JENNIFER EICHMAN:
A Late Sixteenth-Century Chinese Buddhist Fellowship: Spiritual Ambitions, Intellectual Debates, and Epistolary Connections.
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Chinese culture during the lifetime of Shakespeare seems in the light of modern research to have been just as lively as it was in Elizabethan England. But China drew on a much richer and more continuous tradition of cultural production that added a particularly rich texture to everything that the time and place has bequeathed to us today, most obviously thanks to the literary language of the age, which was not like Elizabethan English a medium still to some extent finding its way but a deep and complex resource, albeit one retaining a capacity for novelty. Anyone attempting to enter this cultural world deeply enough to present its riches fairly to an Anglophone readership cannot afford to rush to publication, and therefore must be reconciled to a rate of academic production that in other fields might justifiably be construed as due to idleness, despite all the very real penalties that ignorant systems of research assessment are wont to impose in such circumstances. Jennifer Eichman's work is clearly the outcome of years of study, even though her title makes it plain that she has explored only one small corner of the literary life of the period. But it is an important corner, revealing not the surface splendour of the late Ming but rather the inner concerns of some of its most reflective thinkers, who drew on intellectual traditions stretching back centuries. Yet even so they are given here a full measure of careful evaluation. The result of all the effort expended is, in short, a book that is satisfying as well as original.

The well considered tone of the writing in this study is evident right from the start, with an introduction that carefully lays out the main methodological issues, covering not only the religious interplay involved between self-professed Buddhists and Confucians but also the notion of a fellowship, a term rendered more concrete in the first chapter through a review of the nature of the epistolary evidence used to reconstitute the interactions studied. This chapter also explores the subtleties of religious identity during the period covered, an essential preparation for chapter 2, which describes the particularly complex nuances of "mind cultivation", the chief preoccupation of the members of the network. At the centre of the group is the eminent monk Zhuhong 株宏, but also important here is the radical Confucian Zhou Rudeng 周汝登, a figure hitherto only known to an Anglophone readership through the portion of his discourse with a fellow Confucian translated in Carsun Chang, *The Development of Neo-Confucian Thought*, Volume Two (New York: Bookman Associates, 1962), 129–41. In fact despite much that Zhuhong and Zhou had to say to each other concerning the mind, it is the next chapter, on vegetarianism, that points up their most significant area of disagreement. But their conflict, rather than prompted by any retreat into the established practices of either tradition, stemmed from Zhou's discomfort over any outward observances whatsoever, as against maintaining the prime importance of inner states. This chapter is then followed by one dedicated to the collective outer Buddhist practice of redeeming and releasing animals destined for slaughter, after which a further chapter turns to another highly visible practice, namely Pure Land recitation, something that involved not only the scholars who produced the letters but also their families and employees as well.

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These discussions of the outward realm allow the narrative in the final two chapters to turn back to mind cultivation outcomes, especially contrasting Chan and Pure Land as paths to progress, and thus to the question of how to evaluate those outcomes. The short section on conclusions that rounds everything off carries the title "From vision to realisation: grappling with the self, grappling with tradition", though in the very last place a fascinating appendix demonstrates the nature of the tradition by listing not only all members of the fellowship mentioned in the correspondence, but also all earlier figures whose names occur, whatever their religious affiliation. The author is as well aware of course as the figures she studies that epistolary discussions of religious questions had taken place in earlier times too, specifically mentioning the correspondence of the Song Chan master Dahui Zonggao 大慧宗杲 (pp. 42, 361). But the index to the Japanese edition of this correspondence translated by Araki Kengo 荒木見悟, *Daiei sho* 大慧書 (Tokyo: Chikuma shobō, 1969) – unfortunately, though Araki is cited in several places, this study and all his writings have escaped the bibliography – shows that Zhuhong's Song dynasty predecessor kept very much to Chan themes, repeatedly referring to the late Tang figure Zhaozhou Congshen 趙州從諗 and to the classic question of whether or not a dog possesses the Buddha nature, whereas Zhuhong himself seems only to mention Zhaozhou once, in passing (p. 317). If anything, it would appear that Zhuhong steered the Buddhist epistolary tradition in new directions, for a glance at the letters of a twentieth-century master such as Yinguang 印光 shows that he was happy to extol Pure Land practice ahead of Chan, preaching the word in season and out of season, and occasionally referring back to Zhuhong himself.

Yet the most thought-provoking aspect of this study remains the boundaries between traditions within the Ming environment itself. Buddhists and Confucians were plainly communicating with each other without any inhibitions at this point, for Buddhists had always found a place for secular wisdom, while the Confucians involved do not seem to have been sticklers in their intellectual reservations about Buddhists over such matters as the treatment of the emotions – a matter exhaustively studied for secular sources of the period by Paolo Santangelo but apparently not as such central to the writings of the fellowship. Daoist Inner Alchemy we glimpse only at the margins of the fellowship's concerns, and Daoist public ritual not at all. Three teachings there may have been in the late Ming, but this stimulating research directs us away from simplistic summary into much more intriguing areas. I hope it proves a model for others, even if well-wrought monographs in this challenging area will probably continue to remain less than plentiful.

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ROBERT FORD CAMPANY:
A Garden of Marvels: Tales of Wonder from Early Medieval China.
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From the third century BCE, Chinese literati compiled diverse works on the strange, recording ordinary persons' otherworldly encounters, near death experiences,

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