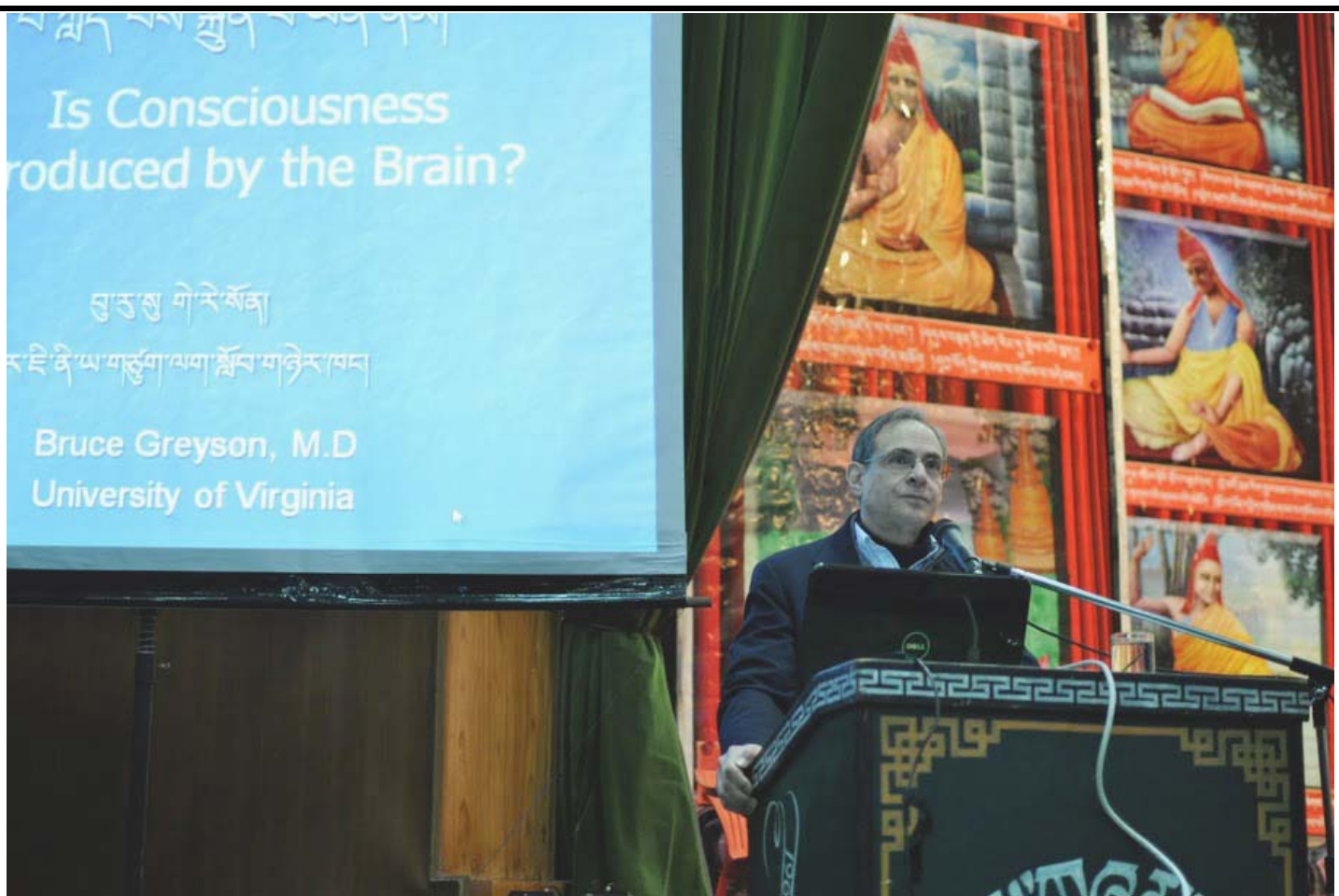




December 16-18, 2011, Dr. Bruce Greyson travelled to Dharamsala, India to present at the conference, "[Cosmology and Consciousness: A Dialog Between Buddhist Scholars and Scientists on Mind and Matter](#)". Dr. Greyson's talk was titled, "Is Consciousness Produced by the Brain?"

The Cosmology and Consciousness Conference themes were as follows:

1. **The Nature of Mind and Consciousness:** How do concepts from the cognitive sciences and neurobiology interface with concepts from Buddhism and other contemplative traditions? What are the relationships among mind, consciousness, and brain? What are the various perspectives on the survival of consciousness after death?
2. **Life and Consciousness in the Universe:** Astrobiological and Buddhist perspectives on life and mind in the universe. Under what conditions, and where might life flourish?
3. **Limits of Knowledge and Knowing:** What are the possible limits to theories of the very large and the very small? What really exists beyond the scope of the five senses? Both Buddhist and scientific traditions have rich perspectives.
4. **Serving Humankind:** How can Buddhism and science best serve humanity-providing both knowledge and happiness? The role of ethics in Buddhism and science will be explored.



Abstract of Dr. Greyson's presentation:

***Is Consciousness Produced by the Brain?***

***Most Western neuroscientists assume that consciousness is produced in some way by the brain, although no mechanism has been proposed by which physical processes could produce thoughts, feelings, sensations. However, there is a large body of empirical evidence suggesting that consciousness sometimes occurs in the absence of any brain activity. For more than 40 years, scientists at the University of Virginia have been studying phenomena that challenge the belief that consciousness is produced by the brain, including memories of past lives and near-death experiences, in which complex thoughts, perceptions, and feelings occur while the brain is severely impaired, and experiencers report encounters with deceased persons and accurate perceptions visual perspective outside the body.***

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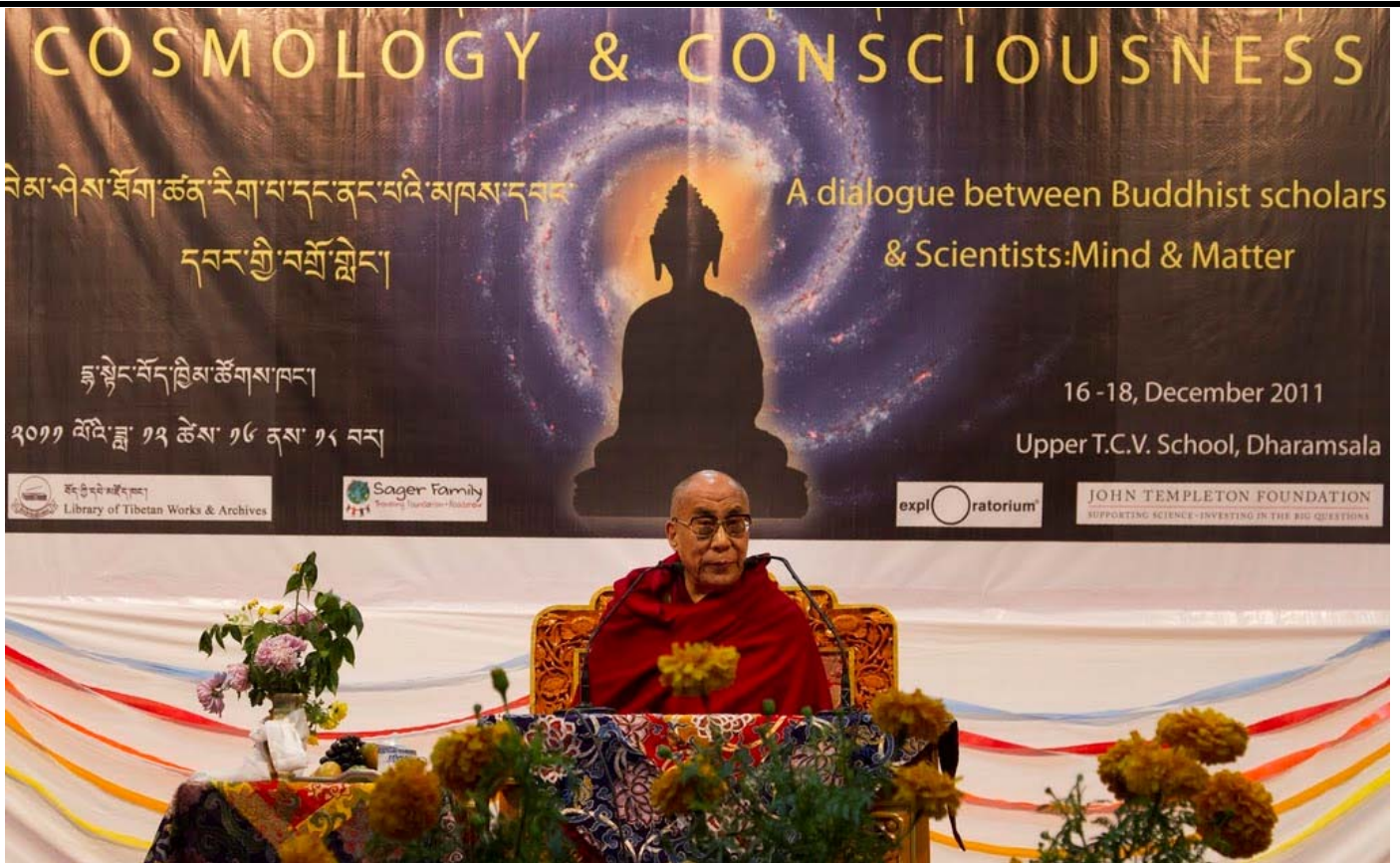
In December 2011, Dr. Bruce Greyson, Carlson Professor of Psychiatry & Neurobehavioral Sciences, and the Director of the Division of Perceptual Studies, was a keynote speaker at this annual conference in India hosted by His Holiness, the Dalai Lama. In 1999, the Dalai Lama directed the Tibetan monastic community to engage Western scientists in an initiative to break down misconceptions and articulate points of relevance between science and Buddhism (<http://www.scienceformonks.org/>) .

Over the past decade, Western scientists have taught more than 220 monks and nuns about physics, quantum mechanics, cosmology, biology, neuroscience, and mathematics. Building on this longstanding interest in creating a dialogue between Eastern and Western scholarly traditions, the goal of the December conference was to promote the integration of the spiritual traditions, the goal of the annual conference is to promote the integration of spiritual values and scientific investigation.



The conference brought together Tibetan monks who are leaders in their home monasteries with scientists from several universities in the US and in India. It was held in the Himalayan foothills in northern India, in Dharamsala at the Home of the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan government in exile.

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The Dalai Lama opened the conference by explaining his decade-long crusade to bring Western scientific understanding to Buddhist monastics. He noted that the Buddha advised his disciples to values skeptical inquiry and not take his statements (or anyone else's) at face value without subjecting them to empirical trail. The Dalai Lama sees empirical verification of hypotheses at the core of both Buddhism and science. **The two disciplines, however, differ in their primary goal: science often values knowledge for its own sake, whereas Buddhism values knowledge in so far as it reduces suffering.** In addition, the two disciplines differ in their focus: science has perfected methods to study of the physical world, whereas Buddhism has developed techniques to study mental phenomena related to the nature of consciousness. As such the two approaches have much to learn from each other.

The Dalai Lama has said that if scientific discoveries challenge basic Buddhist tenets, then Buddhism will have to change. He also noted in his comments that both Western academics and Buddhist monastics share a tendency to talk only among themselves, and that both groups... "need to get out more".

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During his visit, Dr. Greyson presented the Dalai Lama with a copy of his latest book, ***The Handbook of Near Death Experiences***. The Tibetan Library of Works and Archives will be translating the book into Tibetan for use in the monastic curriculum.



One of the central topics at this conference was the relationship between mind, consciousness, and brain. The keynote speakers on this topic were Dr. Greyson and Lobsang Tenzin Negi, Ph.D., Co-director of the Emory University Collaborative for Contemplative Studies. Dr. Greyson's keynote address described some of the research of the Division of Perceptual Studies over the past 40 years, including studies of near-death experiences as well as the research into the cases of children who claim to remember previous lives. The attendees were appreciative of the increased understanding of these topics afforded by the use of scientific investigations.



His Holiness acknowledged each speaker as they were introduced.



The monks listened to translations through ear buds as the western Scientists made their presentations.