

Specific Buddhist Practices Within Traditions That Create Effects Similar to Psilocybin

Building on the prior analysis of practices reducing social interaction needs, I searched for Buddhist practices that induce effects akin to psilocybin (e.g., ego dissolution, mystical experiences, altered perception, unity/oneness, insightfulness, DMN disruption).

Psilocybin often leads to self-transcendence, hallucinations, and neuroplasticity via serotonin 2A agonism and reduced default mode network (DMN) activity. Meditation shows overlaps in phenomenology and neuroscience, such as decreased DMN connectivity, increased entropy in brain states, and enhanced well-being. Below are specific practices from traditions with evidence from studies or accounts. I prioritized those directly compared to psilocybin, using neurological data where available and subjective experiences (e.g., from X posts) otherwise.

Each entry includes the practice, tradition, evidence type, description of similarities to psilocybin (e.g., addressing ego dissolution or perceptual changes), and sources.

1. Open Monitoring (OM) Meditation - Theravada/Vipassana Tradition

- **Description:** OM involves non-judgmental awareness of present-moment contents without fixation, leading to ego dissolution and unity feelings, mirroring psilocybin's blurring of self-boundaries and heightened insight. Practitioners report "oneness with the universe" or altered time/perception, reducing self-referential thought like psilocybin's DMN effects.
- **Evidence:** Neurological – fMRI studies show OM decreases DMN activity and increases brain entropy, similar to psilocybin's disruption of rigid networks, fostering malleable cognition and mystical states. [frontiersin.org](https://www.frontiersin.org) Subjective: Accounts describe deep stillness where external world fades, akin to psychedelic self-loss (e.g., "everything physical rippled like water with neon-like streaks"). [@thematrixwizard](https://x.com/thematrixwizard)
- **Link to Sources:** Review on psychedelics and meditation:
<https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/psychology/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.01475/full>. [frontiersin.org](https://www.frontiersin.org) X post on samadhi visuals:
[@thematrixwizard](https://x.com/thematrixwizard/status/1920846146399784986)

2. Focused Attention (FA) Meditation - Theravada Tradition

- **Description:** FA sustains focus on an object (e.g., breath), progressing to jhāna states of absorption, inducing bliss, equanimity, and perceptual alterations like psilocybin's hallucinations or ego-dissolution. It addresses similar therapeutic effects, like reduced rumination and enhanced neuroplasticity.
- **Evidence:** Quantitative neurological – Psilocybin and FA both modulate DMN and increase between-network connectivity; a study found psilocybin enhances FA depth in retreats, correlating with positive derealization and insight. [nature.com](https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-024-55726-x)
[ftp.centerhealthyminds.org](https://ftp.centerhealthyminds.org/assets/files-publications/Linkages-between-Psychedelics-and-Meditation-in-a-Population-Based-Sample-in-the-United-States_2022-01-20-183339_qaps.pdf) Subjective: Meditators report time loss, visions, and emptiness post-FA, echoing psilocybin trips (e.g., 1.5 hours felt like minutes with "blur images" and tears of unity). [@MumbaichaDon](https://x.com/MumbaichaDon)
- **Link to Sources:** Study on psilocybin-insight in meditation:
<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-024-55726-x>. [nature.com](https://www.nature.com) Population linkages:
https://ftp.centerhealthyminds.org/assets/files-publications/Linkages-between-Psychedelics-and-Meditation-in-a-Population-Based-Sample-in-the-United-States_2022-01-20-183339_qaps.pdf. ftp.centerhealthyminds.org X post on time-dilation:
[@MumbaichaDon](https://x.com/MumbaichaDon/status/1765970332127785081)

3. Zazen (Shikantaza) - Mahayana/Zen Tradition

- **Description:** "Just sitting" cultivates non-dual awareness and peripheral vision, leading to kensho (sudden insight) with psychedelic-like breakthroughs, including visuals, bliss, and illusory reality perception, similar to psilocybin's ego-dissolution and oneness.
- **Evidence:** Neurological – Zen reduces DMN anticorrelation, akin to psilocybin's increased entropy; combined psilocybin-Zen retreats show enhanced self-transcendence without anxiety. [pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov](https://PMC.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10661803/) journals.plos.org Subjective: Users describe sober "psychedelic" states with "fabric of reality" visions and audience-like awareness, mirroring psilocybin trips. [@rcpaskus](#) [@moorehn](#)
- **Link to Sources:** Synergies review:
<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10661803/>. pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov PLOS One on benefits: <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0310160>.
[journals.plos.org](#) X posts on kensho:
<https://x.com/17thbodhisattva/status/1954592279420981704>;
<https://x.com/moorehn/status/1897296516923961353>. [@rcpaskus](#) [@moorehn](#)

4. Dzogchen Non-Dual Awareness - Vajrayana/Tibetan Tradition

- **Description:** Emphasizes spacious, non-fixated awareness revealing non-dual nature, inducing unity, synchronicity, and karmic "echoes," comparable to psilocybin's mystical unity and altered self-consciousness.
- **Evidence:** Neurological – Dzogchen lowers posterior neural activity, similar to psilocybin's DMN changes; studies link it to ego-dissolution without prosocial boosts. [frontiersin.org](#) [akjournals.com](#) Subjective: Accounts of predestined moments or "karmic hallucinations" feel like psilocybin insights (e.g., synchronistic reminders of illusion). [@dakotawint](#)

- **Link to Sources:** Self-consciousness review:

<https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/psychology/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.01475/full>. [frontiersin.org](#) Tibetan framework:
<https://akjournals.com/view/journals/2054/7/1/article-p58.xml>. [akjournals.com](#) X post on synchronicity: <https://x.com/dakotawint/status/1904352124676501906>. [@dakotawint](#)

5. Anatta (Non-Self) Insight Meditation - Theravada Tradition

- **Description:** Contemplates impermanence and non-self, dissolving ego and leading to purity awareness, akin to psilocybin's disintegration of self and reduced suffering/dukkha.
- **Evidence:** Subjective/anecdotal – Elimination of "me/mine" ends loneliness-like dukkha, with visions and peace; parallels psilocybin's ego-loss. [@BuddhaBeings](#)
@AlpacaAurelius Neurological tie-in: Reduced DMN linked to less self-rumination, as in psilocybin studies. [pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov](#)
- **Link to Sources:** X posts on awareness silence:
<https://x.com/BuddhaBeings/status/1897292847902286300>;
[@BuddhaBeings](https://x.com/AlpacaAurelius/status/1748410827453898933)
@AlpacaAurelius Synergies: <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10661803/>.
pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov

Ranking the Strength of Evidence

Ranked by rigor: High (randomized neuro studies), Medium (observational neuro/subjective with ties), Low (anecdotal only). Steps: (1) Categorize per item; (2) Score (High=3, Medium=2, Low=1); (3) Average mixed; (4) Interpret: Higher ranks for practices with direct psilocybin-comparison data.

Practice/Tradition	Strength	Rank	Explanation	Open
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Open Monitoring (Theravada/Vipassana)	Medium-High (2.5)	fMRI entropy/DMN data directly compares to psilocybin; strong subjective visuals.
Focused Attention (Theravada)	Medium (2)	Retreat studies with psilocybin enhancement; neuro correlates, time-dilation accounts.
Zazen (Mahayana/Zen)	Medium (2)	DMN/entropy overlaps; retreat evidence, breakthrough anecdotes.
Dzogchen Non-Dual Awareness (Vajrayana/Tibetan)	Medium (2)	Neural activity reductions; mystical synchronicity parallels psilocybin.
Anatta Insight Meditation (Theravada)	Low-Medium (1.5)	Subjective ego-loss strong; inferred DMN links, no direct psilocybin studies.