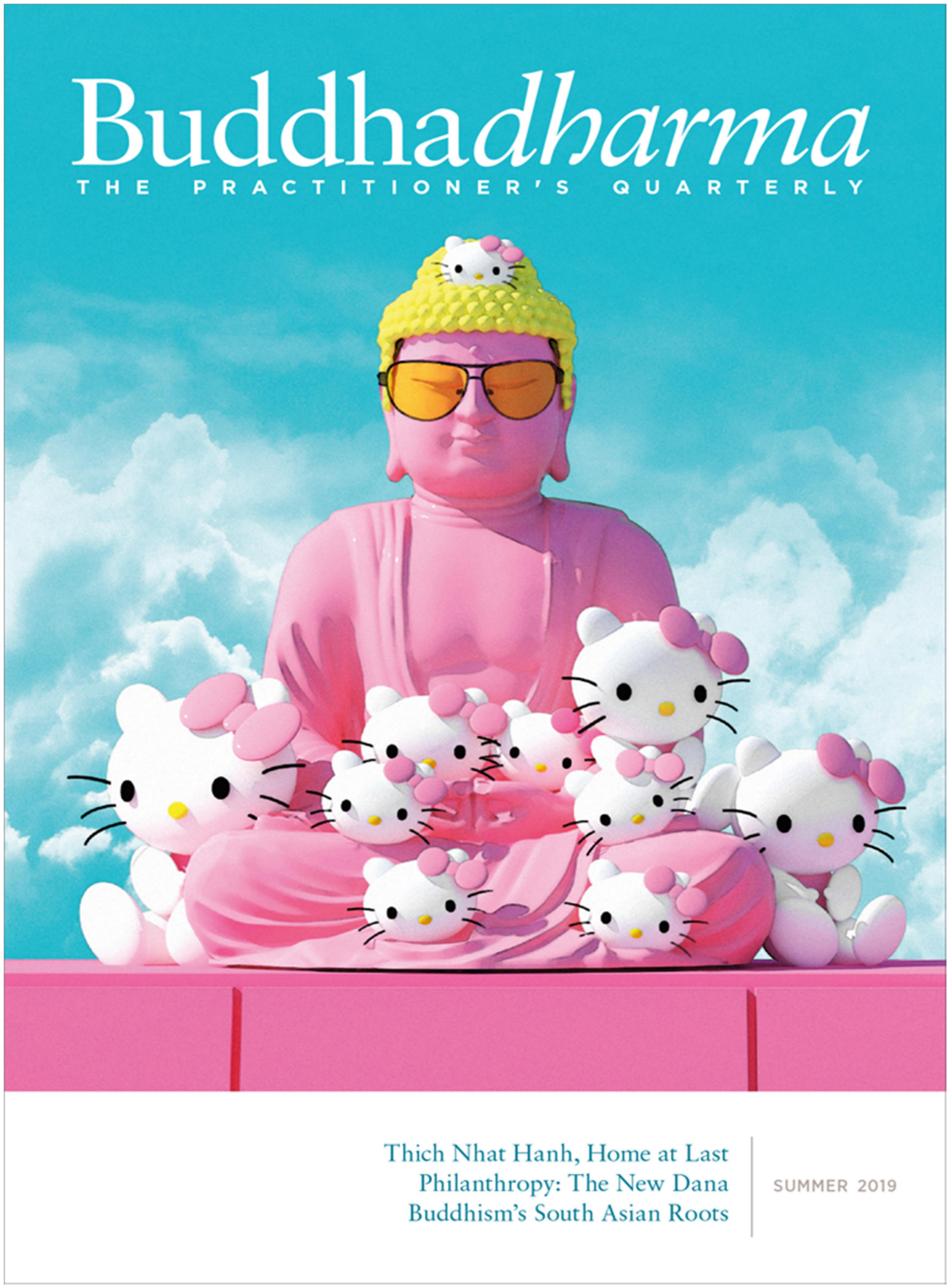
Buddhadharma
THE PRACTITIONER'S QUARTERLY
Thich Nhat Hanh, Home at Last
Philanthropy: The New Dana
Buddhism's South Asian Roots
SUMMER 2019

Philanthropy: The New Dana

Haleigh Atwood

TRADITIONALLY, Buddhist monasteries, universities, and initiatives have benefited from longstanding infrastructures of support from patrons and donors. The Indian emperor Ashoka (263–232 BCE) established temples, funded the construction of stupas, and supported the ordination of monks. In sixth-century Japan, Buddhism was embraced as a religious and political tool to create centralized governance; as a result, temples became cultural hubs and were even used as hospitals, schools, and orphanages. Today in Thailand, Buddhism is still supported by the state, and kings are considered both religious and secular leaders.

Other Asian countries have an engrained system of mutual dependence between lay and monastic communities. It is not uncommon for laypeople to provide monastics with the finances and labor necessary to construct buildings, supply food, pay bills, and so forth, in exchange for spiritual support.

Today in the West, there is a level of outreach, networking, and fundraising required of monasteries, practitioners, and organizations to survive—let alone thrive. Yet Buddhist practitioners and organizations operate without these kinds of financial scaffolding.

It is here that the influential role of foundations comes into play. While individual donors are significant—the practice of dana remains fundamental to Buddhist practice—various foundations have also taken up an important role and may offer part of the solution. Whether it is sponsoring long-term contemplative study or showcasing never-before-seen Tibetan art, foundations such as the ones profiled below propel the integration of Buddhism in the West forward.

BUKKYO DENDO KYOKAI
Society for the Promotion of Buddhism

BDK America

Taking advantage of Japan's rapid expansion of manufacturing during the mid-twentieth century, Rev. Dr. Yehan Numata returned to his home country after studying in California to start a profitable business that specialized in crafting measuring instruments, such as calipers and micrometers. He named his company the Mitutoyo Corporation, "mitutoyo" meaning "three abundances," which refers to Buddhism's three jewels: buddha, dharma, and sangha.

In December 1965, having firmly established Mitutoyo Corporation, Numata undertook his lifelong dream of sharing Buddhism with the world by founding Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai, a private foundation dedicated to the promotion of Buddhism. BDK America was founded in 1978 as the foundation's first overseas affiliate. Today, it is a leading supporter of Buddhist academics, literature, and education in the West.

"Our goal has never been to convert anyone to Buddhism," says Rev. Brian Nagata, director of education for BDK America. "Our goal, like our founder's, is simply to introduce Buddhist thought." Inspired by the Gideon Bibles that Numata saw in hotel rooms, BDK's first project was the development and distribution of *Teachings of the Buddha*, commonly known as the "Buddhist Bible." The book, with its bright orange rising sun on the cover, can be found in hotels, schools, prisons, military facilities, and hospitals around the world. Translated into forty-eight languages, the book has more than 9.5 million copies in circulation.

Next, Numata aimed to translate the entire Chinese Buddhist canon into English. To support this project, he established the Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research in California, whose work on the project is ongoing. Around the same time, BDK America established the first Numata Chair in Buddhist Studies at Numata's alma mater, the University of California, Berkeley. The goal of this academic program, now called the Numata Programs in Buddhist Studies, is to help institutions enhance their respective Buddhist studies programs. Selected schools are given an endowment from which the interest generated can be used to support visiting professors, special lectures, and conferences. There are currently seventeen Numata Programs at leading institutions around the world, including Harvard, Oxford, and Hamburg University.

Numata also established the BDK Fellowship, which supports postgraduate students as they study in Japan for one year under the supervision of a Japanese Buddhist scholar. To continue the legacy of Numata, who passed away in 1994, the foundation continues to support various academic efforts around the world. Most recently, BDK America launched the Toshihide Numata Prize for Buddhist Literature (named after Numata's son), which is awarded each year
to the author of an academic Buddhist studies volume. The winner is presented with a $10,000 cash prize, as well as speaking opportunities at symposiums in California and Japan.

Frederick P. Lenz Foundation for American Buddhism

Before Frederick Lenz died in 1998, he had begun the process of establishing a foundation to foster the growth and development of Buddhism in America. Twenty years later, the Frederick P. Lenz
Foundation supports a vast variety of organizations and initiatives, from study and community outreach to scholarships and conferences. "We try to be really open-minded," says Norman Oberstein, CEO. "We try to come up with programs that are different, creative, and inclusive."

One of the foundation's largest area of funding is education, supporting study, outreach, and scholarships at institutions with established Buddhist studies programs. Naropa University in Boulder, Colorado, is the foundation's longest sustaining grantee, with funds largely going toward scholarships and programs. Other institutions supported by Lenz Foundation include Brown University, NYU, and UC Berkeley. The foundation also supports Buddhist publications, meditation resources, mindfulness programs, women in Buddhism, Buddhist palliative care, retreat centers, and Buddhist ministry in justice systems.

Prison Mindfulness Institute (PMI), a grant recipient, has grown into an international organization that provides mindfulness-based programs to at-risk and incarcerated youth and adults. In an email, Fleet Maull, founder, and Kate Crisp, executive director, write, "We are incredibly grateful to the board of the Lenz Foundation. Their support has allowed us to introduce many tens of thousands of incarcerated youth and adults and thousands of criminal justice professionals to the healing and transformative power of mindfulness."

Over the years, Lenz Foundation has given close to $7 million in grants to more than one hundred organizations. The foundation has also broadened its scope of grantees to include non-Buddhist organizations that offer contemplative programs, such as the Institute of Jewish Spirituality, which aims to reconnect people with traditional Jewish practice and teachings. In 2018, the institute received a $10,000 grant to support its Jewish Mindfulness Meditation Teacher Training Course, which consists of three intensive retreats and a curriculum of study.

For the last decade, Lenz Foundation has hosted a series of conferences that offer a range of resources, from collaboration training to fundraising and sustainability instruction. In 2018, the foundation's advisory committee met to discuss future topics for conferences and programs that promote the next generation of Buddhist leaders, with suggested topics emphasizing the importance of fostering work from women and people of color. Most recently, the foundation supported The Gathering, an event co-hosted by Lion's Roar Foundation and Union Theological Seminary, which brought together leading Buddhist teachers of Black African descent.

HEMERA

Hemera Foundation

Named after the Greek goddess of the daytime, Hemera Foundation was founded in 2007 by Caroline Pfohl to help those who are struggling, disenfranchised, or in pain. Pfohl says the mission of Hemera is to both "awaken people's inner light" and "shine light on areas of our culture that need our help." In order to explore how Buddhism can benefit the modern world, the foundation provides contemplative resources to individuals from all walks of life, helping them flourish within their families and communities.

Hemera is a philanthropic foundation committed to expending its capital within twenty-five years, using up its current $31 million endowment by 2032. To meet this objective, an estimated $2.5–4 million per year is spent on grants and projects that fall within three key areas: the care and education of children, the mental and emotional health of adolescents, and the promotion of contemplative study and practice.

Hemera supports the development of all Buddhist lineages, encouraging individuals to find a practice that best suits them. "We seek to understand and promote how Buddhist practices can have a lasting effect on an individual's personal and professional life," says Rob Kaufold, executive director.

Hemera is the lead supporter of the Foundation for a Mindful Society, investing in the creation of *Mindful* magazine, which is devoted to the growing secular mindfulness movement. The foundation has also supported many Buddhist talks and events, including The Gathering.

Hemera is currently launching several of its own initiatives. One is Healthy Buddhist Communities, which aims to address recent reports of misconduct. In the coming years, researchers will highlight best practices, policies and procedures, and transformative ethics for centers, students, and teachers. "We want to offer a collection of resources that communities of all lineages can draw on," says Pfohl. Another initiative, Hemera's Tara Project, will interview one hundred female Buddhist teachers from around the world, representing various traditions and demographics. The interviews will provide these influential women with a platform to share their spiritual journeys and offer insight into what it's like to be a female dharma teacher.

Hemera Foundation also offers a Contemplative Fellowship Program at eleven retreat centers across the US, including Spirit Rock Meditation Center and Insight Meditation Center that assists newcomers wanting to attend residential retreats. Depending on eligibility, the program can cover up to 100 percent of an applicant's retreat costs. Aiming to increase the accessibility of contemplative sitting practice, Hemera is constantly searching for new retreat centers to partner with for this fellowship.

Kalliopeia Foundation

Kalliopeia Foundation's work starts from the belief that life should be treated as sacred and interconnected. Since its founding in 1977 by Barbara Sargent, Kalliopeia has supported work that takes both spiritual and physical responsibility for our relationship with the earth. "We see the ecological crisis as an expression of a human crisis related to fundamental questions around who we are and how we can live together," says Zoë Fuller-Rowell, executive director.

With much of its grant making focused on initiatives that address social and environmental change, Kalliopeia works with leaders from many different fields and communities, from Indigenous language revitalization projects, to urban ecology initiatives, to earth- based law movements. To date, the foundation has given $85 million in grants to more than five hundred initiatives, including several Buddhist ones. Buddhist scholar and ecophilosopher Joanna Macy has received grant support for her project, Work That Reconnects, which is a network that aims to motivate and inspire people to create a more sustainable world.

Kalliopeia also offers an annual Spiritual Ecology Fellowship that supports young leaders and innovators as they kick off pilot projects on spiritual ecology. In 2016, two fellows decided to collaborate in order to address environmental and community violence. Kyle Lemle and brontë velez created Lead to Life, a project that ceremonially melts guns into shovels, then uses those shovels in tree plantings that honor victims of gun violence. "Kyle and I met at the Spiritual Ecology Fellowship," says velez. "We spent time in India with Tibetan Buddhist nuns, and one of our mentors in that program integrated Buddhist principles into our work. We found ourselves wanting to explore how ceremony changes a commitment to environmental justice, and so here we are."

As well as supporting various ecological and spiritual pursuits, Kalliopeia Foundation also has several in-house initiatives, such as the Global Oneness Project. The multimedia education platform was founded in 2006 to highlight social, cultural, and environmental issues through documentaries, photo essays, and licensed films. The project provides a free curriculum that educators can use to cultivate empathy and cultural diversity in their classrooms by introducing students to religious traditions around the world. Kalliopeia's latest initiative is *Emergence Magazine*, a quarterly online publication that explores the connections between ecology, culture, and spirituality. The magazine's fourth issue, which tackles how religious traditions have impacted our histories and identities, features a Buddhist pilgrimage in Japan and a profile of Rev. angel Kyodo williams and her philosophy of radical dharma.

KHYENTSE FOUNDATION

Khysentse Foundation

"The golden age of Buddhism was only possible because there were major patrons in the past," says Cangioli Che, executive director of the Khyentse Foundation. "Our foundation's mission is to follow in the footsteps of these patrons and support all traditions of Buddhist study and practice."

Khyentse Foundation was founded by Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche as a nonprofit organization in 2001 to support his monasteries in China, India, and Bhutan. However, as the foundation grew, its mission expanded. At this writing, the foundation has supported Buddhist projects and programs in more than thirty countries. Khyentse aims to revitalize Buddhist traditions around the world—both in countries where Buddhism has a long history and heritage, such as India and Thailand, and in countries where Buddhism is still relatively new, such as Canada and the US.

In the "Buddhist mother countries," as Che calls them, the foundation supports more than three hundred monasteries by providing students with management training, language programs, and computer courses. In countries newer to Buddhism, Khyentse offers scholarships and grants to students and practitioners who wish to study Buddhism or embark on long-term retreats. In 2017, more than 150 students benefited from the scholarship programs alone. "We feel that the dharma is the most important gift, and therefore our effort is to share it with people," Che says. "We do not build monasteries, we build people." Khyentse offers scholarships for monastics, lay practitioners, and academic institutions. It also focuses on textual preservation through a project called the Buddhist Universal Digital Archive (BUDA), which aims to digitize Buddhist texts. When completed, all translated texts will be available online through the Harvard University library server, as well as through a mirror site in China so that Chinese scholars may also benefit. For requests that fall outside of preservation, academia, and practice, the foundation has dedicated funds, called Ashoka grants, for special projects. The only requirement is that the project must relate in some way to promoting the dharma. Beyond this, Khyentse focuses on supporting three key areas.

First is the development and training of Buddhist teachers who are equipped for the twenty-first century. In addition to developing basic computer skills, this means training leaders who can compassionately connect with younger generations and people from different ethnicities and backgrounds.

Second is the application of Buddhist values in basic childhood education. To further this goal, Khyentse is developing a curriculum for children from kindergarten to grade twelve based on such fundamental Buddhist concepts as wisdom and interdependence.

The third area is the fostering of Buddhist studies at universities and colleges through grants and partnerships. Two landmark events in this category include the establishment of the Khyentse Chair of Buddhist Studies at UC Berkeley and the Khyentse Center for Buddhist Textual Scholarship at Hamburg University.

何 鴻 毅 家 族 基 金
THE ROBERT H. N. HO FAMILY FOUNDATION

Robert H.N. Ho Family Foundation

The philanthropic history of Robert Ho's family can be traced back several generations to his grandparents, who were known in Hong Kong for their charitable donations. A successful journalist and newspaper owner, Ho moved to Canada at the end of his career but maintained a deep connection to his Chinese cultural heritage. Carrying on in the generous footsteps of his family, he founded the Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation in 2005 as an independent philanthropic organization. The foundation is dedicated to fostering an appreciation for Chinese arts and culture, as well as the application of Buddhist insights in contemporary life. "We're not a Buddhist organization per se, but the philanthropic values of the family are Buddhist values," says Ted Lipman, CEO.

The Ho Family Foundation supports a Buddhist chaplaincy program at Harvard University that trains chaplains from around the world. Alongside the Khyentse Foundation, the Ho Family Foundation supports the Buddhist Universal Digital Archive's preservation of Buddhist texts. While Khyentse is financing the digitization of Pali and South Asian texts, the Ho Family Foundation has focused on the digitization of texts in Chinese and Sanskrit.

The foundation is currently funding a three-year exhibition at Smithsonian's Sackler Gallery that highlights artworks spanning Buddhist traditions, including a re-creation of a Tibetan Buddhist shrine room and a film demonstrating present-day worship at a stupa in Sri Lanka. "We're trying to present the history of Buddhism with as little jargon as possible," says Robert DeCaroli, Buddhist art historian and co-curator of the exhibit. "The Ho Foundation has been supportive and engaging as collaborators in this process—the only demand is that the work be excellent. I feel really lucky to be a part of this."

"We focus on arts and education because I think there is a feeling in this family that these have lasting impacts on society. As a result, we get involved in projects that are directly related to Buddhism," says Lipman. "Our main criteria is excellence, whether it's an art exhibition or a postdoc student in Europe." The foundation also offers a series of grants that target new professorships, research and postdoctoral fellowships, and Buddhist studies programs. Currently, the foundation is funding a program at The Courtauld Institute of Art for the conservation of Buddhist art in collaboration with the School of Oriental and African Studies in London.

Tsadra Foundation

A small, family-operated nonprofit trust, Tsadra Foundation was founded by Tibetan Buddhist practitioners Eric Colombel and Anthony Chapman in 2000. At the time, their mission was to support those who were pursuing advanced Tibetan Buddhist study and practice by providing them with access to textual resources and materials.

From the start, Tsadra enlisted advanced scholars and translators from around the world to embark on translation projects. Today, the foundation has published more than one hundred translations of Tibetan and Sanskrit texts into either English or French. "Right from the beginning, we have worked with the highest level of translators and practitioners," says Marcus Perman, director of research. Perman joined Tsadra to help scholars and translators access materials, basically serving as a library and resource center for their academic needs. "We want people who are teaching and translating to keep doing that work," Perman says. "We hope our support helps to give them a sense of authority." The foundation also hosts international conferences and workshops for Tibetan language translators, creating opportunities for translators to network with one another and showcase their work.

Tsadra Foundation also invests in crafting digital resources, such as databases of information about ancient Tibetan texts, for advanced practitioners. The *Treasury of Knowledge*, a ten-volume encyclopedia of Buddhism from Jamgon Kongtrul, has been translated into English and made available in a series of interactive apps. Perman says the impact of these digital resources is visible in monasteries in India, Nepal, and Tibet, where he has seen monks scrolling through translated texts on their iPads. As the modern world begins to shelve bulky volumes and piles of papers, Tsadra hopes to provide Buddhist practitioners and monastics with the digitized materials required to go further with their practice and study.

While translation remains important to Tsadra, the foundation has expanded its mission to include support for contemplative practitioners. The Contemplative Scholarship Program sponsors individuals who are on three-year retreats; to ensure that these retreats are organized by authentic traditions with safe practice spaces, Chapman meets with both retreat organizers and applicants. Tsadra also runs a Study Scholarship Program that sponsors Western academics who wish to study Tibetan Buddhism in Asia for three years. "The whole approach is designed to benefit intermediate-to-advanced Buddhist students," says Perman. "These programs are intensive long-term commitments." Among the prerequisites, applicants must possess an extensive background in Buddhist studies and be able to speak Tibetan. By focusing on this in-depth level of training, the foundation hopes to cultivate the Buddhist practitioners and scholars of the future.