

FROM OUR READERS

Science and Buddhism

I'D like to thank Dr. Melvin Klegerman for his article "Science and Buddhism" in the March *Living Buddhism*. His suggestion that the three realms of *ichinen sanzen* offer a foundation for the ten dimensions of reality required by current thinking on Theory of Everything was particularly provocative. He suggested that the five components, together with the realm of individual beings, provide the six dimensions required in addition to the four dimensions of space-time. But the three realms also include the realm of the environment. I wondered, at first reading, how he might extend his thoughts to include this.

If I may venture a suggestion, perhaps the dimensions of space-time constitute the component called form. Then we have a total of eight dimensions in the realm of temporary existence, plus the realm of individual beings and the realm of the environment for a total of ten. Just in case anyone is counting.

I have been a member of SGI since 1969, practicing in the L.A. area until I moved to Northern California six years ago. The members here in Sonoma County have a tremendous seeking spirit, and many youth division in my chapter read articles such as his—not that there are very many yet (articles, that is, we have lots of youth division)—with eager curiosity. Until recently I sometimes felt that no one else devoted any thought to the details of how the core theories of this faith might relate to contemporary science; President Ikeda's published discussions were the sole source.

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Melvin Klegerman's reply: Thank you for pointing out an oversight in my article on "Science and Buddhism." This presentation was at least partly adapted from ideas developed in my thesis for the Study Department in 1987, in which I explained that the four dimensions of space-time corresponded to the realm of environment. Therefore, 4 (environment) + 5 (components of the individual) + 1 (aggregates of living beings, or society) = 10. I was able to introduce this concept in my presentation at the conference, but apparently did not develop it sufficiently in the article. I apologize for any confusion this may have caused.

I FOUND Melvin Klegerman's article, "Science and Buddhism," in many ways to be a very intelligent presentation on that subject, a really exciting new paradigm shift.

I believe that one part of his suggested equation of Chih-i's (T'ien-t'ai's) six subjective with the six remaining objective dimensions of a Superstring ten-dimensional universe does seem, to a non-scientist, to offer an interesting explanation for a mind-boggling quantic phenomenon. Yet, a novice like myself might ask whether one should even think of taking such a literal application of a Buddhist concept and applying it so dramatically to the physics of the universe. At first I thought that such application was mind-bogglingly unrealistic. Or is it? It made me think. Are we perhaps not following other hypotheses which, if taken literally, science might find also mind-boggling, without actually asking ourselves whether that literal

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interpretation is the correct one?

For example, I have sometimes wondered how science—full steam ahead armed with all its “chaos” and “complexity” (see letter in the January issue), quantum theories, etc.—could explain how our usual paradigm of “reincarnation” works? It seems from my limited viewpoint that a number of SGI members take the parable literally, that we will soon be reborn on Earth (quite likely with our relatives) in human form, on a one-to-one correlation with a 100 percent recycling of our individual karmas. Others may say that it would take a super-super-computer to keep track of all that, as well as violation of physics’ Second Law of Thermodynamics! They may state that with the Big Bang, how can one talk even of the eternity of life? “It is a fairy tale.” Or is it?

There is so much that I want to learn.

In this age, science can be used for extraordinary good for humanity or for extraordinary evil. The SGI must confront it. I believe we can make a critical difference. Despite my limited understanding, I thank Melvin Klegerman for his exemplary courageous and stimulating thoughts. I hope that the youth especially leave no stone unturned pursuing science based on faith.

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