and people alike have tossed mangoes about. Under the mango tree, Buddha performed miracles and broke the egoism of the diatribes. After that occurrence, the 6 cult leaders were afraid of Buddha's majesty, and many of the world's animals had attained dharma.

2. Buddhism's proactive adaptation based on the Metaverse

2.1 Buddhism as a tool for thinking Metaverse When a person lives in two worlds, the real world and the virtual world, or possibly more than two worlds, Buddhism must relate to that reality as a tool for protecting human desires. Buddhist organizations have a responsibility to practice proactively by establishing meta-temples in the Metaverse as intellectual venues for individuals all over the world to study the mind-stimulating doctrines that visualize delusion in the Metaverse.

2.2 Meta-temple development as a Metaverse learning resource: to improve the environment of awakening in the Metaverse, a Buddhist area should be established in the Metaverse, maybe in the form of temples, meditation centers, locations for listening to Dhamma, and areas for learning Dhamma. Dhammakaya Temple, for example, has organized a the Metaverse exhibition called "Mutita" to celebrate monks on a 360-degree virtual temple that provides visitors a taste of the temple's new generation of monks.

2.3 Meta-Meditation in the Metaverse: What's New? There are numerous basic practice bureaus in Buddhism. Regardless of the many patterns, the ultimate purpose is to improve the human intellect. To sustain the form of introspection without distortion, these teaching patterns should be produced and publicized in the Metaverse, whether it is the base practice guidelines of Wat Nong Pa Phong, the Institute of willpower, Wat Phra Dhammakaya, Plum Village of Ven. Thich Nhat Hanh, or others. Furthermore, it may be possible to create a Meditation Master's avatar that resembles an actual person and use it to teach Karma in the Metaverse in a different method. Unless the monks are functioning as personal missions, they are acting as personal missions in this circumstance. The Buddhist primary organization should likewise take use of the chance.

2.4. Make Buddhism the universal Metaverse religion: Buddhism should now be considered a universal Metaverse religion, rather than a religion restricted to Buddhists. Buddhism is atheist for two major reasons. Buddhism teaches people to investigate themselves and overcome life problems based on truth principles. Love, loving kindness, and mindfulness are the universal ideals of

Buddhism: 1) Metta (Love, Loving Kindness), in the Metaverse, there is something seductive about easy intrinsic disobedience, and what will seduce the thirst for cravings is also very much, mercifully, pure love for fellow human beings will prevent the mind from being struck by negative stimuli in Metaverses and not being struck by negative stimuli in Metaverses; 2) Sati (Mindfulness), More principles are needed to reinforce immunity in Metaverse because there is an enticing thing that generates unrestrained disobedience and encourages human appetites. In other words, intentional awareness of your feelings to instruct the self-mind not to struggle with the power of appetites (mindfulness). This notion is in line with what many multinational organizations are working on by building their own organizational workforce according to the principle of mindfulness, as seen by Google's four-times-a-year, seven-week-a-year mindfulness training program called "Search Inside Yourself" (Chade-Meng Tan, 2012).

Based on these considerations, Buddhism must embrace a global concept that can be communicated to the world without regard for ethnicity or religion in order to be classified as the Metaverse religion. The world's universal principle is love, and in Buddhism, universal love is kindness (Metta) and mindfulness (Sati) to direct thoughts away from the force of desires. Even in the actual world, these concepts have various offices to extend to anyone, not just Buddhists, such as Thich Nhat Hanh's French plum village, the Sunnataram Temple in Mae Hong Son Province, Thailand. The Metaverse will provide a fantastic opportunity for Buddhism to flourish. In the vast universe, modern with universal principles for the entire planet.

The Roles of Buddhist monks in the Metaverse

1. The role of Buddhist monks as the Metaverse user: Monks, as users of the Metaverse, must be aware of their role as follows:

1.1 Knowing Delusion: In the Metaverse, there are innumerable and endless dangers and passions. They are virtual embellishments that allow users to participate in activities not only through computer monitors or electronic devices, but also as if they were in the real world, and they may be tricked into

forgetting that they are in a virtual world that is not the actual world. These embellishments may easily overwhelm people who are sensitive to them. Monks should not be seduced, as Buddha warned Vakkali, who is obsessed with his appearance: "Vakkali, there's no point in our festering bodies that she sees here. For, indeed, only the one who sees the Dhamma sees me. One who does not see the Dhamma does not see me. So, you must leave my presence. (Daw Mya Tin, 1986).

The above message reflects that the beauty that appears in front is indeed an imperfect embellishment, that the virtual world in the Metaverse is the same, a maya or delusion that causes real lack of intelligence (Aviccha) and obsession (Moha), which must be controlled by knowing wisdom, and Upekkha is a stable mind that is not shaken by the desired emotions in the Metaverse.

1.2 Research the benefits and drawbacks of Metaverse and look for opportunities: Metaverse has many benefits and drawbacks, thus monks, as Metaverse users, should take advantage of the benefits and look for opportunities to use Metaverse for themselves and the public. On a more intimate level, monks learn and practice meditation in a number of ways and realistically in the Metaverse, as follows:

1) What occurs in the Metaverse is a continuous process, even if the user has already logged off, there is no halting or whirling restart, The Metaverse as a whole will continue to exist;

2) The story universe is always in motion. In the virtual world, digital items are accurate to the full extent of their content. It is accessible at all times and is constantly available.

3) The Metaverse can support millions of users representing human beings in the virtual world from any location in the physical world; 4) Users can participate in several activities at the same time; and users can collaborate in the universe, the Metaverse combines virtual and physical worlds, both content and experiences created in the real world and the digital world, and can be converted into a physical world, such as buying products using virtual reality avatars through different platforms; and 5) the Metaverse combines virtual and physical worlds, both

content and experiences created in the real world and the digital world.

2. The Metaverse's position of Buddhist monks as unique religious figures: fear of invisible or supernatural powers contributed to atheism becoming a religion in the traditional age. For millennia, mankind have coexisted with faith and religion. Religion will appear to be intellectually reliant and a source of comfort in all areas, regardless of where humans move in the real world, the physical world, or even the social world. Religion will become an integral part of the Metaverse in an era when humans enter a virtual world known as the Metaverse, and those who will play an important role in it will be monks, whose roles in the Metaverse include propagating Buddhism, providing ritual services, and spiritual leadership in the Metaverse.

2.1 Buddhist propagation in the Metaverse: Administration, religious studies, relief education, public works, and welfare are all part of Buddhist clergy's mission. A possible mission in the Metaverse is to spread religion in virtual reality via VR headsets, possibly by establishing a Buddhist propagation area in the form of temples or online monasteries, and by creating Buddhist avatars who are accepted in Buddhism alive and dead, such as Ven. Cha Suphatto, Buddhadhasa Bhikkhu, Phra Brahmaganabhorn (P.A. Payutto), Panyananta Bhikkhu, Phra Brahmabundit. Furthermore, Buddhists from all over the world can access Buddhism, even if they are at home.

2.2 Ritual services in the Metaverse: In recent times, the use of artificial intelligence-based robots, monks, or priests to perform rituals on behalf of human monks has become common, such as the Japanese "Pepper" robots, which have been developed to have human-like potential and have been used as funeral prayer robots to replace an insufficient number of monks in Japan, as well as Thailand's first Virtual Monk, AI Monk, who also teaches dharma to the audience (Public Broadcasting Authority of Thailand, 2022). It demonstrates that providing future ritual services will unavoidably include the use of technology. Christianity has begun to promote the ritual service plan in the Metaverse under the name VR Church, as several religious organizations have already done (VR Church, 2022). Buddhist organizations should therefore take the initiative and move fast to implement a

Buddhist missionary plan using Metaverse technology.

2.3 Spiritual leadership in the Metaverse: According to Buddhist Monk John Paramai Dhanissaro (2021), monks' responsibilities are divided between themselves and others. In other words, if there is the Metaverse, Buddhist monks should be placed in it because Buddhism should be present everywhere there are people. People can learn Dharma, develop their spirits, and meditate without having to physically meet Buddhist monks at a temple; however, they can enter monasteries while still at home. Such opinion reflects a growing desire to use modern technology like the Metaverse to make Buddhism more accessible to the general public, to seize opportunities, and to act as individuals without waiting for policy from Buddhist organizations.

Conclusion

Based on the concepts proposed in the above article, in order for the role adjustment to be truly consistent with the intentions of Buddhism, what should be used as a principle to express the role of Buddhism in the Metaverse era is the concept of Pātihāriya in Buddhism which is consistent with the concept of The Metaverse as a base of concept in adapting the Metaverse era by focusing on the use of the Metaverse as a tool for human development with principles as an example shown in many Buddhist scripture events in which Buddha uses Pātihāriya as a tool for human development. The role of Buddhism may be classified into two parts: 1) The organizational role is Buddhism in the Metaverse era, it should be proactively adapted to drive Buddhism as an intellectual tool in the Metaverse; develop Meta-temple as a learning resource in the Metaverse; develop the meditation model as a source of mental development in the Metaverse; and make Buddhism a universal religion of the Metaverse to transcend the constraints of space, ethnicity, and religion, with an emphasis on Metta (loving kindness) and Sati (mindfulness); and 2) Buddhist monks' personal roles: as Metaverse users, monks should be aware of the Metaverse's delusion, understand its benefits and drawbacks, and seek opportunities to benefit from it; and as person theologians in the Metaverse, monks should serve as Buddhist

missionaries, ritual service providers, and spiritual leaders.

5. References

1. Andries du Plessis and Bernhardett Theron. (2016). Virtual World – Physical World: What is the Real World?. *International Journal of Management Science and Business Administration*, 2(6), 42-54.
2. Chade-Meng Tan. (2012). *Search Inside Yourself The Unexpected Path to Achieving Success, Happiness (And World Peace)*. London: Harpercollins Publishers.
3. Daw Mya Tin. (1986). *Dhammapada Verse 381: Vakkalitthera Vatthu*. Burma: Editorial Committee, Burma Tipitaka Association Rangoon.
4. Edosomwan, S.O., Prakasan, S.K., Kouame, J. D., and Seymour, W.T. (2011). The history of social media and its impact on business. *The Journal of Applied Management & Entrepreneurship*, 16(3), 79-91.
5. Janet H. Murray. (2020). Virtual/reality: how to tell the difference. *Journal of Visual Culture*, 19(1), 11-27.
6. Kiriakidis, P.P. and Demarques, L. (2013). A Case Study of Student-to-student Cyber Bullying in one High School. *Revista Romaneasca pentru Educatie Multidimensionala*, 5(2), 101-118.
7. MCU (Mahachulalongkaranarajavidyalaya University). (1996). *Mahachu's Tripitaka (Thai Version)*. Bangkok: MCU Press.
8. Monk John Paramai Dhanissaro. (2021). *Buddhist Monks and the Metaverse*. Retrieved April 4, 2022, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fYulbVjkiOo>
9. Mystakidis, S. (2022). *Metaverse*. *Encyclopedia*, 2(1), 486-497.
10. Narumon Markman. (2017). The Miracle (Iddhi-Pātihāriya) of Buddha. *Ramkhamhaeng University Journal Humanities Edition*, 36(2), 157-172.
11. Phra Brahmaganabhorn (P.A. Payutto). (2015). *Dictionary of Buddhism*. 31st edit. Bangkok: Plidhamma Press.
12. The Public Broadcasting Authority of Thailand. (2022). *Virtual Brother passes on Dharma in a good mood*. (online) (quoted on April 21, 2022). Form <https://news.thaipbs.or.th/content/311654>
13. Tilanka Chandrasekera and So-Yeon Yoon. (2018). Augmented Reality, Virtual Reality and their effect on learning style in the creative design process. *Design and Technology Education: An International Journal*. 23(1), 55-57.
14. Tobias H Höllerer and Anatole Lécuyer. (2018). *Virtual and Augmented Reality*. *IEEE engineering in medicine and biology magazine: the quarterly magazine of the Engineering in Medicine & Biology Society*, 38(2):28-30
15. VR Church. (2022). *VR Church in the Metaverse*. Retrieved April 20, 2022, from <https://www.vrchurch.org/>