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Abstract

Introduction

According to the Dalai Lama, we all share a common wish to find happiness. However, happiness is not found in the accumulation possessions such as the latest hi-tech gadget or Prada handbag. Rather, true transformation comes from within. Fueled by our *determination*, the essence of transformation lies in our ability to see with a clearer vision (i.e., *wisdom*) and to live with an open heart (i.e., *compassion*). These “Three Principles of the Path” were taught by the great Tibetan scholar/yogi Tsong Khapa. Employing various practices including meditation, we purify and transform our afflictive emotions while increasing merit (e.g., generosity, gratitude). Then, acting “as if”, we begin to shift our perspective to embody our authentic divine nature. In this presentation, we examine QEEG differences in wisdom versus compassion meditation.

Method

We compare EEG activity in a Tibetan Buddhist monk during two forms of meditation: analytical meditation on wisdom and generating feelings of compassion. A Lexicor Neurosearch24 was used for recording and NeuroGuide, LORETA-Key, EureKa3!, and MHyT3! software for analysis.

Results

Wisdom meditation involved increased activity in the superior, middle and inferior temporal areas, bilaterally. Compassion meditation involved increased activity in right orbital frontal, insula and medial frontal regions. Consistent with recent reports by Davidson's group (Lutz, etal 2005), compassion meditation also evidenced increased left hemisphere beta coherence.

Conclusion

Different meditative practices produce unique mind states and patterns of brain functioning. Wisdom meditation activated areas consistent with insight into verbal problems, conceptual perspective taking, mental imagery in deductive reasoning among others. Compassion meditation activated areas associated with sense of self, flexibility, empathy among others. Implications for neurofeedback training are considered.

References:

Lutz, A., Greischar, L., etal (2005). Long-term meditators self-induce high amplitude gamma synchrony during mental practice. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 101 (46), 16369-73.