EDU:C Proposal:  
The Robert H.N. Ho Centre for Buddhist Studies

1 Naming pending approval of Governing Council

Statement of Purpose

This is a proposal to establish The Robert H.N. Ho Centre for Buddhist Studies. This will be a new Centre, with an administrative home in Arts & Science. With affiliated faculty supporting the centre from all three campuses, UTM and UTSC will be associated with this EDU. The Centre would be opened July 1, 2017.

Academic Rationale

The Robert H.N. Ho Centre for Buddhist Studies is being proposed as an EDU:C unit that is the locus of collaborative research and training across the University in the area of Buddhist Studies. This section describes the academic rationale for the creation of this Centre. The Centre will provide an intellectual home for faculty, graduate and undergraduate students already engaged in Buddhist studies. The Centre will sponsor conferences, lectures or other events in Buddhist Studies, provide graduate and undergraduate student support, support short term visiting scholars, and support the teaching of Buddhist Studies courses at the University.

Toronto is home to one of the most diverse populations in the world, with more than 150 languages spoken daily and approximately half of the residents originating from beyond Canada’s borders. Among them are dozens of Buddhist communities, resulting in a unique mosaic of Buddhist traditions in the Greater Toronto Area. This mosaic is reflected in the diverse religions that are studied at the University of Toronto, Canada’s leading university. The University of Toronto is home to three core Buddhist Studies faculty members and fifteen faculty members directly supporting Buddhist Studies researchers and students. Their research represents the traditions of India, China, Japan, Tibet, Nepal, Burma and Central Asia. Each year, four hundred undergraduate students enrol in the approximately 45 courses on Buddhism and cognate topics. The graduate offering in Buddhist Studies within the MA and PhD in the Study of Religion, housed in the Department for the Study of Religion currently has sixteen MA and PhD students. Such a robust program would not be possible without courses in languages such Chinese, Japanese, Sanskrit, Tibetan, Burmese, Pali, Newar, and Vietnamese, which are offered at the University of Toronto in the Department for the Study of Religion and the East Asian Studies Department. Moreover, over the last two decades, thanks to generous support from a number of affiliated centres and lecture programs, the University of Toronto has hosted a rich series of courses, visiting lecturers, visiting faculty teachers and researchers, conferences and other events. The result is one of the most vibrant and productive centres of Buddhist Studies in North America.
U of T’s Department for the Study of Religion (DSR) is the unit in which most Buddhist Studies scholars are either appointed or affiliated, and which houses the graduate offerings in Buddhist Studies and the undergraduate Major program in Buddhist Studies and Specialist program in Buddhist Studies. The DSR is the largest and most productive department in religious studies in Canada and among the top in North America, comparable to Columbia, Emory, Yale and UC Santa Barbara. It offers an unparalleled balance among Eastern, Middle-Eastern and Western religions, between classical and modern iterations of religions, and between traditional historical, philological and text-centred approaches to that engage anthropology, sociology, politics and post-colonial studies. It regards its location in one of the world’s most religiously diverse cities as an important resource and responsibility in facilitating intellectually informed and publicly-minded conversations on religion in the public sphere.

In Buddhist Studies, the department currently has expertise in forms of Chinese, Tibetan, Himalayan, South Asian and Southeast Asian Buddhism. In teaching and research, the department focuses on the study of Buddhist traditions with the use of historical, text-critical, art historical, philological, anthropological and philosophical methods. The field currently highlights a context-sensitive study of Buddhism, focusing on ritual, philosophy, medicine and other intellectual developments and modes of practice in South Asia, the Himalayas, Nepal, Burma/Myanmar, Central Asia, Tibet, China, and Japan.

Graduate offerings in Buddhist Studies: Both the MA and PhD in the Study of Religion offer fields of study in Buddhist Studies through, the DSR. This constitutes Canada’s largest graduate offering in Buddhist Studies, currently enrolling sixteen students in the field; MA and PhD graduates of the DSR’s Buddhist Studies field have gone on to teach at Universities around the world and/or take up other careers (see below). The department has one endowed scholarship specifically awarded to a PhD student in the field, the Phool Maya Chen Scholarship in Buddhist Studies. Most graduate students participate in faculty research clusters in Buddhist Studies (see below).

Undergraduate programs in Buddhist Studies: Undergraduates with an interest in Buddhism may join the department’s focused and vibrant degree programs in the field: the Buddhist Studies major or the Buddhist Studies specialist programs. A number of undergraduate students each year are chosen to participate in faculty-led research clusters (see below), and Buddhist Studies faculty have led 299Y Research Opportunity Program courses most years since 2004 for undergraduates interested in advanced Buddhist Studies research training.

International coursework and research in Buddhist Studies: Graduate students in Buddhist Studies regularly accompany faculty members on research trips or conduct their own graduate research, with students traveling in recent years to India, China, Tibet, Myanmar, Nepal, Taiwan, and Mongolia. The Woodsworth College Summer Abroad program in Hong Kong has regularly offered RLH290Y Religion in Hong Kong or RLG206Y Introduction to Buddhism as international courses for students interested in Buddhist Studies. Undergraduates have also accompanied Buddhist Studies faculty members to Tibet and China for research; two recent 399Y/DIIF international study/research opportunities have brought students interested in Buddhism to Vietnam and Himalayan India; and other types of funding, such as UTEA or faculty grants, have provided a number of undergraduate students with the chance to travel for research on Buddhism.

Our scholars and students have access to outstanding academic resources. Foremost is the Cheng Yu Tung East Asian Library. The Library began with a collection of rare materials acquired from China in the 1930s and today is one of the major research collections on East Asian studies in North America. It
holds foreign language source materials for advanced research in Chinese, Japanese, Korean and Tibetan Buddhism, containing more than 400,000 volumes. Other U of T libraries have extensive holdings in Hindi, Bengali, Tamil and Sanskrit, covering a range of Buddhist texts and secondary scholarship.

The Library has been particularly supportive of the growth of Buddhist Studies at the U of T over the last decade. For example, a unique model of international collaboration between the U of T and Columbia University’s research libraries harnesses existing expertise in Tibetan collection services at both universities to increase the availability of Tibetan resources to a wider community of scholars in Canada and the US, making the Tibetan collection at U of T the largest in Canada. Faculty and students of both institutions benefit from the innovative service model created by the partnership, established in 2012, which provides for jointly sponsored acquisitions trips to enhance the Tibetan collections at both universities, and a shared point of service for research consultations.

Faculty members and students also have access to Buddhist art and artifacts in the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM). Within the ROM, the Department of World Cultures employs several full-time researchers devoted to the art and archaeology of Asia. Among the permanent collections containing Buddhist objects are the Joey and Toby Tanenbaum Gallery of China, the Prince Takamado Gallery of Japan, the Gallery of Korea, and the newly established Sir Christopher Ondaatje South Asian Gallery. In addition, the ROM is home to the H.H. Mu Far Eastern Library, which is considered to be the most important collection in Canada uniquely devoted to Asian art.

In addition to extensive library and museum resources, the University of Toronto hosts a number of regular lecture series that are focused in full or in part on Buddhist Studies. Most prominently, the University of Toronto / McMaster University Yehan Numata Program in Buddhist Studies is a yearly series of Lectures and Reading Group meetings in Buddhist Studies, as well as regular conferences in Buddhist Studies. Critical Indology is an annual lecture on methods, theories, and sources for studying South Asia. Centre for South Asian Studies Lectures is a series organized by the CSAS that has events in support of Buddhist Studies regularly. Lectures in the Arts, Histories, Literatures and Religions of Burma is presented by the Southeast Asia Seminar Series and the Centre for South Asian Studies once yearly.

In addition to these lecture series, University of Toronto is regularly the host of major conferences or workshops focused fully or in part on Buddhist Studies. For example, in 2012 the Department for the Study of Religion hosted the annual “Religion and the Literary in Tibet” workshop, funded by SSHRC, bringing over twenty international scholars here to discuss new research on Tibetan literature and their effects on religious discourse and practice. “Religious Materiality in the Indian Ocean World, 1300-1800” is the 2015-2016 Sawyer Seminar on the Comparative Study of Cultures, funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, which interrogates how material forms of religious culture reveal the historically contingent nature of trans-local practices in the Indian Ocean World from 1300 to 1800. In 2017, the U of T will host the “XVIIIth Congress of the International Association of Buddhist Studies.” This conference, which takes place every three years in Asia, Europe, or the Americas, is the largest international forum for the presentation of current academic scholarship on Buddhism. This will be the first time a Congress of the IABS will take place in Canada.
Consultation

Consultation has been between the Dean’s office and departments at UTSC, the Dean’s office at FAS, New College, the Dean’s Office at UTM, Department of Religion (FAS), and Advancement (both centrally and at FAS).

We note the existence of two additional venues for the study of Buddhism at the University of Toronto: an undergraduate minor program at New College, and a Master of Pastoral Studies program at Emmanuel College. The undergraduate Minor Program in “Buddhism, Psychology and Mental Health” is offered at New College. Courses in this program investigate how Buddhist and Western psychology intersect, with an emphasis on Western psychological and scientific research methodologies. There are no full-time faculty appointments associated with this program. In addition to courses, supplementary program activities include occasional seminars featuring research in Buddhism and psychology and practical workshops on applications of Buddhism and psychology; and a Buddhism and Psychology Student Union that organizes meditation and yoga classes, discussion groups, invited speakers, movie nights, and social events. Emmanuel College has recently opened “Studies in Buddhism”, joining its Muslim Studies and its historically dominant Christian programs as a new professional stream. Their Master of Pastoral Studies: Buddhism (MPS) is a twenty-credit professional master’s program aimed at preparing graduates to be certified with the Canadian Association for Spiritual Care as persons who provide pastoral counselling and/or spiritual care (public chaplaincy) in hospitals, educational institutions, prisons, congregations and the armed forces. There are no full-time faculty appointments associated with this program at Emmanuel. As these two venues do not focus on teaching or research in the academic field of Buddhist Studies, they are not included in the present proposal. In orienting the new Ho Centre for Buddhist Studies, care must be taken to clearly present to a wider public the difference between the academic field of Buddhist Studies and programs such as these.

Faculty Participation

See Appendix A for a Faculty list.

Structure/ Administration

As an EDU:C, this Centre is a multidisciplinary, multi-departmental unit designed to foster research and scholarly interest in Buddhist Studies. The EDU:C will report to a Council of Deans comprised of the Deans of FAS, UTM and UTSC. The Director will be appointed by the lead Dean (FAS) in consultation with other Deans on the Council of Deans for a fixed term of no more than five years. The Director will administer the Centre’s operating budget from divisional budgets and be responsible for administrative and financial operations, accountable to the lead Dean. All monies and research funding will flow
through the Dean’s (FAS) office in line with the Faculty’s normal practice. Any research contracts or agreements similarly require approval and the signature of the FAS Dean.

The Director will be supported by an Executive Committee comprised of faculty in the field of Buddhist Studies. The Executive Committee will consist of at least three members and will meet with the Director of the Centre on a regular bias (usually twice per semester) to oversee the regular activities of the Centre. These activities include the approval of disbursements of funds available to the Centre in accordance with relevant agreements. An Advisory Board in line with the Provost’s Statement on the Role of Advisory Bodies will include scholars in Buddhist Studies from outside the University of Toronto. The role of the Advisory Board will be to provide strategic consultation and advice to the Centre. The Advisory Board will include both internal and external representation. The University welcomes the participation from The Robert H.N. Ho Family Foundation who shall be entitled to appoint one representative to the Advisory Board.

The Centre will not offer courses. Courses in Buddhist Studies will continue to be offered in the Departmental units where they are now housed.

**Budget**

The tri-campus advisory committee, with the agreement of The Robert H.N. Ho Family Foundation, proposes the pooling of the two parts of the Ho gift into one endowment of $4,000,000. This endowment will earn at current investment rates (4.25%) approximately $170,000 per year. The committee recommends the following uses for the annual income, aimed at using the balance of the funds ($82,000) yearly at the annual discretion of the Director and Executive Committee.

1. administrative support for the Centre (0.5 FTE, ~$ 50,000 + $12,000 benefits);
2. a Director’s stipend ($10,000);
3. stipends for the teaching of up to two Buddhist studies courses at UTSC ($16,000), and Buddhist Studies scholarly events especially at the St George and UTSC campuses;
4. support as possible for short term visiting scholars and student needs.

The Centre will have the following physical resource requirements, to be provided by the University:

1. Director’s office
2. Admin support office
3. Meeting room

**Research Funds**

The EDU:C will not administer research funds.
Review

In line with normal practice, this EDU:C will be subject to periodic review (normally every five years) by the lead Dean. Any review would normally assess the EDU’s sustainability, performance, and achievements to the goals set out at its establishment. Possible outcomes of the review could include closure.

Appendix A: Faculty

We have divided the relevant faculty in two categories, “Active Faculty” and “Collaborating Faculty”. Active faculty consists of the U of T Buddhist Studies scholars who have a primary graduate appointment in the DSR. Collaborating faculty are scholars who support the study of Buddhism from cognate fields, such as Asian History, South Asian Studies, or Anthropology.

Buddhist Studies Active Faculty

Christoph Emmrich (Associate Professor – UTM) works on children, gender, mimesis, and memory, and the translation of ritual idioms across Buddhism, Hinduism and Jainism. Through historical records and contemporary testimonies he studies Buddhist and Brahmanical practices, such as ear-piercing and the marriage to the bilva fruit, designed for and transformed by girl children in Burma/Myanmar and the Kathmandu Valley of Nepal. Christoph has also worked on time in Pāli literature, Burmese travel writing, ritual failure in Nepalese processions, and the role of ritual in Newar literary production. His main current project is Once the Buddha Was a Girl.

Frances Garrett (Associate Professor) does research on Tibetan religious history and its relations with other forms of Tibetan intellectual and literary culture, especially medicine. Her work has addressed the implications of controversies over human development in Tibetan scholasticism, how Tibetans reconcile medical physiology with Buddhist descriptions of the body, and the formation of intellectual and literary disciplinarity. She has worked recently on the Inner Asian Gesar epic, and is now beginning a project focused on contemporary and historical stories about Himalayan mountains, as told by Tibetans, Sherpas, and international mountaineers and pilgrims. At the University of Toronto, she is also a member of the Asian Institute, the Centre for South Asian Studies, and the Knowledge Media Design Institute. She was the 2010-2011 Director of the Religion in the Public Sphere Initiative, and she has been Associate Chair of the Department for the Study of Religion since 2011.

Amanda Goodman (Assistant Professor) is cross-appointed in the Department for the Study of Religion and the Department of East Asian Studies. Her research focuses on the formative Tang-Song transition period of Chinese Buddhism, and specifically the Chinese esoteric or tantric Buddhist traditions of the eighth through tenth centuries. Grounded in the textual and material finds from the Dunhuang Buddhist cave site, her work engages with broader conceptual issues in the study of the dissemination and appropriation or alteration of Buddhism across the Sinitic world in the pre-modern period. She is also interested in the cross-cultural transmission of Buddhism along the old Silk Road, and regularly teaches on the topic of Central Asian Buddhism. She is currently preparing a book-length study centered on an indigenous Chinese Buddhist ritual compilation, the Vajra Peak Scripture, that reflects on regional and trans-regional esoteric Buddhist ritual trends during China’s middle-period.
Collaborating Faculty (Non-budgetary cross-appointments)

Arti Dhand's areas of interest include the Mahabharata and the Ramayana Hindu epics, Hindu ethics, gender issues in Hinduism, and religion and sexuality. She is the author of *Woman as Fire, Woman as Sage: Sexual Ideology in the Mahabharata* (2008) and numerous articles on topics such as “Engendering Brahmanirvanam in the Mahabharata: A Conversation between Suka and Sulabha,” “Hinduism and Pedagogy: Teaching Hinduism to Hindus in the Canadian Diaspora,” and “The Subversive Nature of Dharma in the Mahabharata: A Tale of Women, Smelly Ascetics, and God.” She has a BA and MA from the University of Calgary, and a PhD from McGill University.

Deepali Dewan is Senior Curator in the Department of World Cultures at the Royal Ontario Museum and Associate Professor, U of T Department of Fine Art. Her research interests encompass nineteenth and twentieth-century visual culture of South Asia and the South Asian Diaspora. Her work on colonial South Asia has examines the links between early art education, the circulation of objects, and the production of knowledge in the discipline of art history.

Kajri Jain has worked on popular images in modern India, such as the bazaar icons known as calendar art, or monumental statues, such as those of Tibetan and Dalit Buddhism, and theme parks, focussing on a vernacular business ethos where religion has been the primary site for adopting new media and expressive techniques.

Malavika Kasturi specialises in the social and cultural history of modern South Asia. Her research interests include gender and kinship, law and legal history, and popular religion. Her recent book, *Embattled Identities, Rajput Lineages and the Colonial State in Nineteenth Century Colonial North India* (Oxford University Press, 2002) analysed the reconstitution of the family and martial masculinities amongst elite lineages in British India, against the backdrop of colonial ideologies, political culture and material realities. Kasturi has also written about the engagement of kinship hierarchies with colonial legal discourses on property, succession and inheritance.

Reid B. Locklin holds a joint appointment with St Michael’s College and the Department for the Study of Religion. His research focuses on a range of issues in Comparative Theology and Hindu-Christian Studies, particularly the engagement between Christian thought and the Hindu tradition of Advaita Vedanta. He also writes on the scholarship of teaching and learning in theology and religion. Dr. Locklin grew up in Athens, Georgia, completed a BA in Humanities at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, a MTS from Boston University, and a PhD in Theology from Boston College in 2003. He has taught at the University of Toronto since 2004.

Jennifer Purtle works on Chinese art and visual culture from the Six Dynasties to the present, in particular, the cultural geography of artistic production, urbanism, East/West exchange, optics and optical media, and Chinese contemporary art and its various historical and geographical contexts.

Srilata Raman completed her BA in New Delhi, India, her MPhil at Oxford University, and PhD in Tübingen, Germany. She is the author of *Self-Surrender (Prapatti) to God in Śrīvaīśvāravīraśīvavism: Tamil Cats and Sanskrit Monkeys* (2007), and *Words and Deeds: Hindu and Buddhist Rituals in South Asia* (2005).

Ajay Rao works on Sanskrit intellectual history, Sanskrit literature, and religion in South India. His first book, Re-figuring the Ramayana as Literature: A History of Reception in Premodern India focused on traditional hermeneutics and the pre-colonial prehistory of the modern emergence of this epic as a
foundational religious text. He is currently engaged in collaborative research projects on the “Age of Vedanta” and “Sultanate Sanskrit”.

**Graham Sanders** studies the portrayal in narrative of the composition, performance and reception of poetry in pre-modern China as a way of enriching our understanding of how poetic practice was envisioned in the Chinese tradition. He teaches classical Chinese language, and literature survey courses from the pre-Qin through the Qing eras at the undergraduate level, and more specialized courses in pre-Tang and Tang literature at the graduate level.

**Jayeeta Sharma** works on migration, labour, family, gender, food, cultural circulation, in studies of Eastern Himalayan borderlands, the British Empire, and post-colonial spaces. Her book, *Empire’s Garden: Assam and the Making of India* (2011) examines the intersections of colonial tea capitalism with identity contestations in modern and contemporary India. Her current research on the Himalayas, focuses on labour mobilization, hill-stations, inter-racial intimacies, education, missionary and philanthropic networks across sites as diverse as Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Scotland, Australia, and New Zealand.


**Chen Shen** joined the ROM in 1997 as the first Bishop White Curator of East Asian Archaeology, an endowed curatorship, and began his Canadian-Chinese collaborative archaeological fieldwork in China. Currently, Dr. Shen is leading several projects in Pleistocene archaeology in Northern China - Nihewan, Luonan, and Shandong projects. His research focuses on human origins and lithic technology development in East Asia. Dr. Shen has curated numerous exhibitions at the ROM, including the critically acclaimed *Treasures from a Lost Civilization: Ancient Chinese Art from Sichuan* (2002), and *The Warrior Emperor and China’s Terracotta Army* (2010). Dr. Shen has also been integral in fostering working relationships between the ROM and numerous renowned museums in China, including the Palace Museum and the National Museum of China (both in Beijing), and Nanjing Museum (Jiangsu Province).

**Michael Stoeber** received a BA in philosophy (1980) and an MA in religious studies (1986) from the University of Calgary, as well as Alberta Permanent Teaching Certification (1983). After studies at McMaster and University of Toronto, he received a PhD in philosophy of religion through the Centre for the Study of Religion at the University of Toronto (1990) and a SSHRCC Post-Doctoral Fellowship (1990-1992). He is professor of Spirituality at Regis College and cross-appointed to the Department for the Study of Religion, University of Toronto.

**Nhung Tuyet Tran**’s intellectual interests lie at the intersection of gender, law, and religious practice in Vietnamese society. She is completing a social history of gender, entitled *Vietnamese Women at the Crossroads of Southeast Asia: Gender, State & Society in the Early Modern Period*. She has published in the *Journal of Asian Studies* and is the co-editor of Viêt Nam: Borderless Histories (2006), a collection of
revisionist essays on Vietnamese histories. She has begun research on a study examining the cultural history of Vietnamese Catholicism, using sources written in classical Chinese, the Vietnamese demotic script (chữ nôm), and European languages. She is Canada Research Chair in Southeast Asian History.

Tony Toneatto is a clinical psychologist and a member in good standing with the College of Psychologists of Ontario and the Canadian Health Register of Service Providers in Psychology. He received his Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from McGill University in Montreal in 1987. He is an Associate Professor in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Toronto, and until 2010, he was a senior scientist in the Clinical Research Department at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. He is widely published in the psychology of addiction and psychiatric disorder with over 100 peer-reviewed articles and book chapters, some of which focus on the use of Buddhist meditation in clinical practice and research. Dr. Toneatto has over twenty-five years of clinical experience in the assessment, diagnosis and treatment of a wide variety of psychiatric disorders, including anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress, substance and behavioural addictions.