

Meditation Sickness and the Ethics of Buddhist Studies

Lingyin Lecture Series

Monday, 22
November 2021

5-7 PM (UK time)
Online via Zoom

Oriental Institute,
Oxford.

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Why does a certain percentage of people experience psychotic breaks or other adverse mental and physical side-effects from practicing meditation? Are these the symptoms of improper practice or an unavoidable part of spiritual cultivation? In either case, the phenomenon that centuries-old Buddhist texts called "meditation sickness" is now amply documented in contemporary scientific literature. Writings from medieval China not only identify the mental and physical symptoms that can arise in the course of meditation practice, but also explain why these pathologies arise and how they can be effectively treated. Might these materials contain important therapeutic information that is relevant for meditators today? The possibility is tantalizing, but we Buddhist studies scholars find ourselves in a predicament. We are the only people who can translate these premodern texts for contemporary audiences and interpret them in light of modern medical theories. But will our professional norms and disciplinary identities let us help?



Advance registration required: <https://bit.ly/3CwuFMz>

Registration:



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