

BRIDGING ESOTERIC VAJRAYANA BUDDHISM PRACTICES WITH SCIENCE TO ENHANCE HUMAN COGNITION

Do note that all times are in EST. Due to speakers and participants joining us internationally, we understand that online session timings may not be suitable for everyone. They will be recorded and uploaded on the website for future viewings

SCIENTIFIC PROGRAM (*TENTATIVE*)

March 26 6:30 pm – 9:30pm

6:30 - 7:30 pm

Welcome and Opening

Introduction to the Workshop

7:30 - 8:15 pm

Panel 1: Vajrayana practices, their origin, and classifications

Based on the pre-recorded talks that present the outline of Vajrayana meditative practices, their historical origins, and uniqueness, the panel will discuss the uniqueness of these practices, their relation to other Buddhist practices, and their composition (main stages). All the workshop participants will have a chance to ask questions from the panel discussants.

Panel discussants: Geoffrey Samuel (University of Sydney), David Germano (University of Virginia).

8:30 - 9:15 pm

Vajrayana practices: Past, Present, and Future 1

Discussion session on how Vajrayana practices have been practiced in the past, their status in the present, and the forecast for the future. The workshop participants will have a chance to ask questions from H.E. Gyaltsen Rinpoche and Gebchak Wangdrak Rinpoche.

9:15 – 9:30 pm

Concluding remarks

March 27 5pm – 9 pm

5:00 - 5:45 pm

Current neuroscience research on meditation. Differences between meditative practices of different Buddhist practices from a neuroscience perspective

Based on the pre-recorded talks, the panel will discuss major findings of scientific research on meditation in general and the main meditation techniques currently under study.

Panel discussants: Antonino Raffone (Sapienza University of Rome), Rael Cahn (USC)

6:00 – 6:45 pm
7:00 - 7:45 pm

Current neuroscience research on Vajrayana practices and their possible neurocognitive and physiological mechanisms I & 2

These sessions will present current scientific data on meditative practices in general and Vajrayana practices in particular. The discussion will be emphasizing the uniqueness of neuroscience practices, their physiological, cognitive, and neural correlates.

Panel discussants: Maria Kozhevnikov (NUS & Harvard Medical School), Arnaud Delorme (CNRS, UCSD)

8:00-8:45 pm

Vajrayana practices: Past, Present, and Future 2

A continuation of the discussion about the current situation of Vajrayana practices in Bhutan and Tibet. All the participants will have a chance to ask questions from H.E. Gyaltsen Rinpoche and Gebchak Wangdrak Rinpoche.

8:45 – 9:00 pm

Concluding remarks

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SCIENTIFIC PROGRAM (*TENTATIVE*)

March 28 from 5 pm – 8 pm

5:00 - 5:45 pm

Advanced Vajrayana practices 1: The case of Tummo

Based on the pre-recorded talks on the research related to Tummo,, the panel will discuss the topics related to research on advanced Vajrayana practices and answer the questions from all the participants.

Panel discussants: David Germano, Maria Kozhevnikov, Alexander Levitov

6:00 – 6:45 pm

Creativity, Imagination, and Vajrayana Practices

Based on the pre-recorded talks, the panel will discuss scientific research on creativity and the ways Vajrayana practices can contribute to understanding creativity concepts in general and the main meditation techniques currently under study.

Panel discussants: Keith Holyoak (UCLA), Michael Sheehy (University of Virginia), Michael Lifshitz (McGill University), Maria Kozhevnikov

7:00 – 7:45 pm

Risks and benefits associated with advanced Vajrayana practices and their medical applications

The panel will discuss the topics related to research on the risks and danger associated with Vajrayana practices as well as the topics related to the ethical questions surrounding these practices and their medical benefits.

Panel discussants: Laurence Kirmayer (McGill University), Alexander Levitov (East Virginia Medical School), Jennifer Penberthy (University of Virginia)

7:45 – 8:00 pm

Concluding remarks

April 2 from 5pm – 8pm

5:00 - 5:45 pm

Overcoming Attentional Limitations and Vajrayana Practices

Based on the pre-recorded talks, the panel will discuss scientific research on creativity and the ways Vajrayana practices can contribute to training attentional capacities

Panel discussants: Michael Inzlicht (University of Toronto), Antonino Raffone. Maria Kozhevnikov

6:00 – 6:45 pm

Advanced Vajrayana practices 2: Dream Yoga and Lucid Dreaming

The panel will discuss the topics related to dream yoga practices according to Vajrayana traditions, and the ways dream-yoga practices can contribute to scientific research on lucid dreaming.

Panel discussants: Benjamin Baird (Univesrity of Wisconsin), Michael Sheehy (University of Virginia), Ken Paller (Northwestern University)

7:00-7:45 pm

How to Research Vajrayana practices? EEG Methodology Issues.

The panel will discuss problems related to conducting research with Vajrayana practitioners, possible methodologies, equipment, and training.

Panel discussants: Dan Levendowski (Advanced Brain Monitoring), Chris Berka (Advanced Brain Monitoring),

7:45 – 8:00 pm

Concluding remarks

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April 3 from 5pm – 8pm

5:00 - 6:00 pm

Virtual Round Table Discussion: What Vajrayana practices can do for cognitive psychology and neuroscience?

Live session with all the workshop presenters and a round table. The discussion will focus on possible contribution of Vajrayana practices to future scientific research on the capacities and potential of the human mind.

6:15 - 7:15 pm

Virtual Round Table Discussion: What Science can do for the preservation of Vajrayana practices?

Live session with all the workshop presenters and a round table. The discussion will focus on possible ways to preserve Vajrayana practices (e.g., attract attention of a larger community of scientists to Vajrayana; record the practices).

7:30 – 8:00 pm

Concluding remarks

April 4 from 5:30pm – 8:30pm

5:30 – 6:30 pm

Virtual Round Table Discussion: How to make the bridge?

Live session with all the workshop presenters and a round table. The discussion will focus on possible ways to establish collaborations between Vajrayana scholars and practitioners in Bhutan and Tibet and scientific community.

6:45- 7:45 pm

Virtual Round Table Discussion: Future steps and future research projects

Live session with all the workshop presenters and a round table. The discussion will focus on future steps and research projects.

7:45-8:30 pm

Live Q&A Session

The workshop participants will answer the questions from the audience (LIVE)

8:30 – 8:45 pm

Closure