



84000

TRANSLATING THE WORDS OF THE BUDDHA

A TEN YEAR REPORT

2010 – 2020



Guiding Values and Operating Principles

1 We are a project of offering and volunteerism

At its core, 84000 is a project of offering and service. We remind those involved with us that at 84000 work is contributed out of a genuine wish to benefit the world, and is often motivated by devotion to the Dharma.

2 We are committed to translation accuracy and readability

As a project that strives to translate the entire Tibetan Buddhist Canon for the educated general reader, maintaining the quality and readability of translation is a non-negotiable principle in ensuring the continuation of a 2,500-year living tradition.

3 We nurture and support contemporary translators

We appreciate every single application submitted by translation teams around the world. While successful applications will be supported by the award of a grant and nurtured by our editorial team, 84000 is also committed to encouraging and empowering interested and promising translators.

4 We place equal value on our three key stakeholder groups

In order to ensure the integrity of the project we give equal value to the perspectives of three key stakeholder groups: Indo-Himalayan Dharma teachers, the international scholarly community, and practitioners and devotees of the Buddhadharma. We make every effort to maximize the strengths of each group, seeking out complementary modes of partnership with the aim of producing excellent translations for our target readership.

5 We recognize that accomplishing our vision will require perpetual effort

By acknowledging that both language and understanding are continually evolving, we appreciate that our translations will need to be amended, improved, and edited as time goes by. In preserving the words of the Buddha for all future generations, there is no “rubber stamp” and no finishing line.

Message from the Executive Director

Dear Friends and Supporters of 84000,

With loved ones around the world grappling with the ongoing effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, lingering economic recessions, and pervasive instability, it has been a challenging year for many of us. Through the ages, the words of the Buddha have helped people to focus the mind in times of uncertainty, and to build resilience amongst vulnerable populations. This past year has certainly been a reminder of the continued—if not growing—relevance of the Buddha's wisdom, and I can barely believe we are already celebrating ten years of 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha.

Ten years ago, we wondered how we would ever begin to embark on this immense journey, how we would find translation teams, how we would be able to manage—with integrity—such a vast and unexplored collection. This decade has been a litmus test for our vision, and not without its challenges. But with your support, we have commissioned 343 translations; have awarded over \$7.5M in grants to teams of highly skilled translators around the world; assembled a committed and qualified team with an efficient editorial system that published 59 texts in 2020 alone; and we are innovating the ways in which these online publications can be accessed. We continue to maintain an even balance between Western-modeled academic approaches and Indo-Himalayan insight and scholasticism, and through this our publications have been widely read and appreciated. In short, we are progressing well toward the translation of the Kangyur, while also preparing ourselves for the 161,800 pages of the Tengyur. And so, with deep respect for the tradition of translation—and the historical precedents set throughout the centuries by Dharma kings and patrons whose dedication has ensured its survival thus far—we can confidently report that 84000 is successfully contributing with a long-term, collaborative, and non-sectarian effort to translate the Tibetan Buddhist Canon.

Some of you will have been present at the 2009 conference in Bir, India, from which this initiative was born; and many of you have invested in us, whether through reading our publications, participating in our resoundings, or otherwise generously donating whatever resources you could. And for all this, we are so grateful. 84000 relies on the support of individual donors, and we appreciate every donation, no matter the size, since a drop in the ocean is no less important than the wave. But it would be remiss of me not to mention first and foremost our Founding Sponsors, without whose trust this project would not have been possible. And our Matching Funds Donors and our Sūtra Sponsors, for their significant contributions: the former have pledged to match all recurring donations made by our thousands of general donors, and the latter, through their sponsorship of specific texts, have facilitated the commissioning of translations—an activity that is integral to our operations and our ability to achieve our vision.

As we walk this journey together, we are maturing and have developed the structure and processes that will enable us to realize our vision. This is a 100-year project, and today, it is in our hands—yours and ours—to protect this endangered archive of wisdom and to safeguard this precious legacy for future generations. We are humbled to have you with us.

Yours in the Dharma,
Huang Jing Rui



84000's Origins

“

I would like to see the words of the Buddha
available in every major language in the world.

- *Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche*

”

When Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche first expressed his wish to see the words of the Buddha translated into modern languages, the Khyentse Foundation took the lead in hosting an historic conference in March 2009 at the Deer Park Institute, in Bir, India.

More than fifty of the world's leading Tibetan Buddhist teachers, translators, and academics, as well as publishers and patrons, gathered to discuss the translation of the Tibetan Buddhist canon—the Kangyur and Tengyur—into English and other modern languages. The participants agreed that the very survival of Buddhism depended on their working together to preserve the words of the Buddha for future generations, and 84000—a project of all Buddhists, for all Buddhists and beyond—was born.

Leaders of Tibetan Buddhist lineages gave their blessings to this landmark initiative, and throughout the conference, participants shared their aspirations and discussed the practicalities and challenges of translating the entire Tibetan Buddhist canon first into English, and then into other languages.

The vision of the conference was vast, the atmosphere was enthusiastic with healthy debate, and the final alignment on bringing the Buddhadharma to the world was inspiring.

A complete list of conference participants is available in Appendix A.

Khyentse Foundation



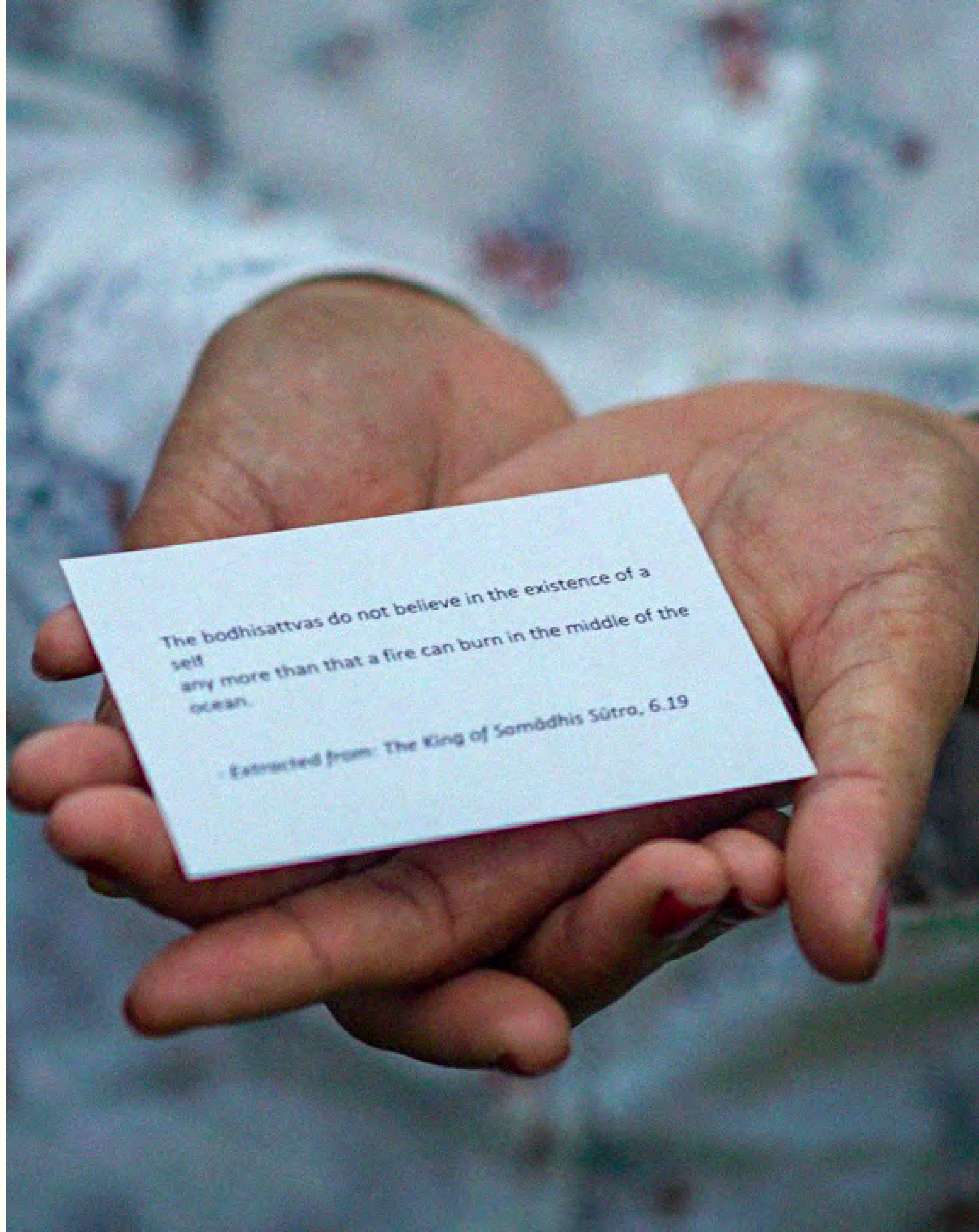
KHYENTSE FOUNDATION

Buddha's Wisdom for Everyone

It is with deep admiration and appreciation that we acknowledge the Khyentse Foundation for all its efforts in sponsoring and organizing the historic “Translating the Words of the Buddha” Conference in March 2009. For the next four years, it was the Khyentse Foundation’s dedication and stewardship that nurtured 84000 into the full-fledged project we are proud to have become, and we are grateful to have its continued and sustained support even to this day.

In establishing this project, the Khyentse Foundation provided key contributions to our ongoing efforts, including the commissioning of pilot translations to bring us experience in the complex process of translating, editing, and publishing them—experience that proved crucial in practice and for our long-term planning—the organizing of our first few working committee meetings to set up the framework for our development, and supplying essential infrastructural and administrative support for the initial phases of 84000, incubating the project until it could become independent. Since then, the Foundation has continued to provide core financial support to 84000.

It has been our great pleasure to witness the Foundation’s ongoing and progressive efforts both to nurture the source of the Buddhadharma and to care for its future preservation and propagation. We would certainly not be where we are today without the Foundation’s vision, dedication, and support.



The bodhisattvas do not believe in the existence of a self
any more than that a fire can burn in the middle of the ocean.

— Extracted from: The King of Samādhis Sūtra, 6.19

108 Founding Sponsors

By offering yourselves as founding members, you are seeding a plantation of dharma in the hearts and minds of millions to come, not only limited to one culture and race.

- Dzonggar Khyentse Rinpoche

Here, we must acknowledge the immense debt of gratitude 84000 owes to our 108 Founding Sponsors. They are the ones who generously provided the seed funding that was so vital as we set off on this century-long journey. In addition to establishing the necessary financial reserve and funding for the initial rounds of translations, the funds—between \$50,000-\$250,000 each—have been used for: creating the infrastructure for reviewing, editing, and pre-publication work; developing the tools and resources necessary for translation work; training translators and editors; and helping to offset both the costs of the initial planning, and the current and ongoing administrative and operational costs.

We offer our heartfelt thanks to all our Founding Sponsors for enabling us to safeguard this invaluable world heritage and to make it available for generations to come.

How We Work

For ten years, 84000 has worked tirelessly to preserve the heart of a living tradition

Our 100-year vision is to translate the words of the Buddha into modern languages, and to facilitate engagement with them by providing universal access and interactive comprehension tools.

In pursuit of our vision, 84000's focus on translating the Tibetan Buddhist Canon and the provision of global access can be divided into three main areas of work:

Commissioning Translations

- Many of the texts in this Canon no longer exist in any other language. Our grants catalyze the work of translators and scholars, so that together we can help to preserve a living tradition and to stimulate interest in traditional Buddhist scholarship.

Editorial Work

- In line with international academic standards, our editorial processes and review policies help to ensure the quality and readability of published texts; to present balanced interpretations of the works in the collection, and of difficult terms and expressions; and to preserve a coherent and dependable version of the Canon in today's world.

Innovating Access

- Working with modern technology we develop new ways in which these texts are read, studied, and disseminated, providing readers free access to this collection and its timeless wisdom with the support of engaging and interactive comprehension tools.

The Buddhist scriptures, firmly rooted in the classical world, underlie a living tradition still active today in bringing secular and spiritual nourishment to all. We believe our vision and our goals are of huge importance in the modern world.



84000 Milestones

2010 - 2020

BUDDHIST LITERARY HERITAGE PROJECT

A new project is born and incubated under the Khyentse Foundation umbrella to begin translating the Tibetan Buddhist Canon for future generations.

FIRST CALL FOR GRANTS

We receive 21 grant proposals, and commission approximately 3,000 pages of the Kangyur for translation, marking the beginning of a one-hundred-year project!

READING ROOM LAUNCHES

The first Java-based iteration of our online Reading Room launches with eight English-language translations of texts (published in 2011) from the General Sūtra section of the Kangyur, allowing our early supporters unprecedented access to the Buddha's wisdom.

FIRST BODHGAYA RESOUNDING

Our signature activity is born at the place it all began! Since then, 84000 has held resounding events around the world and online, with as many as 5,000 participants.

RETHINKING THE TECHNOLOGY

We continue to work intensively on some of the longer translations, while at the same time setting out on the long process of adapting our working methods, text database, and the Reading Room software to the needs of the TEI standard.

FURTHER EDITORIAL AND TECHNOLOGY LEAPS

A new in-house technology director starts work and our earlier, Java-based reader is replaced by a system applying current best-practice web standards. Meanwhile the editorial team evolves and expands, and by now we have thirty-seven texts published in the Reading Room.

FIFTY TEXTS NOW AVAILABLE

Our Reading Room, an online and interactive digital library of the Buddha's words, sees its fiftieth publication added. Readers now have more access than ever to the sūtras, and as our collection of English-language translations grows, we hope to become a crucial resource for further academic study as well as for committed practice.

UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP

We partner with long-time collaborator, Rangjung Yeshe Institute, which offers courses in Buddhist philosophy and in Tibetan, Sanskrit and Nepali languages. Founded by Chogyi Nyima Rinpoche, the courses combine traditional Tibetan Buddhist teachings with a modern Buddhist Studies perspective for which academic credits are widely accepted by the world's top universities.

2010

2012

2014 -15

2017

2019

2009

2011

2013

2016

2018

2020

BIR CONFERENCE

A historic conference brings together over fifty of world's leading Tibetan Buddhist teachers, translators, academics, publishers, and patrons to discuss the preservation of Tibetan Buddhism.

NEW NAME, NEW LOOK

Our name changes to 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha, and graphic design icon Milton Glaser kindly offers us a new logo and a new look!

INDEPENDENCE

After three years of dedicated nurture and support from the Khyentse Foundation, 84000 matures to become an independently registered 501c3 organization in the United States, with an independent board chaired by Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche.

BODHGAYA MEETING

An important meeting at which 84000's entire team seeks the advice and feedback of senior Tibetan scholars from the different traditions takes place in Bodhgaya. We also take the decision to convert our database of texts to the widely used TEI (Text Encoding Initiative) specifications.

MAJOR IMPROVEMENTS MADE TO THE READING ROOM

The result of years of research and planning, this version of the Reading Room built on our database converted to TEI specifications marks a significant step in how 84000 ensures readers like you have easy and intuitive access to our published translations of the sūtras, in one of the world's most widely understood languages.

100th GRANT AWARDED

We award our hundredth grant to a translation team; cumulatively, these grants have totaled over \$6 million! Our grant-giving has allowed for the efficient, collaborative, and comprehensive translation of the Tibetan Buddhist Canon—the first such endeavor to begin in over 1,000 years.

NEW READING ROOM FEATURES

Our online Reading Room receives a number of upgrades, including an interactive trilingual glossary, source-text view, and multiple downloadable formats. We are committed to ensuring that our readers can easily access not only the texts themselves, but also the meanings of the words and teachings they contain.

125 TEXTS PUBLISHED

This year we added fifty-nine texts to our online Reading Room, raising to 125 the number of translations available to all, for free. That means that 50 percent of the Kangyur (or over 36,000 pages) are either in translation, with Editorial awaiting publication, or are already available to you for free in our online Reading Room.

Commissioning Translations

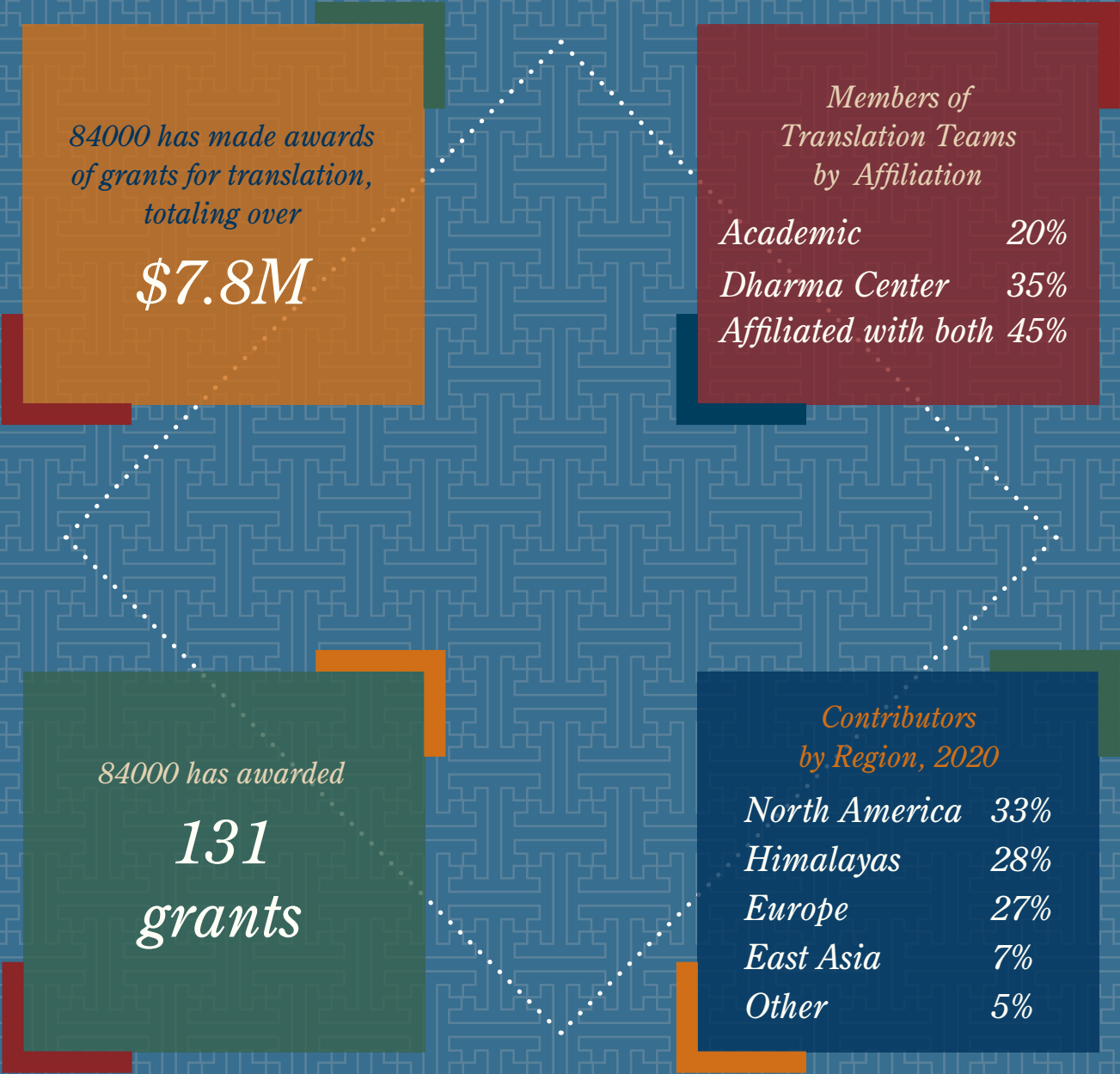
Grants for Translators

The past few decades have seen a steadily burgeoning interest in the study and practice of Buddhism in the West, as well as a resurgence of interest in some Asian societies traditionally associated with Buddhism.

84000’s activity starts with the commissioning of new translations into modern languages, beginning with English. A great deal of study and research goes into the process of translating texts, and such detailed, lengthy work cannot be sustained financially without patronage. We find that awarding grants catalyzes the work of translators and scholars, as well as contributing to the maintenance of traditional Buddhist scholarship and practice in a world that is in danger of losing sight of its huge importance.

To date, 84000 has awarded 131 grants to 52 translation teams around the world, allowing translators and scholars to work on this canonical literature full-time and thus to make our vision a reality. As a group, they have translated or are in the process of translating over 50% of the Kangyur. We are therefore on track to complete the translation and publication of an English-language Kangyur by 2035, which will allow us then to concentrate on the Tengyur.

A complete listing of contributors and recipients of 84000 grant awards, 2010–2020 can be found in Appendix B.



Editorial Work

The Core of 84000

Compiling modern language translations of the entire Buddhist Canon, produced by different teams over a one-hundred-year period, is a task that needs to be planned, managed, channeled, sustained, harmonized, and coherently presented through an intensive editorial process. Central to our success thus far, and crucial over the next ninety years, is our in-house editorial team, whose growing strength ensures that these translated texts are accurate, readable, and in accord with scholarship both traditional and modern.

Ten years ago, we started from scratch. The editors set about conducting a survey of the source texts, setting the scope, editorial policy and priorities of the project, compiling guidelines, and defining approaches to the source texts, to translation methodology, to terminology, and to style. They compiled and edited the Tibetan and Sanskrit titles of all the texts in the Kangyur, translated them into English, and created a database based on the Kangyur's traditional structure. They began commissioning pilot project translations, using them to establish a multistage editorial process from initial research through to electronic markup and publication, with built-in internal and external review, contextual introductions, annotations, a hyperlinked glossary, and a bilingual view drawing on digitized Kangyur texts.

As a result, engaged Buddhist practitioners are able to find the clear and comprehensive detail they require, and standards of accuracy and authenticity are no less rigorous than those required by an academic audience, even if the frame of reference is not primarily academic.



“

The translation of the Kangyur is a cultural transfer and a spiritual transmission. The goal is communication, which can be achieved through collaboration and consultation.

- Dr. Peter Skilling,
Fragile Palm Leaves Foundation

”



Editorial Work

Committed to Perpetual Effort

As our experience grows, the editors adapt our approaches, refine and expand the editorial process to improve both its efficiency and the quality of the published texts, as well as to develop the in-house scholarship so necessary for this immense undertaking. In this context a three-day meeting was held in January 2020 at Stanford University (California), hosted by Dr. James Gentry at the Department of Religious Studies, to review our published translations and editorial policies. The team also held the first Review Council session—an initiative in which renowned experts in the field review our publications in the presence of the translators and members of the editorial team, and offer advice and suggestions for our work.

Since then the worldwide Covid crisis has delayed any in-person meetings and conferences, but our editorial team has adapted well to online communication and has had regular meetings to discuss both the specifics of ongoing projects as well as general points of policy, difficult terms and expressions, issues of style and presentation, and shared knowledge and resources. In addition, many fruitful topic-based meetings have taken place between editors and translators on a wide range of subjects, sometimes with invited expert guests.

Our editorial team is also charged with training the next generation of translators and editors so that 84000 can continue to work toward completing its vision well beyond the lifetimes of everyone working with us today.

In addition, our editors are engaged in their own research and publication activities, and some of the articles by 84000 editors this year were published in the *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, and in the journal *Buddhadharma*.



“

A comprehensive English compilation of the Buddha's words will serve as an authoritative bedrock for a living tradition.

- Dzogchen Pönlop Rinpoche

”



Innovating Access Collaborative Team Platforms

Empowering Translators

Despite the diverse geographical locations from which our translators work, 84000 is passionate about creating a community for these skilled individuals. Leveraging technology, we regularly meet online with our translators to exchange experiences and expertise, and our online translator community brings translators into contact with each other's work. Through search tools, dictionaries, and glossaries we stimulate scholarly debate, peer review, and transmission of knowledge to a new generation.

Efficient Collaboration

We have developed tools to simplify the management of the many simultaneous translation projects, and tools to automate the encoding of the texts for publication. Through these innovations we have seen the lead time for the technical preparation of a large publication drop from a few months to a matter of weeks. Over time we will benefit more and more from these innovations, meaning that more of the funds so generously donated to us can be spent on translation.



“

They used to carve the sūtras on stone, and wrote on palm leaves. Then they made woodblocks, and printed, and typed, and photocopied. All this was so that more people in more places could read the words of the Buddha. And there was a lot of merit there. Now times have changed again. When we publish sūtras online in a widely spoken language, and you can download them, there must also be a lot of merit there.

- Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche

”

Innovating Access

For Readers and Practitioners

Resounding

If 84000 were to have a signature outreach activity, it would surely be its series of resoundings, a practice inspired by ancient monastic recitations of the Kangyur. Designed to engage our audiences and readers, 84000 has pioneered the concept of Global Live Resoundings connecting and coordinating thousands of people online around the world to recite the words of the Buddha together, as well as our popular biennial Resounding Under the Bodhi Tree, in Bodhgaya, India.

We believe that in order to do justice to the hard work of the translators and our dedicated editors, this archive of wisdom must be made fully, clearly, easily, and freely accessible to both readers and practitioners.

Engaging Readers

An active readership is integral to the preservation of the Buddhadharma, and as an online publication house, 84000 invests time and effort into leveraging the technologies available to us to continually develop our interactive, online Reading Room.

Our Reading Room is now a functional interactive digital space that currently houses 129 translations, available in multiple downloadable formats for free. It integrates our trilingual glossary, providing online readers with English definitions of key words alongside the original Sanskrit and Tibetan terms; and our simultaneous source-text viewing option, which is considered especially important to translators-in-training.

39,935
*Reading Room
sessions logged
per month*

35,802
*sūtra downloads
in 2020*

*Our site is
regularly visited
from over*
155
countries

After purifying all habitual tendencies without exception,
I will completely accomplish the two accumulations of merit
and wisdom.
For the purpose of liberating all beings without exception,
May I swiftly reach perfect enlightenment.

- Extracted from: Calling Witness with a Hundred Thousand
Prostrations, 1.37

Innovating Access

Contributions to the Global Community

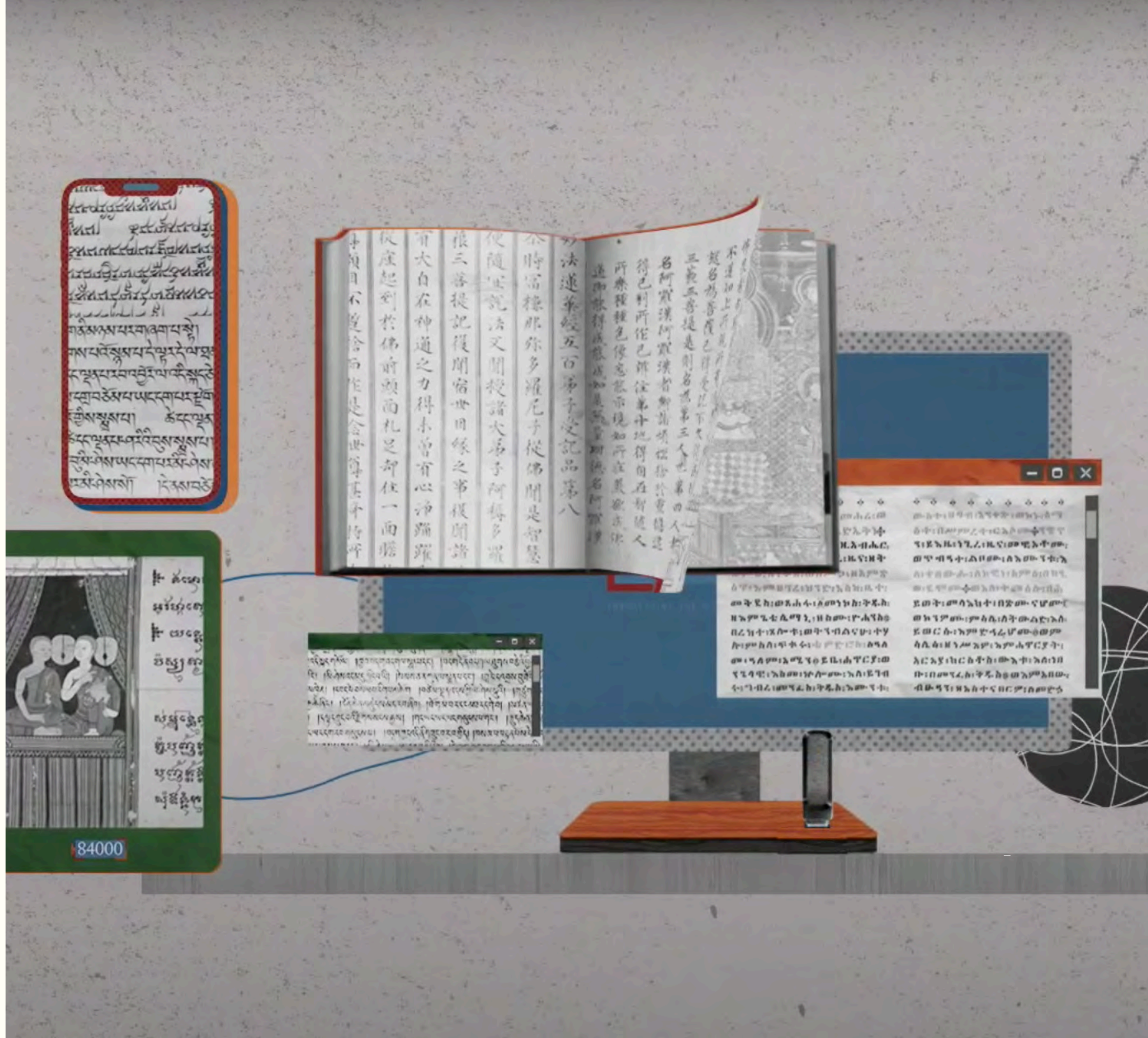
We are committed to contributing what we can to global efforts at the intersection of scholarship and open access.

The underlying database of our published works comprises files in a universal text format, marked up in xml using a set of tags conforming to the TEI (Text Encoding Initiative) specifications widely used in the digital humanities. Our text files can be made freely available to researchers anywhere.

Linked Open Data is now another standard by which scholarly data is shared on the internet, and publishing the metadata of 84000's translations and text catalogs in this form makes it available to cutting edge research tools and projects.

One of the tools at the heart of our initiatives to speed up and standardize translations is “translation memory,” an open-standard, technical format that shows translators existing translations of similar words and phrases. We support the use of translation memory by providing in-house tools as well as making it available for use in third-party translation software.

Our dataset of matched passages in Tibetan and English could be a crucial resource in ensuring Tibetan becomes a digital language, and the Tibetan language community is collaborating with a tech giant by using 84000 data to improve research on AI applications for Tibetan to English translation.



Financials in Review

2010 – 2019

84000 takes measures to maintain a modest financial approach to all levels of its operations, and in our first ten years we have built a good financial base with which to fund a growing number of translation projects, while also setting up necessary internal support systems. Currently, over eighty-five percent of our budget goes directly towards our three main areas of work: awarding grants for new translations, editorial review, and access technology.

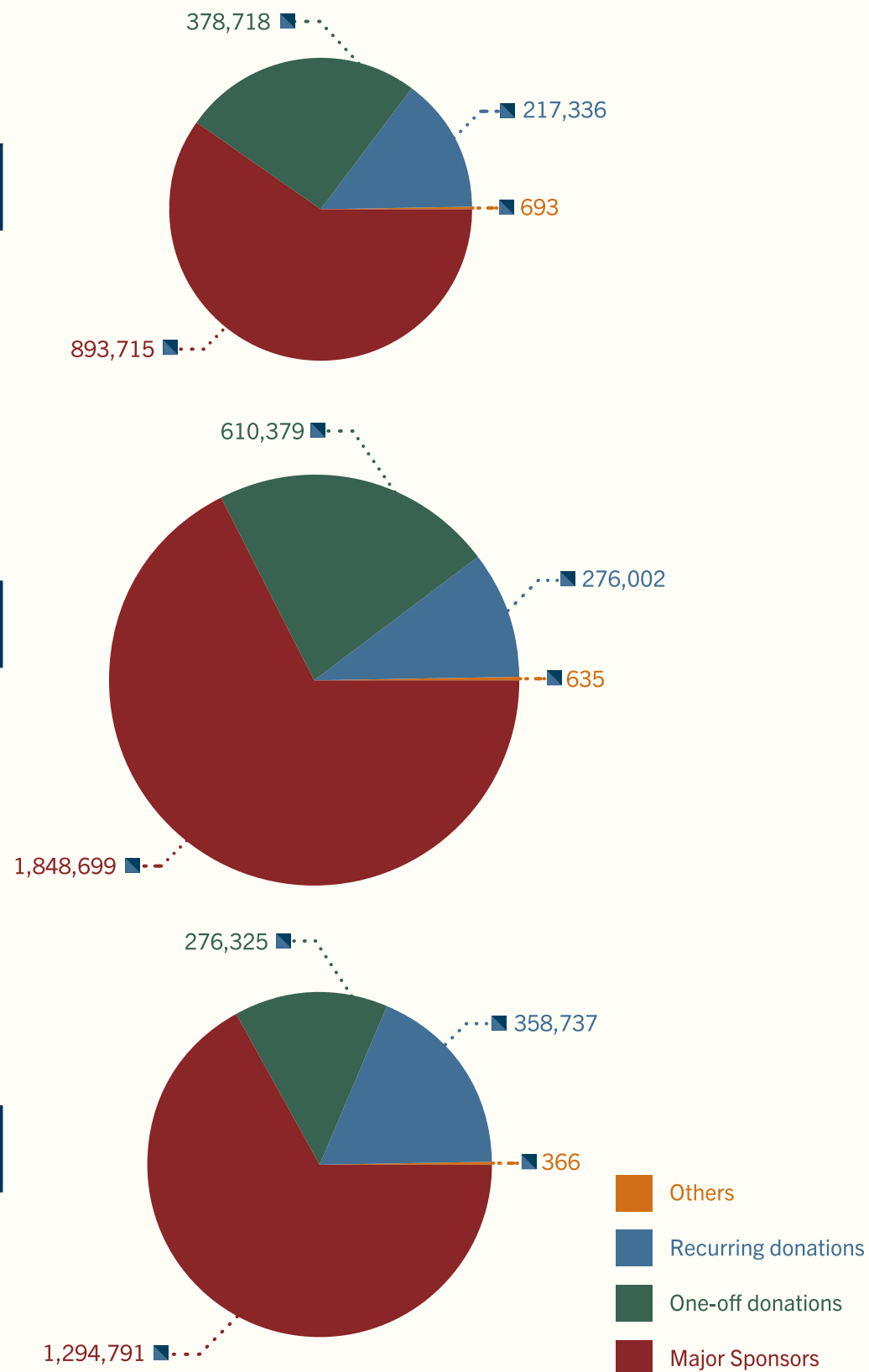
We remain both strategic and prudent with our funds. With the restructuring and much-needed expansion of the editorial team this year, however, additional financial resources are required to support our core editorial work, as well as technological developments that will allow us to provide open and free access to thousands of texts as we continue.

Over the next ten years, as we prepare for the translation of the Tengyur, we intend to invest further in identifying and developing the capacity of our core team, strengthening our integration of technology in how we create open access to this collection, training of translators and editors, and in outreach to the Indo-Himalayan Dharma teachers, the international scholarly community, and our general reading audiences. This is a one-hundred-year project, and our work will become increasingly complex as we progress and delve deeper into little-explored texts and histories. We will need continued financial support in order to sustain our current activities, and to mature as an organization in realization of our vast vision.

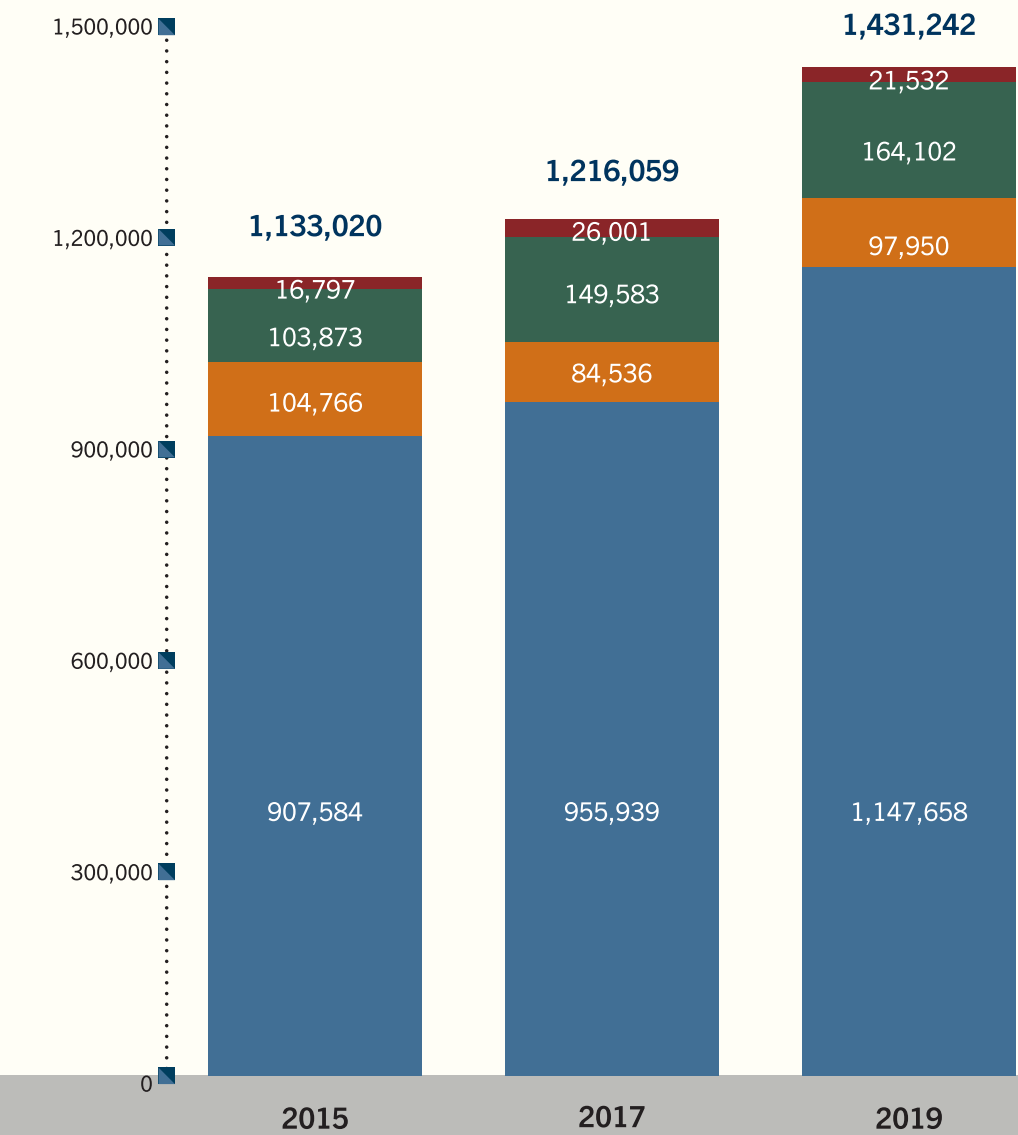
Summary of Financial Position 2015-2019 (USD)

	2015	2017	2019
Revenue			
Contributions and Donations	1,490,462	2,735,715	1,930,219
Interest and Dividends	74,531	109,550	284,429
Net Unrealized Loss	(61,920)	(15,214)	208,109
	1,503,073	2,830,051	2,422,757
Expenses			
Program Expenses - Translation	907,584	955,939	1,147,658
Program Expenses - Reading Room	104,766	84,536	97,950
Management and General Expenses	103,873	154,509	164,102
Fundraising Expenses	16,797	21,075	21,532
	1,133,020	1,216,059	1,431,242
Change in Net Assets	370,053	1,613,992	991,515
Net Assets at Year End	5,750,781	7,634,982	9,408,501

Donation Analysis (USD)



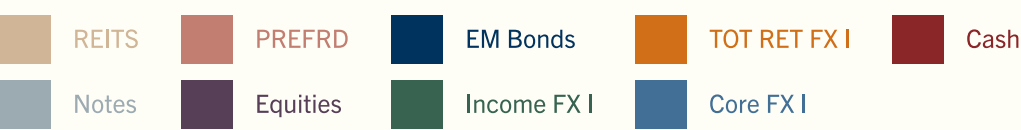
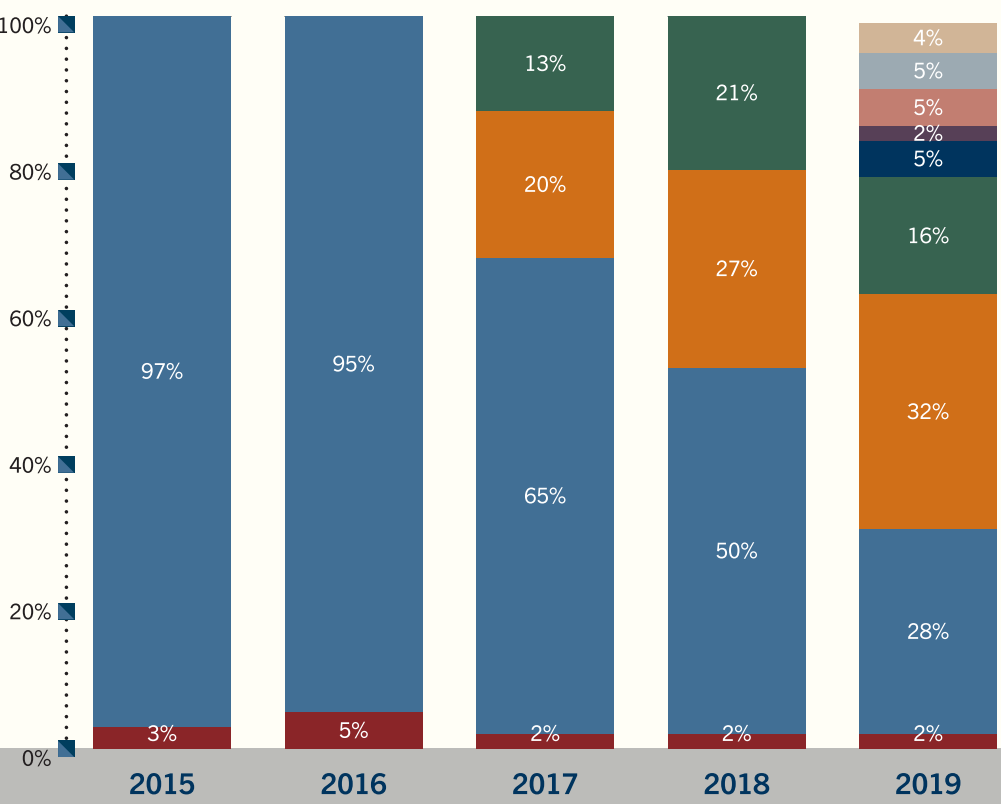
Expenses Analysis (USD)



Investment Portfolio 2015-2019 (USD)

84000's reserves were established at the end of 2014 and were invested with a very conservative risk profile ensuring a relatively stable first two years. As the reserves increased, the asset allocation moved from solely fixed-income related investments to a more diversified portfolio with a longer-term investment horizon, and allowed for potentially higher returns.

Markets in 2019 saw declining interest rates with a dovish Federal Reserve pivot, creating an extremely benign environment for fixed income. In this scenario, the portfolio returned a solid 7%. Going forward, with interest rates flirting with new lows, the new asset allocation should prove beneficial and well-timed, and diversification should also help the portfolio endure bursts of volatility in the markets. The investment strategy remains conservative-leaning, with a moderate risk profile.





84000 Team

as of December 31, 2020

The 84000 team extends its deepest gratitude and appreciation for the hundreds of volunteers around the world who have supported us at events or with tasks that we may otherwise not have been able to accomplish. We are reliant on your generosity with your time, advice, and efforts, and remain humbly grateful for these contributions.

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Namgyal Wangchuck, Bhutan

Her Royal Highness Kesang
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Tashi Tobgay

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Zoe Tang

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Grants Committee, 2009–2020
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Working Committee Member, 2019
Grants Committee Member, 2019
Editorial Committee Member, 2019

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Rev. Dr. Chodrung Kunga

Founding Working Committee Member,
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– Secretary, 2013–2018
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– Co-Chair, 2010–2018

E. Gene Smith

Founding Working Committee Member,
2009–2010

Dr. Tom Tillemans

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Working Committee Member, 2011–2018
Grants Committee Member, 2011–2018
Editorial Committee Member, 2011–2018

Jeff Wallman

Working Committee Member, 2011–2018
Technology Committee
– Chief, 2011
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– Co-Chair, 2012–2018

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North America Team Lead, 2013–2018

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as of December 31, 2020

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Dr. James Gentry
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Gavin Kilty
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An Aspiration Prayer For 84000

MAY THERE NEVER BE A TIME...

As peace, harmony, sanity, and the well-being of this earth and its inhabitants are now so endangered, may there never be a time when the world's media, school textbooks, and daily conversations stop using words like generosity, patience, and loving-kindness, and when the meaning of such words is lost.

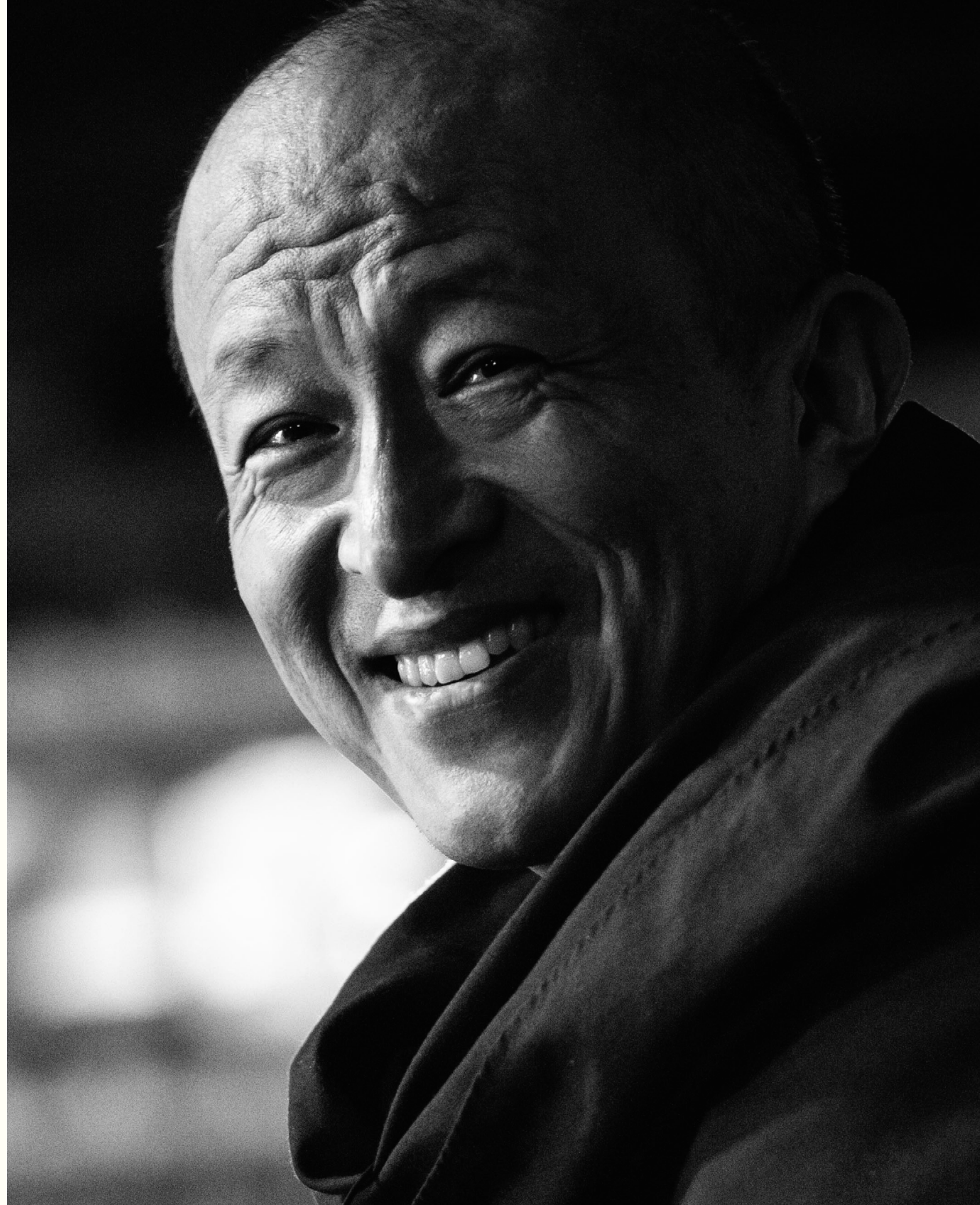
As we fear the darkest hour of this dark age, may there never be a time when words like impermanence (*anitya*), unsatisfactoriness (*duhkha*), selflessness (*anātman*), dependent arising (*pratītyasamutpāda*), illusion (*māyā*), and emptiness (*śūnyatā*) cease to exist, and when their meaning is lost.

May the endeavors of the translators and editors plant the seed of the Dharma in all directions.

May the efforts of the patrons and administrators nurture and strengthen the shoot of the Dharma at all times.

May the noble aspirations of this endeavor maintain and propagate the precious Dharma far and wide.

This prayer was composed by
Brahma Pushpa,
in India, June 2020.





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