

Preface

The Central Monastic Body and the Centre for Bhutan Studies and GNH are delighted to present the compilation of selected papers presented at the international conference titled *Tradition and Innovation in Vajrayāna Buddhism: A Mandala of 21st Century Perspectives*, on 1 to 3 July 2016 in Thimphu, Bhutan. The papers discuss the issues of continuity and change within contemporary expressions of Vajrayāna Buddhism, its creative response to changing socio-cultural conditions, and how it has shaped the art, culture, and consciousness as well as addresses Vajrayāna's dialogue with 21st century medicine and science and the role of body-mind yogic practices within Vajrayāna Buddhism and their applicability within an increasingly transcultural and technologically driven world. For this publication, no themes or categorization were attempted.

We appreciate the dedicated involvement of John Arudssi, Senior Research Fellow (University of Virginia), board member and Editor-In -Chief of the International Society for Bhutan Studies (ISBS) and Seiji Kumagai San, *Uehiro* Associate Professor (Kyoto University), board member and Secretary General of the International Society for Bhutan Studies (ISBS), for reviewing and editing some of the papers.

The Centre for Bhutan Studies and GNH and the Central Monastic Body would like to acknowledge and thank the participants for their valuable contributions. We would like to mention that the convening of this conference enabled us to auspiciously receive a number of great spiritual leaders and

scholars in Bhutan, thus establishing important contacts and beginning a rich dialogue for advancing the global reach of Buddhism in the 21st century.

The Organizers would like to submit our deepest gratitude to His Majesty the King of Bhutan for blessing this joint initiative. Equally, His Holiness the Je Khenpo and Their Eminences, the Lopens of the Central Monastic Body have provided their wise counsel, direction and material support in preparing the conference. The Fourth Majesty of Bhutan is increasingly revered throughout the Buddhist world as a wise and compassionate monarch whose visionary leadership and policies have relevance far beyond the boundaries of Bhutan. More than any previous Bhutanese monarch or ruler, His Majesty's reign had witnessed the crucial effort to harmoniously blend development and modernization in Bhutan with spiritual values in the face of accelerating globalization. This conference is but a small contribution to help strengthen the role and practice of Buddha dharma in Bhutan and to foster it in the larger world.

The Centre for Bhutan Studies and GNH are indebted to the Hon'ble Prime Minister of Bhutan, Lyonchhen Tshering Tobgay. His unstinting and decisive support for the conference not only reveals his spiritual temperament, but his unquestionably broader view that the severe challenges facing humanity require a re-catalysation of spiritual values and traditions.

Lastly, we would like to acknowledge and thank the Tourism Council of Bhutan for their logistical support. We could not have held this conference in the serene atmosphere of the Royal Institute of Tourism and Hospitality, Motithang without their support.

