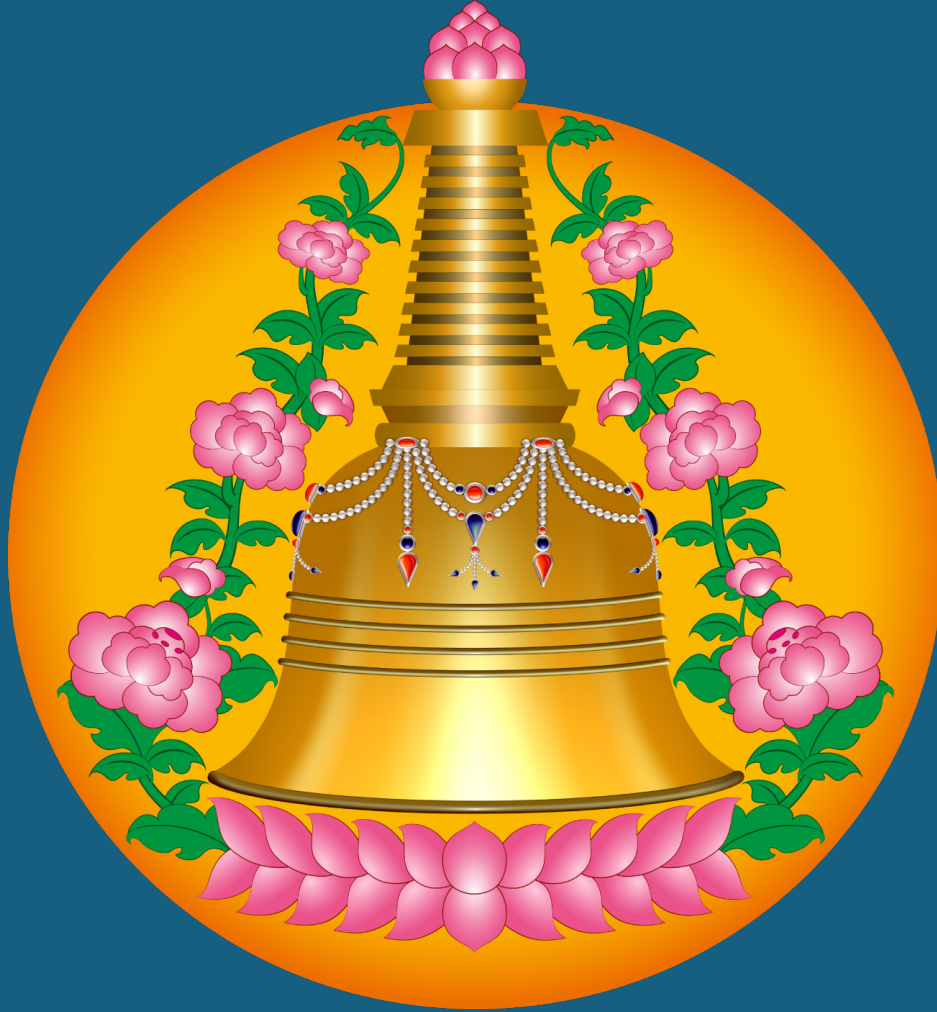


**The Annual Report of the Atisha
Charitable Trust**



**The Atisha Charitable Trust, Headquarters
Arasinakere, Mysore
2024**

The Annual Report of The Atisha Charitable Trust for The Year 2024

This report for the year 2024 marks a significant development, which is historical for this Trust. However, before discussing the evolution, we want to remind our readers of the following.

As we occasionally reiterate, the Atisha Charitable Trust (ACT) promotes spirituality, education, and social service. It is the umbrella organisation for the Kundeling Monastic Community (KMC), its main arm, through which it realises its avowed goals. We are registered and recognised by the State of Karnataka's Societies Act, the Income Tax Department, and the Ministry of Home Affairs, India, as a society with fundamental religious, spiritual, educational, and social objectives.

Perceptions can sometimes mislead specific individuals, as those with little or no affinity for religion or spirituality often presume that all religious institutions are sedentary and parasitic, contributing nothing to people outside their community or society. Unfortunately, due to a lack of exposure, many remain unaware of the numerous organisations from diverse religious backgrounds in India that rival the best-known secular institutions in charity and public service.

Faith and spirituality are part of the fabric of East Asian society, particularly in India. Religious organisations serve people more effectively than government and secular institutions. Our definition of spirituality encompasses fulfilling the diverse needs of individuals, whether related to religious beliefs, education, the arts, material needs, or medical care.

Advancement in the Kundeling Monastic Community

The recent growth of the ACT is related to the increasing number of community members in the KMC. As mentioned in that year's Annual Report, the induction process for the newly arrived postulants began mid-2023. For two decades after the founding of the KMC, it was the first time in its history that its inhabitants mushroomed from fifteen to thirty. Given that some leave after ten years of training, we now have approximately twenty new candidates.

The KMC combines secular and spiritual training, recognising that few will choose a monastic life. This monastery also allows training in the Buddhist curriculum without ordination. The KMC emphasises the importance of monastics engaging with the local populace and mainstream Indian society. Those who pursue the monastic vocation

have responsibilities toward Buddhist votaries and humanity. We can confidently say that these features are unique to the KMC.

While a blessing to the KMC, the new postulants also present a challenge to its permanent inhabitants and the ACT. Their secular education, health, and other needs have become priorities alongside their religious training. The care and upbringing of these recruits are now critical for the ACT, as the members of the KMC will carry on the legacy of the ACT's goals and objectives and will hopefully serve as the foot soldiers of both the ACT and the KMC.

KMC Undertakings in Summary

As the pivotal project of the ACT, it involves its community of monastics and newly inducted postulants, who will spend a little more than a decade in training that includes their secular education and religious study. Some unwittingly view this as a purely religious endeavour without realising that it also entails the care and parenting of young people who receive the same education that any secular school could boast of.

Unlike schools in other regions, education is free in the KMC, which provides all necessary resources to support the growth of adolescents. Unlike other monasteries, KMC also covers the costs of excursions and visits for inmates to see their families. Education at our institution is not about seeking a livelihood; spiritual counselling and religious services are not for remuneration.

As we now place greater emphasis on the KMC's improvement, for the reasons stated, this does not indicate that our other aims have become inoperative. A bit of common sense will reveal that education and juvenile care projects now fall directly under our jurisdiction as undertakings within the confines of the KMC. They comply with our bylaws, meet Indian regulations, and align with our objectives.

The Promotion of Art for Its Preservation

In recent years, since 2022, we have revived a long-cherished project that had lain dormant for various reasons, not due to apathy. The astute understand that artwork related to both Indian and Tibetan archetypes promotes the respective cultures of these two ethnicities and provides a livelihood for an ancient profession on the verge of extinction. State-sponsored work on conserving artwork and monumental edifices in the West, based on Christian heritage, does not imply support for Christianity or a purely religious agenda.

The commissioning of Thangkas (tapestry paintings), receptacles (icons of deities),

and ritual objects is commonly regarded as souvenirs, gifts, and decorative items in homes today. It is no longer viewed solely as a religious practice; however, this does not imply that we endorse the sale of Buddhist icons and their related paraphernalia for commercial purposes. This perspective arises from the liberal outlook of mature Buddhists who believe that adapting Buddha icons by apostates to serve various purposes does not attack Buddhism.

As we discuss the promotion of art, its various presentations, and its value in sustaining local livelihoods and employment, I would like to mention that, in my capacity, I have occasionally promoted local handicrafts and artefacts, a practice I continue to this day. For instance, I have privately purchased local sandalwood powder incense and cultural artefacts from the state enterprise for decades to promote art and culture.

The Annual Promotion of Secular Education and Other Sponsorship Projects

In 1988, I introduced the concept of “Buddhism in Action,” the first application of this goal, translated to “Supporting Secular Education.” In 1993, I secured the support of the Atisha India Tibet Funds in the Netherlands. The founding of the Atisha Charitable Trust in March 1994 marked the acknowledgement of support for secular education as one of the Trust’s critical goals. Since then, despite numerous hurdles, we at the ACT have never wavered from this precious objective. Despite calling the goal ‘Buddhism in Action,’ we have never attempted to convert those who benefit from our schemes to the Buddhist faith.

Since 2012, we have assisted the Karnataka State Government-funded schools in rural Mysore, where we adopted the Government Higher Primary School (GHPS) of Arasinakere. This support extends to other GHPS schools in nearby villages. The aid includes uniforms, raincoats, stationery, complimentary gifts to boost morale during inter-school competitions, and funds for renovating school buildings. The support pattern has continued in varying degrees, depending on the schools’ needs, and contributions are ongoing.

The individual sponsorship projects have supported Tibetan monks and families in Tibetan refugee settlements, as well as Indians from low-income families studying in schools or colleges. This year, contributions went towards scholarship initiatives for Tibetan monks, providing stationery goods for GHPS village schools, supporting the Leprosy Mission India, and facilitating public relations exchanges that involved hosting public figures and local authorities.

The Project Paricharya, The Ritual Undertaking as Service

Probably one of the least understood engagements among many in the Western Hemisphere, giving the impression of merely being involved in a ‘faith healing’ process or a praying session. On the contrary, many from the West have immensely benefited from such symbolic gestures from their chosen faiths, other than Buddhism. We do not intend to discuss Buddhist ritualistic practices; instead, we would like to enlighten our readers on the practical benefits and values of these practices.

This world is full of problems and suffering, with conflicts abundant everywhere. The bright side of life comes from optimism and spiritual values that embody the spirit of altruism and wisdom. However, contemporary learning institutions and society contribute little to these priceless values. As a Buddhist organisation, it is natural for us to act and provide solutions based on our tenets. This is where Buddhist ceremonial engagements, called Paricharya, come into play.

People facing various health problems, seeking relief, preparing for surgery, approaching the end of life, and dealing with severe financial issues and family disputes from different parts of the world have consistently appealed to us for support. We have counselled numerous individuals, providing solace and hope while leaving it up to them to follow the suggestions offered. Whether alive or deceased, we have offered hope through our prayer vigils and even acted as a hospice for those in their final days.

We believe that anyone with moderate intellect will agree that this is more than mere social engagement or just another therapy.

Work Not Undertaken For This Year

In our 2023 report, we mentioned the departure of the Sai Baba Volunteers, who had been assisting us with the Allopathic medical camp, and the passing of our Taiwanese doctor of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). These two incidents occurred during the pandemic, following the total lockdowns that began in 2020. The devastating effects, even after the return to normalcy, resulted in dramatic changes and losses. For the ACT, this led to the closure of the Allopathic Medical Camp (AMC) and the Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) program.

It is common knowledge that during the pandemic, the entire world came to a standstill, rendering many of our projects dysfunctional, just like all other institutions. Nevertheless, our contributions to medical care continued, as reported in 2021 and 2022.

Although our AMC and TCM may have paused, our support for health and medical projects persisted through other channels, including on a personal level. We hope to resume the TCM in the coming year and will explore alternative health and medical support options.

The ACT has a history of enduring persecutive vendettas engineered by some highly celebrated individuals, involving stigmatisation and financial embargoes. We have always stood for the separation of state and church, as well as for the freedom of belief and expression, and those who insinuate against us for other reasons have yet to produce solid evidence. Our adversaries, however, have succeeded in marginalising us from all support for three decades, resulting in limitations on our activities and space. But we believe this will change!

Our endeavour to achieve self-sufficiency has remained a dream for the reasons stated. Since the inception of the ACT, we have lacked commercial outlets and means to support our projects, which primarily rely on a small number of patrons. While discussions regarding financial independence continue with our patrons on various occasions, we do not feel the need to elaborate on it here in this write-up. We encourage our readers to acquaint themselves with the Aims and Objectives, the history, nature and functions of the ACT from our website

Ultimately, this write-up aims to convey the essence of a financial report provided to our benefactors, presenting precise figures intended primarily for their information and understanding. It seeks to make our undertakings comprehensible and rationalise them, as numbers alone are not self-explanatory.

1. The newly arrived postulants since July 2023 and those that arrived in January 2024 provided with homewear at the Kundeling Monastery.



2. At the English class with Mrs Geeta and attending the religious classes and helping with the dogs in the community.





3. The monks of the KMC distribbuting stationary goods as contribution tools to-wards promotion of secular education on the 21st June 2024.





4. Felicitation and thanks giving from the ACT to the teachers and all working staff at the ACT headquarters July 25th 2024.







5. At a special meal on a special day for the community 30th July, 2024.



6. The first effort towards saving of energy consumption and installation of solar panels at the headquarterson the 1st August 2024. The beginning of the first phase.



7. The annual contribution towards inter school contests, an effort in promoting competitive skills in sports, dancing and arts among youth on the 3rd September 2024.



8. The new members of the KMC are on a recreation tour during the famous Dasera festival at Mysore on the October 2024.





The faces of the newly settled young members of the KMC says it all!

9. Buddhist artwork of sacred images purchased and adorned, serving multi-purposes, to both believers and non believers.

