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DGBC DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION ROADMAP: 21ST-CENTURY BUDDHISM 2025–2035

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# 1. Background of the Digital Transformation

1.1. Environmental Context of the Digital Transformation

Superintelligent / super-smart society

In its Society 5.0 programme, the Japanese government adopted a human-centred vision of society and an economic development agenda aimed at solving social problems, built on the integration of cyberspace and the physical world. The EU and several other actors challenged the Society 5.0 programme; the EU, however, narrowed its focus to **Industry 5.0** and smart urban planning. One element of this is the Moonshot R\&D programme: GOAL 1 — the cyber-avatar programme, a tele-services system. GOAL 2. precision medicine—new predictive systems for cancer, heart disease, diabetes, dementia, and virus–human interaction. GOAL 7 achieving a healthy lifespan of 100 years. GOAL 9: vitality of thought—linking Asian humanities and brain informatics, comprising at least 20 projects. Characteristics: aligning strategic and quality objectives; pursuing system-level improvements; cultivating knowledge to strengthen organizational intelligence; and achieving goals with integrity and voluntary participation. The concept of a *super smart society* has been the subject of global debate since 2016.

Superintelligent Higher Education

In higher education, the primacy of online education precludes a return to pre-COVID systems. The pervasive presence of artificial intelligence is profoundly reshaping higher-education systems, affecting everyday workplaces and student activities alike: in student projects**, new requirements include intelligent planning-and-design competences, intelligent personal competences, and the ability to work with intelligent data systems.** AI is fundamentally transforming the labour market: hundreds or thousands of jobs are disappearing, while digital competencies are creating new employment opportunities that require new kinds of skills. Skills-based employment is gaining momentum.
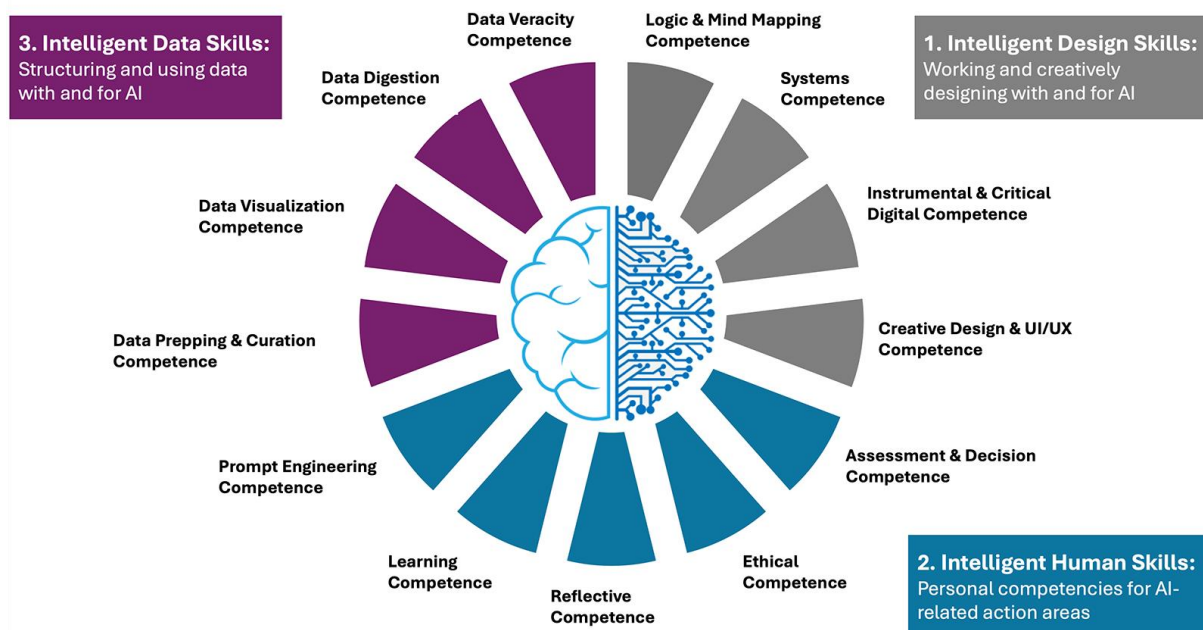
Intelligent competencies call for the transformation of traditional programmes, greater standardisation of career opportunities, a demand for defined skills, and the strengthening of transferable abilities. Artificial intelligence is changing students' communication styles; therefore,

socio-emotional skills development must be integrated into the curricula. AI is amplifying negative perceptions of instructors, reshaping conversational norms, and diminishing self-esteem and regard for others. The spread of robotic behaviours is expected; social skills will diminish; AI will remove the perceived need to learn languages and amplify loneliness.

Expected effects:

- Requires instructors to adopt AI-supported teaching methods.
- Requires students to develop new research skills.
- Emergence of AI-supported textbooks; curriculum and practical planning.
- AI-intensive writing.
- ChatGPT-4 subscription; regulation of the field is required.
- Continuing professional development for instructors; AI literacy for both instructors and students; and the emergence of Neptun-like platforms (e.g., UCLA's PapyrusAI). (EDUCAUSE AI trend analysis).
- Technology: BuddhaBot – a specialized religious platform; Naropa University (USA) is a leader in this field.

1.2. International Standards for Online and Blended Programmes

International accreditation standards for online and distance education (the INQAAHE standard)

- Online and blended education, together with courses and programmes, are integrated into the institution's management system.
- The institution has the financial resources in place to support the following areas of online and distance education: learning resources; staffing and expert input (experience, continuing professional development, professionalisation); technology infrastructure; data security; robust student identity-verification tools; and other organisational capacities.
- The institution's information policy covers system-related communications, software, internet access, the library, and other service reference resources.
- The institution equips and supports departments and instructors for online and blended teaching, and conducts periodic evaluations. Organises methodological training for instructors and students on student-engagement techniques and online student assessment, and evaluates student progress in online and blended courses and programmes.
- The institution supports student engagement and learning in online and blended education through technical and study-skills courses.
- The institution can demonstrate that online and blended education delivers learning outcomes and access to learning resources equivalent to full-time on-campus study.
- The institution demonstrates that online and blended education is reviewed and overseen by a suitably qualified expert and meets quality standards.
- The institution has appropriate regulations and practices in place for academic integrity, student identity verification, data security, and personal safety.

1.3. Organisational Requirements for Digital Transformation

In addition to making information digitally accessible and automating and streamlining processes, digital transformation aims to reshape institutions. Digital transformation is a profound shift across culture, workforce, and technology that generates a new model for education and programme organisation and reshapes the institution as a whole—its operations, strategic priorities, and value propositions. The digital transformation process begins with learning from other institutions' good practices. It calls for careful consideration of the needs of organisational culture, staff, and technology development. This is followed by an analysis of the institution's current state, a needs assessment, and then the development of the strategy. Continuous analysis of outcomes and progress—and the implementation of corrective measures—is a priority. A key element of digital transformation is the redefinition of remote work.

2. DGBC's Digital Transformation Programme

2.1. Digital vision

DGBC uses smart, digital-age solutions to reach diverse age groups and to support them in discovering individual and community opportunities in understanding Buddhist religious practice and in the research and teaching of Buddhism.

DGBC's data processing policy complies with EU and national regulations. Digital transformation is aligned with the institution's strategic objectives and the regulation of online higher education. The institutional website provides clear information on the mode of study.

Transmitting the Buddha's Teaching through skilful digital means.

DGBC's Digital Transformation Programme aims to interpret and open up new pathways for the digital understanding of religion, digital religious practice, and a digital spiritual culture; to pursue, within the digital humanities, research and exploration of digital Buddhism—understanding and applying its sources and research methodologies; to teach the Buddha's Teaching; and to provide Buddhist teacher training and preparation for religious vocations through the tools of distance learning, remote work, and digital media.

Instructors/Researchers: Instructors can develop programmes, courses, and learning materials—and conduct research—within digital platforms, environments, and templates that substantially reduce programme-administration time. Their digital competence extends to digital pedagogy, student engagement, the delivery of exams and other assessments, and the straightforward documentation of their own activities and performance. The teaching staff's digital competencies also extend to the use of mobile applications and to working with new AI tools.

Student Experience: Students increasingly manage their study-related administration on a self-service manner. Services for personal development, spiritual counselling, academic advising, and career counselling are almost fully digitised, including specialised student-wellbeing matters. Online education becomes a brand that makes DGBC students stand out within the church-run university sector, and it serves international networking and student recruitment.

Research: DGBC pairs contemplative inquiry in digital humanities and international digital-Buddhism networks with analysing big datasets and incorporating the findings into Buddhist studies.

Education: Key elements of the digital transformation include building student e-portfolios, developing digital learning materials, and preparing students for remote work, research, and community development in digital environments.

Community Development: Aligned with the Dharma Gate Buddhist Church (TKBE) and other Buddhist communities, digital community development centres on e-services, with e-ceremonies, practices, and programmes taking precedence in service design.

Services: Alongside developing the campus environment, the information system, and the IT infrastructure, the goal is the smart development of IT security and technical services.

2.2. Digital strengths

The institution's digital strengths include: the core infrastructure, the IT system, the capacity for distance education, consistent data provision; collaboration across different groups; and a culture of digital interactions and behaviours.

2.3. Digital Governance

The digital transformation project is a cross-cutting development that permeates every element of the institutional strategy and forms part of its transformative services. Digital transformation is overseen

at vice-rector level and embedded in routine governance. Digital transformation costs are included in annual planning; acceleration is also planned through external grants. Online education is part of routine academic administration and is represented in the institution's Senate and other decision-making bodies.

2.4. Digital Strategy – Continuous Improvement

2.4.1. Annual trend analysis: digitally personalised learning; course-mapped learning resources; one-to-one counselling (2024).
2.4.2. Artificial intelligence and machine learning: an intelligent tutoring system with personalised feedback.
2.4.3. Predictive analytics: dropout risk – counselling, tutoring, financial aid.
2.4.4. Immersive learning: active learning – exploring the context surrounding the topic.
2.4.5. Experiential learning: concrete tasks.
2.4.6. Multisensory learning – visual, auditory, tactile.
2.4.7. Location-based intelligent technologies: GPS location services, events, restaurants.
2.4.8. Authoring tools for learning content management.

2.5. Digital stakeholder communities

2.5.1. Thematic student and instructor groups, e.g., by specialisation.
2.5.2. Digital Development Community.
2.5.3. Digital Resource Development Community

3. DGBC's Digital Ambitions in Transforming Education, Research, and Community Development

Since 2020, Buddhist religious practice, Buddhist studies, and the teaching of Buddhism have undergone a profound transformation that is redefining the practice of Buddhism as a digital culture. The scholarly literature explicitly discusses a symbiosis between Buddhism and artificial intelligence, in which the transhuman, post-Anthropocene perspective shifts the focus from environmental ascendancy to a new virtual reality at the intersection of the virtual world and Buddhism—religious practice and meditation. For DGBC, digital transformation must extend to contemporary religious practice, virtual research, and multimedia-embedded online education and organisational development.

3.1. Education: Digitally Enabled Buddhist Learning – Interactive Awakening

Digital Buddhist Education

Tasks

3.1.1. Introducing flexibility in when and where learning takes place.
        Equipping classrooms for digital learning
        Building students' capacity to use mobile devices for learning
        Multimedia equipment for digital teaching Coordinated development of IT, the library, and facilities; appropriate acoustics.
        Organising a laptop donation campaign
        Moodle Learning Management System
        Lecture recording, video storage
        Meditation Recording Studio
3.1.2. Increasing the frequency and depth of interactions between students and instructors

Developing Online Services
Regular Professional Development for Instructors
Online Teaching Methodology
Formation of Study Groups

3.1.3. <u>Developing knowledge and competencies; effective knowledge transfer.</u>
Computer Courses: Data Literacy
Artificial Intelligence Courses

3.1.4. <u>Structured self-management and motivation.</u>
E-portfolio, presentation of learning objectives and outcomes
Active student engagement programmes

3.1.5. <u>Media competence</u>
Training for students and instructors

3.1.6. <u>Technological capabilities.</u>

<u>Resources, best-practice examples</u>

- Interactive learning environment: video, music, animation
- Moodle
- SMART University: Buddhist TV channels — BLIA TV Taiwan, Bodhi TV Nepal, The Buddhist TV Sri Lanka, DMC TV Thailand,
- Academia.edu, ResearchGate platforms,
- H-Buddhism Network: H.Net: Humanities & Social Science On-lineDigital, Digital Buddhist Canons.
- AI as a key element in the transformation of Chinese Buddhism: Zheng, Y. Transformation in the digital age: AI and humanistic Buddhism. MDPI. Religions. 15. Issue 1. Basel 2024. *Religions* **2024**, *15*(1), 79; https://doi.org/10.3390/rel15010079
- UDEMY: Mindfullness: 1,158 341 student 419 course https://www.udemy.com/topic/buddhism

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3.2. Research: digitized Buddhism – digital humanities

Buddhism research

<u>Task</u>

3.2.1. <u>Library database development.</u>

<u>Resources</u>

- Digital Buddhism: Buddhist archives, digital humanities research centers, and numerous conferences provide access to extraordinarily rich resources. There is dedicated scholarship on the topic and established database systems. Students' and instructors' digital research skills call for a new level of Buddhist research methodology.
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- Oxford Digital Buddhism: digital canon collections — Pali texts (BUDSIR), VRI Corpus, Buddha Jayanti Tripitaka Project, Göttingen Register, Pali Text Society corpus, digital edition of Chinese texts CBETA, SAT databases. Tripitaka Koreana Knowledgebase project, ACIP and BDRC Tibetan resource centers, Kanjur & Tanjur sources, Sanskrit Buddhist Texts, Göttingen GRETIL, Khmer manuscripts, Lao manuscripts, the Dunhuang Project, Myanmar manuscript collection. Huntington photo archive of Buddhist art, Phot Dharma with 14,500 photographs of Buddhist sites. Tokyo STA Group, Tibetan and Himalayan Library. Uma Audio Library: visits by Tibetan lamas. Dictionaries, databases: Digital Dictionary of Buddhism, index of Buddhist texts. Buddhist Dharma Drum name dictionary, place names, and list of Buddhist studies. Gandhari-language Buddhist dictionary, Buddhist canon research database, Tripitaka catalogues — CBETA, Sutta Central.
- Buddhist philology: Tokyo Postgraduate International Buddhist Studies Project, Bibliography of Buddhist Studies (148), Bibliography of Chinese Canon Translations, 1,200 HTML texts with SPARQL, Dan Martin's TibSkrit reference dictionary, National Taiwan University database with 411,000 texts, Genchi Bibliography, Jodo Shinshu manuscripts in Japanese Buddhism, H-Buddhism Bibliography, Indian and Buddhist Studies Treatise Database (INBUDS).

3.3. Community Development

3.3.1. Religious understanding in the digital space: patterns of digital Buddhism.
3.3.2. Interpreting Buddhism through digital tools, new styles of Dharma teaching, transnational identity.
3.3.3. Internet Buddhism: digital Buddhist communities and networks.

Resources
- Robot monks, intelligent bodhisattvas — Japan — the Mindar robot:
- Chinese robot monk Xian'er, Longquan Temple, 2015. speaks, gives instructions, offers scriptural exegesis, chants sutras, leads Buddhist chanting, and can guide people to God.
- FGS translation portal and dictionaries
- Journey to the Land of Buddha: virtual identity, virtual temple stories
- Online worship and digital Dharma: numerous internet-based, cyber rituals and online ceremonies have emerged, such as Fo Guang Shan online lantern lighting.
- Second Life Zen Buddhism - BodhiFharma online meditation, group meditation, virtual symbols
- Fu Gang Go buddhist software 3.1.2. version: online prayer, meditation, chanting, copying scriptures, a tour to the Fo Guang Shan Temple, with a virtual monk providing a virtual guided tour and directing contemplation.
- Buddhism Online: Japanese Buddhism on the internet — religious practice, research on virtual Buddhist cultures.
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- Sharapan, Maria. "Discovering Buddhism Online: A Translocative Analysis of Tibetan Buddhist Forum Discussions." *Heidelberg Journal of Religions on the Internet* 13 (2018).

4. Complete digitization of services

4.1. Admission procedure: website, accessible information, virtual campus tour, virtual Open Days, digital meetings with students, personal information via application, chatbot responses, virtual city tour.
4.2. Enrolment: personalised digital enrolment, virtual Orientation Day, virtual Neptun training, etc.
4.3. Education: digital reading lists and recommended texts — open access or with attached materials, online lectures and seminars, videoconference rooms, Neptun self-service, Neptun timetable download, data use by administrative staff, class recordings, digital assessment systems.
4.4. Student life: assistive technology for students with disabilities, institutional programmes, events via digital channels, e-sports competitions, data analytics, well-being monitoring, digital timetable planning, virtual student services, student discount accounts.
4.5. Employment: virtual career services, remote work courses, e-portfolios, e-career counselling, e-entrepreneurship counselling.
4.6. Alumni: shared platform, continuing education offerings, event offerings, career counselling.

4.7.   Improved student records system.
4.8.   Complete student CRM
4.9.   Timetable simplification and better user communication.
4.10.   Curriculum reform and a self-service portal with data analytics.
4.11.   Instructor mobile application timetable.
4.12.   An appropriate platform for delivering instruction.
4.13.   Joint digital skills development.
4.14.   Shared training portal with course materials for instructors.
4.15.   Digitalised remote work capabilities.
4.16.   Big Data processing service.
4.17.   Intellectual property protection.
4.18.   MTMT services.
4.19.   Research data management.
4.20.   Digital research ethics.
4.21.   Research excellence reporting.
4.22.   Research project management.
4.23.   Unified community relations portal.
4.24.   Digital volunteer service system.
4.25.   Digital traineeship system.
4.26.   Digital thesis system.

5. Technology development

5.1. Development of digital educational platforms

- Improvement of the LMS (Learning Management System) (Moodle)
- Introduction of interactive content creation tools (e.g., H5P, Genially)
- Digitisation of e-learning materials and courses (interactive videos, tests, simulations)
- Integration of videoconferencing systems and virtual classrooms (Zoom, Google Meet)

5.2. Data- and analytics-driven developments.

- Student performance and activity monitoring (learning analytics)
- Data-driven decision support (dashboards for leaders and instructors)
- Analysis of learning data (Learning Analytics) for personalized education.
- Applying predictive analytics to reduce student dropout.

5.3. Modernisation of IT infrastructure.

- Widespread adoption of cloud-based solutions (Microsoft 365, Google Workspace).
- Secure data management and access (VPN, proxy, two-factor authentication)
- Introduction of interactive smartboards for classroom use.
- Interactive display showing classroom occupancy.
- Multimedia equipment, media space.
- Optimising remote work through tool development.

5.4. Digital administration and case management.

- Introducing modules that support the automated operation of the electronic student information system
- Online enrolment; automation of workflows for forms, certificates, and applications.
- Developing digital portfolios for instructors and students.

- Introducing electronic document management and digital signatures
- Automated administration (e.g., chatbot at the Academic Affairs Office, appointment booking system).

5.5. Artificial Intelligence

- AI-based learning tools (e.g., chatbots, intelligent tutors)
- AI-based plagiarism checking and paper analysis.
- Integration of plagiarism and AI-use detection systems.

5.6. Research and Innovation Support

- Establishing a digital research data repository
- Introduction of research management systems (project tracking, publication records)

5.7. Digital skills development.

- Digital skills training programmes for instructors and students (e.g., digital pedagogy, use of AI).
- Integration of AI, data management, and cybersecurity into education
- Digital mentoring programme

5.8. Cybersecurity and data protection

- Continuous assurance of GDPR compliance
- Regular security audits and user awareness training

5.9. Sustainability and smart campus

- Smart building management systems (energy efficiency, IoT sensors)
- Enhancing digital accessibility (barrier-free access)
- Green IT solutions (e.g., energy-efficient data center)