Wedding the personal and impersonal in west coast Vipassana: A dialogical encounter between Buddhism and psychotherapy

Ann Gleig

Abstract

Numerous studies have noted that depth psychology has been one of the most prevalent frameworks for the interpretation of Buddhism in the West. Similarly, many commentators have bemoaned the assimilation of Buddhist thought and practice into western psychological discourse. This paper argues, however, that such critiques often fail to adequately distinguish between reductive approaches that reduce Buddhist phenomena to psychological states, and dialogical enterprises that utilize psychology as a tool to extend, through dialogue, the aims of Buddhism. Through a focus on what I identify as "West Coast Vipassana," a distinctive current within the American Insight Community, I examine attempts to incorporate personal life into Buddhist practice. While there are numerous incidents of the reductive approach in the Buddhist-psychology interface, I interpret West Coast Vipassana as providing a more legitimate and dialogical or "skillful means" approach to Buddhist practice in a contemporary Western climate.

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REFBACKS

There are currently no refbacks.
Understanding the key differences between counselling and psychotherapy can make all the difference to the impact therapeutic treatment has on a client. Although there are a number of similarities between the two forms of communication, they both work on different guidelines. A psychotherapist however, will focus on a deeper awareness of emotional issues, and looks at the foundation of the problem. How to Get Your Expectations Met. Entering into any form of counselling requires a firm commitment on the part of the individual in distress, and open communication. In order to get the most out of the therapy it is best to ensure the correct form of counselling is considered. This starts by choosing to visit the type of therapist who is best skilled in the area you most need to focus on. Vipassanā (Pāli) or vipaśyanā (Sanskrit) literally, "without-seeing", "without (Vi), seeing (Passanā)", is a Buddhist term that is often translated as "insight". The Pali Canon describes it as one of two qualities of mind which is developed (bhāvanā) in Buddhist meditation, the other being samatha (mind calming). It is often defined as a form of meditation that seeks "insight into the true nature of reality", defined as anicca "impermanence", dukkha "suffering, unsatisfactoriness", anattā "non-self Wedding the personal and impersonal in west coast Vipassana: A dialogical encounter between Buddhism and psychotherapy. Journal of Global Buddhism, 13, 129–146. Google Scholar. Mindfulness: A dialogue between Buddhism and clinical psychology. Mindfulness, 1(3), 161–173. doi:10.1007/s12671-010-0018-1. Article Google Scholar.