

PROMOTION RECOMMENDATION  
The University of Michigan  
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

Benjamin H. Brose, assistant professor of Asian languages and cultures, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of Chinese Buddhism, with tenure, Department of Asian Languages and Cultures, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	2009	Stanford University
M.A.	2003	Stanford University
M.A.	2002	University of California, Berkeley
B.A.	1996	University of California, Santa Cruz

Professional Record:

2013 – 2014	Visiting Scholar, Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica, Taiwan
2009 – present	Assistant Professor, Department of Asian Languages and Cultures, University of Michigan

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching – Professor Brose is a knowledgeable, imaginative, and conscientious teacher with a deep commitment to serving students’ needs, seeking both to broaden their intellectual horizons and to develop their skills in critical thinking, reading, and writing. He makes important contributions to the department’s curriculum by developing interesting new course offerings, such as “Buddhism and Death” and “Religions of China.” His syllabi show an ongoing commitment to using engaging materials and methods, including field trips, films, and guest lectures, with an emphasis on having students work with primary sources wherever appropriate. As a result student evaluations are consistently excellent.

Research – Professor Brose’s book, Patrons and Patriarchs, supplies a meticulous historical context for developments in Buddhist history. The monograph is noteworthy for its methodological innovation as the first work in the field of Buddhist studies to analyze the social networks of monks in a rigorous manner. External reviewers noted Professor Brose’s mastery of difficult sources as well as his superb knowledge of classical Chinese and firm command of textual issues. Reviewers stated that Patrons and Patriarchs represents the authoritative work on the subject and predicted it would secure a position of leadership in the field for Professor Brose and would stand as a model of scholarship for years to come. His second project demonstrates a willingness to move his research beyond China’s medieval period into the modern era, requiring mastery of a new archive and methodological flexibility. Professor Brose is a rare scholar in the field of Buddhist studies, where few publish research on the history of premodern and modern Chinese Buddhism. With his knowledge of China, Japan, and Korea, as well as his mastery of religious studies and historical methods, Professor Brose is a key member of a faculty who are committed to scholarship that crosses regional and disciplinary boundaries.

Recent and Significant Publications:

Patrons and Patriarchs: Regional Rulers and Chan Monks during the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms, University of Hawai'i Press, 2015.

“Disorienting medicine: Fayan Wenyi’s ten admonishments for the lineage,” *Journal of Chinese Buddhist Studies*, 28, 2015, pp. 153–188.

“Credulous kings and immoral monks: Song literati critiques of Buddhism during the five dynasties and ten kingdoms,” *Asia Major*, 27, 2014, pp. 73–98.

“Crossing ten-thousand *Li* of waves: The return of China’s lost tiantai texts,” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, 29(1), 2006/2008, pp. 21–62.

Service – Professor Brose served a three-year term on the department’s Graduate Program Committee, was elected to its Executive Committee for two years, and is currently serving a two-year term on its Curriculum Committee, which includes undergraduate advising. He participated in the Knight-Wallace Program, acting as the faculty host for a *New York Times* reporter in 2014. He also served on the steering committee of the Chinese Religions Section of the American Academy of Religion and on the board of the Brill Studies on East Asian Religion series.

External Reviewers:

Reviewer (A)

“I consider Dr. Brose to be a leading scholar in the field of Buddhist Studies, and I regularly recommend his work to graduate students working in the field of Chinese Buddhism. His work combines painstaking research in pre-modern primary sources with the sophisticated overview of a scholar who grasps the key issues in the contemporary Humanities. He exemplifies the qualities that one would associate with tenured faculty at the University of Michigan.”

Reviewer (B)

“...to a significant extent... [Patrons and Patriarchs] is pioneering work that will reshape our understanding of Chan (and Buddhist life in general) during this period, and it will further highlight the pivotal role of patronage by rulers in the creation of enduring Chinese Buddhist institutions.”

Reviewer (C)

“I think of Professor Brose as belonging to a small group of scholars of East Asian Buddhism who combine impeccable philological skills with a solid grasp of social history and contemporary theory. Professor Brose’s work draws on a wide range of sources in both classical and modern Chinese and Japanese, but he has managed to move far beyond philology to undertake a thoroughgoing engagement with social history in his scholarship. This gives his work a breadth that remains rare in the Buddhist Studies field.”

Reviewer (D)

“Although a devoted researcher, he has never separated his research from his responsibilities as an educator and mentor. I highly appreciate his teaching philosophy, according to which research and student training are complementary endeavors. He is a keen promoter of the belief that learning is not a unidirectional transmission of knowledge, in which students are trained as passive recipients of instruction; but rather, he has treated his students more like colleagues with whom he collaborates to broaden and deepen their intellectual foundations.”

Reviewer (E)

“I am particularly impressed by Ben’s readiness to move from his scholarly comfort area, leaping from the tenth to the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, and from mainland China to Taiwan and Japan. ...there are very few scholars in the field today who are able to take that kind of long historical and broad geographical view.”

Reviewer (F)

“It is clear from Brose’s publications that he is extremely well trained in the field. His writing evinces thorough background knowledge and shows that he has a solid grasp of the fundamental research tools. The latter include a command of classical Chinese, the ability to read modern Chinese and Japanese secondary scholarship, and awareness of the full range of documentary and archeological evidence on which historical research is necessarily based.”

Reviewer (G)


“Professor Brose’s plans for his second and third monographs mark a significant departure from the subject matter of his first book, indicating an admirable intellectual breadth and a methodological flexibility on the part of this rising scholar.”

Reviewer (H)

“In its focus on the socio-political rather than purely doctrinal, Professor Brose’s contribution our understanding of the formative period of Chan Buddhism is extremely important, and indeed path breaking. ... I would venture to state that his standing in the field is already extraordinarily solid, and that he stands almost shoulder to shoulder to some of the best tenured scholars in the field of Tang-Song Buddhism...”

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Brose has made a significant contribution to the long tradition of excellence in the field of Buddhist studies at the University of Michigan and will continue to do so over his career. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Assistant Professor Benjamin H. Brose be promoted to the rank of associate professor of Chinese Buddhism, with tenure, Department of Asian Languages and Cultures, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.



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Andrew D. Martin, Dean  
Professor of Political Science and Statistics  
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

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