

Buddhism and Science

Breaking New Ground

Edited by B. Alan Wallace

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Buddhism and Science brings together distinguished philosophers, Buddhist scholars, physicists, and cognitive scientists to examine the contrasts and connections between the worlds of Western science and Eastern spirituality. This compilation was inspired by a suggestion made by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, himself one of the contributors, after one of a series of cross-cultural scientific dialogues in Dharamsala, India, sponsored by the Mind and Life Institute. Other contributors such as William L. Ames, Matthieu Ricard, and Stephen LaBerge assess not only the fruits of inquiry from East and West but also shed light on the underlying assumptions of these disparate worldviews. Their essays creatively address a broad range of topics: from quantum theory's surprising affinities with the Buddhist concept of emptiness, to the increasing need in the West for a more contemplative science attuned to the first-person investigation of the mind, to the important ways in which the psychological study of "lucid dreaming" maps similar terrain to the cultivation of the Tibetan Buddhist discipline of dream yoga.

Reflecting its wide variety of topics, Buddhism and Science is comprised of three sections. The first presents two historical overviews of the engagements between Buddhism and modern science or, rather, how Buddhism and modern science have defined, rivaled, or complemented one another. The second describes the ways Buddhism and the cognitive sciences inform each other; the third addresses points of intersection between Buddhism and the physical sciences. On the broadest level this work illuminates how different ways of exploring the nature of human identity, the mind, and the universe at large can enrich and enlighten one another.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

B. Alan Wallace, founder and director of the Institute for the Interdisciplinary Study of Consciousness, studied physics as an undergraduate at Amherst College and received his Ph.D. in religious studies from Stanford University. Wallace trained for many years as a monk in Buddhist monasteries in India

and Switzerland and has taught Buddhist theory and practice in Europe and America since 1976. He also served as interpreter for numerous Tibetan scholars and contemplatives, including the Dalai Lama. His other published works include *Choosing Reality: A Buddhist View of Physics and the Mind*, *The Bridge of Quiescence: Experiencing Buddhist Meditation*, and *The Taboo of Subjectivity: Toward a New Science of Consciousness*.