UC SANTA BARBARA

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# The Mummified Monk

When a private collector brought a Buddha statue to the Drents Museum in the Netherlands for restoration, something amazing was discovered. A special CT scan taken at the Meander Medical Center revealed a nearly 1,000-year-old mummy sitting in the lotus position inside the statue.

The mummified body is that of Buddhist master Liuquan, who belongs to the Chinese Meditation School. According to Fabio Rambelli, chair of UC Santa Barbara's Department of East Asian Languages and Cultural Studies and also a professor of religious studies, the statue dates back to the 12th or 11th century.

"Most Buddhist statues all over Asia and in China and Japan in particular are envisioned to be animated entities," Rambelli said. "They are not just symbols of teachings, they are not just aids or supports for meditation; they are real presences of the sacred. The Buddha is in the statue."

According to Rambelli the last 20 years have seen a growing body of scholarship on the animated nature of statues. "And I hope it will be the first step of a more systematic study of Buddhist statues not only in Asia but also in Western museums to see what's inside of them," he said.

For access to the "The Mummified Monk" video, featuring Fabio Rambelli discussing the 1,000-year-old mummy found inside a Buddhist statue, please contact us.

## About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.