

Dear Jinhua,

Many years ago, in the early 1970s when I was a graduate student, and the fate of Buddhism in China was completely obscure, I was lucky enough to meet Professor Jan Yün-hua in Japan, a few years into his career at McMaster. In 1981 I met him again in England, after the end of the Cultural Revolution, and I remember how seriously he stressed the need to support young Chinese scholars of Buddhism at that time, for the sake of the future of China. I was rather sceptical about the importance of this at the time, because I doubted how much scholars could achieve, but gradually I came to see the wisdom of his words.

And as you know from my review, my reaction on reading your first published monograph of 1999 on the making and remaking of Tiantai history, was clear. I immediately sensed that a new generation of scholars from China had indeed reached an unprecedented stage in the study of Chinese Buddhist history, both reviving the meticulous approach of the great names of earlier times, and adapting also to developments of the late twentieth century. I am glad that you have been but the first of a number of younger Chinese colleagues to transform research in the field. But I am particularly glad that you have devoted yourself to securing together with others the advancement of the field also through large scale international collaboration. What the future holds for Chinese Buddhism we cannot tell. But the changes to the place it now holds globally in academic study, in which you have played a key part, are to my mind irreversible. Congratulations, Jinhua, it is wonderful to see your work now receive the recognition that it deserves.

Tim Barrett