

# Buddhism and Digital Communication: Connecting the Guru, the Master and the Disciple through Digital tools

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**Abstract:** Guru Rinpoche (or Padmasambhava), a Tibetan figure from the 8th century, is important in Tibetan Buddhism. Today, his traces are still visible in the Himalayas in caves, dedicated spots, and monasteries. Nowadays, a practitioner could be in contact with this Guru through his master, himself holding the knowledge and the 'karmic' connection with this Guru. In Tibetan Buddhism, it is the dominant and everlasting method. Surprisingly – or logically – the link between the Guru (and one of them, Guru Rinpoche), the master (itself an emanation), and the disciple is now also possible with social media and digital tools. The use of digital tools gives indication on how people understand and are maintaining the link into an everyday practice. By examining the presence and the activities by the practitioners of Buddhism on digital tools, this article wants to examine the modalities of esoteric practices. Creating posts and photos may be a manner to express its devotion to the guru, a constitutive dimension of the relationship between a figure and practitioners. Moreover, with the 2020 lockdown, additional digital practice arises, such as online session with the master and mantra counter as performative action.

## Introduction

From the master-disciple relationship's point of view, this article examines how digital tools and practices can prolong, replace, or affect relationship and connection. In other words, it explores the performativity of the master-disciple relationship, in Tibetan Buddhism adapted to the modalities of the digital technologies.

We summon three similar notions to question the effectiveness of online practices in the master-disciple relationship in Tibetan Buddhism, but we don't consider that these notions are identical term to term, avoiding a strict comparative approach. Coming from linguistics, performativity is said to be a verb whose enunciation amounts to realizing the action it expresses, for example, in the sentence *I swear it* (Antidote dictionary, 2021). By extension, it makes it

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possible to question the effectiveness of a practice, or how it can achieve the action to which it refers. In the religious sciences, 'symbolic effectiveness' raises the question of the action of the ritual when it takes place face-to-face and then online: 'In other words, do actors consider online practices and rituals to be "valid" as well as those carried out without Internet mediation?' (Duteil-Ogata, Jonveaux, 2020, 3).

Finally, Tibetan Buddhism develops practices with a performative character that rituals contribute to transforming the practitioner. The Buddhist vocabulary refers to 'skillful means (upaya)' as an act that works for the learning, understanding or achievement of a disciple. In his work on the representations of the world in Buddhist cosmology, Eric Huntington (2019) deals with the conception of the cosmos through writing, rituals, mandalas, and architectures. An argument on performativity irrigates this book, because according to Tibetan Buddhism, studying writing, practising a ritual, visualising a mandala, or strolling into a monastery lead to perceptible effects. 'Clearly cross magical thinking is intimately connected to the experience of sacred space. Like the meditations on the Tantric Mandala, movement throughout the architecture provides a transformative experience that ends with direct access to an enlightened Buddha at the centre of the cosmos' (Huntington, 2019, 225). Before testing the hypothesis of a performativity and a face-to-face transfer of the ritual to the online mode, a reflection on development of communication processes is necessary.

Tibetan Buddhism in its diffusion in the West, especially since the 1970s, evolves by encountering the communication technologies. Dapsance (2018) distinguishes three approaches represented by three authors. For David McMahan (in Dapsance, 2018), Buddhism once settled in the West emphasizes rationality and meditation instead of a specific practice based on texts. He uses three dense terms: 'detraditionalization', demythologisation and psychologisation. Donald Lopez (2003) considers that modern Buddhism is a new school, between West and Asia, an approach that provides a coherent framework for understanding the movements of this philosophy in the West. Finally, Jeff Wilson (in Dapsance, 2018) emphasizes the genealogy of the practice of meditation called 'mindfulness'. These authors interpret the transformation of Buddhism during its implantation in the West and its insertion in the digital sphere.

An aspect often linked with the presentation and diffusion of Buddhism, where analysis, fascination and testimonies are closely intertwined, approach of which Alexandra David-Neel (1999), is the illustrious representative. With Agniel (2018, 146) 'Orientalists brilliantly combine two ways of approaching Tibet: from the philosophical point of view, by presenting a dogmatic and rigorous Buddhism, and from the imaginary point of view, by relying on the myth of a magical and wonderful Tibet.' This approach has led to a relative confusion that contributes to the perception of Buddhism between science and magic, thus contributing to the definition of a religion known for its strong adaptive capacity to different type of contexts and of practitioners. This flexibility explains several contemporary approaches of Buddhism. Thus, supernatural dimensions, plasticity of reception and practice dominate Buddhism. Thanks to this plasticity, digital devices fit easily into this space.

In the widely discussed distinction by Christopher Helland between online religion and

religion online, let us address the link between religion and communication. Logically, the Internet is 'a place of creation and recreation of the contemporary religious sphere' Duteil-Ogata, F., Jonveaux, I., Kuczynski, L., Nizard, S., (2015, 26). Campbell (2012, 65) identifies five components briefly presented here: 'networked community, storied identities, shifting authority, convergent practice, multisite reality'. The notion of 'networked community' shows that practices emerge in a social sphere, the result of interactions themselves in a network. Sharapan (2018) provide an example of reorganization of Buddhism through online forums and online courses. The 'multiple identity' emphasizes that our identity in the twenty-first century consists of a set of elements and resources, a fragmented and multiple identity. Moreover, with networks, everyone is free to build an alternative and personalized faith.

The 'changing authority' explains the emergence of new religious actors in the digital world. Practitioners but not institutions emancipate from authority, itself a flexible concept in this branch of Buddhism. The 'convergence of practice' indicates that digital opens and channels both devices. Finally, it's easy to see that the digital allow a 'multisite reality', better a multiple reality, because different levels are connected between them. Gleig (2014) discusses the characteristics of Buddhism encountering technology. Buddhist geeks, as they called themselves, claim for a new approach of Buddhism by using communication tools with several arguments. They have a fundamental optimism about the impact of technology on Buddhism, which supports the democratisation of Buddhism, and argues that it allows a redefinition of the hierarchy. Such approach referred to 'DIY Buddhism' 'consider communication tools to reducing the suffering whatever is the channel or the type of relation. Such vision appears to be a reinvention without filters helped by technology, a vision close to the one proposed by startups and their applications.

## **Master and Disciple in Tibetan Buddhism**

Globally, currently two modes of transmission exist; an academic model, and a master-disciple relationship model. The first adapts to the standards of transmission of the 21st century and is in line with the broad tenets of modernity. The second respects traditional forms, here originating from Asia, especially Tibet. We don't have space here to detail the adaptations or permanence of these two models. The masters who came from Tibet and then India knew how to adapt (or not) to the expectations of the Westerners. At the same time, the formalization and popularization of Buddhist knowledge are shifting from a specialized model to a model of popularization. And communication tools contribute to this popularization and change of practice.

Homola (2013) describes the transmission from master to disciple through the construction of a privileged relationship, an oral and secret transmission and the risks and privileges of the master. We face the combination of traditional, modern processes or reconstruction dimensions of Tibetan Buddhism. In Tibetan Buddhism, to submit to the guru allows to build a framework and create a form of freedom beneficent for the structure and the quality of the master-disciple

relationship. In short, the framework gives the freedom to follow the teachings. The guru is somehow a bridge between the inside and the outside. The inside is us and our experiences, and the outside is someone who has the knowledge to evolve. In his work, Dzongsar Jamyang Khyentse and Saint Guily (2018, 121) list twenty-three qualities necessary to the master, such as open-minded, tolerant, scholar, humble, generous, not judging, etc.

The words of Geytrul Jigme Rinpoche, master of the RIPA lineage<sup>2</sup>, are identical: the guru must develop devotion, without room for judgment. The disciple responding to a request of the guru manages to be closer to realization. It's in the unfolding of devotion and beyond doubt that blocks openness that the master-disciple bond reveals itself, lives itself and promotes the relationship. The disciple commits himself to the master to follow his instructions, and the master commits himself to accompany him until awakening.<sup>3</sup> 'Thus, even more than the skillful means, devotion to the master is the crucial point of the Vajrayana and the Dzogchen, without which everything remains sterile. Far from being slavery, the relationship to the master is liberating, the latter being the catalyst of spiritual transformation' (Cornu, 2006, 361). In addition, the final stage is the fusion between master, guru, Buddha, and disciple, each being the other and vice versa, depending on the quality – or degree – of the realisation.

Having described the plasticity of Buddhism emphasized by communication tools and the strength of the link between master and disciple, we propose to explore several cases.

## Performativity and Online Practices

Five modes using digital for practice and teaching stand out. For each of them, the performativity of the act and the nature of the master-disciple relationship arises. Tibetan Buddhism considers Guru Rinpoche (or Padmasambhava,) as the second Buddha, after the historical Buddha Sâkyamuni, the founder of Buddhism in the 5th century BC. Guru Rinpoche lived an intense life, and accounts of his life seemingly mix real facts and fantastic elements, as is usually the case with the life of the masters in the Tibetan tradition. For Cornu (2017, p. 46): 'Padmasambhava, whom all Tibetans name Guru Rinpoche, "The Precious Guru", is much more than the historical figure whose Tibetans agree to recognise the brief passage in Tibet in the eighth century [...] Isn't he considered the second Buddha, with the mission to teach Tantra? Padmasambhava is truly the living symbol of Tibetan Buddhism, the personification of the essential principle of the transmission of Tantric teachings and Dzogchen that is, the Master par excellence.'

Guru Rinpoche, whose biography lends itself to imagination and fantasy, allows many appropriations in terms of communication. Despite several biographies and accounts of the life and actions of Guru Rinpoche (Cornu, 1997, Dalton, 2004, Fremantle, Trungpa, Lati Rinbochay & Karma-glinpa, 1979, Gyatso, 1995), uncertainties about the master's life remain.

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<sup>2</sup> "Ri" means mountain and "Pa" the one who dwells in it. Source :<https://ripa-international.com/ripa-lineage>, consulted Septembre 27, 2021.

<sup>3</sup> Teaching, the Guru in Buddhism, RIPA Center, Switzerland, June 2017.

Tradition indicates that Guru Rinpoche incarnated himself in an eight-year-old child, on a lotus leaf floating on Lake Dhanakosha, in the kingdom of Oddiyana, located in the Swat Valley, near Peshawar, in the north of Pakistan. A limited number of authors propose Odisha in the east of India as a place of origin. Guru Rinpoche then travelled the Himalayan massif from east to west, without it being possible to establish a chronology of his journey. However, his tracks are observed in Tsopemaandin Nalanda (the Buddhist University), (India), Sikkim and Pharping (Nepal). It's also present in Bhutan and the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh. Padmasambhava remains, to this day, the central figures of Sikkim and the Kingdom of Bhutan. Places and traces relate to one or more episodes of spiritual practices or achievements specific to this Buddhist current. The comparative reading of the various biographies reveals that a founding episode, the construction of the monastery of Samye in 779 in Tibet and the struggles against demons obstructing it, is well documented. He is also the only one to have a date, articulated with the reign of Trisong Deste, monarch who invited Guru Rinpoche to Tibet. Guru Rinpoche is a legendary figure - monk, shaman, yogi, and scholar - who represents, through epic episodes, an ideal of enlightenment and, according to the unlinear understanding of time in the Tibetosphere, it's misleading to seek to establish a historical biography. For Cornu (1997, p. 54): '[Historical texts] are hagiography rather than reliable historical sources. It would be absurd to seek a coherent chronology of the events of Padmasambhava's life. Should we remember that this isn't the primary purpose of these inspired works, intended to inspire the faith with epic narrative rich in teachings?' Thus Cornu (1997) proposes the life of Guru Rinpoche in the form of versified episodes. Similarly Ngawang Zangpo (2007) exposes the biographical account on thirteen pages of verses.

Today, the traces of his presence and his passage are visible in the Himalayan massif: painting on the walls of the temples, paintings on silk (thangkas), prints in the rock, caves where the Guru meditated or practised, statues and temples dedicated. Beyond the character and myth, a central point of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition illuminates this article. Indeed, to receive help or simply to meet the master, it's enough to ask, because according to the conception of Tibetan Buddhism, this one is always among us: 'Those who know Padmasambhava know that the promise he made more than a thousand years ago is a living truth: I am never far from those who are inspired by faith, nor even from those who are deprived of it, although they do not see me. My children will always and forever be protected by my compassion' (Soygal Rinpoche, 2005, 273).

Several factors are favourable to an approach in communication: continuity of the presence/absence of the master, reality/mystery, rationality/affectivity. These factors form a favourable context for combining communication and religion and analysing the nature of the links between practitioners and disciples of a guru and a contemporary lama or Rinpoche. The importance of the figure of Guru Rinpoche explains the links between a guru, a master who is an emanation and disciples who have faith in the first two ones.

In this framework, we develop a discussion about the online presence of the guru and the role and place of information and communication technologies. Communication tools amplify the effects and social accounts managed in the name of the deity, Guru Rinpoche or

Padmasambhava exists under several approaches. In the first part of the analysis, this work presents the initiatives elaborated by devotees for connecting with guru Rinpoche's karmic presence. In the second part, it's about guru-devotee relationship, even if one guru, for example the head of RIPA lineage such as NamkarDrimed Rinpoche is an emanation of Guru Rinpoche.

An analysis conducted in 2019 reveals that Guru Rinpoche is present on three social media platforms: Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, with modest numbers of accounts for each of them.<sup>4</sup> The chosen corpus allows an analysis of the proposed speeches and the limits encountered (Schmidt, 2018).

**Table 1 - Facebook, analysis as of February 11, 2019**

Accounts of Guru Rinpoche	Journal	About	Friends	Photos	Mention 'I like'
1	Photos	Empty	0	No	
2	Photos	Empty	39	No	
3	Photos		0	Yes	Buddhist Dignitaries and Institutions
4	A candle	Empty	0	Candle	Miscellaneous news
5	A neutral background	Empty	0	Neutral Fund	
6	4 photos of a congress and friends in China	Empty	0	Congress and friends.	
7	Photos, videos	Since 2009, in Treviso, Italy	213k	Photos and content by practitioners	The page seems not maintained for a moment; inscription is not possible.

Profiles with photos of individuals are excluded, considering that these accounts used, for their own reasons, the name of Guru Rinpoche or Padmasambhava. We get six accounts with an image of the Guru and photos and activities related to the Buddhist universe, without it being possible to identify links with a practice. For Facebook, the table shows a virtual absence and a trivialization of the use of one of the two names and associated iconography.

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<sup>4</sup> We consider the two names Guru Rinpoche and Padmasambhava to offer a better rendering of the digital presence. Videos and blogs also contain the names of Guru Rinpoche and Padmasambhava but are not included in the corpus.

**Table 2: Instagram analysis as of February 10, 2019**

<b>Accounts Guru R: a fortnight Padmasambhava: about twenty</b>	<b>Publications</b>	<b>Subscribers</b>	<b>Subscriptions</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Guru Rinpoche	74	96	261	Private account, in Spanish
#gururinpoche	14,513			Travel, master, and event photos
Gurupadmasambhava	10	160	10	Places and images of the master
Gururinpoche	6	114	10	Photos of the master with a series of 10 to 15 hashtags.
#gururinpocheday	278	0	0	Photos and images. Comments related to practise.
#Padmashambhava	8,212			Similar photos to #guru Rinpoche. Images of places, of the master, texts, and maxims. Identical author
Padmasambhavacentre	70	294	375	Images of the place and the master
Grupoestudiopadmasambhava	25	35	40	Images of practitioners and announcements of events. Spanish Buddhist Center.
padmasambhava4959	29	3	2	Private account. On the day of the consultation, it is not possible to see the publications.
Padmasambhava	34	58	17	Master images and texts and maxims in Tibetan. In Russian

First, less than thirty-five accounts using one of the master's two names. Almost half of them are individuals who speak of activities not related to Buddhism and not the accounts of a centre or related to Dharma (in the Buddhist sense of Sakyamuni Buddha teaching). The examination of the contents reveals a 'classical' iconography linked to Padmasambhava, a mixture of images, photos of statues and places of the Himalayas, supplemented by announcements, or texts and maxims with spiritual content.

**Table 3 – Twitter analysis as of February 27, 2019**

Account Name	Tweets	Subscriptions	Subscribers	Creation dates and last tweet. Location Reported	Contents
@guru rinpoche	43	18	10 4	2010-2013 Everywhere	Links to articles and Facebook page
@TheGururinpoche	4703	974	0	2012-2018 Universe	Link to Facebook page
@gururinpoche108	234	294	28 0	2011-...In las tierras nevadas	Private account, in Spanish.
@Gurupadma sambhava	6	18	79	2009 then inactive Sikkim	Referral to a website

By excluding accounts that have the names of Guru Rinpoche or Padmasambhava in their contents, we get only four dedicated accounts, one of which is inactive. The content is either innocuous or links to Facebook pages.

The study of social networks dedicated to the digital presence of the master makes it possible to use the criteria set out by (Campbell, 2012). A community of practitioners, travellers and supporters occupy the digital space in connection with the master. This remains the same as many other digital communities (Mercier & Pignard-Cheynel, 2018). It is about affirming an identity by sharing links and visibility. That said, affirming identity and visibility through social media contribute to reevaluating the authority: individuals are free to challenge the dominant position hold by some hierarchy.

Indeed, Tibetan Buddhism is structured into four (plus one) schools or sects, each with a leader at its head, even as the Dalai Lama represents them all. Lineages exist within these schools, and these are essential because they explain the doctrinal connection and the associated practices. Each practitioner can ‘choose’ a lineage and, in it, a precise practice that suits him, according to the recommendations of his lama. The encounter between Buddhism and authority is thus fruitful: each practitioner can feel free to develop a digital presence of its choice, referring mostly to merits. Installing the master on the networks is a way to identify with him, to attract his benefits and to modify the religious hierarchies. Here, everyone is free to seize the master to give him the floor, out of a control by a lama or a contemporary Rinpoche.

However, the three social media are not very active. For the most part, it is to link to a site or page, or to publish photos. These are of two categories: the first includes photos of the master, maxims, and texts. In a way, Internet users give him the floor. The second are places that express the presence of the master in forms that are sometimes like the diaries and accounts of travel (Franceschi, 2013). Here the use is twofold: to show that the author has travelled these places and to transmit the benefits. In Tibetan Buddhism, acting in the service of the dharma is an act of practice. By transposition, this use of social media is, in a way, an act of practice. This may be the reason why Instagram dominates the corpus. It is easier to manipulate and promote images than to build a narrative and even more a coherent or relevant dialogue of the master using Facebook or Twitter. In other words, it is easier to mount the master and his places of



manifestation than to speak in his place. These images and rare texts finally tell an uncertain, magical, and ethereal story, in conformity with the story of the life of Guru Rinpoche presented above. This is one of the most visible limitations.

## **COVID Lockdowns and Online Mantras**

During the 2020 lockdown, a centre had a proposal: ‘to contribute to the anniversary of H.H. Karmapa on 26 June 2021, the Samyé Ling Centre in Brussels is organising a 24-hour session of accumulation of the mantra “Om mani padme Houg”. We invite participants to recite the mantra in two ways: on the spot and on Zoom, April 24, and May 25. If not, you can do so at a time of your choosing. You can place the number of mantras recited on this link.’

The online mantra counter elaborated to indicate the number of mantras recited to deposit them on a web site is interesting. A link to a form allows each participant to add from home the number of mantras recited and thus contribute to the accumulation. This is also the support for remaining in contract with the master. The question of performativity is absent here, because only the number counts, as a sign of a contribution to the collective.

## Practices dedicated to the 17th Gyalwang Karmapa Orgyen Trinle Dordje on the occasion of his 36th birthday

Lama Yeshe Losal Rinpoche has expressed the wish that a maximum of practices be accomplished for the long life and good health of the 17<sup>th</sup> Gyalwang Karmapa Orgyen Trinle Dorje and for the development of Dharma activities in general

From Monday March 8 to the weekend of April 24/25 inclusive

Three ways to participate



- Every morning and / or evening by participating in the rituals of Green Tara and Chenrezig via a dedicated Whatsapp group.
- By participating in the intensive 24-hour Chenrezig practice.
- By accumulating mantra recitations when possible and / or desired.

Between now and the celebration of the 36th anniversary of the Karmapa in June 2021 - which could become a difficult year for him and strewn with obstacles - a practice group will meet every day via the internet (via the mobile application WhatsApp) until April 23, and on April 24 an intensive practice of Chenrezig will take place for 24 hours non-stop.

**All participants are invited to count the number of mantras recited and to transmit the accumulated numbers:**

- Via the online form provided for this purpose: [Click here to access the form](#)
- Or by sending an email [tosecretanat@samve.be](mailto:tosecretanat@samve.be)
- Or by SMS to 0498 723 878

Figure 1: Print screen of the announcement of practices with the link to access the form.

Traditionally, the online teachings are identical to those delivered in a room. The master speaks, the disciples listen. Following a conference on YouTube is a mode that has become common for all access to knowledge. It is a passive and distance listening, here online religion.

On some occasions, Tibetan Buddhism practices a drupchö, which is an elaborate way of doing a particular practice over several days and epitomizes the depth, power and precision of

Vajrayana'.<sup>5</sup> Since 2020, Drupchö practice has been offered online by the Ripa Centre. Participants through Zoom can follow the practice realized in the centre, reciting texts, and carrying out student practices. The monks on the site perform the complex ritual proper to that ceremony.

Secrecy in digital age is also a point to consider. In that Centre, participants should have taken refuge to access online initiation, in a type of restricted access. Thus, the protection of secrecy, or at least the restriction of teaching, is maintained.

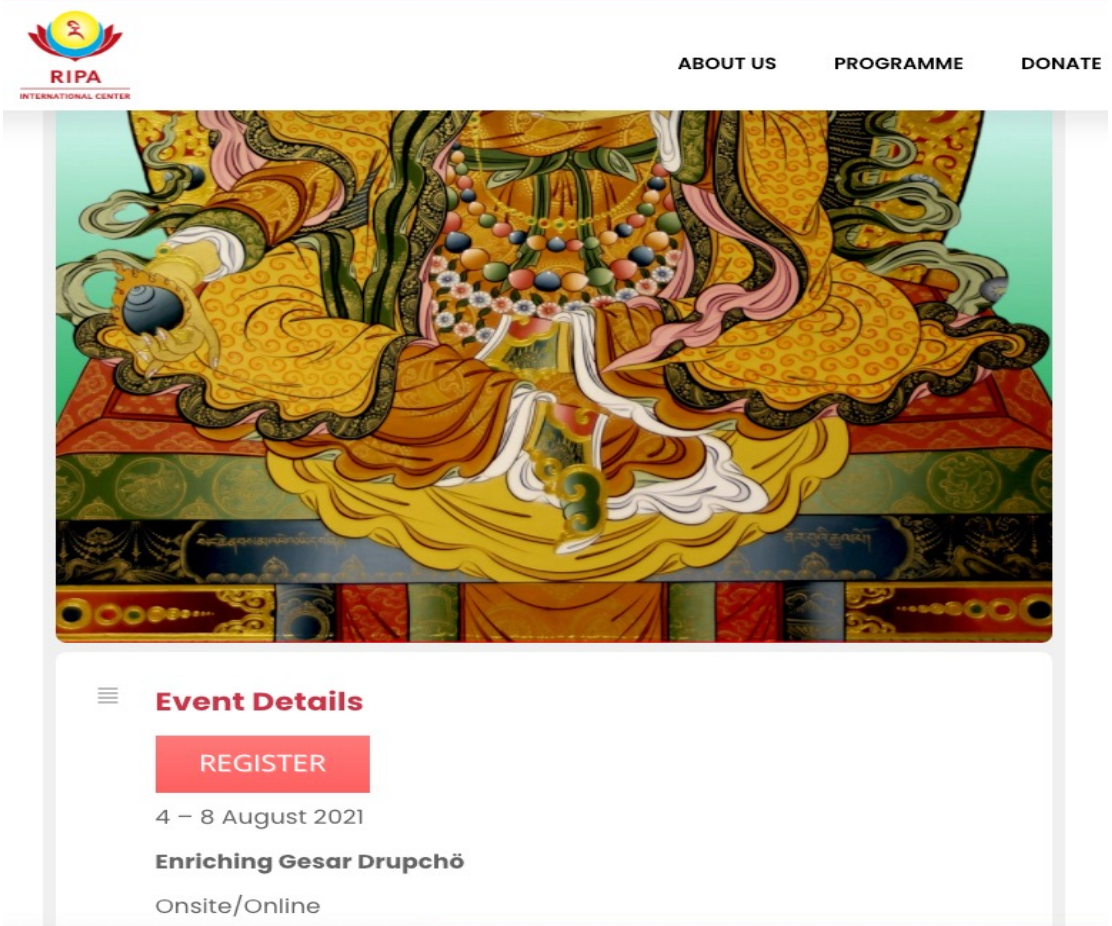


Figure 2: Print screen of RIPA Drupchö announcement

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.tibetanbuddhistencyclopedia.com/en>, consulted June 25, 2021.

The transmission of an initiation is the fifth modality, being a more implicating practice in Tibetan Buddhism. The master is here supposed to transmit empowerment online, regarding it as one of the most transformative and effective rituals. This is the most complex point and discussions between teachers must take place. However, we do not know them. The question of performativity is total and arises in the following terms: what is the degree of efficiency for the practitioner installed behind his screen? The nature of the ritual, which is often long and complex, and the link between the master and the disciple are two important points.



Figure 3: YouTube print screen. Master delivering the lung (prana or qi) and the oral transmission (reading the text) of two termas during an online session.

## Master, Disciple, Digital and Performativity

These five forms of digital practice lead to a unique question: what symbolic effectiveness or performativity in the master-disciple relationship? Two elements finally appear: 1) presence to the master, so the master-disciple relationship exists through the digital, and 2) importance of faith and devotion in the relationship master disciple of Tibetan Buddhism. If it is strong, sincere, and complete, performativity seems possible. However, this remains a matter of belief and commitment.

**Table 4: Master Disciple Relationship**

1	Accounts on social network	Voluntary link	Narcissism? Merit <sup>6</sup>
2	Mantra counter	Practical tool	Collective accumulation, merit
3	Teachings	Listen, passive	Presence at the master
4	Intensive ritual	Participation, active	Practice
5	Transmission	Participation, active	Practice

In cases 1 and 2, the disciple develops a movement towards the master without the master being informed. It is a free contribution, consistent with the logic of devotion proper to the master-disciple relationship of Tibetan Buddhism. In cases 3 to 5, the master accepts the use of digital, that is, a validation on his part of the tool and efficiency, even if the performativity isn't discussed, at least to our knowledge. It is possible to consider this as a modality of the dharma, as it must continue to rotate for the good of living beings. Pragmatically for one of the centres, it is also to ensure the continuity of resources since online practices pay off. Another center relies on the logic of giving, but without putting it forward, in line with the logic of Tibetan Buddhism. If the courses if 100% online, as is Tara Triple Excellence online meditation program (<https://dharmafun.org/tte>), it becomes a resource for the organization.

**Table 5: Assumed or Proposed Effectiveness: From the Disciple to the Master**

1	Accounts on social network	Effectiveness depends on the representation of the disciple
2	Mantra counter	Visualization of the disciple's efforts, devotion
3	Teachings	Listening, participation without travel
4	Intensive ritual	Isolated practice in a complex ritual, lack of group support in the implementation of the ritual
5	Transmission	Reception (isolated)

The relationship of master disciple is influenced by the uses of digital and this article shows how users translate their relationship to the Guru and master when they create and animate social media on his behalf. In everyday life, Tibetan Buddhism invokes and nourishes the presence of the teacher chosen by the practitioner in the form of visualization, considered as the heart of the practice. The use of digital can then be a form of presence/absence of the master, an exposure

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<sup>6</sup> One of the first actions that any Buddhist practitioner learns to develop is generosity because generosity breeds merits. It should be noted that this notion of merit is very important in Buddhism. On the whole it can be said that merits are beneficial, positive acts; it enables the disciple to build the necessary indispensable foundations that help him to progress on the path both morally and spiritually." Source: [www.bouddhisme-france.org/archives/voix\\_bouddhistes/transcripts/010204\\_odon\\_vallet.htm](http://www.bouddhisme-france.org/archives/voix_bouddhistes/transcripts/010204_odon_vallet.htm), accessed 27 February 2019.

to his image and its benefits. As Tibetan Buddhism rely on devotion, creating an account, using a counter, following a teaching or initiation are ways to practice and accumulate merit for the practitioner.

Legitimation and credibility of the masters in such an unstable framework are important because limits of practices, ritual commitments and perceptions are blurring under the mix of online tools and developmental disciplines. This raise the question of the relation between the guru and the student. (Koñ-sprul Blo-gros-mtha' yas &, Garry (1999) recommends that the student examine the teacher, then condenses the requirement of a Vajrayana master into six: unbroken lineage, samaya is unimpaired, conduct is in accord with the vows, pith instruction, scriptural knowledge, and compassion. Then, the author explains, thought a 10 items list that the master disciple relationship function in a two-way structure. Finally, in line with Kongtrul words', the student will experiment the concordance between the teaching and the rituals and his own experience according to the two-way communication doctrine. His faith relies on intelligence and experience, not blind adherence to doctrine. This reasoning appears as another manner to describe or to realize performativity.

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