The foundations of Chinese psychotherapies: Towards self-enlightenment

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Abstract

Traditionally, Western therapies have attempted to understand the psychological functioning of the self from an individualistic perspective, emphasizing the need to satisfy, maintain and strengthen the self. In the East, for more than 2,500 years Buddhists have adopted a distinctive approach to the concept of the self. The ultimate aim of Buddhism is to overcome the pain and emotional disturbances caused by life's difficulties, challenges, and stressors. Buddhism provides an alternative perspective on the self and ways to manage one's daily life. In fact, Buddha is considered as one of the greatest therapists. Buddhism is thought to be practiced in all cultures. The Buddha's teachings are aimed at attaining an authentic, durable happiness by cultivating a transition from the self state to the nonself state. The process is named self-enlightenment. Buddhism holds that personal identity is delusional, that each of us is a self that turns out to not actually exist. Clinging to or being obsessed with the delusional self is the major cause of suffering. This process leads to nirvana or the state of nonself, a state of total liberation. The purpose of this presentation is to present a new therapy, named the Self-Enlightenment Therapy (SET), based on a full consideration of Buddhist teachings. The SET is based on the solid theoretical and practical backgrounds, including introduction and overview, theory and key concepts, therapeutic process and techniques: the path to self- self-enlightenmentm three ways to increase self-enlightenment, application and advanced self-enlightenment.

Image

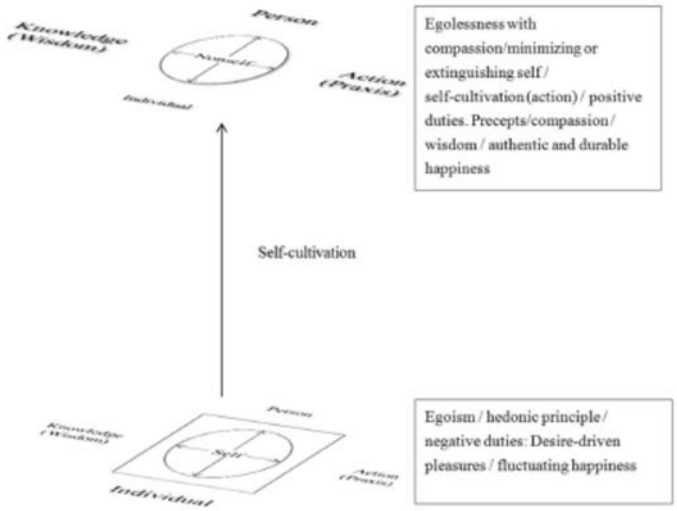


Figure 1 The model (The Nonself Theory) for self-enlightenment process

Recent Publications

1. Shiah, Y.-J. (2016). From self to nonself: The Nonself Theory. Frontiers in Psychology, 7, 12. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2016.00124

2.Shiah, Y.-J. Chang, F., Chiang, S. -K., Lin I.-M., & Tam, W.-C. C. (2015). Religion and health: Anxiety, religiosity, meaning of life and mental health. Journal of Religion and Health, 54(1), 35-45.

3. Shiah, Y.-J. Chang, F., Chiang, S.-K., & Tam, W.-C. C. (2016). Religion and subjective well-being: Western and Eastern religious groups achieved subjective well-being in different ways. Journal of Religion and Health, 55(4), 1263-1269. doi: 10.1007/s10943-014-9905-4

4.Shiah, Y.-J. Chang, F., Tam, W.-C. C., Chuang. S.-F. & Yeh, L.-C. (2013). I don't believe but I pray: Spirituality, instrumentality, or paranormal belief? Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 43(8), 1704-1716.

5. Lee, Y.-H., Shiah, Y.-J., Chen, S. C.-J., Wang, S.-F., Young, M.-S., Hsu, C.-H., Cheng, Q.-J. & Lin, C.-L. (2015). Improved emotional stability in experienced meditators with concentrative meditation based on electroencephalography and heart rate variability. Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine, 21(1), 31-39. doi:10.1089/acm.2013.0465

Biograpgy

Yung Jong Shiah has devoted much of his professional career in linking Buddhism to psychology. He has published about 50 articles on related issues in both Chinese and English. The Self-Enlightenment Therapy (SET) is based on the Nonself Theory (Shiah, 2016). The SET is hoping to opening up the discipline of clinical and counseling psychology between Buddhism.