
MIND AND LIFE V

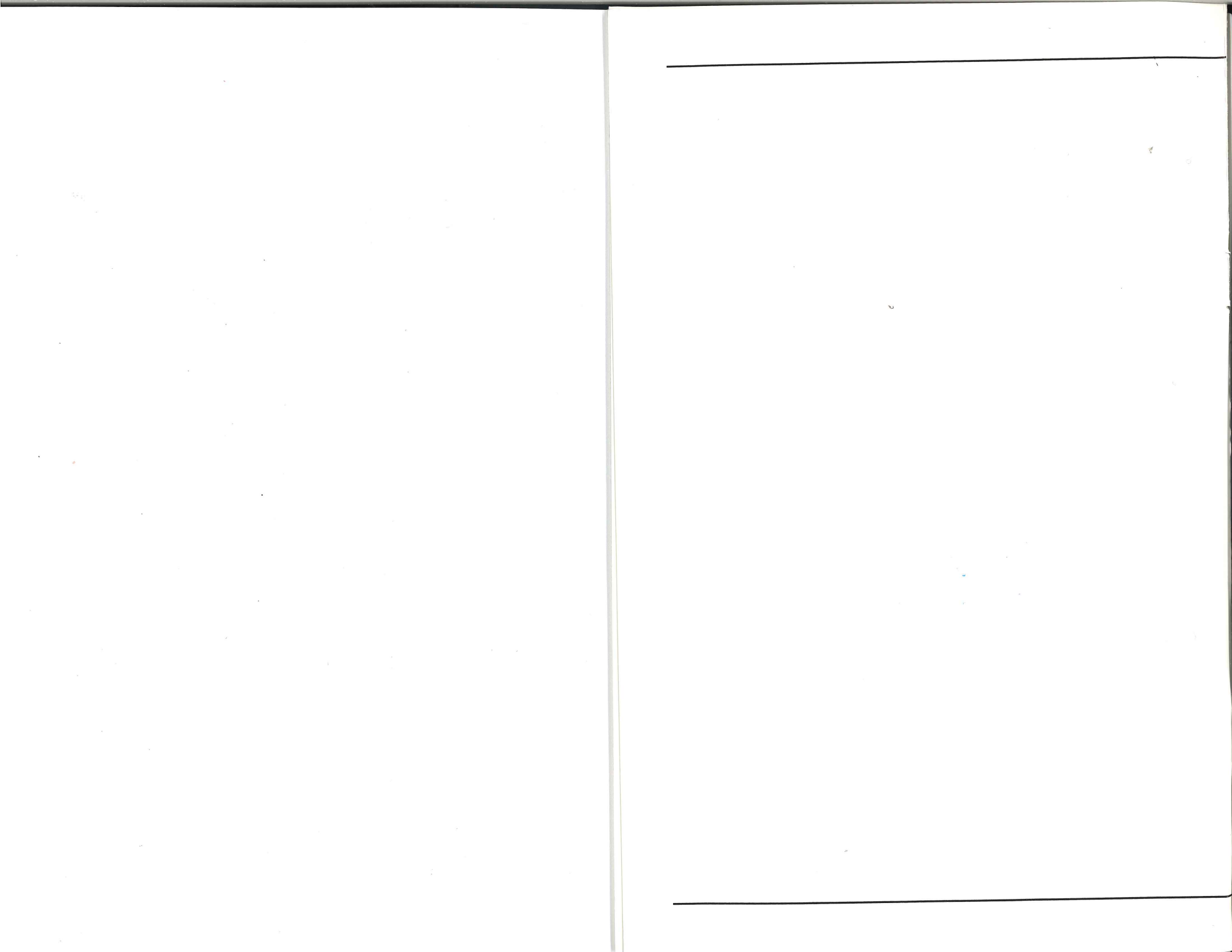


DIALOGUES BETWEEN
BUDDHISM AND
THE SCIENCES

ALTRUISM, ETHICS and COMPASSION

with
HIS HOLINESS
THE XIVth DALAI LAMA

DHARAMSALA, INDIA
OCTOBER, 2-6 1995



MIND AND LIFE V

ALTRUISM, ETHICS and COMPASSION

The **Mind and Life Dialogues** have provided unique opportunities for small groups of Western scientists to engage in concentrated, private discussions with H.H. the Dalai Lama and other representatives of the Tibetan tradition. The purpose of these meetings is to mutually inform and enrich both traditions about various issues pertaining to life and the mind. A key ingredient in these experiences has been that participants come to present their specialties and to participate in the dialogues in a spirit of truly open and free exchange.

"**Mind and Life I**" was held in October, 1987 in Dharamsala, India, and was the first attempt in this direction. It succeeded in opening up a deeper dialogue than had been possible under less favorable circumstances. It provided the impetus to continue the Mind and Life series into other specific topics. Edited parts of the dialogues from this first meeting have been published as *Gentle Bridges*, J. Hayward and F. Varela (Eds.), Shambala, Boston, 1992.

"**Mind and Life II**" was held in Newport Beach, California in October, 1989, in a shorter time span than the previous conference. Its intention was to focus discussion on important current topics in neuroscience with well established North American researchers.

"**Mind and Life III**" was again held in Dharamsala in November, 1990, in its original format. Its intention was to focus on the relationship between mental states and the healing process, as seen from both the Buddhist tradition and Western medical research.

"**Mind and Life IV**" was held in October, 1992 in Dharamsala, India. Its intent was to focus on a far more delicate area including the three topics: sleeping, dreaming and dying. We wanted to bring to discussion those "marginal" states in which our habitual, reified sense of

personal identity is challenged, and in which concomitantly a host of phenomena of great significance for human existence become intensified or are made manifest. Current knowledge about the strictly neuroscientific correlates of sleeping and dreaming were presented as well as the insights of many years of clinical work in the Western tradition of psychoanalysis concerning dreams and their role in neurosis and health. These presentations were complemented with a description of the unique Tibetan tradition of dream yoga and "Bardo" teachings (the intermediate state following death and prior to one's next rebirth). Western clinical studies on so-called near-death states were discussed in connection with the Tibetan teachings.

"Mind and Life V" will focus on the study of altruism and compassion in Western science. We will address these topics from a highly multi-disciplinary perspective since altruism and compassion are clearly significant for both the social and life sciences. A historical perspective on the role of compassion in science and the bias in the study of negative rather positive psychological states in the behavioral sciences will first be considered. The role of altruism in evolutionary biology will be examined and its relevance to understanding human motivation will be discussed. The characteristics that determine whether people help other people in need will be the focus of another presentation. A related topic, and one central to the contemporary world situation, concerns the conditions that give rise to genocidal violence. The ingredients that are essential to positive socialization and the cultivation of altruism and compassion in children will also be examined. Finally, what is the relevance of altruistic motives to economic behavior? There is a class of economic problems in which selfish motives, assumed by most economics to underlie all significant economic behavior, are found to be self-defeating. This meeting will bring together scholars in psychology, philosophy, economics and the history of science. The discussion each day will focus on relations between Western and Tibetan Buddhist understanding of concepts that are central to both traditions.

PARTICIPANTS

Tenzin Gyatso, His Holiness, the XIVth Dalai Lama of Tibet.

Richard Davidson, Ph.D., Vilas Professor of Psychology and Psychiatry, University of Wisconsin.

Nancy Eisenberg, Ph.D., Regents' Professor of Psychology, Arizona State University.

Robert Frank, Ph.D., Goldwin Smith Professor of Economics, Ethics, and Public Policy, Cornell University.

Anne Harrington, Ph.D., Professor of the History of Science, Harvard University.

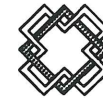
Elliott Sober, Ph.D., Vilas Professor of Philosophy, University of Wisconsin.

Ervin Staub, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology, University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

INTERPRETERS

Geshe Thubten Jinpa, Ph.D., Cambridge University, U.K.

Jose Ignacio Cabezon, Ph.D., Iliff School of Theology, Denver



OVERVIEW

Professor Davidson is the scientific co-ordinator of this Mind and Life meeting. He will introduce the meeting on Monday morning by providing an overview of the scope of interests represented among the Western scholars assembled. He will highlight the diversity of ways in which altruism and compassion have been approached in Western social and natural science.

PROGRAM
Monday, October 2, 1995

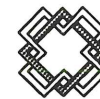
Morning Session

**Presentation: Science and Compassion –
Conceiving the Relationship.
Anne Harrington, Ph.D.**

This conference's proposed dialogue on compassion may be conceived as involving an exchange of theoretical views between Tibetan Buddhism and Western science on human nature and its capacities. If so, the dialogue on the Western side might begin by asking about the significance of the fact that the Western sciences of life and mind have historically paid much less attention to the human capacity for loving and caring emotional states than they have to the human capacity for violent, destructive behavior. Indeed, Western science has often assumed that human beings are "naturally" violent and selfish. Alternatively, we may suppose that the topic of this meeting invites an exchange of views on the practices embodied in Buddhism versus science respectively, and how far each are explicitly directed towards the cultivation of compassion. Many scientists once argued that the discipline of the scientific method itself was morally elevating, and that cultivation of scientific rationality would save humanity from its own dark and selfish tendencies, and promote right action. The case of medical science in Nazi Germany provides us with an opportunity to explore reasons for questioning this belief. Having looked at theory and practice separately, we may conclude our attempt to conceive the relationship between science and compassion by asking what relationship exists between scientific theories of human nature on the one side, and science's understanding of its practical role in society on the other. How can science combine an interest in learning more about compassion with a commitment to instantiating ideals of compassion in its own research practices?

Afternoon Session

Discussion theme: Comparison of Western scientific and Tibetan Buddhist theories of the "natural" state of human beings, and their different sense of what must be done to cultivate higher moral thinking and action; what Western science might learn from Tibetan traditions to become more compassionate.



Tuesday, October 3, 1995

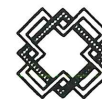
Morning Session

**Presentation: How are Biological Evolution
and Psychological Altruism Related?
Elliott Sober, Ph.D.**

Evolutionary biologists use the concepts of altruism and selfishness to describe the effects that a behavior has on an organism's fitness—its ability to survive and reproduce. A mindless creature can be an evolutionary altruist, if it helps another individual at cost to itself. The everyday concepts of altruism and egoism are quite different; they describe the psychological motives that people have in acting as they do. The theory of psychological egoism says that human beings have as their only ultimate goal the improvement of their own situation; this theory denies that people ever have altruistic ultimate motives. Psychologists and philosophers have debated whether psychological egoism is the correct theory of human motivation. This presentation will begin with some history; describing why the issue of evolutionary altruism has been important in biology. We will then consider whether evolutionary considerations can help clarify the psychological problem of motivation. If our minds are the product of natural selection, does this tell us anything about whether psychological egoism is likely to be true?

Afternoon Session

Discussion theme: How should psychological altruism be defined? If people help each other solely because helping makes them feel good, does this mean that people are egoistically or altruistically motivated? Can the question of what our ultimate motives are be resolved by observing how people behave? If not, is it possible to resolve this question at all? If evolution has led parents to want to take care of their children, is this desire likely to be based on purely egoistic motives, or is it more plausible for it to include a genuinely altruistic concern?



Wednesday, October 4, 1995

Morning Session

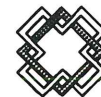
**Presentation: Responsibility and Inclusive Caring in
Altruistic Helping and Group Violence.
Ervin Staub, Ph.D.**

The first part of the presentation will look at research on helping behavior in emergencies, when someone is suddenly in pain or danger. It will focus on how circumstances and personal characteristics lead witnesses or "bystanders" to feel more or less responsible for the welfare of another, and on how everyday social rules can inhibit helping. The second part will provide an analysis of the origins of genocidal violence. It will consider social conditions like difficult life conditions, cultural characteristics like the devaluation of another group, the psychological processes that arise and generate violence, the evolution of increasing violence by perpetrators and the role of bystanders. The third part will describe "positive socialization" of children in the home and in "caring schools" required for the development of valuing others' welfare and altruistic action, and for the capacity to oppose destructive policies and practices by one's group.

Afternoon Session

Discussion theme: Comparing:

- 1) Tibetan Buddhist and Western notions about overcoming the differentiation between "us" and "them;"
- 2) Positive socialization for inclusive caring by love, guidance, discipline and learning by doing and by monastic/spiritual training. How can the effects of negative socialization be later overcome? How can compassion and feelings of responsibility be fostered in individuals and nations, so that they become active bystanders who try to stop group violence?



Thursday, October 5, 1995

Morning Session

**Presentation: Empathy-Related Emotional Responses,
Altruism, and Their Socialization.**
Nancy Eisenberg, Ph.D.

Psychologists have found that various empathy-related emotional responses such as sympathy and personal distress relate differently to the performance of prosocial behavior (e.g., helping, sharing). Research concerning the link between sympathy and children's prosocial behavior is briefly examined. Then aspects of the family environment that have been associated with sympathy and personal distress will be reviewed, as will research on the socialization of prosocial behavior in children.

Afternoon Session

Discussion theme:

- 1) What does Buddhism have to say about the socialization of empathy and prosocial behavior?
- 2) What role do emotion and cognition play in prosocial development (emotion versus cognition).
- 3) What role does the concept of karma play (if any) in blaming victims for their problems? Can emotional regulation and meditational techniques be used to foster sympathy rather than personal distress?



Friday, November 9

Morning Session

**Presentation: Can Altruism Survive
in Competitive Environments?"**

Robert H. Frank, Ph.D.

According to many Western biologists and other behavioral scientists, competition has assured that narrow self-interest is the only important human motive. In this presentation, we will challenge this prevailing view by describing an important class of economic and social problems in which selfish motives turn out to be self-defeating. Drawing on evidence that reliable nonverbal signals of character exist, we will explain how cooperative predispositions might survive in — and, indeed, even be nurtured by — competitive environments. This account is at once in harmony with the Western view that self-interest underlies all action and, at the same time, with the Buddhist view that there can be great advantage in transcending our selfish tendencies.

Afternoon Session

In evolutionary terms, altruists gain advantage by being able to identify, and interact selectively with, one another. Implicit in this view is the need to avoid interacting with opportunists. What does the Tibetan Buddhist tradition say about avoiding people of bad character?

Evolutionary accounts stress the advantage not only of altruistic motives but also of vengeful ones, as a means to deter aggression in circumstances in which mere threats would otherwise not be credible. How does the Tibetan Buddhist tradition deal with the problem of deterring aggression?



ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS

His Holiness the Dalai Lama

His Holiness the XIVth Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, is the spiritual and temporal leader of the Tibetan people. He was born on July 6, 1935 in a small village called Taktser in northeastern Tibet. Born to a peasant family, His Holiness was recognized at the age of two, in accordance with Tibetan tradition, as the reincarnation of his predecessor, the XIIIth Dalai Lama. The Dalai Lamas are manifestations of the Buddha of Compassion, who chose to reincarnate for the purpose of serving human beings. His Holiness has traveled extensively, speaking on subjects including universal responsibility, love, compassion and kindness. In 1989, His Holiness received the Nobel Peace Prize.

Richard J. Davidson

Richard J. Davidson received his Ph.D. from Harvard University in Psychology in 1976. He is currently the William James Professor and Vilas Professor of Psychology and Psychiatry at the University of Wisconsin. He is co-author or editor of seven books, the most recent being *The Nature of Emotion* (with Paul Ekman) and *Brain Asymmetry* (with Kenneth Hugdahl). Professor Davidson has also written more than 125 chapters and articles for scientific journals. He is the recipient of numerous awards for his work including the Hilldale Award from the University of Wisconsin (1995), the Established Investigator Award from the National Alliance for Research in Schizophrenia and Affective Disorders (1995) and the Research Scientist Award from the National Institute of Mental Health. Professor Davidson serves on the Editorial Boards of numerous scientific journals and is a Core Member of the MacArthur Foundation Research Network on Mind-Body Interactions. In 1992, he and other members of a scientific team launched a new research project involving a neuroscientific investigation of exceptional mental abilities in advanced Tibetan monks.

Nancy Eisenberg

Nancy Eisenberg received her B.A. from the University of Michigan and her M.A. and Ph.D. in psychology from the University of California, Berkeley. She currently is Regents' Professor of Psychology at Arizona State University. She has published nearly 200 books, chapters, and empirical journal

articles on children's and adult's social and moral development. She has been a recipient of 5-year Research Scientist Development Awards from the National Institute of Health and the National Institutes of Mental Health (and will soon be starting a Research Scientist Award from the National Institutes of Mental Health). She is President of the Western Psychological Association, has been associate editor of *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly* and *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, and is editor-elect of the journal *Psychological Bulletin*.

Robert H. Frank

Robert H. Frank (USA, 1945) received his Ph.D. in economics in 1972 from U.C. Berkeley. He holds a joint appointment as Professor of Economics in Cornell University's Johnson Graduate School of Management and as Goldwin Smith Professor of Economics, Ethics, and Public Policy in Cornell's College of Arts and Sciences, where he has taught since 1972. His books include: *Choosing the Right Pond: Human Behavior and the Quest for Status* (Oxford University Press, 1985); *Passions Within Reason: The Strategic Role of the Emotions* (W. W. Norton, 1988); *Microeconomics and Behavior* (McGraw-Hill, 1991); and *The Winner-Take-All Society* (with Philip Cook, The Free Press, 1995). Besides teaching at Cornell, he taught math and science as a Peace Corps Volunteer in rural Nepal from 1966 to 1968; he served as chief economist for the Civil Aeronautics Board from 1978 to 1980; and during the 1992-93 academic year, he was a Fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences.

Anne Harrington

Anne Harrington is Professor for the History of Science at Harvard University; specializing in the history of psychiatry, neuroscience, and the other mind sciences. She received her Ph.D. in the History of Science from Oxford University in 1982, and has held postdoctoral fellowships at the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine in London, and the University of Freiburg in Germany. Currently she is a consultant for the MacArthur Foundation Research Network on Mind-Body Interactions, with a particular interest in the sociocultural dimensions of such interactions. She is also a member of the Steering Committee of the Harvard University Mind, Brain and Behavior Initiative, and recently organized a conference under their auspices called "Placebo: Probing the Self-Healing Brain." In addition to authoring some 40 articles and producing two edited collections, she is the author of two books, *Medicine, Mind and the Double Brain* (1987) and *Re-*

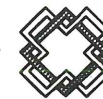
enchanted Science: Holism and German Culture, 1890-1945 (to appear in the spring of 1996). At Harvard, she teaches courses on "Evolution and the Mind," "Madness and Medicine," "Models of the Human Mind and Brain," and "The Mind-Body Connection in Modern Medicine."

Elliot Sober

Elliott Sober (USA, 1948) received his Ph.D. in Philosophy from Harvard University in 1974. Since then he has been an Assistant/Associate/Full Professor and is currently Vilas Professor of Philosophy at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. His main area of research is the philosophy of science, focusing especially on philosophical questions raised by evolutionary biology. His publications include: *The Nature of Selection, Reconstructing the Past, Core Questions in Philosophy; The Philosophy of Biology,* and *From a Biological Point of View.*

Ervin Staub

Ervin Staub is Professor of Psychology at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. He received his Ph.D. at Stanford University and taught at Harvard University. His work has focused on caring, helping, altruism and passivity in the face of others' needs. His books on this topic are *Positive social behavior and morality: Vol. 1. Social and personal influences, 1978; Vol. 2. Socialization and development, 1979* and two coedited volumes (*Development and Maintenance of Prosocial Behavior: International Perspectives on Positive Morality, 1984; and Social and Moral Values: Individual and Societal Perspectives, 1989*). He also edited *Personality: Current Issues and Basic Research, 1980*. Since the late 70's he has also studied human destructiveness like genocide and ethnic violence (*The Roots of Evil: The Origins of Genocide and Other Group Violence, and Patriotism in the Life of Individuals and Nations, in press.*) and youth violence. His article, *The Psychology of Bystanders, Perpetrators and Heroic Helpers*, won the Otto Klineberg Intercultural and International Prize of the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues. He has applied his work to public issues and concerns (e.g., police violence, racism, the war in Iraq, child rearing) in articles, lectures, workshops, teacher training, interviews with journalists, and radio and T.V. appearances.



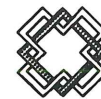
INTERPRETERS

Geshe Thubten Jinpa

Born in Zonghar, Tibet in 1959, Thubten Jinpa received his initial monastic training at Zonghar Chode Monastery, India. In 1978, he joined Shartse College of Ganden University where he engaged in intensive study of Buddhist Philosophy, Epistemology and Logic. He received his Geshe degree in 1989, and is presently studying at Kings College, Cambridge University in England. He has taught logic and philosophy and is one of the principal interpreters for His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

José Ignacio Cabazón

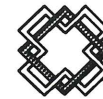
José Ignacio Cabezón is Associate Professor of the Philosophy of Religion at the Illff School of Theology in Denver, Colorado. He hold a B.S. with an emphasis in Physics from the Caltach and a Ph.D. in Buddhist Studies from the University of Wisconsin, Madison. A monk in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition from 1977-1985, he studied principally at the Je College of Sera Monastery in South India. The author of several books and articles, his most recent published work includes *Buddhism and Language* (1994) and *Tibetan Literature; Studies in Genre* (1995, co-edited with Roger Jackson). His current research ranges from medieval Tibetan plemics on the interpretation of the doctrine of emptiness to the philosophy of cross-cultural comparison.



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*"This is my simple religion.
There is no need for temple; no need for complicated philosophy.
Our own brain, our own heart is our temple;
the philosophy is kindness."*

His Holiness The Dalai Lama

