

I first encountered Jinhua' s work when I was asked to be an outside reader for his doctoral dissertation from McMaster University. This focused on the supposed Esoteric Buddhist traditions that Saichō (767-822), the founder of the Tendai School, brought back from China, but were probably introduced later by Annen (b. 841), a later Tendai Esoteric monk. Although Jinhua' s argumentation in that early work struck me as being overly circuitous, his conclusions struck me as being eminently reasonable and as changing the narrative of Esoteric Buddhism in Japan. When I had a grant shortly afterwards, I asked the chair of Religious Studies to invite Jinhua to be my replacement. Eventually, we had many chances to meet as I was invited to conferences at McMaster, Jinhua' s alma mater, and then later Jinhua invited me to conferences at the University of British Columbia and in China. I think we also met several times in Japan.

During the decades after he received his doctorate, I closely followed Jinhua' s work and was increasingly impressed by both the quality and quantity of his essays. His arguments became increasingly subtle and comprehensive. I was asked to write recommendations for his applications for grants. This was one of the easiest and most enjoyable tasks I had because Jinhua was so well qualified and actually completed most of the projects that were funded. My reviews of Jinhua' s work concluded with serving on a review board for the his project "From the Ground Up: Buddhism and East Asian Religions," a vast project around which many scholars have assembled, so that Jinhua has become one of the most important foci of East Asian Buddhist Studies. Jinhua' s role in this vast project revealed another aspect of his abilities: organizing scholars for conferences and for publications. On top of that he has become a key figure introducing Asian and Western scholars to each other and enlisting them in joint projects.

On a more personal note, I have come to know Jinhua' s family over the years. He is clearly a wonderful father and husband. Those same qualities of caring for his family are also present when he takes care of his students, colleagues and visiting scholars. He is exemplary in so many ways and clearly deserves all of the awards he has received.

Paul Groner