



B. Alan Wallace

Santa Barbara Institute for Consciousness Studies

Dr. Alan Wallace, a scholar and practitioner of Buddhism since 1970, has taught Buddhist theory and meditation worldwide since 1976. Having devoted fourteen years to training as a Tibetan Buddhist monk, ordained by H. H. the Dalai Lama, he went on to earn an undergraduate degree in physics and the philosophy of science at Amherst College and a doctorate in religious studies at Stanford. He has edited, translated, authored, and contributed to more than thirty books on Tibetan Buddhism, medicine, language, and culture, and the interface between science and religion. He now teaches Buddhist philosophy and meditation throughout Europe and North America.

Lecture series

23 - 24 - 25 September 2009 - 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm

**Aula Magna - Scuola Superiore S. Anna
Piazza Martiri della Libertà - Pisa, Italy**

Buddhism and Science: Confrontation and Collaboration

Sept. 23, 2009

There are three principal areas in which Buddhism and science overlap: ethics, the mind sciences, and the physical sciences. While ethics plays a minor role in modern science, in Buddhism it is considered to be indispensable for social and environmental flourishing in this and future lifetimes, and it provides an essential foundation for the cultivation of mental balance and the eventual realization of spiritual freedom. Cognitive scientists have confined their research methods primarily to relying on subjective verbal reports, behavioral studies, and research on the brain. Buddhists, on the other hand, have relied primarily on first refining their attentional and introspective skills and then investigating the nature of the mind from a first-person perspective. While the mechanistic materialism that dominated much of 19th-century sciences is largely incompatible with Buddhism, modern advances in physics, especially in quantum mechanics, suggest profound points of convergence between scientific and contemplative modes of inquiry into the nature of the universe and the role of the observer in nature.

Buddhism and Clinical Psychology

Sept. 24, 2009

Buddhist and scientific methods and theories for diagnosing and treating mental illness and for seeking to enhance mental health and balance differ in fundamental ways, some of which are incompatible with each other, while others are complimentary. In this lecture, Alan Wallace will trace some of the principal themes advocated by Sigmund Freud, B. F. Skinner, and Daniel Dennett, followed by a short presentation of some of the key questions of modern positive psychology, and finally outline Buddhist methodological and theoretical principles regarding mental health, following the traditional Buddhist format of ethics, mental balance, and wisdom.

The Shamatha Project and our plans for an International Shamatha Project

Sept. 24, 2009

The scientific study known as the Shamatha Project, conducted in collaboration with the University of California, Davis and the Santa Barbara Institute for Consciousness Studies entailed detailed, studies of 60 meditators participating in two 3-month, intensive meditation retreats during the spring and fall of 2007. While most of the 22 terabytes of data collected from this study have yet to be analyzed, the early results are very encouraging, as they show some of the measurable benefits of sustained, intensive training of attention, metacognition, empathy, and other virtues. In this lecture Alan Wallace will give a qualitative overview of some of these findings and also outline plans for extending such research worldwide in that International Shamatha Project.

**Attendees are invited to pre-register on-line at the following e-mail address:
m.bergamasco@sssupsup.it**