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UCSB Scholar to Discuss Personal and Social Balance in Chinese Taoism

Traditional Chinese religious and medical texts, spanning a period of some 2,500 years, reveal a common set of understandings about what the body was, and which of its uses demanded ethical scrutiny and cultivation. Over time, differing interpretations and conclusions arose out of this matrix of understandings.

Scholar William Powell will explore the topic in a talk titled "The Quest for Personal and Social Balance in Chinese Taoism," part of the UCSB Affiliates Spirituality and Culture series. It will be presented on Monday, April 28, at 7:30 p.m. in the First Presbyterian Church Fellowship Hall, 21 E. Constance St. Admission is \$8 for UCSB Affiliates or Chancellor's Council members and \$10 for all others. Advance registration is recommended by calling the UCSB Office of Community Relations at 893-4388.

Powell, professor and chair of the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultural Studies and associate professor of religious studies at UC Santa Barbara, will discuss a set of body practices and understandings associated with Taoists of the Complete Perfection School. This movement emerged around the 10th century and continues to thrive in China today, both on remote mountains and in urban centers. Their understandings of the body have led not only to specific dietary and meditative practices but to their own forms of martial arts as well.

Powell earned his doctorate in Buddhist studies at UC Berkeley in 1981. He was trained in the philological methods of Buddhist studies, which was the basis for his translation and study of the prominent 9th century Chan (Zen) monk, Tung Shan. His current work focuses on the relationship between Chinese religion, pilgrimage, and sacred space, particularly mountains. This work emphasizes modes of spatial perceptions rooted in religious understandings, and the role of those modes of perception on economic, social, and ecological systems.

For more information, visit <http://www.ia.ucsb.edu/comrel/events.shtml>

About UC Santa Barbara

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