THE PROMISES AND PROBLEMS OF MINDFULNESS:
BETWEEN MENTAL STILLNESS AND MENTAL ILLNESS

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This talk will critically assess modern appropriations and applications of Buddhist meditation and mindfulness practices in therapeutic contexts. In order to understand both the promises and potential problems of the use of meditation and mindfulness within various healing techniques it is important to track how those practices developed within the Buddhist tradition and how they have been transformed down to the present day. Current writing on meditation and mindfulness generally celebrates those practices as a panacea for a wide range of physical and mental ailments, but the final section of this talk will discuss some emerging research that suggests there can also be some deleterious effects associated with the contemporary experimentation with those practices.

JAMES ROBSON is a leading scholar of Daoism and Buddhism in China, as well as an expert on Zen. He is currently researching the history of the relationship between Buddhist monasteries and mental hospitals in Japan.

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Questions?
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