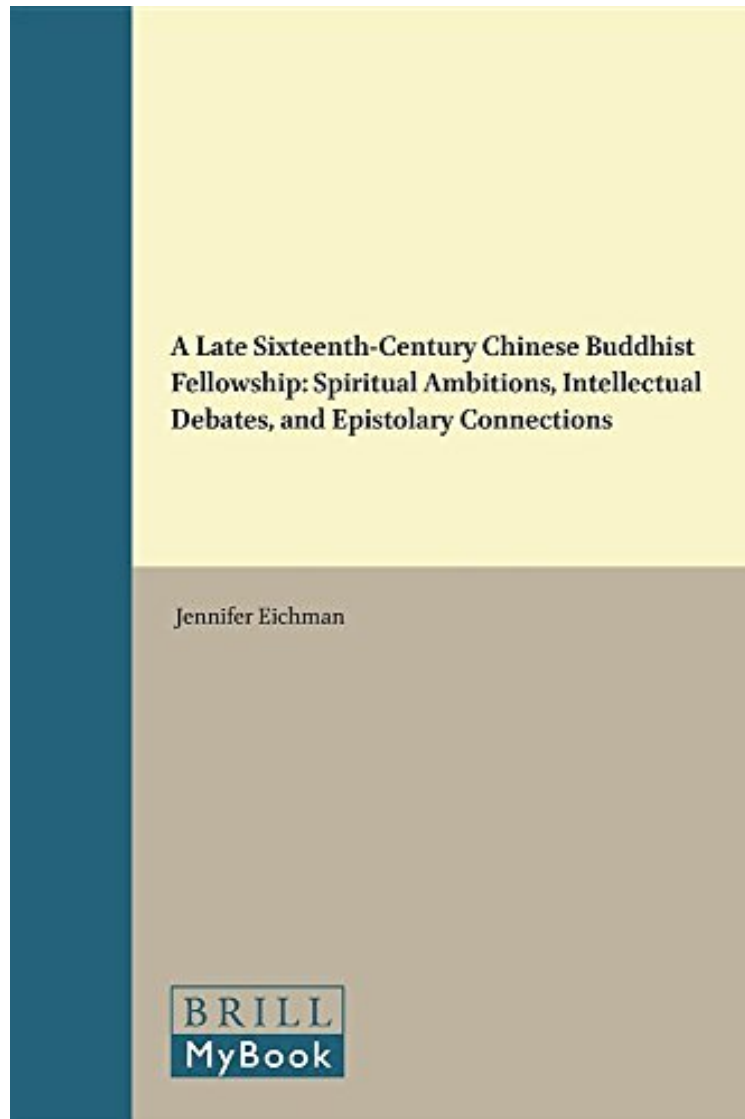


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A Late Sixteenth-Century Chinese Buddhist Fellowship: Spiritual Ambitions, Intellectual Debates, and Epistolary Connections (Sinica Leidensia)

Jennifer Eichman

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Jennifer Eichman : A Late Sixteenth-Century Chinese Buddhist Fellowship: Spiritual Ambitions, Intellectual Debates, and Epistolary Connections (Sinica Leidensia) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Late Sixteenth-Century Chinese Buddhist Fellowship: Spiritual Ambitions,

Intellectual Debates, and Epistolary Connections (Sinica Leidensia):

Through a detailed analysis of epistolary writing, *A Late Sixteenth-Century Chinese Buddhist Fellowship: Spiritual Ambitions, Intellectual Debates, and Epistolary Connections* brings to life the Buddhist discourse of a network of lay disciples who debated the value of Chan versus Pure Land, sudden versus gradual enlightenment, adherence to Buddhist precepts, and animal welfare. By highlighting the differences between their mentor, the monk Zhuhong (1535-1615), and his nemesis, the Yangming Confucian Zhou Rudeng (1547-1629), this work confronts long-held scholarly views of Confucian dominance to conclude that many classically educated, elite men found Buddhist practices a far more attractive option. Their intellectual debates, self-cultivation practices, and interpersonal relations helped shape the contours of late sixteenth-century Buddhist culture.

'Jennifer Eichman's rich and insightful book sheds significant new light on the ethical and religious aspirations, self-understandings, and practices of elite men in late-Ming China. This is a vital book for understanding the interactions between Buddhism and Confucianism, and indeed, what Buddhism and Confucianism meant in practice. (...) Perhaps the most impressive aspect of this book is the fluidity with which sociological theory, historical and cultural investigation, literary analysis, and doctrinal and more anthropological studies of religion all blend together seamlessly.' Stephen C. Angle, Wesleyan University 'Eichman purposely limits her study to the relatively narrow Wanli period (1573-1620), giving the work a depth that would otherwise not be possible. This allows her to examine the development, over about half a century, of a religious network strung together by personal relationships.(...) This level of detail assists us--both author and reader--to avoid one of the pitfalls of the study of Pure Land Buddhism, which is the presumption of the normative status of later Japanese developments, such as exclusive adherence.(...) Eichman's study makes important contributions for several different interested audiences, more than can be discussed adequately in this brief review. Two of these are historians of Chinese religions, and scholars of religious studies.(...) Given the important contributions made by this work, it will continue to provide resources for later studies, as well as standing as an exemplary instance of how such studies should be conducted. Richard K. Payne, *Reading Religion* (<http://readingreligion.org/books/late-sixteenth-century-chinese-buddhist-fellowship>) About the Author Jennifer Eichman, Ph.D. (2005), Princeton University, is a Research Associate at the Centre of Buddhist Studies, SOAS, University of London. She has published on late Ming Chinese Buddhist traditions and the intersection of Confucian and Buddhist ideas.