Is mindfulness conceptualized differently in Western mindfulness–based interventions than in Buddhism?

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〈Abstract〉

Psychology is a secular discipline, but because of its application to all domains of life, it inevitably makes contact with religious and spiritual practices. These practices have often been described in manners that avoid any direct engagement with the philosophical assumptions that underlie religious traditions. Recent systematic inclusions of mindfulness exercises in psychological practice, however, force the field into more direct discussions of religious philosophies, particularly those of Buddhism. While certain aspects of mindfulness have been successfully incorporated into psychological therapies, some Buddhist scholars have argued that the Western secular conceptualization of mindfulness is too restricted, as it does not acknowledge the roles of the other elements of Buddhist practice,

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particularly those pertaining to morality and wisdom. The present article reviews the arguments recently forwarded by Buddhist scholars that definitions and applications of mindfulness in Western mindfulness-based practices deviate from those of Buddhism. The article concludes that such discrepancies are not too dissimilar from differences in the conceptualization of mindfulness within Buddhism itself, and Western conceptualizations of mindfulness appear to be most closely related to those of later emerging Buddhist traditions.

**Keywords**: definition of mindfulness, mindfulness-based interventions, psychology, Buddhism

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2. Do psychology and Buddhism use different conceptualizations of mindfulness?
3. How does the Western secular conceptualization of mindfulness compare with that of different Buddhist schools of thought?
4. Conclusion and suggestions for future directions

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