

## Khyentse Center Guest Lecture Series

03.06.2026  
16:00 Uhr  
ESA-OST, Raum 120

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(CERES, Ruhr Universität Bochum)

### Metaphors in Early Dzogchen Literature

Dzogchen (Tib. *rdzogs chen*), Great Perfection or Great Completeness, is a unique Tibetan Buddhist and Tibetan Bön contemplative tradition focusing on the immediate recognition of ultimate reality, in early Dzogchen literature also referred to as awakened mind (Tib. *byang chub sems*). In my talk I will explore the proliferation of light metaphoricity within early Tibetan Buddhist Dzogchen materials from the 9th and 10th centuries (including texts later categorised as Mind Series [Tib. *sems sde*] texts). It thereby traces a gradual tradition building process visible in those texts. I will illustrate how the metaphorical potential of the image schema light develops with further concretisations of light metaphors as well as with the creation of new light-cum-space deliberate metaphors, e.g. the wisdom mind is like the light of the sky (wisdom is transparency is awakened mind).

The present talk presents research done in the frame of the Collaborative Research Center (CRC) 1475 “Metaphors of Religion” (<https://sfb1475.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/en/news/>). In the CRC we investigate religious meaning-making in language, and we assume that metaphors have a fundamental share in this process. Two further assumptions guide us as broad principles in our research. Firstly, as a working basis, we borrow from Lakoff (1986) the model according to which in metaphors, meaning is transferred between semantic domains. Secondly, applying this model to religion, which cannot directly articulate its ultimate subject (the transcendent), we operate with the assumption that religion in its meaning-making process draws from its semantic environment (source domain), transferring meaning to its own domain (target domain).

Prof. Dr. Dorji Wangchuk (Director) & Dr. Orna Almogi (Co-director)  
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