

BODHI TIMES

Benevolent Organisation for Development, Health & Insight (BODHI)

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No. 23

We aim sustainably to improve health, education and the environment in developing countries by providing a hook, not a fish. BODHI was founded in 1989 on the principle of skillful, compassionate action. BODHI is neither religious nor political. We have supporters and advisers from many faiths. We encourage your support, ideas and acts of kindness. Realising the interdependence of all beings is in our enlightened self-interest. If we don't work together to reduce the world's much-discussed problems, then who will?



L to r: Nathan Thuma, Gary Bravo, Tony Richardson, Ben Chaves, Pat Winters, Aleta Drummond, Marty Rubin, Mike Miller, David Beck, Alan Dreifuss and Jane Sorenson. Below rt: Aleta Drummond (l) and Susan Lavelle.

15 Ugly Docs

On Saturday, May 11, Dr Martin Rubin and some friends put together Dance Party for Tibet in Forestville, California. It raised nearly the entire amount needed for Year 3 of the Revolving Sheep Bank, providing a night of fun for people BODHI otherwise would not reach. Long may it continue!

Thanks to Edmee Danan, MD, Guy Gullion, MD, Serge Abramovich, MD, Patricia Winters, MD, Nathan Thuma, MD, Gary Bravo, MD, David Beck, MD, Alan Dreifuss, PhD, Mike Miller, MD, Mark Kasprow, MD, Sophie Anesow-McLean, MD, Ben Chaves, MD.

Special thanks to Aleta Drummond, MD, Tony Richardson, MD (for bringing toy sheep from Australia), Susan Lavelle and Jane Baron-Sorensen for their extra effort. The Poyntlyss Sistars Band (B-a-a-a-n-d) played.



Revolving Sheep Bank, Year 3: See p. 4

Tibetan photos on pp. 1 & 4 courtesy Goldstein/Beall

We've got it! Australian tax-deductibility

BODHI Australia has finally achieved tax-deductible status. We are classified as a deductible gift recipient (DGR) as an overseas relief fund and as an income tax exempt charity (ITEC).

It was a community effort. We were helped all along the way. Tony Scavone provided crucial legal advice. Jane Hudspeth did everything that was asked promptly and graciously. Luiz Ribeiro attended meetings in Canberra. Many community groups wrote letters of support. Senators John Watson and Bob Brown and the Hon. Dick Adams and staff provided expertise, advice and facilities. Special thanks to those at AusAID and Peter Howells at the Australian Taxation Office. Thank you all very much.

Australian tax-payers: Cheques to BODHI Australia Overseas Relief Fund are tax-deductible, as are any credit card donations. Cheques to BODHI Australia are welcome but not tax-deductible.

U.S. tax-payers: All donations are unaffected and remain tax-deductible in any form.

A global campaign of hope

The scale of terrorism continues to expand and the attempts by Western governments to suppress it look increasingly costly, punitive and unsuccessful. For people with comparatively high incomes, the world has become more unstable and dangerous, though it is still far safer, accessible and predictable than for the majority of the world's population.

As well, scientific recognition of the scale of adverse environmental change continues to grow. Adding to the well-recognised problem of greenhouse gas accumulation, a vast brown haze over much of Asia and the Mediterranean Basin has been identified as changing global climate by reducing rainfall and the penetration of light needed to grow food. Contributing to this haze are aerosols from cars, coal-fired power stations and biomass burning from innumerable cooking fires. A bright spot is that, while this haze may have contributed to the prolonged dry spell across the eastern Sahel in the 1970s and 1980s, the recent increased rainfall in this region has coincided with (and may have been caused by) reduced European emissions of sulphur dioxide.

Meanwhile, drought has reduced harvests in southern Africa, Ethiopia, Australia and parts of Asia. Globally, the per capita production of grain has fallen for the fifth straight year, to levels last seen in the early 1970s (see figure). A drought followed by crop-damaging rain currently threatens famine in Cambodia. Food is short in Central America, partly because of Hurricane Mitch's destruction of so much infrastructure. In Argentina and Uruguay, people are increasingly going hungry as their economic crisis deepens.

What lies ahead?

The performances of the U.S. and Australia at the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the Delhi Conference of the Parties on climate change do not augur well for our common future. Both countries continue to appear indifferent to the risk of climate change. Presumably, they think others will be most severely affected. William Blum, author of *Rogue State: A Guide to the World's Only Superpower*, has collated several reports of U.S. triumphalism. For example, Robert Kagan of the Carnegie Endowment wrote: "The truth is that the benevolent hegemony exercised by the U.S. is good for a vast portion of the world's population. It is certainly a better international arrangement than all realistic alternatives." Similarly, Blum reports that columnist Charles Krauthammer speaks of America's "uniquely benign imperium."

There is a disturbing parallel between the U.S., the Nazis and the Taliban. All see the world in Manichean terms, that is, one in which people are solely good or bad (Aryan/

non-Aryan, believer/infidel, and terrorist/non-terrorist). The U.S. is far more inclusive than the Nazis and Taliban, but needs spurring to provide the leadership required to ensure the future *is* better than the past.

Consistent with a Manichean worldview is the West's widespread ignorance of its governments' record of manipulating or supporting foreign regimes in exchange for access to their resources, even where such governments are flagrantly corrupt. One example of the double standard of democracy at home allied with autocracies abroad is the unflagging Western support for the Saudi Arabian monarchy (despite its vast wealth, Saudi Arabia has a comparatively low life expectancy.) Michael Klare, author of *Resource Wars*, reports the common belief that, in 1945, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt pledged continual U.S. support for the Saudi monarchy in exchange for unfettered access to its oil. Similar meddling by Western powers (including Russia) in the Middle East contributed to the rise of Saddam Hussein and the Taliban.

Just as barbarians assaulted the walls of the Roman empire, it's not surprising that today's centers of world power are under attack. That the instigators are not the poorest of the poor (the fourth "claste") does not invalidate the claim that the extent of global inequality is an important factor in their genesis. For example, assertions that the CIA is behind the Bali bomb attack had widespread credence in Indonesia. Would such views be as common if Indonesians had a long history of democracy, literacy, scientific achievement and engagement as emerging equals in the world economy, and if the CIA had a less meddlesome history?

In fact, the rise of terror, the availability of weapons of mass destruction, the still growing global population and the continuing decline in natural capital are deeply concerning, particularly if the rich

world continues to rely on fortification and militarization as its main response.

Alternatives to war on terror

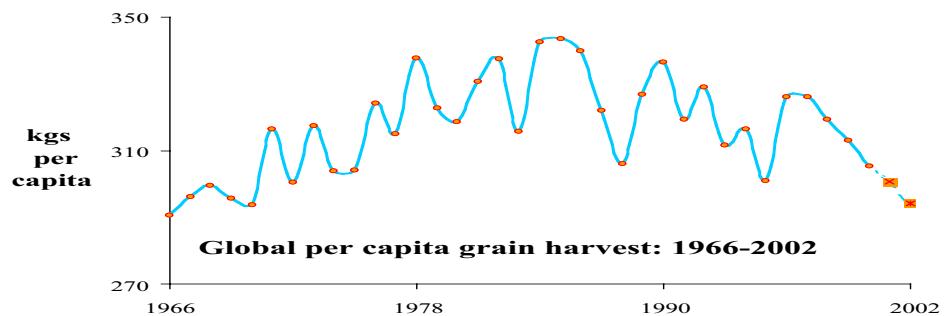
Instead, a campaign of hope, led by the U.S. and its allies, is far more attractive than a conventional war on terror, and may prove more effective at reducing terrorism. For this to occur, Western leaders must see that near universal access to education, information (and data) and clean technology are in our collective self-interest. Yes, it would be expensive. It would require enormous investment, on the scale of a military war. With luck research, subsidies, economies of scale and new technologies (especially to provide energy and transport) could become affordable to billions in the majority world. This campaign could stimulate the global economy and retard ecological harm. As well, wouldn't the hope of *genuine* engagement in the global economy reduce the attraction of terrorism as a career path?

A new gilded age?

Writing in the *New York Times*, Princeton economist Paul Krugman recently warned that the U.S. has returned to a new gilded age in which the super rich, cared for by armies of servants, live in mansions, some approaching the White House in size. Not unrelated, Jared Diamond warns that a major cause for the scale of global environmental risk-taking is the insulation of decision-making elites from the consequences of their actions.

The sacrifices required for a war of hope appear daunting. But a future in which terrorists use increasingly desperate means attempting to destroy civilization is appalling. A war on terror does not reduce the long-term risk. At the least, it needs to be allied with a campaign of hope. And this means that we must abandon Manichean world views.

References available on request.



The global grain harvest comfortably outpaced population growth during the 1970s, but has faltered in recent years. The mainstream explanation for the fall between 1985 and 1996 does not persuasively explain the subsequent decline. Total food production has not experienced the same decline, but grain is important because of its facility for storage and transportation, thus serving to protect and reduce the impact of poor seasons in different regions. Per capita fish consumption has also started to decline. Raw data: FAO, UN Population Division, and U.S. Dept of Agriculture (provisional data for 2001-2).

Annual Report: Sohbar Adult Literacy

Project Name: RYMPEI JINGSTAD Literacy Class, Sohbar

Period: From 1st July 2001 to 31st June 2002

Names of Authors of report and qualifications: Dr. Hallelolah Ghonglah, MBBS, MCH and Banri Ryngnga, MA.

2. Executive Summary

- i) The main purpose of the project: to teach all illiterate adults in the community around Sohbar to learn to read and write and to enable them to use this literacy in their work.
- ii) Collaborating institutions: this mainly includes the traditional institutions in the Khasi tribal community like the village durbars (councils), the youth groups and the Mothers' Unions.
- iii) The main expected result: enhanced literacy skill of the people, both men and women. It is extremely valuable because we live in a high information technology society and people without basic minimum literacy are left behind.
- iv) Future: based on the success of this project we would like to extend it to other communities and even attempt vocational training and guidance.

3. Progress

3.1 Project Objectives. The main objectives as mentioned is to make all adults in the Sohbar village able to read and write meaningfully. There is no deviation.

3.2 Project details.

- i) Timetable is one hour daily from 6pm to 7pm. This has been followed regularly. Two staff employed: Shri Kynsai Tangdhara and Ms Snoh Khongngai.
- ii) Methodology. These two teachers teach one hour every day besides literacy even other subjects like English and maths since the learners evinced much enthusiasm.
- iii) The results so far have been very encouraging. Around 56 students who have gained basic knowledge of literacy from this class have expressed more interest and initiative in their work. They know now how to calculate and record their earnings in the market and improve their cultivation. They know how not to be deceived by moneylenders etc.
- iv) Future. Would like the project to continue and even extend to other villages.

3.3 Budget discussion. Except for certain overheads, the budget has been more or less enough. Small variations here and there like the unexpected failure of electricity when we have to buy a gas lamp.

3.4 Conclusions. We have more or less achieved our original objectives. In fact the enthusiasm from the learners is more than what we aimed for. Would like to continue and expand to other areas if possible, even in vocational training.

4 Appendix

Results of Note. One bakynton malngiang, a person who was illiterate, now can read and write effectively. He said he felt like a new person now that he has control over his own life with the knowledge he gained here.

Budget expenditure(Actual):

1. Room rent:Rs1000x12 months	12,000.00
2. Honorarium for 2 teachers Rs500x2x12..	12,000.00
3. Books & materials 15x50x12	9,000.00
4. Almirahs(two)1000x2	2,000.00
5. Two chairs 600x2	1,200.00
6. Two tables 650x2	1,300.00
7. Two blackboards & chalks 500x2	1,000.00
8. Travel costs 1000x12	12,000.00
9. Gas lamp(due to power failure)	1,200.00
10. Other contingencies 500x12	6,000.00
TOTAL	56,700.00 (A\$2500, US\$1500)

The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment

The Millennium Assessment (MA) is an international research program modelled on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Involving many hundred scientists, it aspires to collate scientific evidence about the value of ecosystems to human society. Colin is involved in several aspects of the MA, including as co-ordinating lead author for the impact of future ecosystem change to human health and well-being. As well, his recent essay, "Demography, carrying capacity and entrapment" was awarded the 2001 W.D. Borrie prize by the Australian Population Association. Thanks to Dr. Maurice King, BODHI's public health adviser since 1990, for his part in informing and inspiring this article. Since completing his Ph.D. (entitled "Inequality and Sustainability"), Colin has been employed at the Australian National University in Canberra, working closely with Professor Tony McMichael. Through the wonders of electronic commuting, he still manages to spend most of his time in rural Tasmania.

THANK YOU

Shan Ali, NSW, Australia

Mrs Sumithra Bhat, Bangalore, India

Malcolm Dick, Tas, Australia

Prof. John Guillebaud, Oxford, UK

Dr. Brian Learoyd, NSW, Australia

Dr. Shanti Raman, NSW, Australia

Prof. Frank Schofield, Qld, Australia

Gayle Welch, Ph.D., AZ, US

Thanks to the **Australia Tibet Council**, Victoria, for allowing us to sell posters from their table during the Dalai Lama's visit to Melbourne in May, and to **Bryan West** for his generous donation and plans to adapt the Revolving Sheep Bank concept for use by other teachers via the publication, *Queensland Geographer*.

"Senior Geography students responded very favourably to The Revolving Sheep Bank during a recent activity wherein they evaluated the likely effectiveness of various Aid projects,' Bryan says. "One particularly lethargic chap became very excited, and exclaimed that it was 'the most f'ing hardcore thing' that he had ever heard of. He became further interested when he found out that its founders are 'normal people.'"

We need your help

Thanks to your generosity, BODHI has supported numerous exciting and innovative projects, such as continuing education for remote health workers, adult literacy (a key to better health) and a micro-credit scheme for Tibetan nomads.

To continue, we need your help. Please send your donation, payable in U.S. or Australian dollars, to an address below.

Donations by U.S. and Australian tax-payers are tax-deductible

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We greatly value your support and keep our mailing list confidential

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As someone whose life work has been the study of Bangladesh and its people, child labour has been an area of special interest to me for many years. It became an international issue in the last decade, as globalisation of world labour and markets reshaped the world economy. Images of children chained to looms have informed the perception of child labour in the West ever since, but how accurately do they reflect reality? Child labour cannot be seen in isolation nor dealt with as a single issue. It can be as benign as tending the family herd of goats or as horrible as fighting as front-line troops.

Most people draw a clear line between child work and child exploitation. Obviously, a child

whose work causes suffering needs help, but we in the West must be very careful about our response. Very often, our 'helping' becomes meddling that only makes things worse for the children and their families. Yet, to do nothing is surely a dereliction of responsibility towards those whose fundamental human rights we claim to uphold.

We owe it to working children to try to really come to grips with the reasons why they are working and what the consequences for that child might be if we interfere.

Let me illustrate this. Several years ago, girls of about 11 years of age were identified as employees in a carpet factory in Nepal, working 14-16 hour shifts daily, with a break of just one hour in the middle of the day. An outcry about this caused the girls to be sent home to the villages from which they had been recruited. But in their home villages and with no income, they spent their time in unpaid and remorseless domestic labour until they could be married off, usually

before puberty, to face a short and hazardous life as a wife and young mother in a society where there is little if any medical treatment for newly married women with gynaecological problems. One of the girls taken from the factory said that she liked work at the factory, because she had an hour to herself every day, reasonable food and a little money. Children who are discharged from such employment because of international pressure on their employers very often have no safety net, and end up in worse conditions.

then we have no business moralising or interfering.

Washing our collective hands of child exploitation is a cop-out. We buy shirts and shoes and assembled toys made by child workers—in the U.S., Britain and Australia as well as Asia and Africa. Boycotts don't solve the problem in the long run. We must not turn a blind eye to the matter but, in places where child labour occurs, we should support projects that provide a genuine

safety net for children forced out of the labour market: those who depend on their work for survival and that of their parents and siblings. If children are taken out of labour, then they must be provided

with food, skills and a decent education, not just a token one. Children removed from paid work who are not given genuine alternatives will soon drift back into exploitative employment. If we can help by investing thought and money into genuinely useful education projects, then children will gain skills that remove them from demeaning and dangerous occupations that give no chance at a better life as adults.

[If you wish to know more about child labour, then please contact me for an electronic copy of my paper, "Child labour in Bangladesh: recent trends and labour standards," presented to the International Workshop on Bangladesh on 3-4 October 2002.]

Dr. Denis Wright

New Community Board

At its meeting in June, BODHI U.S.'s directors decided that we would benefit from another level of community involvement. The formation of a Community Advisory Board (distinct from the BODHI Advisory Board) was proposed and unanimously accepted. BODHI Australia directors agreed. Please contact us for further details.

We'd like to welcome Richard Patterson as our first Community Adviser. Richard says, "I see my role as a Community Advisor as three-pronged, that is, to continue in my however faltering efforts to raise funds for BODHI's projects, to function as a point of contact and source of information for BODHI U.S.'s existing and potential donors and supporters in the eastern United States (especially between newsletters) and, as called upon, to be a representative or go-between. It is my intention to mail out a letter of introduction and a short questionnaire that will hopefully give me a sense of who BODHI U.S.'s supporters are, and what they want or need of someone in this role. I sincerely hope that my efforts on BODHI U.S.'s behalf are of benefit." Contact information: Richard A. Patterson, RN, BSN, 435 Wood Ave. Cincinnati, Ohio 45220, Voicemail: (513)470-5942. Email: rapatterson@fuse.net.



Revolving Sheep Bank, Year 3.

Nomads receiving stock.

Professor Goldstein writes, "The sheep project is going well. Yonden had the money for year 3 and has given it to the nomads for more sheep. I gave him a chart of what new data I would like and we will see what he comes up with next Spring/Summer (they do animal headcounts in winter). He told me everyone is extremely pleased with the program, although there was an attempt by the county to take it over. Yonden said he could not give them the money because it was specifically earmarked for the two nomad xiang."

We need to raise US\$5000/A\$9,000 for each of Years 4 and 5.