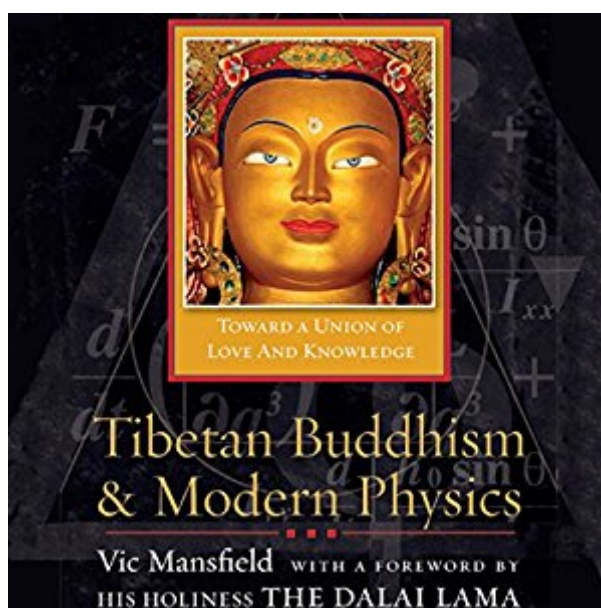


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Tibetan Buddhism And Modern Physics: Toward A Union Of Love And Knowledge



Synopsis

Tibetan Buddhism and Modern Physics: Toward a Union of Love and Knowledge addresses the complex issues of dialogue and collaboration between Buddhism and science, revealing connections and differences between the two. While assuming no technical background in Buddhism or physics, this book strongly responds to the Dalai Lama's "heartfelt plea" for genuine collaboration between science and Buddhism. The Dalai Lama has written a foreword to the book and the Office of His Holiness will translate it into both Chinese and Tibetan. In a clear and engaging way, this book shows how the principle of emptiness, the philosophic heart of Tibetan Buddhism, connects intimately to quantum nonlocality and other foundational features of quantum mechanics. Detailed connections between emptiness, modern relativity, and the nature of time are also explored. For Tibetan Buddhists, the profound interconnectedness implied by emptiness demands the practice of universal compassion. Because of the powerful connections between emptiness and modern physics, the book argues that the interconnected worldview of modern physics also encourages universal compassion. Along with these harmonies, the book explores a significant conflict between quantum mechanics and Tibetan Buddhism concerning the role of causality. The book concludes with a response to the question: "How does this expedition through the heart of modern physics and Tibetan Buddhism - from quantum mechanics, relativity, and cosmology, to emptiness, compassion, and disintegratedness - apply to today's painfully polarized world?" Despite differences and questions raised, the book's central message is that there is a solid basis for uniting these worldviews. From this basis, the message of universal compassion can accompany the spread of the scientific worldview, stimulating compassionate action in the light of deep understanding - a true union of love and knowledge. Tibetan Buddhism and Modern Physics will appeal to a broad audience that includes general readers and undergraduate and graduate students in science and religion courses.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Vic Mansfield's work is an attempt to find the "middle way" between the knowledge born of science and the compassion central to Mahāyāna, and Vajrayāna Buddhism. His scientific explanations are clear and concise. Even though he grays out sections for a reader not interested in the details of these explanations, I would not recommend skipping them, since you will be missing demonstrative gems from what must have been a remarkably gifted teacher. Even though one would expect that he may have been sympathetic to models such as Bohm's implicate order, he never diverges from the standard models in his explanations and clearly intends not to depart from the generally accepted paradigms. Complementing and outlining this discipline, his writing has a light, kind, engaged quality. Vic Mansfield must have been the kind of teacher whose office you could stop by anytime for kind and patient explanations of difficult material or of whatever concerned you. Vic Mansfield's heartfelt appeal for the union of love and knowledge inspired by his own journey through the implications of contemporary science and ancient wisdom on Sunyata is both moving and convincing. The challenge presented does involve the very survival of our species. I believe he struggles a little too much though with Buddhist causality being challenged by the findings of random factors guiding events as revealed in science and biology. After all, science is about knowledge through findings with specific methodologies, not about human soteriology. Scientific theories and findings are necessarily incomplete. The extrapolations of scientific findings to a world view by New Atheists and others are only the reflection of personal, metaphysical biases and not of science. Vic Mansfield's concern regarding causality is addressed by Nagarjuna in the Mādhyamakakārikā, "Nothing whatever arises. Not from itself, not from another, not from both itself and another, and not without a cause." Causality itself remains empty of inherent existence and remains only as a convention for our descriptions and management of the regularities of nature in an understanding echoing Hume's skepticism. In addition, necessary conditions for the arising of phenomena are not necessarily equivalent to causal agents. "Randomness" of biological mutations cannot be truly "random" in the sense that an observer, a microscope, prior knowledge, etc., are necessary conditions for a "random" phenomena to arise. Thomas Merton, characteristically having no internal conflict on such issues, said it well: "There is a logic of language and a logic of

mathematics. The former is supple and lifelike, it follows our experience. The latter is abstract and rigid, more ideal. The latter is perfectly necessary, perfectly reliable: the former is only sometimes reliable and hardly ever systematic. But the logic of mathematics achieves necessity at the expense of living truth, it is less real than the other, although more certain. It achieves certainty by a flight from the concrete into abstraction. Doubtless, to an idealist, this would seem to be a more perfect reality. I am not an idealist. The logic of the poet -- that is, the logic of language or the experience itself -- develops the way a living organism grows: it spreads out towards what it loves, and is heliotropic, like a plant."Highly recommended.

I purchased this as a gift. The person that received it loved it. He would recommend it for anyone that has an interest in Buddhism.

Many surprises and intriguing conclusions await any reader willing to follow this book's discussions attentively and carefully. No previous training in physics or Buddhism is assumed. Indeed, this text could serve as a first introduction to either discipline. The author, a professor of physics and astronomy, tells us that a major impetus for writing the book was a call by His Holiness the Dalai Lama for works that would introduce Tibetan monks to issues in modern science. Although the author makes his points with great care and precision, his general tone is light and often quite personal, with frequent anecdotes, occasional humor, photographs, and poetry. The author's warmth shines through. Nevertheless, the discussion is layered, so that deeper meanings are available to more knowledgeable readers. I've enjoyed a few other books that compare modern physics to Asian philosophies. This one stands out because it focuses in detail on some very specific issues without hand-waving or short-cuts. Among the problems discussed are: can an entity be truly independent? is there invariably a direction to time? can an event be "uncaused"? do physical laws support the possibility of "compassion" as understood in Buddhism? Don't assume you already know what conclusions are reached. This book comes across as written with feeling and honesty. For all its intellectual concentration, I believe it was primarily a labor of love.

wonderful accomplishment! Best book so far on the subject. The author is Vic Mansfield, not the Dalai Lama as stated on this Kindle Book. My review is for the Audiobook. At first, I thought the author was wrong when he said that the Gelupka view of emptiness (shentong) was a non-affirming negative, but then I reread "Journey to Certainty", a commentary on Jamgon Mipham's "Beacon of Certainty

While the uptick in interest in Tibetan Buddhism - aka, Quantum Buddhism - is encouraging, alas, the plethora of writers on the subject are not equal. Several are good; many are mediocre; and all too many were either not written well or shone a light on the lack of knowledge and/or teaching skills of the authors. Vic Mansfield's "Tibetan Buddhism and Modern Physics: Toward a Union of Love and Knowledge" is, unequivocally, a star - if not the star - among the many. I have read it through from front to back; have re-visited selective areas; and now have plans to re-read the entire volume. As a Buddhist Atheist ... is there such a thing? ... ah, but that is a question for another discussion: I recommend this book to those who are new to the subject matter; to those who have been immersed in it for some time; to scientists; to theologians; and to those who are engaged in any/all/or no spiritual practices. Submerge yourself in the waters of this book and you will emerge bathed in light, liberation, and joy.

For those wanting to read entire chapters or the introduction by the Dalai Lama, go to the author's website at [...] That site has much more information about the book. It may help you decide if it is for you. Vic

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