



June 3-6, 2025, International Vajrayāna conference to be held by the Centre for Bhutan & Gross National Happiness Studies, Thimphu, Bhutan on **‘Science, Mindfulness and Meditation’**

The Centre is pleased to announce an International Conference on the theme ‘Science, Mindfulness, and Meditation’ from 3-6 June 2025 in Thimphu, Bhutan to present intersections on contemplative practices and scientific research. The conference will be a rigorous and pathbreaking gathering of philosophers, meditation masters, spiritual practitioners, yogins, abbots, scientists of various streams including neuroscientists, and meditation and mindfulness professionals to exchange their profound knowledges on the important subject. It will be the 5th such conference which usually focuses on Vajrayana. As meditation, mindfulness and mind transformation techniques exist equally in other traditions, the conference can benefit from their presentations, and it seeks a good number of presentations from other secular, religious, and indigenous traditions (such as those of Africa, Latin America, Australia, and Euro-Asia).

In the four engaging days of the conference there will also be a series of demonstrations and presentations on the theme. Meditation masters will introduce practical sessions on meditation and mindful living. Shown below are suggestive topics for presentation paper on ‘Science, Mindfulness, and Meditation’, but other topics related to the conference theme are welcome.

Neuroscientific research: neuroplasticity and contemplative practices; technological (EEG, fMRI, biometric etc.) monitoring of meditation techniques; effects of meditation on brain hemisphere synchronization; mapping the stages of meditative absorption in the brain; scientific analysis of chakra and mantra meditation; meditation and the nervous system; and inner fire breathing and meditation.

AI: Technological innovations in meditation research and training; effectiveness of Apps-led meditation; potential of virtual reality in simulated meditation experiences; biometric monitoring and neurofeedback of practices; and scientific validation of other esoteric practices.

Cultural and historical contexts: Influence of Buddhist meditation practice on other traditions and vice versa; comparative study of esoteric Buddhist meditation and hatha yoga; approaches to mindfulness in different contexts, including East and West; cultural significance of meditation in different traditions; origin and foundations of meditation and mindfulness; mindful societies and reduction of social pathology; and organization and leadership with and without mindfulness and meditation.

Psychological and cognitive impacts: Meditation in health; relation between mindfulness and creativity and innovation; impact of meditation and mindfulness on happiness; meditation in building emotional intelligence; meditation’s role in overcoming addictive behaviors; relationship between psicoacoustics and mantric meditation; subjective experience of long-term practitioners; and mindfulness in family setting and community.

Education and health: Educational and therapeutic applications; integrative approaches to meditation and medicine; meditation programs in school curricula and in special education and supporting neurodivergent learners; and stress management and coping skills.

Environment: Space of meditation; urban architecture for meditation and mindfulness; role of nature and landscape in meditation and mindfulness; hygiene and diet and metabolic rate during meditation; and physical and sleep routine during long term meditation.

Ethical and consciousness studies: Ethical considerations in meditation research; lucid dreaming; dream yoga; *thukdam* and death; limitation of EEG, fMRI, and other technologies in studying consciousness; consciousness and higher mental states; power dynamics in teacher-student relationships meditation practices; meditation and altered states; commodification of mindfulness; commercialization of meditation; and commercial co-optation in the wellness industry.

Those wishing to present papers at the conference should submit abstracts by 31 March 2025, and full paper by 30 April 2025 [See Important Information below]. Those applying for participations rather than paper presentations should directly register by visiting www.bhutanstudies.org.bt. International participants will be required to pay a fee of US \$ 350 to meet the four day of conference catering and reception. The payment must be deposited before visa is issued by the Centre.

For further inquiries, please contact us at bhumedcon@gmail.com or visit our website at www.bhutanstudies.org.bt



IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Important deadlines

1. Registration of participants: 31 March 2025
2. Abstract submission: 31 March 2025
3. Visa application: 14 April 2025
4. Abstract review notice: 14 April 2025
5. Draft paper submission: 30 April 2025

Registration

1. Registration should be done online through the conference webpage.
2. Conference registration fee of USD 350 should be paid by all international participants. Your registration will be complete only after you pay the registration fee.
3. The last date for registration of participants will be 31 March 2025.

Abstract

1. The content of the paper must be within the theme elucidated above.
2. The paper should be an original work, not presented or published elsewhere.
3. Abstract must include title, author names with professional affiliation, background, objective, method, key result, and conclusion (in APA style) and be shorter than 300 words.
4. The language can be either English or Dzongkha / Chokey.
5. The last date for abstract submission is 31 March 2025.
6. A team consisting of not less than three members will review the abstracts.
7. Notice of either acceptance or rejection of abstracts will be sent via email by 14 April 2025.
8. A paper should not be co-authored by more than two persons.
9. Abstracts of all accepted contributions will be included in the conference brochure that will be distributed to all participants in advance.

Full paper

1. Speakers should submit their papers in APA style.
2. The deadline for submission of draft papers is 30 April 2025.
3. Failure to submit the draft paper on time, submission of incomplete paper, or major digression of the paper from the approved abstract may result in cancellation of your presentation.
4. The final paper of your presentation must be submitted within two months after the conference for publication of the conference proceedings.

Visa

1. Participants will be accepted as official guests of the Centre, and the Royal Government of Bhutan will waive the Sustainable Development Fee (SDF) of US \$ 100 per day in order to allow you to attend the conference.
2. Nationals of India, Bangladesh, and Maldives do not require visa. You will be issued entry permit at the port of entry. Entry permit application, which will be facilitated by the Centre, must be submitted along with a copy of your passport.
3. No conference visa shall be issued to dependents/spouse/partners.
4. The maximum visa duration granted for this purpose is 10 nights of stay in Bhutan.
5. No route permit will be issued. Route permit is required to travel beyond Paro and Thimphu.
6. The following are the list of documents to be submitted for processing your visa:
 - a. Valid passport copy
 - b. Filled-in visa application form
 - c. The visa application form can be downloaded from <https://www.mfa.gov.bt/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/bhutan-visa-application-form.pdf>
7. The deadline for submission of the visa application is 14 April 2025.
8. We will send soft copy of your visa clearance to you via email.
9. At your point of entry, you will be required to show your visa clearance letter. You must carry a hard copy of the visa clearance at your point of entry.



Logistics for speakers

1. Speakers shall be provided with local accommodation, meals, and local transportation during the conference. But this shall be only for four days of the conference.
2. If you arrive early or extend your stay (within the approved visa duration), you must make your own local arrangements.

Non-speaker participants

1. You must submit a copy of your Curriculum Vitae (CV). Visa processing will start only after we receive your CV.
2. The organiser will refuse to process or cancel your visa if the organising committee is convinced that your primary purpose of coming to Bhutan is not to attend the conference.
3. Non-speaker participants will have to make your own arrangements for accommodation, food, and local transport. However, refreshments and lunches will be provided during the conference.

Meals during conference

1. All participants will be provided with lunch and refreshment during the conference.
2. A welcome dinner will be hosted on June 2nd to foreign participants and local invitees.