

# TRADITION AND INNOVATION IN VAJRAYĀNA BUDDHISM

A Mandala of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Perspectives

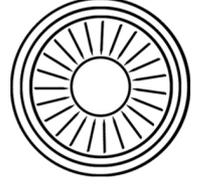


JULY 1 - 3, 2016  
THIMPHU, BHUTAN

Organised by Central Monastic Body and  
Centre for Bhutan Studies & GNH Research



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## TRADITION AND INNOVATION IN VAJRAYĀNA BUDDHISM

A Mandala of 21st Century Perspectives

Conference in the Kingdom of Bhutan

July 1 – 3, 2016

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This international conference to be held in the Kingdom of Bhutan under the auspices of the Central Monastic Body and the Centre for Bhutan Studies will focus on issues of continuity and change within contemporary expressions of Vajrayāna Buddhism. As a textual tradition, Vajrayāna, or Tantric Buddhism developed in India from the 8<sup>th</sup> century onward as a creative response to changing socio-cultural conditions, building on earlier traditions of spiritual practice. Vajrayāna subsequently shaped the art, culture, and consciousness of much of Asia, and especially the Himalayan regions of Tibet, Nepal, Sikkim, and Bhutan.

Vajrayāna Buddhism is now a global phenomenon. This conference will explore the dynamism of transmission as Vajrayāna engages the challenges and opportunities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Panelists will range from Bhutanese and Tibetan lamas to neuroscientists, academics, and international scholar-practitioners who have adapted Tantric Buddhism's methods of individual and collective transformation to the emerging technologies, priorities, and social concerns of the contemporary world.

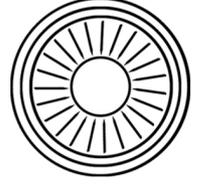
The three-day series of talks and presentations will address Vajrayāna's dialogue with 21<sup>st</sup> century medicine and science as well as its current and historical interface with the visual and performing arts. Presentations will emphasize Vajrayāna's long history of creative adaptation within wider processes of continuity and change and the current globalization of Himalayan Buddhist culture. The conference will specifically address the role of body-mind yogic practices within Vajrayāna Buddhism and their applicability within an increasingly transcultural and technologically driven world.

### A Conference with a Difference

Academic conferences typically provide opportunities for researchers to share their current research with university colleagues. The inaugural 'Tradition and Innovation in Vajrayāna Buddhism' conference differs in that it offers a chance for leading scholars and practitioners to discuss their perspectives with a wider international audience and, specifically, to share their knowledge with representatives of Vajrayāna culture in the last remaining Himalayan Buddhist Kingdom. The conference format will thus promote an



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engaging exchange of ideas towards a deeper appreciation of Vajrayāna's evolving role in 21<sup>st</sup> century global society.

The conference is structured on the interconnected categories of View, Practice, and Application and explores emerging models of Vajrayāna within traditional Bhutanese culture as well as internationally in regard to Tantric Buddhism's deep history of creative adaptation to changing social and cultural contexts.

The conference will be open to the general public and will include interactive discussion groups.

For more information on participating in any aspect of the 'Tradition and Innovation in Vajrayāna Buddhism' conference, please contact conference coordinator Ms. Chhimi Dem at [cdem@bhutanstudies.org.bt](mailto:cdem@bhutanstudies.org.bt).

To register for the conference free of charge, please contact Ms. Chhimi Dem at [cdem@bhutanstudies.org.bt](mailto:cdem@bhutanstudies.org.bt).

### Conference Highlights

*(subject to change)*

'Himalayan Buddhism and Human Flourishing'; 'Saraha's Intent: The Tantric Tradition of the Mahāsiddhas'; 'What is Vajrayāna, where did it come from, and where is it going?'; 'Siddhas, Monks, Nuns, and Dakinis: Creativity and Conservatism in Tantric Buddhism'; 'Hidden Histories: Female Siddhas and the Role of Women in Vajrayāna Buddhism'; 'Liberating Narratives: Form and Function in Life-Stories (*nam thar*) in Himalayan Buddhism'; 'Yoginis of Fire and Light & The Neuroscience of Tummo'; 'Digital Dharma: Vajrayāna in Art and Film'; 'Expanding the Boundaries of Mind and Body: The Tantric Buddhist Path of Methods'; 'Tantra and Medicine'; 'Activating the Vajra Body: The Union of Medicine and Meditation in Tantric Buddhism'; 'Embracing Enlightenment: Mind-Body Practices in Tantric Buddhism'; 'Endangered Heritage: Himalayan Trance Runners and Shifting Shrines'; 'Embodying the Natural State: Spiritual and Scientific Dimensions of Buddhist Yoga (*Tsalung Trulkhor*)'; 'Dream Yoga and the Luminosity of Sleep'; 'Awakening the Dormant Capacities of Mind and Body: Clinical Applications of Tummo, the Yoga of Inner Fire'; 'Yogas of Body, Breath, and Mind: Tsalung Trulkhor in Practice'; 'The Neurobiology of Awakening: Neuroscientific Perspectives on Meditation and Dzogchen'; 'Radical Awakening: The Union of Psychology and Spirituality in Tantra, Mahāmudrā, and Dzogchen'; 'Mountains, Mandalas, and Marathon Monks: Vajrayāna Buddhism in Japan'; 'Young Tulkus Organization (YTO) & The Future of Vajrayāna'; 'Sacred Dance and Sacred Song in Tantric Buddhism'; 'Seeing the Buddha: Biochemistry, Vision, and the Transcendence of Death'.