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Polluting Dreams in Han-period and Early Medieval China

By

Robert F. Company

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January 28, 2022, Fri | 2 to 4 P.M. (AZ Time)

Lattie F. Coor Hall Room 174 & Zoom

More info &
registration:



Polluting Dreams in Han-period and Early Medieval China

by Robert Campany, Professor of Asian Studies and Chair of Gertrude Conway,
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Many Chinese texts written between 250 BCE and 800 CE preserve passages prescribing methods for preventing a particular sort of dream from occurring or for addressing its effects after it occurred. This sort of dream was most commonly termed *meng* 惡夢. Modern scholars have usually translated this term as “nightmare” without further explanation. In this lecture, professor Campany will discuss how these dreams were not so much mere psychological experience but in fact involved actual physical contact with exogenous beings that impacted the dreamer and his or her immediate social circles. Professor Campany will also present the strongly exorcistic and apotropaic measures that cleanse the dreamer of the state of ritual impurity brought about by such dreams. His argument will be based on both manuscripts and transmitted texts that once circulated in Daoist, Buddhist and common-religion contexts of practice.

Professor Robert Campany is the Gertrude Conway Vanderbilt Chair in the Humanities and professor of Asian Studies of Vanderbilt University. His main research area is in Chinese religious history from early medieval China (ca. 300 B.C.E. to 600 C.E.), as well as the comparative, cross-cultural study of religion. This lecture is based on the second installment of his 2020-21 Guggenheim award-winning work, *Dreaming and Self-cultivation in China, 300 BCE – 800 BCE*.