

# BODHI TIMES

Benevolent Organisation for Development, Health & Insight

June 2006

No 30

*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 and is neither religious nor political. We have supporters and advisers from many faiths. We encourage your ideas and acts of kindness. Realising the interdependence of all beings is in our enlightened self-interest. Now more than ever, if we don't work together to reduce the world's much-discussed problems, then who will?*

## Two peoples united by discrimination

In 2005, BODHI began to support a school for Chakmas, a tribal people living in the north-eastern Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh who were displaced from East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) in the 1960s. Their original homeland is in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), in **southern Bangladesh**. There the Chakmas, together with other tribal peoples (collectively known as Jummas) face continual repression and land-grabbing by the far more populous Muslim Bengalis. The intrusions of new settlers are supported by the Bangladeshi police and army, who persistently ignore the human rights abuses.

BODHI supports the work of Parbatya Bouddha Mission (PBM) in the CHT. Founded in 1983, PBM is led by Ven. Sumanalankar, whom Colin met in Nagpur, India in late 2005. Ven. Sumanalankar is assisted by a group of socially engaged monks and lay people, including social workers, day labourers, educators and philanthropists.

PBM provides an orphanage, health center, school and vocational training (weaving, sewing and carpentry), as well as a place for moral education and meditation.

PBM cares for 209 children from various ethnic minority communities in the CHT. Some do not

have parents or are too poor to afford schooling. Students stay at PBM and attend classes at the residential school inside the PBM complex, where they receive free accommodation, food and healthcare services. 'The residential school also provides free educational facilities to local village students,' Ven. Sumanalankar writes.

BODHI supporters Padma and Swapna Chakma, who live in Canberra, Australia, visited PBM in December 2005. Padma writes: 'PBM is really a

valuable project for our Jumma people. Hundreds of orphans are getting shelter and an education. It is the best humanitarian project I have seen. I highly recommend this organization, which has a very good reputation, skills and integrity.'

BODHI's donation of A\$3000/US\$2130 will be used for school supplies, medical care for residential students and eight free medical camps at the locations in the CHT in which they are working.



Below: Dapodi clinic attendees; right: boy in hostel, Ulhasnagar  
Courtesy Karuna Trust



In 2005 Colin visited the Dapodi Clinic, in **Pune, India**. This serves the people of a nearby slum of 85,000 people. It also provides health outreach to nearby villagers. He was impressed by the doctor, Mrs. Kalpna Gadlingkar, who worked in the clinic for about a quarter of the salary could she could earn in private practice. We have donated A\$3000/US\$2130 to support this Clinic. Anemia is a major health problem, along with TB and HIV/AIDS. Currently, all pathology tests require a visit to the nearby hospital, which can result in a delay of many hours. In practice, such tests are rarely performed. To make this easier we are hoping to purchase and donate a portable hemoglobinometer, specifically designed for low cost and portable use in developing countries. This was developed by Dr Roy Rickman, ([www.http://www.diamedica.co.uk/products.htm](http://www.diamedica.co.uk/products.htm)) who (like Colin) is a graduate of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. Running costs for this instrument are low, and all the chemicals needed are locally available. Its cost is 660 pounds sterling. Your support makes a difference.

There is much else that can be done. We hope this is the start of a long and beneficial relationship.

# Genocide through indifference

As I write I am reflecting on the sometimes quavering, emotional voice of Stephen Lewis, the U.N. envoy on HIV/AIDS in Africa (<http://stephenlewisfoundation.ca/>). His 2005 Massey Lectures, 'Race Against Time' are currently being broadcast on Australian radio (<http://www.abc.net.au/rn/bigidea/>). I highly recommend this broadcast, which uses unusually forceful and frank language.

While focusing on HIV/AIDS in Africa (not just a tragedy, but a form of genocide by neglect), Lewis also savages the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. These cop it for their role in introducing fees for basic health care and education in Africa, in the so-called 'Structural Adjustment Programs' (SAPs). SAPs, imposed in exchange for more credit, were especially notorious in the 1980s. True believers claimed that the introduction of 'free markets' would create winners from losers and lead to an economic boom. In most countries they failed dismally. It is little

“  
**A rush for male  
circumcisions (probably  
partly effective against HIV)  
is underway in Swaziland**  
”

consolation that SAPs, strongly criticized at the time, are now largely discredited. In my darker moments I think their failure was intended. It is more likely that these programs had genuine and well-meaning supporters and that they were approved because they suited the powerful of the time, who then as now were largely contemptuous of the health of the poor.

## THE HOLLOW MEN OF THE G8

Lewis is also strongly critical of the double standard of trade and aid policies practiced by the rich and powerful club who constitute the G8, none of whom have come close to meeting the target of government provided overseas aid of 0.7% of GNP. Of the G8 club, he is particularly scathing of the meanness and double standards of the US, Japan, Italy and his own country, Canada (whose Prime Minister Lester Pearson, had originally devised the 0.7% target.) Lewis shows how these countries repeatedly find ways to evade their promises. It is true that nearly all of us place personal well being before that of strangers, but how much money do we waste on trivia? (And don't draw me on the topic of military spending).

## PHANTOM AID

Lewis draws attention to 'phantom aid,' citing the work of Action Aid (<http://www.actionaidusa.org/realaid.php>). According to their report, phantom aid constitutes up to two thirds of aid that is claimed to be delivered. Phantom aid does not target poverty relief and is not tied to the sale of goods and services from the donor country. Much aid is wasted on technical assistance, usually paid to highly priced consultants who fly in and fly out. A recent example of phantom aid from Australia is the payment by AusAid of A\$679,000 to Trevor Flugge for eight months' work in Iraq in 2003. Flugge and his company, the Australian Wheat Board, knowingly provided illegal kickbacks to Saddam Hussein's regime

(<http://www.reportage.uts.edu.au/stories/2006/special/flugge.htm>). At best, Flugge's work might be considered a form of export enhancement. It was surely not aid. Flugge's appointment was criticized by Aidwatch and Oxfam.

## MORE ON THE DOUBLE STANDARD

Old enough to recall how the Uruguay Trade talks were supposed to provide a more level playing field for developing countries, Lewis is also deeply skeptical that the current Doha round of trade talks will achieve its stated goal of enabling poor countries to access markets in rich countries.

Speaking at the recent American Academy of Science meeting, Per Pinstrup Andersen, a distinguished expert on nutrition and development, observed that none of the 26 international conferences on poverty and hunger in the last 30 years have achieved their goals and targets. Few have come close. People have short memories. Pomp surrounds the pronouncement of targets, usually held in luxurious, well-fed environments, and little publicity is given to their non-attainment.

## DEMOGRAPHY OVERLOOKED

Excellent as Lewis is, his analysis seems likely to overlook the causal contribution of demographic factors in the collapse of much of modern Africa. Devoted readers of this column (if there are any!) know that I am obsessed with the harmful economic effects of excessively rapid population growth. Of course, many countries in sub-Saharan Africa now have low or even negative population growth rates because of the ravages of HIV/AIDS and in some cases warfare. This sad fact does not negate the demographic argument. Instead, consider the current decline in growth rate (if not numbers) as the second part of a  $\cap$ -shaped curve, where a steep rise in population is followed by a crash. If this slowed growth is due to fewer births, then it would probably be economically and socially beneficial, unless overdone as in Russia and — if sustained too long — parts of Europe and one day even China. But the current decline of population growth in Africa is mostly from excessive deaths, many of them among people who should be highly productive. This worsens the problem.

Unless good governance can be introduced the cycle will repeat itself, a phenomenon technically known as 'irruptive.' While non-phantom foreign aid will not guarantee good governance, it will surely help.

**A large question rarely asked.** A large question remains which is rarely asked: who really wants to see the end of abject poverty? Hopefully you and I do, but the current global situation seems not all that different to the US in 1850 or the British Empire in 1750. Much modern affluence is underpinned by the poverty of the masses. Effectively, there exists a system of quasi-slavery; a global 'claste' system (see BODHI Times 14). We need a new William Wilberforce (whose campaign

led to the abolition of slavery in the British Empire in 1833) and a new John Woolman (a Quaker whose work preceded Wilberforce).

Fear of the other is likely to drive 'strategic demography' for the foreseeable future. There is growing evidence from basic neuroscience that humans are deeply wary of people who look and act differently. A rational way to respond to this fear of the other is to think and behave as part of a discrete group. It then follows that personal safety and advancement lie in constantly seeking to advantage that small group, rather than the bigger group we are all part of. We have evolved with this strategy, but we can expand the group with which we identify.

## EURABIA AND TERRORISM

The historian Niall Ferguson has criticized multiculturalism — the idea that peoples of different ethnicity, religion, education and socioeconomic circumstances can be fused into a single cohesive mass — as naive optimism. He warns that the higher birth rate among the Muslim countries that flank the south and east of Europe bodes ill for the contrastingly 'senescent' European Union. He has used (perhaps coined) 'Eurabia' to describe 'the subtle Muslim colonization of Europe's cities — most striking in places like Marseille, France, where North Africans populate whole suburbs.' Let's hope Ferguson is wrong. His vision implies a bleak future. Ferguson will be proven wrong if enough people can be convinced that a fairer, more inclusive world is in their own interest. We have far to go, but the cost is high if we fail.

The Dalai Lama has recently linked global terrorism with inequality, stating: 'This new terrorism has been brewing for many years. Much of it is caused by jealousy and frustration at the West because it looks so highly developed and successful on television. Leaders in the East use religion to counter that, to bind these countries together.'

His Holiness also warned of the futility of a harsh crackdown on terrorists: 'The problem will escalate [if bin Laden is assassinated by the West] ... If there is one bin Laden killed today, soon there will be 10 bin Ladens.'

## CRYING WOLF?

I conclude by responding to the implicit criticism of work similar to ours by Prof. Furedi (author of *The Politics of Fear*). He argues that raising claims about the Cold War, terrorism and global warming are forms of sensationalist propaganda. Of course, activists and the press do exaggerate threats, sometimes at the cost of more important issues and risks. But the past century saw the emergence of Nazism, the Chinese famine, the Spanish flu, the epidemic of HIV/AIDS, and the Rwandan and other genocides — and that's just the beginning. Would Furedi really claim that people who foresaw and attempted to warn of these disasters warranted disrespect?

Full references on website.

*I am now working for Deakin University in Melbourne (but living in Tasmania) as a Senior Research Fellow in Global Health. I am researching the viability of a new post-graduate course in global and international health. I remain linked to the National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health at the Australian National University in Canberra as a Visiting Fellow.*



## BODHI trains the trainer: Deafness in Nepal

BODHI supporter Dr. Sonal Singh [an Associate Professor in North Carolina originally from Darjeeling, India, who retains strong Nepali connections] writes: 'Nepal has thousands of speech and hearing impaired children. There are a few satellite schools for the deaf throughout the country, but none are as well equipped as the school for speech and hearing-impaired children in Naxal, Kathmandu. This school has 300 students from all over the country. It is the only such school which provides education up to 10th grade, and it runs a residential program for children who mostly live in privately run hostels. Most of the children are from rural villages, and most drop out as they are unable to afford the cost of education and urban lodging ... We will try to ensure that they complete at least the elementary level education up to class 10 [the highest level of education possible for hearing impaired children in Nepal] and that they receive adequate health training as a part of the curriculum with the intention that they adapt and share this with their communities when they go back home.'

'The objective at present is to aim at increasing the literacy level and health awareness among speech and hearing impaired children in Nepal. The results of this project can be used as a pilot for other projects. Subsequently we plan to survey the rural and mountainous regions of the country to establish the causes and prevalence of deafness. We will involve the children graduating from the program and their community of other hearing impaired children in this phase of the project.'

'The project started with one student (see below) in April 2006. It will be effective because there is a desire amongst the people to learn and know how to read and write. I will do annual evaluations to ensure that the project is running smoothly.'

*We will provide US\$600 a year to this train-the-trainer project for Years 1 & 2 in the names of Dr. Ken McConnell and Simon Brown (see page 4). See website for project proposal and budget.*



Sangeeta Basnet (left) and schoolchildren (above)  
Courtesy School for the Deaf

'Sangeeta Basnet is a 12-year-old girl with complete deafness from a family in the village of Dolkha, Charikot in the mountains of Nepal. Charikot is a hill town about 90 miles east from Kathmandu in the direction of Mount Everest. She became deaf at the age of 5 years, secondary to untreated typhoid fever. She is otherwise in good health. She is the youngest of 10 siblings with seven sisters and 2 brothers. Sangeeta is currently in Kathmandu with her father, who works as a peon. She started school late, at the age of 9 years due to extreme poverty. She is currently in class 3 at the School for the Deaf in Kathmandu. In her class of 25, Sangeeta is among the top 5-10 students.'

**We're updating our website to include detailed information and photos from all of our current projects.**

## Gift idea

Susan is donating part of the sales profits to BODHI (and all those generated from website sales) of her cookbook, *Midlands Morsels, Favourite Recipes from the Heart of Tasmania (Mostly)*. By devoting a page in the cookbook to BODHI, she hopes to reach new audiences not otherwise accessible. Please email BODHI to purchase this unique gift (\$15 + postage). Thanks to all of you who have placed orders.

**BODHI advisor Shelley Anderson, recently co-nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize, will be using a recipe from *Midlands Morsels* in an upcoming IFOR cookbook for peace. Please visit IFOR's website ([www.ifor.org/WPP](http://www.ifor.org/WPP)) to order a copy.**

## Thank you

Dr. Warren Bell, British Columbia, Canada  
Tom & Merrily Bliss, California, USA  
Dr. Anna Brooks, Tasmania, Australia  
Prof. Ken & Sue Cassman, Nebraska, USA  
A/Prof. Bill & Wendy Castleden, WA, Australia  
Ross Campbell, Tasmania, Australia  
Drs. Kym Collins & Richard Boughton, NSW, Australia  
Terry Culver, NSW, Australia  
Fred Groenier, Tasmania, Australia  
Lesley Hall, Tasmania, Australia  
A/Prof. Chris Kelman, ACT, Australia  
Dr. Rennie & Ron D'Souza, ACT, Australia  
Prof. Bob Douglas, AO, ACT, Australia  
Prof. Mark & Dian Elvin, NSW, Australia  
Prof. John Hamilton, NSW, Australia  
Judith Lipton, California, USA  
Dr. Gerry & Sally McGushin, Tasmania, Australia  
Jeffrey Whitman, California, USA

Congratulations to **Dr. Sue Wareham** for receiving the Order of Australia Medal. Let's hope this justly deserved award gives her even more influence in her work for peace in this trouble-filled world ... Thanks to **Buddha House, Adelaide** for purchasing 10 posters of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in Central Park. (We still have some available) ... Special thanks to **John Bell**, Tasmania, Australia, whose unswerving generosity and enthusiasm has enabled us to keep the Revolving Sheep Bank in Tibet afloat.

## We need your help

Thanks to your generosity, BODHI has supported many exciting and innovative projects. To continue, we need your help. Please send your donation, in U.S. or Australian dollars, to an address below. Contact us for details of direct-debit facilities.

*Donations by U.S. and Australian taxpayers are tax-deductible*

*Australia cheques must be made out to BODHI Australia Overseas Relief Fund to be tax-deductible*

**Founding Patron**  
**His Holiness XIV Dalai Lama**  
**1989 Nobel Laureate for Peace**

Medical Director Colin Butler, BMed., PhD  
Dir Electronic Communications Denis Wright, PhD  
Community Adviser, Shanti Raman, FRACP, MAE  
Editor Susan Woldenberg Butler

### Advisory Board

Roshi Robert Aitken	Hawaii, U.S.
Shelley Anderson	The Netherlands
Sen. Bob Brown	Australia
Sr. Mila de Gimeno	The Philippines
Prof. John Guillebaud	Oxford, U.K.
Dh. Lokamitra	Pune, India
Dr. Maurice King	Leeds, U.K.
Prof. Christopher Queen	Boston, U.S.
Prof. David Rapport	Canada
Sulak Sivaraksa	Thailand

Email: [csbutler@tassie.net.au](mailto:csbutler@tassie.net.au), <http://www.bodhi.net.au>

**BODHI U.S.**  
2743 Portobello Drive  
Torrance, CA 90505-7309 U.S.A.  
Tel: +1 (310) 378-0260  
Directors: Colin Butler, Martin Rubin, M.D., Scott Trimmingham, Susan Woldenberg Butler

**BODHI AUSTRALIA INC**  
4 Queen Street, Campbell Town,  
Tasmania Australia 7210  
Tel: +61-3-6381-1675  
Directors: Colin Butler, Susan W. Butler, Denis Wright

**We greatly value your support and keep our mailing list confidential**

*Printed on recycled paper*

# Passings

In recent months BODHI has lost two treasured friends. Dr. Ken McConnell, a colleague of Colin's from medical school (Newcastle, NSW), died on January 21 in a climbing accident on Mt. Wellington, Tasmania. Ken recommended BODHI to the members of four expeditions he led to Nepal and Tibet, between 1994 and 2000. Some of our most loyal supporters accompanied Ken on these trips, particularly that of 1994 to Lhakpa Ri in Tibet. Ken had recently qualified as a psychiatrist.

Ken had great compassion for, and was extremely generous to the Nepali community, who did so much to make his expeditions successful. Ongdi Sherpa, who was particularly close to Ken and his partner Anna, writes from Nepal: 'I'm really proud of him. He was a really kindly person ... All the staff say so sorry to hear the bad news. ... Life has no guarantee.'

Simon Brown, a local friend with whom we shared endless afternoon teas (at which he drank strong black coffee with four sugars), died after years of uncomplaining physical suffering. He supported our projects staunchly and attended the last three annual general meetings of BODHI Australia.

*The families of Ken and Simon each nominated BODHI as the charity of choice in lieu of flowers at their funerals. See page 3 for details.*



*We  
miss  
you  
both*



Dr. Ken McConnell (above left courtesy Anna Brooks) and left, silhouetted against Mt. Everest (courtesy Lesley Hall). Simon Brown as a schoolboy in Tasmania (above right courtesy the Brown family)

## Revolving Sheep Bank expands



Copyright M. Goldstein

Recipient and sheep

Thanks to the **Revolving Sheep Bank's** outstanding success, together with Susan's growing grant-writing expertise, the U.S.-based Bridge Fund has granted US\$4500 for Year 1 of an expansion of the RSB into an adjacent nomad area in Tibet. We now need to fundraise for the remaining four years, and hope to continue gathering momentum now that the 5-year trial in Phala has been completed.

Prof. Goldstein writes, 'In our interviews with the nomads [in August, 2005], everyone was extremely pleased and grateful for this program, whether or not they received a loan. They all felt that this program is the ideal way to help alleviate poverty for nomad households, because in contrast to a one-time gift of money or animals, it allows the household to develop a stable new resource base that they can maintain in future years. Both of the first two recipients said that they never believed they would be able to achieve the level of security and well being that they now have.'

'Similarly, both the local nomad officials in the trial communities, and the government officials at the next administrative level, the xiang, were also extremely positive about the impact of this program and requested that the program be continued by expanding it to other communities under their xiang. In fact, when we attended the annual Horse Racing festival in this area, many nomads from other communities under the xiang came and asked if we could start this program in their community, promising that they will manage the resources well and not let them be wasted.'

*To see Prof. Goldstein's report and photos, please visit our website*

## Dh. Lokamitra new adviser



Photo courtesy Lokamitra

*We are delighted to welcome Dhammachari Lokamitra of Pune, India, to our advisory board. He has worked tirelessly among the Dalit community since the 1970s. Dh. Lokamitra submitted the following.*

Lokamitra was born Jeremy Goody in London in 1947. He was ordained into the Western Buddhist Order (WBO) in January 1974 as a Dhammachari, and given the name Lokamitra. In 1975 he became Chairman of the North London Buddhist Centre of the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order (FWBO). In 1977 he visited India, stopping in Nagpur to meet some of Sangharakshita's former disciples. By chance he arrived on the 21st anniversary of Dr. Ambedkar's momentous conversion to Buddhism in Nagpur in 1956 along with 500,000 followers who were previously designated as Untouchables in the Hindu caste system. This day changed his life. Encouraged by Sangharakshita, he decided to remain in India. For the first twenty years he helped initiate and guide the activities of Trailokya Bauddha Mahasangha, Sahayaka Gana (TBMSG), the Indian name for FWBO, and its social wing Bahujan Hitay especially amongst the followers of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. In 1984 he married a local Buddhist and they have two children.

TBMSG now has over twenty Dharma centres, as well as four retreat centres, while Bahujan Hitay runs over 25 hostels for children who otherwise would not easily get an education, as well as about 80 community health and education projects in the slums of Bombay, Nagpur, Pune and other towns.

In recent years Lokamitra has concentrated on the following projects:

1. Establishing the Nagarjuna Institute in Nagpur to train Buddhists from different parts of India in basic Buddhist teachings and practices;
2. Developing the Jambudvipa Trust in Pune. This trains and advises social workers and activists from socially deprived communities in different parts of India, and is especially concerned with responding to the needs of such communities in times of calamities. Jambudvipa made make a considerable contribution to relief following the Gujarat Earthquake and the Tsunami in South India; and
3. Creating understanding and bridges between Buddhist followers of Dr. Ambedkar and other Buddhists in India and abroad. Please visit [www.jambudvipa.org](http://www.jambudvipa.org) for information about this inspiring work.



# BODHI TIMES

**B**enevolent Organisation for Development, Health & Insight  
December 2006 No 31

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

## Inculcating values with education

Population pressure, together with discrimination, continues to stress the land of the Chakmas, both in southeast Bangladesh and neighbouring parts of India. Increasingly, these tribal people recognise that education is crucial to their prosperity and even survival. BODHI is supporting Chakmas in Bangladesh and the northeast Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh (AP), where about 30,000 refugees were legally settled from Bangladesh in the late 1960s (see *BODHI Times* 28). Sneha, which means compassion, is the name of the organisation helping to educate Chakmas in AP. In addition to the usual goals, the school aims to impart compassion, love, peace and tolerance. 'We hope that Sneha's method of providing value-based education and inculcating values among the children will be replicated in other parts of the world in future, impacting globally,' says the Sneha School's founder, Susanta Chakma. Many of the 305 students in the school are girls. The teacher-student ratio is 1:36; in surrounding areas it's as high as 1:300.

BODHI is working with the Chakmas to develop a health education curriculum for the Sneha School that includes learning about malaria, a big problem.

BODHI began working with Chakmas in NE India in 2005. BODHI funded Rs. 300 of the Rs. 400/month increase in the honorarium of the school's five teachers, from Rs. 2100 to Rs 2500 and paid for an increased honorarium for the headmaster cum Programme Manager from Rs. 3,000 to Rs. 4,000. We also paid teachers' salaries for April-June, 2006 and funded library books for children and references books for teachers. At present, there are 700 titles and 775 volumes in the school library, in both Hindi and English. Lastly, we funded musical instruments, including harmonium, tabla, guitar and drumset. From 2006, music and drama has been included in the curriculum. 'It has been made compulsory that every child from class VI has to learn music,' Susanta says.

Thanks to a generous donation of A\$5,000 by Ric and Jo Easton of Biodistributors, Sheffield, Tasmania, we have increased this year's funding to the Sneha School. Please visit website for what Ric and Jo's donation is providing and for Susanta Chakma's full report.



Children at picnic and (below) girls playing football, Sneha School, AP, India

Photos courtesy Sneha



## Mobile medical camps & school supplies in the CHT

'Parbatya Bouddha Mission (PBM) is grateful to BODHI for their generous support towards the orphan, poor and destitute children and poor indigenous people in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) of Bangladesh,' writes Uttamalankar Chowdhury, PBM's General Secretary.

PBM used BODHI's A\$3,000/US\$2275 to organise 20 free Mobile Medical Camps at 3-4 areas in districts including Mahalchari, Panchari, Dighinala and Khagrachari. 'The Jumma (indigenous) people usually live in remote areas where there are no electricity, medical and other facilities available,' Uttamalankar says. 'To buy medicines and get prescriptions from physicians, patients must go to nearby markets.'

'PBM provides only primary healthcare services including medicines, tests and medical prescriptions as there is no major medical equipment. In each camp, 150 to 300 patients received medicines and prescriptions. PBM with its medical staff including doctor, paramedic, lab technician and others provided their voluntary services to patients suffering from such ailments as fever, malaria, cold-cough, rheumatism, dysentery, acute respiratory illness (ARI), diarrhoea, acute asthma and skin disease.'

BODHI's donation also purchased school supplies at PBM's orphanage, which houses 210 destitute children from different ethnic indigenous communities of the



Dr. Suvash Basu Chakma examining Mrs. Umara Devi Chakma

Courtesy PBM

CHT. With our permission, PBM also made a cash contribution to a children's home at Maischari which was attacked earlier this year by Bengali settlers.

# Rwanda revisited

*We are delighted and honoured to welcome Prof. John Guillebaud to this column while Dr. Colin Butler takes a break to focus on his new job at Deakin University in Melbourne, Australia, where he is helping to establish Australia's first postgraduate degree in global health (differentiated from international health). Prof. Guillebaud, environmental campaigner and pioneer in contraception, has been a friend and adviser to BODHI since 1994. He writes about a visit to Rwanda (where he was born and spent the early years of his life) from which he recently returned.*

Readers of *Bodhi Times* may recall an article I wrote a couple of years ago on the 10th anniversary of the world's fastest-ever genocide (c 1 million people in 100 days) in Rwanda. I was born in what was then called Ruanda-Urundi. When my father Peter along with Eustace Kajuga and other Rwandan teachers together opened the first Protestant secondary school in the northern country, my sister Meg and I grew up with Eustace's children Husi and Wilberforce — speaking Kinyarwanda in preference to English. Sadly, the bodies of my friend Husi and his (Belgian) wife, also of Wilberforce's wife and 3 children and Eustace himself are among 250,000 in the mass grave at the Genocide Memorial museum in Kigali, which I have just visited.

Our family has 5 generations of association with the Region, starting with my grandfather who in 1925 produced the very first Grammar for the language and translated most of the Bible. My parents and several of my aunts then spent the major part of their working lives in the field of education and literature translation, from 1939 into the late 1980s. In 1995 my parents returned to Rwanda to assist in post-genocide reconciliation work. After my father's death my mother worked (alongside my sister Rev Meg Guillebaud) in Byumba, an hour's drive north of Kigali, until she also died at the age of 86, helping to the end the widows and orphans of the area through range of income-generating crafts. Meg now continues that work, along with writing, promoting reconciliation and teaching Church leaders of the local Diocese.

Our nephew Simon works with wife Lizzie among the young people of the troubled country of Burundi to the south; and, since December last, young Zac their firstborn begins generation 5!

My own latest visit to the region, this October, was in a party comprising: my aunt Veronica — last surviving sister of my Dad, now 86, who herself assisted in translation work in the 1950s but had also as a child aged 6 been on safaris in Rwanda with my grandparents during the pioneering 1920s; Jonathan my eldest son; and sister Meg our stalwart local host, guide, chauffeur and translator). Our journey had many purposes, including:

◇ To celebrate the 60th Anniversary of my father's founding of Shyogwe Secondary School, which we found to be a thriving institution of 850 pupils (many trilingual in French, English and Kinyarwanda) who gathered for a special school assembly in which we were Guests of Honour. As well as many speeches, a specially written ode to the Founder was read to us by a senior pupil — though we squirmed, as he certainly would have, when he was referred to as “St Peter”. Somewhat garbled historically, but probably not we thought representative of Shyogwe's teaching excellence!

◇ To donate to the National Museum three unique watercolours of King Musinga's Court



that were painted in 1927 by my grandmother, in the presence of the British Ambassador and the Rwandan Minister of Culture — and with the accompaniment of the exuberant drumming and dancing of the Urungangazi cultural troupe. We learned that these seem to be the only colour representations in existence and as such the Minister declared them of great historical and cultural significance. Indeed, when next day we visited the site where the now long-gone thatched palace (an ultra large hut for King Musinga with many smaller huts for his wives and retainers) had been recreated for tourists, the local guide agreed at once that their own blueprint for the Court buildings must have been wrong ... The paintings show a much higher surrounding stockade and he planned to suggest that this would be corrected in due course.

◇ To open a building in Byumba housing a craft workshop, small sales outlet and meeting-rooms for the many impoverished widows of the area, in memory of my mother.

◇ To cut tape for a second time, in a ceremony to open a Library and Information Technology building in Kigali centre, in memory of my father.

◇ To meet the Minister of Health for useful discussions about the Government's new concern to promote family planning; given that all those who died in 1994 have now been replaced and the country is expected to double its population by 2050.

◇ To visit Urunana, the radio soap opera modelled on the Archers, which conveys health education messages within the story lines. Some of the well-known obstacles to acceptance of family planning were discussed, such as entrenched religious objections from both Catholics and some protestant groups, also cultural pro-natalism, the concept that the size of a group (tribal or religious) gives more political clout — and various local myths such as that the Pill causes permanent infertility. But Kalisa the Managing Director agreed that radio has the power to correct misinformation and even alter behaviour. Now the government

*cont. next page*



A/left: Genocide memorial, Kigali: below the slabs are 250,000 skeletons, including our friends in the Kajuga family. Also in pic are Jonathan and Christine (Museum Guide). A/r: Replica of King Musinga's domain with Husi's mother Marion Kajuga; the local tourist guide; Veronica; and Meg; Facing: typical Rwanda scene (in background); JG plus local schoolboy on Lake Mohasi ferry.

*Courtesy John and Jonathan Guillebaud*



## Guillebaud in Rwanda

of Rwanda is also in favour of promoting birth planning, it would be ideal to add discussion of that issue within some scripts — in a similar way to the messages about HIV prevention that they have been conveying for some years.

### How is Rwanda, the country?

On the surface, remarkably normal. There are all the expected problems of poverty in Africa, but Rwanda has better infrastructure (including excellent main roads) and less overt corruption than adjoining territories. The Government has done much to establish security and to promote reconciliation. The infamous identity cards which caused the death of so many Tutsi have been changed so everyone is classified as "Rwandan"; there is no longer discrimination on tribal lines in schools; and there are commissions for reconciliation throughout the land in a genuine attempt to bring about national unity.

In an effort to deal with over 125,000 prisoners and with the judicial system overwhelmed after the genocide, in 2000 the Government decided to return to a form of the traditional justice system called *Gacaca* (pronounced Gachacha). Local administrative areas selected people of good standing in the areas to direct these courts and spent some months training them in judicial procedures. Large billboards all over the country proclaimed that 'if everyone admits to what they have done and tells what they have seen then the truth will save the country'. The idea was that if people were tried in the *Gacaca* courts in their own locality then the truth would emerge. In 2003 President Kagame issued decrees freeing several thousand prisoners. These were first of all the sick, those over 70 years of age, those who had been children in the genocide, and those who had no dossier against them. Then a few weeks later another group of those who had admitted the crimes against them were also released. The rationale for releasing the latter group was that they had already served about 8 years in prison and it was unlikely that the *Gacaca* courts would impose a longer sentence.

Although according to Meg all this is patchy and slow, only working well in some areas, I felt that Rwandans were well on the way to drawing a line under the dreadful events of 1994. But will they be able to defuse the time-bomb of their own fertility, on track to so grossly exceed the yields from the fertility of their beautiful land, with its great rolling hills and green valleys?



## BODHI as an umbrella

We're increasing our scope by supporting three projects whose existing donors do not currently receive tax-deductible status. In this way BODHI can expand its reach without diverting funds from existing projects, as (we hope) new donors who support these other projects will transparently channel funds through BODHI to their destinations:

1. At Easter, Colin and Susan met Ven. Zasep Tulku in Tasmania. We have known Rinpoche for several decades. His vision is that the Jamseng Healthcare Centre in **Zadoh, eastern Tibet** 'provide accessible comprehensive health care services to the nomads of Yol Nin Gar, of Kham, eastern Tibet.' (see [www.gadenrelief.org/zadoh.html](http://www.gadenrelief.org/zadoh.html)) Jamseng's support base is mostly in Canada (where donations are tax deductible) but supporters in Australia and the US do not receive any tax refund. Now they can.

2. We hope to support some Chakma refugees in the U.S., originally from Tripura, to support the Chakma school in **Kolcutta, India**.

3. Following Colin and Susan's recent interview on the Australian radio program Bush Telegraph, retired university lecturer Jaya Dharmasiri contacted us about children with Downs Syndrome in **Sri Lanka**. They need skills development aids, manuals and toys. A specially trained teacher and an aid need to be hired and a new school built. There are five fee-paying students and thirty more hopefuls, unable to pay tuition. Extra funds would expand the number of children able to attend the school.

**Other news** ... Kabita Chakma has become an invaluable member of our committee ... We're investigating medical projects with the Chakmas in India and Bangladesh ... We are expanding our contact with the Chakma communities in Bangladesh and India and their representatives in Australia and the U.S.

## Holiday gift idea

Susan is donating part of the sales profits to BODHI (and all generated from website sales) of her cookbook, *Midlands Morsels, Favourite Recipes from the Heart of Tasmania (Mostly)*. Please contact BODHI to purchase this unique gift (\$15 + \$5 postage and handling).

## Thank you

Dr. Scott Bell, Tasmania, Australia  
Ann & Eliot Bliss, California, USA  
Meri & Len Goad, Victoria/UK  
Dr. Stephen Graham, Australia/Malawi  
Jan Heywood, NSW, Australia  
Margaret Humphrey, Queensland, Australia  
Donna Ingram, North Carolina, USA  
Jill Jameson, Victoria, Australia  
Prof. Hillel & Charlotte Koren, North Carolina, USA  
Janice & Peter Laud, Tasmania, Australia  
Mamie & Merle McGee, California, USA  
Prof. A J McMichael, ACT, Australia  
James & Charlotte Meyers, California, USA  
Dr. Geetha Ranmuthugala, Victoria, Australia  
Wanda Trimmingham, California, USA

Activities on BODHI's behalf. **John Bell** of Tasmania spent some of his holiday time in Australia's warm north enthusiastically promoting the Revolving Sheep Bank ... **Leon Braun**, Communications Officer at the University of New England in Australia's beautiful country town of Armidale, has provided invaluable publicity advice to alma mater Susan WB.

**Please visit our website for detailed information and photos from all our current projects**

## We need your help

Thanks to your generosity, BODHI has supported many exciting and innovative projects. To continue, we need your help. Please send your donation, in U.S. or Australian dollars, to an address below. Contact us for details of direct-debit facilities.

**Donations by U.S. and Australian taxpayers are tax-deductible**

*Australian cheques must be made out to 'BODHI Australia Overseas Relief Fund' to be tax-deductible*

**Founding Patron**  
**His Holiness XIV Dalai Lama**  
**1989 Nobel Laureate for Peace**

Medical Director Colin Butler, BMed., PhD  
Dir. Electronic Communications Denis Wright, PhD  
Community Adviser Shanti Raman, FRACP, MAE  
Editor Susan Woldenberg Butler

### Advisory Board

Roshi Robert Aitken	Hawaii, U.S.
Shelley Anderson	The Netherlands
Sen. Bob Brown	Australia
Sr. Mila de Gimeno	The Philippines
Prof. John Guillebaud	Oxford, U.K.
Dh. Lokamitra	Pune, India
Dr. Maurice King	Leeds, U.K.
Prof. Christopher Queen	Boston, U.S.
Prof. David Rapport	Canada
Sulak Sivaraksa	Thailand

Email: [csbutler@skyoptics.com.au](mailto:csbutler@skyoptics.com.au), [www.bodhi.net.au](http://www.bodhi.net.au)

**BODHI U.S.**  
2743 Portobello Drive  
Torrance, CA 90505-7309 U.S.A.  
Tel: +1 (310) 378-0260  
Directors: Colin Butler, Martin Rubin, M.D., Scott Trimmingham, Susan Woldenberg Butler

**BODHI AUSTRALIA Inc.**  
4 Queen Street, Campbell Town  
Tasmania Australia 7210  
Tel: +61-3-6381-1675  
Directors: Colin Butler, Susan W. Butler, Denis Wright

**We greatly value your support and keep our mailing list confidential**

*Printed on recycled paper*

*Your donations are making a difference*

# New Revolving Sheep Bank

With your support, BODHI's begun a new, second 5-year Revolving Sheep Bank. We've expanded into an area in Pala, western Tibet, adjacent to the trial one.

The new project also purchases 50 reproductive-aged ewes and nannies per annum from wealthier nomads to lend to four poor households within the community. Costs are the same as for Phase 1.

Donors' generosity and a grant from the Bridge Fund for US\$4,500 funded Year 1 of Phase 2. Funds for Year 2 come from the Rainforest Information Network and Dharma Gaia for US\$500 and US\$1,000 respectively. Our ever-loyal donors are provided the rest.

## Trial RSB Evaluation Report

BODHI's 5-year Revolving Sheep Bank ended successfully last year. The influence of BODHI's Revolving Sheep Bank has been far-reaching. It has become the prototype of yak and livestock projects of other NGOs within Tibet.

Professor Melvyn C. Goldstein was able to evaluate this project in May. 'The nomad households involved have increased their herd size, improved their standard of living, and have started to repay their loans on time,' he says. 'Consequently, the nomad community now has a functioning revolving sheep bank as planned.'

'In our interviews with the nomads, everyone was extremely pleased and grateful for this program, whether or not they received a loan. They all felt that this program is the ideal way to help alleviate poverty for nomad households, because in contrast to a one-time gift of money or animals, it allows the household to develop a stable new resource base that they can maintain in future years. Both of the first two recipients said that they never believed they would be able to achieve the level of security and well being that they now have.'



Recipient milking sheep

Copyright M. Goldstein

'Similarly, both the local nomad officials in the trial communities, and the government officials at the next administrative level, the xiang, were also extremely positive about the impact of this program and requested that the program be continued by expanding it to other communities under their xiang. In fact, when we attended the annual Horse Racing festival in this area [where Prof. Goldstein handed over funds for Year 1], many nomads from other communities under the xiang came and asked if we could start this program in their community, promising that they will manage the resources well and not let them be wasted.'

'Empirically, the livestock data for the first 4 households who received animals (in 2000 and 2001) supports this, even though the winter of 2004/5 was a bad one with higher than normal mortality.'

'Material possessions of each of these households has improved markedly. All now have solar lights, very nice furniture, much nicer clothing, and a better diet.'

## Animal capital circulating indefinitely

'Not surprisingly, the local nomads understand that this is an effective way to improve one's standard of living and are eager to get a chance to receive such a loan. Because of this, all support the idea of mandatory repayment so that

the animal capital can circulate indefinitely. This has actually strengthened the authority of the two elected village heads who, as explained below, have had to make several tough decisions in managing the Sheep Bank.'

'The success of this project is dependent on the local leaders insisting that the loan recipients manage the animals well so that they will be able to repay the loan at the end of the loan period. To facilitate this, everyone, including us, agreed that it is important to select only households who are willing to work to improve themselves. That has meant that some of the poorest households have not been lent sheep because they, in a word, are irresponsible. Knowing these nomads well, I agreed with the local leaders assessments of recipients.'

'The success of the Sheep Bank, moreover, also depends on the local officials monitoring the recipients and making sure that they are not squandering the sheep by selling them to buy consumer goods or slaughtering them for their own meat needs. In our program this happened twice.'

'In one case, a very poor young man with a wife and two children was given a loan but was then discovered to be negotiating to sell them to outside traders. The local village heads intervened and warned him not to do that. When he persisted, the village leaders convened a meeting of the household heads and made the decision to take back his animals and lend them to another family. In another case, a warning to the nomad household was sufficient to change its behavior.'

*Please visit our website for Prof. Goldstein's full report and photos.*

## How you can help

**Make a donation:** We still need US\$4950 per year for Years 3-5.

**Media publicity:** We've received good coverage on Australian television, radio and in the print media. We're working on publicity for the US and internationally. You can help by placing an article on the Revolving Sheep Bank in a newspaper or magazine — local, national, international, school or special interest. If you have **other ideas**, please contact us.



# TO FACILITATE YOUR DONATION

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City State Postal Code

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is \_\_\$25 \_\_\$50 \_\_\$100 \_\_\$500 \_\_\$1000 \_\_\$2000 \_\_\$5000 \_\_Other

For Australian cheques to be tax-deductible, they must be made out to BODHI Australia Overseas Relief Fund

All U.S. checks are tax-deductible

*Please inquire about automatic deductions from your bank account*

## **To pay by credit card** (in/converted to Australian dollars)

Please enter your Visa, MasterCard, BankCard or American Express number, expiry date and signature below.

Either return to: BODHI, 4 Queen St, Campbell Town, Tas 7210 Australia  
BODHI, 2743 Portobello Dr, Torrance, CA 90505-7309 USA

OR: Email your details at [csbutler@tassie.net.au](mailto:csbutler@tassie.net.au)  
*All Australian and U.S. credit card donations are tax-deductible*

Visa and MasterCard

□□□□ □□□□ □□□□ □□□□ Exp date □□□□

AMEX

□□□□ □□□□□□ □□□□□ Exp date □□□□

AMEX Security Code:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Type of credit card

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name on credit card (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

---

## For our Australian members

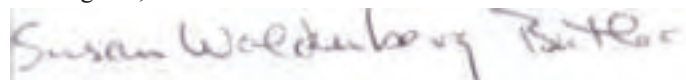
BODHI Australia, 4 Queen St, Campbell Town, Tas 7210, Tel: (03) 6381 1675, Email: [csbutler@skyoptic.com.au](mailto:csbutler@skyoptic.com.au); [www.bodhi.net.au](http://www.bodhi.net.au)

### NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Dear Member,

Please consider attending our annual general meeting, to be held in Armidale, NSW at 183 Allingham St. on Sunday, 17th June 2006 at 2pm. The following business will be conducted: presentation of reports, election of committee members and officers for presidents, vicepresident, treasurer and secretary; confirmation of minutes from last preceding annual general meeting; appointment of an auditor; and reception of reports upon financial transactions conducted during the last preceding financial year. Please RSVP to [csbutler@skyoptic.com.au](mailto:csbutler@skyoptic.com.au). Directions may be obtained by ringing Denis Wright on (026) 7732479 or (026) 772 0557, or emailing [denis@bodhi.net.au](mailto:denis@bodhi.net.au).

Kind regards,



Susan Woldenberg Butler, President

### AGENDA

Opening of meeting

Apologies

Confirmation of minutes from last preceding annual general meeting

Presentation and acceptance of the following reports:

President, Treasurer, Medical Director & Director of Electronic Communications

Election of office bearers for president, vice-president, treasurer and secretary

Election of committee members

Appointment of an auditor

General business

Date of next meeting

Close



# BODHI TIMES

**Benevolent Organisation for Development, Health & Insight**  
Founding Patron: His Holiness XIV Dalai Lama

June 2007

No 32

*Our goal is 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 and is neither religious nor political. We have supporters and advisers from many faiths. We encourage your ideas and acts of kindness. Realising the interdependence of all beings is in our enlightened self-interest. Now more than ever, if we don't work together to reduce the world's much-discussed problems, then who will?*

## In the slums

While communication with the Dapodi Clinic in Pune, India is being improved, BODHI's funds (A\$3,000/US\$2,492) will be used for a six-month project in the Ramnagar and Ghosavi slums of Hadapsar (East Pune). Included are vaccination of 0-5 year olds, provision of daily nutrition supplements for 50 malnourished children 1½-5-year-olds and monthly weighing and health checks for 0-5-year-olds. This project has the advantage of using an existing infrastructure, the jeep, the doctor, the administration, and of a more direct line of communication.

'We have been working in the area with a mobile clinic doing vaccinations for over a year, and so are familiar with the area and its problems,' Dh Lokamitra says. 'A proper hut will give us the opportunity not only to do what we are doing more effectively but also to do much more, as well as to assess whether we should work in the area on a long-term basis. Our health workers are women are from the local slums so they know the situation and can follow up. They have good basic education, and the doctor gives them basic training.'

In these slums live approximately 30,000 people, almost half of whom are children. While dwellers include Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists and Muslims, most are originally Dalits (Hindus formerly known as Untouchables). Most have migrated from eastern Maharashtra in time of drought or from Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Bihar due to poverty. 'Most, if employed, are drivers, sellers of scrap, masons, painters, blacksmiths, washer women and men, housecleaners etc,' Dh Lokamitra says. 'There are severe educational and health problems. In terms of health basically they are very poor, ignorant, living in extremely unhygienic conditions with little or no help from the government or NGOs. In terms of education, adult literacy will be minimal especially for women; there is little in the way of kindergarten education available, which means they get a very poor start.'

'Thirty per cent of the houses are mud, 25% tin sheds and 25% brick and cement. Only 10% have solid roofs. Ninety per cent have no running water and use common taps outside. Most have no toilets, but use government-built common toilets.'

Budget for 6 months:	Total IRs/-90,000
Rent	9,000
2 health workers	12,000
Cook	6,000
Nurse	18,000
Food supplements for 50 children	40,000
Fuel & travelling costs	5,000

BODHI would like to add health education, including in health awareness camps. 'These work with local mothers on matters such as family planning, breast feeding, anaemia, cleanliness and treatment of diarrhoea,' Dh Lokamitra says. 'These also differ according to season. In the monsoon they talk more about water.'

### Images from the Ramnagar slums

Children playing on rubbish heap, wild pigs scavenging (yes, they bite) and women making quilts for their homes out of old cloth rags.

*Courtesy Milind Shakya*



### New Revolving Sheep Bank

## Expanding Sheep ... Again ... and Again

Thanks to three grants, BODHI is expanding the Revolving Sheep Bank in a *third* nomad area in Tibet. **Phase 3** is about to begin in an area adjacent to the first two, when Prof Melvyn C Goldstein returns to Tibet this year. The trial sheep bank (2000-2005) is now self-sufficient. **Phase 2** was implemented in 2006 in an area adjacent to the trial, and is now fully funded by the Bridge Fund.

Funding to begin Phase 3 comes from three U.S. grants: Dharma Gaia Trust and Rainforest Information Network, which donated US\$1,000 and US\$500 respectively, and an anonymous donor who gave US\$3,450. Donations from supporters enable us to fund Years 2 and 3 and part of Year 4, at US\$4,950 per annum. Once again, your generosity has made a big difference.

*Special thanks to an anonymous donor for A\$5,000 for the Revolving Sheep Bank (mostly).*

# The right to be fully human

*The following is adapted from an essay Colin wrote for a global competition on population policy and human rights. Selected essayists were invited to a workshop in Berlin in February, 2007, which was organised by the Irmgard Coninx Stiftung Foundation (<http://www.irmgard-coninx-stiftung.de>). The human rights activists and junior academics who attended came from all inhabited continents, though none were from Russia, a country with a very serious decline in population, health and human rights. See website for full text and references.*

## TWO COMMUNITIES AND PROPOSITIONS

This essay pleads for greater co-operation and dialogue between two mutually suspicious communities. On one side are human rights advocates, anti-globalisation activists and feminists. On the other are a small number of academics, activists and development workers who argue that fertility and population growth rates are crucial determinants of progress towards greater prosperity, freedom and human rights.

My argument rests on two main propositions. **First**, the social, economic and developmental benefits of slower population growth rates have been substantially underestimated in recent decades. Because of the sustained effort of a handful of activists, the importance of this principle is being belatedly rediscovered. For example, an enquiry into this question by the British Parliament (whose report was released in January, 2007, [www.appg-popdevrh.org.uk](http://www.appg-popdevrh.org.uk)) emphatically agreed with this point. [Ed: Colin provided a written submission to this enquiry on behalf of BODHI]. Summarising this evidence, Dr Martha Campbell, Professor John Cleland and two co-authors published a paper in the prestigious journal *Science*, called 'Return of the Population Growth Factor,' in March, 2007.

In the post-WWII period, there was widespread economic and political understanding of this

principle. The Green Revolution, which started in the late 1960s, won a temporary reprieve in the ancient race between the stork and the plough. Within fifteen years of Norman Borlaug's warning that the Green Revolution should be regarded as a precious opportunity to slow population growth, the view that high population growth is harmful for human development came under vigorous attack from a coalition of forces led by the government of US President Ronald Reagan. Representing vested interests such as the oil industry, and intensely threatened by the implications of the 'Limits to Growth' arguments the Reagan administration called for free markets, including for population size. Gullible supporters claimed that since no limits to growth actually exist, and since the invisible hand of the market would maximise public goods, any attempt to regulate population growth would not only be pointless but also would harm human rights.

My **second** major proposition is that it is more likely that inclusive economic growth will generate improved human rights than the converse. (Leave aside, for the time being, the vexed definition of what economic growth measures and constitutes.) That is, while the relationship between economic growth and freedom is far from straightforward, in the main freedom is more likely to flourish in a rich society than in a poor society. This is likely even if existing wealth is distributed fairly evenly in both societies.

(The following argument also ignores the fact that much wealth in rich societies is stolen, appropriated or otherwise kept from the poor so that their comparatively high freedom is likely to have a narrow scope.) For a start, people in rich societies are more likely to be educated and have the tools to develop their human potential than are people in poor societies. Though people in Singapore are neither democratic nor free, I would much rather be born there than in a terribly poor

country like Burundi. Poverty is no guarantor of human rights, as the current situation in Zimbabwe clearly shows.

## CONTESTING FREEDOMS AND RIGHTS

Obviously, choosing one's family size is a human freedom. In calling for a lower population growth rate in order to accelerate development (in countries such as Pakistan, Uganda or East Timor where the total fertility rate is much greater than replacement levels), I am not arguing for an **enforced** reduction in family size, nor even for explicit economic or social penalties (such as restricted promotion) tied to family size. Instead, I am calling for a greater recognition of the role of high population growth in undermining development, including by academic and political leadership. I am also calling for the implementation of social policies which will accelerate the demographic transition. The most important of these factors are well known. They include universal primary school education, the lifting of taboos concerning discussion of this topic, and the availability of cheap contraceptives, especially condoms.

Feminists, human rights activists and the many development workers who remain ignorant about or silent on this issue need to engage in this debate. One response from this community is to argue that the open discussion of this topic will inevitably lead to abuses, such as the compulsory sterilisation of minorities. In fact, denying the role of smaller families in economic take-off helps to perversely maintain poverty and inequality.

Of course, slowing human population growth is not enough to solve our human predicament (illustrated, for example, by the increasingly dire predictions concerning climate change). The tension between the right to reproduce and the struggle to develop is hardly unique. All acts of co-operation necessarily entail a trade-off between competing freedoms and responsibilities. As a society, we choose to restrict the freedom to drive on both sides of the road (except in Delhi on the way to the airport!)

Nor are human restrictions on fertility a recent invention. While a few demographers might still claim otherwise, there is increasing recognition that contraception is ancient, by methods including prolonged lactation, herbs, taboos and possibly other means.

## SKEWED AGE DISTRIBUTIONS

One reason to lower fertility is to reduce 'youth bulges'. These refer to concentrations of young men who are poorly educated, under-employed, (rationally) resentful, comparatively easy to manipulate and potentially violent. Such men are vulnerable to recruitment into activities which can damage society, such as gangs, rebel groups and terrorists. A youth bulge was pivotal in the 1994 Rwandan genocide, when land scarcity forced many young unmarried men to unsuccessfully seek work in the city.



The harmful effects of distorted age structures have also been observed in elephant populations, many of which have been traumatised by human and elephant population pressure. Older elephants are sometimes killed in the presence of their young. Charles Siebert writes in the *New York Times* that such elephants exhibit behavior typically associated with post-traumatic stress disorder, including 'asocial behavior, inattentive mothering and hyperaggression.'



# Deafness in Nepal



Sangeetha Basnet  
Courtesy Sonal Singh

Dr Sonal Singh writes from the U.S.: 'Among over 28 million people in Nepal, nearly 16% have some degree of hearing loss. Only a very few schools provide education for deaf children in Nepal. According to the International Federation of Hard of Hearing People, there are only 30 Ear, Nose & Throat (ENT) physicians in the entire country, or one ENT physician for every 600,000 people. Ear surgeries are only done in Kathmandu (the capital) and Pokhara (about 125 miles from Kathmandu). More than 55% of the otitis media cases are seen in school-going children. Every second case of hearing impairment in children between 5-15 years is caused by otitis media. About 1.7% of the population (360,000 people) has severe to profound hearing loss. More than 35% of the hearing impairment is preventable.

'Data show that children with severe to profound hearing loss who do not receive early identification suffer from substantial deficits in reading comprehension. By 8 years of age, these children are already almost 1.5 years behind their peers. That gap continues to widen over time, with the average deaf child or youth never exceeding a fourth-grade reading level. To overcome some of these challenges, BODHI launched the Train the Trainer Project in Nepal to support educational efforts for these children. One of the students, Sangeetha Basnet, is well into the second year of BODHI's Train the Trainer Project at the School for the Deaf in Naxal in Kathmandu, Nepal. According to Ms Kiran Sinha, BODHI's local contact person who also teaches at the school, Sangeetha is doing quite well in class and has just been promoted to her next year after finishing her finals. Sangeetha is thankful to BODHI and its supporters for their continued support.'

*Funding for this year is in the memory of Simon Brown. Will you help next year, for only US\$600/A\$720?*

# Thank you

Drs Kym & Richard Boughton, NSW, Australia  
Dr Anna Brooks, Tasmania, Australia  
Mrs Margaret Butler & the late Mr David Butler, NSW, Australia  
Em Prof Bob Douglas AO, ACT, Australia  
Jeffrey Griffin, California, USA  
Prof John Hamilton, NSW, Australia  
Maryanne Heslop, NSW, Australia  
Dr Brian Learoyd, NSW, Australia  
Prof Ray Lowenthal, AO, Tasmania, Australia  
Dr Dougald & Mrs Carol McLean, Tasmania, Australia  
Prof Kim McQuaid, Ohio, USA  
James Meyers, California, USA  
Dr John Morris, Tasmania, Australia  
Diane Mullin, NSW, Australia  
Caroline Ralston (Nagasuri), NSW, Australia  
Elizabeth Rawnley, Vic, Australia  
Reading Group of Ms Iven Spicer, ACT, Australia  
Linda Weltmer, Kansas, USA  
Jeffrey Whitman, California, USA

Special thanks to the Australian Jumma community.

**Please visit our website for  
detailed information and photos of  
all our current projects**

## We need your help

Thanks to your generosity, BODHI has supported many exciting and innovative projects. To continue, we need your help. Please send your donation, in U.S. or Australian dollars, to an address below. Contact us for details of direct-debit facilities.

**Donations by U.S. and Australian taxpayers  
are tax-deductible**

*Australian cheques must be made out to 'BODHI  
Australia Overseas Relief Fund' to be tax-deductible*

**Founding Patron  
His Holiness XIV Dalai Lama  
1989 Nobel Laureate for Peace**

Medical Director Colin Butler, BMed., PhD  
Dir. Electronic Communications Denis Wright, PhD  
Community Adviser Shanti Raman, FRACP, MAE  
Editor Susan Woldenberg Butler

### Advisory Board

Roshi Robert Aitken	Hawaii, U.S.
Shelley Anderson	The Netherlands
Sen. Bob Brown	Australia
Sr. Mila de Gimeno	The Philippines
Prof. John Guillebaud	Oxford, U.K.
Dh. Lokamitra	Pune, India
Dr. Maurice King	Leeds, U.K.
Prof. Christopher Queen	Boston, U.S.
Prof. David Rapport	Canada
Sulak Sivaraksa	Thailand

Email: csbutler@skyoptic.com.au, www.bodhi.net.au

**BODHI U.S.**  
2743 Portobello Drive  
Torrance, CA 90505-7309 U.S.A.  
Tel: +1 (310) 378-0260  
Directors: Colin Butler, Martin Rubin, M.D., Scott  
Trimingham, Susan Woldenberg Butler

**BODHI AUSTRALIA Inc.**  
4 Queen Street, Campbell Town  
Tasmania Australia 7210  
Tel: +61-3-6381-1675  
Directors: Colin Butler, Susan W. Butler, Denis Wright

**We greatly value your support and keep our mailing  
list confidential**

*Printed on recycled paper*

## Udana Special Children's Centre, Sri Lanka

### Meet some of the students



Mr Jaya Dharmasiri, one of the founders and the Australian representative of the Udana Special Children's Centre, a school for children with special needs in Colombo, Sri Lanka's capital, says, 'Udana's students include two autistic children, two with Downs Syndrome, two with cerebral palsy, two with learning and hearing difficulties and two with learning and walking difficulties.

The parents of the children and the care providers run the school. There are three teachers, one specially trained, and two trainees. The teachers are paid half of what they are worth. The school rents a hall in a Buddhist temple for a reasonable fee. The temple premises were not designed for children with special needs. Certain security changes, for example fences and lockable gates, have to be installed.'

Udana needs a van as well as funds for a teacher's salary (A\$1,800/US\$1,500 per annum); school fees (A\$660/US\$552 p/a); books, manuals and guides (A\$500/US\$417 p/a); and skills development aids, such as videos and DVDs (A\$1,000/US\$833 p/a).

**Donations may be made to BODHI for the Udana Special Children's Centre**

## New gift available

Susan's new cookbook, *Heritage Highway Cookery, Favourite Recipes From Along Tasmania's Midlands Highway (Mostly)*, is now available. Again, she is donating part of the profits to BODHI. Please contact BODHI to purchase this unique gift at the cost of \$20 + \$5 postage and handling.

Susan's earlier book, *Midlands Morsels, Favourite Recipes from the Heart of Tasmania (Mostly)* is available for \$15 + \$5 postage and handling.

# Bulletin Board



Courtesy Chris Queen

Dr. Christopher Queen with (clockwise) Dr. Namdeo Nimgade, his wife Hira and son, Dr. Ashok Nimgade, in their Nagpur home on October 3, 2006. Namdeo Nimgade was the second Dalit to earn a PhD in the United States, following his mentor, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar (pictured behind). The Nimgades are holding a photo taken on their wedding day in 1954. Ashok Nimgade, a graduate of Harvard University, practices medicine in Boston. The family met in Nagpur to celebrate the Golden Jubilee (50th anniversary) of the Buddhist conversions initiated by Dr. Ambedkar in Nagpur in 1956. An autobiography by the senior Dr. Nimgade is being prepared for publication in English.

## Human rights

Miss Emilia Della Torre (see below) is assisting BODHI Community Adviser Kabita Chakma to prepare a portfolio on the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), Bangladesh for the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), in Geneva. The Hon Justice John Dowd has requested this portfolio in the hope it will lead to an ICJ committee being sent to investigate the human rights situation in the CHT and also, possibly the placement of UN monitors.

## From the literature ... and more

**EXTREME TB.** XDR (extremely drug-resistant) TB is a new and frightening strain of tuberculosis, first discovered in 2006. 'We are now on the threshold of the appearance of a strain of TB that is resistant to every medicine known to science,' said Paul Nunn, coordinator of the World Health Organisation (WHO)'s drug-resistance unit. Among the areas affected by XDR-TB are South Africa and Russia. Regular TB drugs cost around US\$100, whereas MDR (multiple drug-resistant) TB drugs cost about US\$35,000 and need 18 months of treatment.

A recent editorial in *Tropical Medicine and International Health* laments that both private and public health practitioners fail to take TB control seriously enough. The authors advocate engaging all care providers (including informal health practitioners) as a major component in WHO's new Stop TB Strategy. Other recent studies are uncovering new ways to detect active TB, even in cases which are sputum negative.

### LEADING AIDS SCIENTIST MURDERED.

Kenya's leading AIDS researcher Professor Job Bwayo (famous for identifying the Nairobi prostitutes apparently naturally resistant to HIV) was shot by carjackers in Nairobi in March. 'Kenya's well-earned prominence in the global HIV vac-

cine research arena is a great testimony to Prof. Bwayo's scientific leadership and determination,' said Geoffrey Lamb, Chairman of the Board, International AIDS Vaccine Initiative. 'What a great achievement, and what a bitter loss.'

### BODHI HAS MATCHED FUNDS FROM THE

Australian Jumma community to donate A\$1,000/US\$ 830 to Shishu Koruna Sangha (SKS) in Kolkata (Calcutta), India. Mr S.K. Chakma writes, 'At present we are running a senior secondary school (Nursery to XII), 5 student hostels, a health care centre, a technical institute, a centre for study and development of traditional tribal crafts and arts; and Bodhicariya Vihar (Temple). The school is co-educational and located in the midst of sylvan setting.'

This tragedy exemplifies a downward spiral typical of many developing countries. One loss of 'human capital' promotes another. An example is the brain drain.

Meanwhile, in April, 15-year-old Isaiah Gakuyo, born HIV positive, is reported to have been killed because of his disease by his uncle and guardian in Nyeri, central Kenya.

### COLIN ON POPULATION, CLIMATE CHANGE AND SECURITY.

In recent months, Colin has given five invited lectures on population policy, human carrying capacity, globalisation and the security implications of climate change to audiences in Canada and Australia. In Ottawa, he spoke at the invitation of a research group affiliated with the Canadian government on population and the environment. ([http://policyresearch.gc.ca/page.asp?redir=on&pagenm=ev\\_pas\\_index&etime=past#event20851](http://policyresearch.gc.ca/page.asp?redir=on&pagenm=ev_pas_index&etime=past#event20851).) He also spoke to a futures group at the Canadian Defense Department.

### LANCET PUBLISHER PROMOTES THE ARMS

**TRADE.** Colin and colleagues recently submitted letters calling for scientific publishers (including the *Lancet* and *New Scientist* publisher Reed Elsevier) to declare their conflicts of interest.

## WANTED

GRAPHIC ARTIST/DESIGNER  
PUBLISHER

Susan has begun working on a book to celebrate BODHI's 20th anniversary in 2009. We would like it to be a thing of beauty.

## New volunteer

Miss Emilia Della Torre is our latest BODHI volunteer. She is a human rights lawyer with over fifteen years experience in the field. Over the years, Emilia has worked with the United Nations, government and non-government organisations on many human rights issues. These include the rights of indigenous peoples, women, refugees, religious minorities and others. Her publications in the field include a manual, *How to Make a Complaint to the United Nations Human Rights Committee* (White Possum Press). This is used by government and non-government organisations in over thirteen nations. She divides her time between *pro bono* legal work, consultant activities and travel. 'I am really looking forward to working with the Jumma people in



Courtesy Emilia Della Torre

Asia and in Australia,' Emilia says. 'I hope I can make a contribution in this area. I am certain that my life is about to become enriched through this new and exciting experience.'



## Passings

Mr John Bell of Devonport, Tasmania died on 7 November, 2006. 'He was a honourable and generous man,' says his son, Dr Scott Bell. We at BODHI concur.

John's support was a major factor in our decision to expand the Revolving Sheep Bank. Scott will maintain John's donations in his father's name, which will help the sheep banks and which we greatly appreciate.



# BODHI TIMES

**Benevolent Organisation for Development, Health & Insight**  
Founding Patron: His Holiness XIV Dalai Lama

December 2007

No 33

*Our goal is 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 and is neither religious nor political. We have supporters and advisers from many faiths. We encourage your ideas and acts of kindness. Realising the interdependence of all beings is in our enlightened self-interest. Now more than ever, if we don't work together to reduce the world's much-discussed problems, then who will?*

## Free Mobile Medical Clinics in Bangladesh

Free mobile medical clinics are a vital factor in improving the health of isolated villagers in Bangladesh's Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), Ven Praggha Lankar Bhikku of Parbatya Bouddha Mission (PBM) told Colin and Susan in Sydney in June.

From April-June 2006, BODHI supported mobile health clinics in the CHT. Medical staff (1 each doctor, paramedic and nurse and 5 local volunteers) provided primary health care and treatment to 509 patients suffering from such diseases as malaria, acute respiratory infection, diarrhoea, dysentery, asthma, skin disease, peptic ulcer diseases and rheumatism. PBM transported patients requiring admission by ambulance to the closest hospital.

PBM's report (available on our website) notes that people in the areas visited by the mobile medical clinic lack general knowledge about healthcare and awareness of communicable diseases. It quantifies success by a 'gradual reduction in the number of patients in and around the areas' that the mobile clinic visits, and plans to shift the clinic to other areas. While investigating health education, BODHI is providing A\$5,000/US\$4,430 for more free mobile medical clinics.



Ambulance at flooded PBM Medical Centre; inset: workers at PBM office  
Courtesy PBM

## BODHI Human Rights Committee formed

BODHI has formed a Human Rights Committee with Emilia Della Torre, Kabita Chakma (right) and Susan Woldenberg Butler. Its first project is to prepare a portfolio on the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), Bangladesh for the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), in Geneva. We are hopeful about a possible ICJ mission to Bangladesh next year and are working on the final draft of the submission as this goes to press.

Please contact BODHI if you're interested in participating in this aspect of our work.



## Guillebaud's new African NGO TASK for women's health

Prof. John Guillebaud writes: 'I'm recently back from a productive trip to Cape Town to launch our new medical education charity. TASK (Towards African Solutions through Knowledge) for women's health is a charity registered in the United Kingdom to improve the health of women in Africa. To achieve this goal we aim to research and promote the use of modern communication technology for the purposes of education and to provide practical support to workers in the field whose training and experience may be limited. The spread of the mobile phone networks in the African continent offers a unique opportunity to improve communication and education for the prevention, early detection and effective treatment of the major causes of morbidity and mortality for women.

'TASK looks for affordable and sustainable ways to improve women's health in Africa, using locally generated ideas which must not conflict with established culture. The western model for healthcare is not currently affordable for all the population of the African continent. It is intended to look for other models, including the use of non-medically qualified personnel for delivering health care who have been given appropriate training. To aid with the supervision of these specially trained personnel, consideration will be given to the use of modern information and communication technology.'

BODHI hopes to support TASK's work.

## Sri Lanka Udana School

BODHI received a donation of A\$400/US\$357 for the education of an autistic child. This was donated to the Udana School for Special Needs Children. Details are being finalised as this goes to press.



Students at the Udana School celebrate the Sri Lankan New Year in April

## Tibet

## Revolving Sheep Bank

As mentioned in the last newsletter, BODHI has expanded into a third nomad area adjacent to the first two in Tibet's Phala region to begin **Phase 3** of the Revolving Sheep Bank. Prof. Melvyn C Goldstein went to Tibet earlier this year to hand over funds. We hope to have a report and photograph in time for the next newsletter.



# Startled awake: the nature of engagement

*Anyone who is a Vietnamese ... when it's sunset, approaching a temple in a daze, upon hearing the compassionate sound of the temple bell, cannot fail to be startled awake from mundane dreams, Nguyễn Mực Tiên, 1927, DeVido, E., In: Modernity and Re-enchantment: Religion in Post-Revolutionary Vietnam*

Readers of this newsletter know that BODHI attempts to engage constructively with the real problems of the world. In particular we try to reduce the physical and mental suffering of poverty, whether manifest through disease, despair, vulnerability or oppression. I recently attended the ninth biennial meeting of the International Network of Engaged Buddhists, held in Taiwan for the first time. We then toured this crowded island, visiting two beautiful and wealthy Buddhist temples, each with a worldwide network of daughter institutions. Temple spokespersons claimed that their evangelical work was socially engaged. However, even through interpreters, I sensed a large gulf between my conception of social engagement and theirs.

The scope and outreach of these temples are tremendously successful. Both are very large, immaculately kept and surrounded by beautiful gardens. Thousands of Buddha images adorned vast halls. People were calm, friendly and seemed happy — traits which mirrored this prosperous and comparatively egalitarian society as a whole. I saw no beggars in Taiwan, perhaps due to the penetration of Buddhism into ordinary everyday life.

Yet, nowhere in these palaces of faith did I sense any recognition of the world's material and environmental crises. In one monastery, thousands of dollars had been spent to ensure the survival of individual trees in recognition of the importance of nature; yet there seemed no parallel awareness of the need to conserve energy or reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Perhaps this simply reflects a general lack of understanding within Taiwan of climate change — even though that country seems to be experiencing more typhoons which very likely are climate change related.

More importantly, I detected no hint in these monasteries of awareness of the extent of global poverty and exploitation. Their Buddhism seemed to emphasise faith, prayer and material generosity, the last more to construct and operate religious centres than to help the poor. My limited knowledge of these daughter centres is that devotees are encouraged to continue these activities. Status primarily comes from one's material ability to foster even more centres. The model is very successful. Doubtless these beliefs give many devotees satisfaction and some mental peace, but does this method help to reduce global poverty and exploitation? Could it worsen these conditions, including by discouraging analysis?

## Evangelism & social engagement

The psychologist Abraham Maslow described a hierarchy of needs, from basic survival to self-actualisation. I think at its core this hierarchy is self-evident. We should be sceptical of those who argue that enlightenment is attainable by the extremely poor, especially if such claims are made by the well off. While there may be a few saints who thrive in material poverty, these people are very rare. They have usually consciously chosen their poverty, as did the Buddha following his life as a privileged prince. Such freedom to choose reflects a very different experience from that of those born into poverty with little prospect of escape.

Preaching to the wealthy has a place. I do not deny the dissatisfaction of many people who lead materially acquisitive lives. Everyone benefits from greater spiritual awareness, including that attainable from sanctuaries such as the ones I visited. But I think there is a hierarchy of suffering. Material poverty, disease and exploitation are common, especially in developing countries. Some Buddhist scholars argue that all Buddhism is inherently 'engaged.' Though this has many contested meanings (which I lack space to properly discuss) the scale of human exploitation, rather than the inherent suffering from disease, ageing and so on, indicates to me that much more could and should be done. More good would be done if religions worked harder to reduce physical suffering, poverty and vulnerability than to preach to the wealthy.

Many missionaries, Christian as well as Buddhist, appear to believe that spiritual evangelism is of equal or greater value than the provision of material aid or the promotion of health and security. This belief system seems to have two central propositions. First, good mental well-being in this life can be attained by following various spiritual practices, such as the Buddhist Eightfold Path. The second core proposition is that life after death is more important than life on Earth.

For most religions, a better future life includes improved material circumstances. (Descriptions of heaven never include poverty.) It follows that spiritual development in this life can have a material payoff in the next, even if there is little material improvement in this life. Actually, I argue, the quest to provide essentials such as adequate food, shelter and a legal framework which protects basic rights — for example, protection from displacement without compensation, receiving an education or seeking justice if attacked — is more important than the next life.

It seems very hard for any individual to make much of a difference. Few can be charismatic human rights lawyers or dedicated health or

aid workers. But could not spiritual leaders — including Buddhists — draw more attention to the scale of exploitation? Fear of being criticised as 'political' often precludes this. However, ignoring these issues is itself political. If more spiritual figures spoke out about global injustice, then this would surely change government and business policies in ways which would be of lasting benefit. Similarly spiritual outreach, if mainly concerned with conversion, is not only unlikely to be socially engaged but also may be harmful, for example by promotion division or by suppressing social analysis. However the forthcoming high-level Buddhist meeting in Hanoi (p 3) suggests that change is possible.

If we can reduce population growth, increase education and find leaders who speak out for greater human rights, then our world has a chance. Not for utopia, but for sustainable survival. Spiritual leaders who encourage their followers to ponder these issues — as well as to say prayers, follow precepts and pursue a right livelihood — might not be able to erect as grand buildings but, I believe, will contribute to a more just and enduring civilisation.

## The example of Burma

In September monks led a huge protest in Burma (Myanmar), which the military government cruelly suppressed. Many governments, including some in Asia protested — although not the Chinese, who gain considerable material benefit from their support of the Burmese government. The Japanese government announced it would revise its aid policy following the killing of a Japanese journalist.

The critical reaction of the UN and many foreign governments is encouraging. Yet Aung San Su Kyi, the elected leader of the Burmese people, has been held under house arrest for more than a decade. The exploitation, poverty and semi-slavery of the Burmese people are well documented. Why then has this strong international criticism, which includes sanctions, been so recent?



A Pure Land painting, monastery, Taiwan



## Vietnam: democracy, healing & climate change

BODHI director Dr. Colin Butler has been appointed to the International Organising Committee (IOC) for the sixth United Nations endorsed international Buddhist meeting and conference to celebrate Vesak (the thrice sacred day of the Buddhist calendar), to be held in Hanoi, Vietnam from May 14-16th, 2008. Almost 1,000 Buddhist leaders and scholars from all traditions will be invited; many others are expected to attend. This is an excellent opportunity to experience the hospitality of the Vietnamese people, and at the same time contribute to Vietnam becoming an even more open and prosperous society. The theme of the meeting will be a 'Buddhist Contribution to Building a Just, Democratic and Civil Society.' Major sub-themes include: (1) War, Conflict and Healing, and (2) Climate change and environmental care. Colin will co-organise and chair the workshop on climate change.

Confirmed speakers include the leading Vietnamese monk Thich Nhat Hahn and Professor Amartya Sen, the 1998 Nobel Laureate in Economics. We are extremely heartened by this agenda, which seems to us to be very much in the spirit of engaged Buddhism.



Left: Chakma traditional dance; rt: students at assembly  
Courtesy SNEHA



## SNEHA

Mr. Susanta Chakma writes from Delhi, 'We thank BODHI for supporting SNEHA-2nd year of the project titled 'Confidence and Capacity building of the underprivileged children through education in Arunachal Pradesh.'

In addition to new teachers, music classes were introduced formally this year and a music teacher was also appointed.

BODHI is contributing A\$5,000/US\$4,430 towards teachers' salaries, with another A\$100/US\$89 donated by Mr Kulottam Chakma for office and computer expenses. See our website for SNEHA's report.

## BODHI as umbrella

**BODHI continues to seek to help smaller organisations with a similar philosophy to us. We can sometimes channel donations for legitimate development projects for organisations which are not yet tax deductible. So far we have worked with the Udana School and the Bodh Gaya Development Fund. We continue to negotiate an agreement with Zadoh, ([www.gadenrelief.org](http://www.gadenrelief.org)) a Canadian NGO established by Zazep Tuku Rinpoche, which has supporters in Australia and the US. Zadoh works in Tibet.**

## Holiday gifts

Susan's cookbooks make great gifts: *Heritage Highway Cookery*, *Favourite Recipes From Along Tasmania's Midlands Highway (Mostly)* at the cost of \$20 + \$5 postage and handling and *Midlands Morsels*, *Favourite Recipes from the Heart of Tasmania (Mostly)* @ \$15 + \$5 postage and handling. Susan donates the profits of cookbooks sold through the newsletter and website to BODHI. Please contact BODHI to purchase these unique gifts.

*Special offer: both cookbooks for \$30 + \$5 postage and handling  
(please apply for international postage rates)*

## Thank you

Garry Corr, ACT, Australia  
Prof. John Hamilton, NSW, Australia  
Jane Hudspeth, Tasmania, Australia  
Dr. David King, Queensland, Australia  
Dr. Marty Rubin, California, USA  
Rev. Alan Senauke, California, USA  
Scott Trimmingham, California, USA  
Most Ven Prof Dr Lê Manh Thát, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam  
Bryan and Amy West, Queensland, Australia

Thanks to Ven. Chao Hwei, Ven. Shing Kuang, David Reid, Taiwan and the International Network of Engaged Buddhists for hosting the biennial INEB meeting.

Thanks to Anthony Walsh, Family Planning Queensland and the Australian Health Promotion Association for organising Colin's lecture tour in Queensland, Australia.

*Special thanks to Ric and Jo Easton at Biodistributors in Sheffield, Tasmania for their continuing, generous support.*

**Please visit our website for detailed information and photos of all our current projects**

## We need your help

Thanks to your generosity, BODHI has supported many exciting and innovative projects. To continue, we need your help. Please send your donation, in U.S. or Australian dollars, to an address below. Contact us for details of direct-debit facilities.

*Donations by U.S. and Australian taxpayers are tax-deductible*

*Australian cheques must be made out to 'BODHI Australia Overseas Relief Fund' to be tax-deductible*

**Founding Patron  
His Holiness XIV Dalai Lama  
1989 Nobel Laureate for Peace**

Medical Director Colin Butler, BMed., PhD  
Dir. Electronic Communications Denis Wright, PhD  
Community Adviser Shanti Raman, FRACP, MAE  
Editor Susan Woldenberg Butler

### Advisory Board

Roshi Robert Aitken	Hawaii, U.S.
Shelley Anderson	The Netherlands
Prof. Solomon Benatar	South Africa
Sen. Bob Brown	Australia
Sr. Mila de Gimeno	The Philippines
Prof. John Guillebaud	Oxford, U.K.
Dh. Lokamitra	Pune, India
Dr. Maurice King	Leeds, U.K.
Prof. Christopher Queen	Boston, U.S.
Prof. David Rapport	Canada
Sulak Sivaraksa	Thailand

Email: [csbutler@sctelco.net.au](mailto:csbutler@sctelco.net.au), [www.bodhi.net.au](http://www.bodhi.net.au)

**BODHI U.S.**  
2743 Portobello Drive  
Torrance, CA 90505-7309 U.S.A.  
Tel: +1 (310) 378-0260

Directors: Colin Butler, Martin Rubin, M.D., Scott Trimmingham, Susan Woldenberg Butler

**BODHI AUSTRALIA Inc.**  
4 Queen Street, Campbell Town  
Tasmania Australia 7210  
Tel: +61-3-6381-1675

Directors: Colin Butler, Susan W. Butler, Denis Wright

**We greatly value your support and keep our mailing list confidential**

*Printed on recycled paper*

# Prof. Solomon Benatar joins Advisory Board



*We are honoured that Professor Benatar (left) has agreed to become BODHI's latest adviser.* Solomon R Benatar, MBChB, DSc (Med), is Professor of Medicine at the University of Cape Town (UCT) and Founding Director of the UCT Bioethics Centre (1992-).

His current positions in addition to the above are: Chief Physician Groote Schuur Hospital (1980), South African Representative - The Novartis Foundation Scientific Advisory Panel (1998-), Visiting Professor in Public Health Sciences and Medicine, University of Toronto (2000-), and Director IRENSA - A US NIH Fogarty International Center Capacity Building program (2003-2010).

After graduating from the University of Cape Town in 1965, he trained in Anaesthetics and in Medicine in Cape Town and London. His academic interests include respiratory medicine, academic freedom, medical ethics and the humanities in medicine, human rights, health care systems, health economics and global health. Prof Benatar is a corresponding member of the US National Academy of Sciences' Committee on Human Rights and has been a Fellow in the Program in Ethics and the Professions at Harvard University and Visiting Professor at Harvard Medical School. He is an elected Foreign Member of the US National Academy of Sciences' Institute of Medicine and of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Previous positions include: President of the International Association of Bioethics (2001-2003), and Chairman of the South African Interim National Health Research Ethics Committee (2001-2005).

Other professional activities include: Ethics Advisor to the Nelson Mandela Foundation (2003-), Medecins Sans Frontieres (2001-) and the HIV Prevention Trials Network (HPTN) - Family Health International USA (2001-). Prof. Benatar

is an Elected Fellow of the Hastings Center, New York and of Imperial College London and Elected Honorary Fellow American College of Physicians and of the College of Physicians of South Africa.

Memberships include: Advisory Board Global Physicians and Lawyers for Human Rights (2000-); Drugs for Neglected Diseases Group; Medecins Sans Frontieres (2003-); Board of Directors Lung Institute University off Cape Town (1999-); International Medical Advisory Panel, International Planned Parenthood Federation (2004-), Scientific Advisory Committee of Centre for AIDS Programme of Research in SA (2001-), Board of Directors International Association of Bioethics (2001-2006), and Standing Committee on Ethics, Canadian Institutes of Health Research (2007-2009). Editorial activities include Advisory Boards: Theoretical Medicine and Bioethics and Editorial Boards; Public Library of Science Medicine; Clinical Ethics; HIV Medicine; BioMed Central: Philosophy, Ethics and Humanities in Medicine; and Public Health Ethics. Journal Reviewer for many journals including Social Science and Medicine, American Journal of Public Health; and Manuscript Reviewer for: Kluwer Press, Oxford U Press, Cambridge U Press and Princeton U. Press.

Prof. Benatar's current interests are in Global Health, International Research Ethics, HIV/AIDS, and Public Health Ethics. He advocates extending the bioethics discourse from the interpersonal level to the ethics of institutions and international relations, and consideration of upstream causes of poverty and disease as needing attention and rectification.

## Nepal Green Tara Trust & Kathmandu Lesbians

Dr. Jane Stephens (Ven. Karunamati) has worked in Nepal since 1993 and established the Green Tara Trust in the UK in 1999. 'We aim to work with poor, rural communities where geographical access to healthcare and education is difficult,' she says.

In addition to childbirth-related problems and high infant mortality, HIV and other sexually transmitted infections are increasing rapidly in Nepal, mainly due to community fragmentation. Most affected women and girl children are marginalized, as are sex workers and Dalits. 'Our initial work focuses on the poorest 30% in these communities then expands to incorporate the whole community.

Our current programme is looking at the effect of health promotion on maternal, child and young people's sexual health in rural Nepal.' While the project has wide support, there is very little funding for Karunamati herself, so BODHI is donating A\$1,000/US\$893 for that purpose.

Karunamati has recently become involved with lesbians in Kathmandu. 'Sexual violation of people of all alternative sexualities is common and hidden from public view. The focus of the Blue Diamond Society, the main NGO working to support these groups, is for men who have sex with men due to the increased HIV risk incurred by penetrative

gay intercourse. This means they can get good NGO funding, but only for men who have sex with men. The Blue Diamond Society are supportive of lesbians but there is no funding to help them address their own health, education and advocacy needs. There seems to be a huge hole in the development input given to lesbians.

'The lesbians I have met ... would like help in improving their literacy, English and computing so that more jobs are open to them. They also need support in understanding their rights as employees as well as challenging any discrimination through the courts,' Karunamati says. 'A small amount of regular financial support would go a long way in assisting these women, and others like them, to live with more stability, positivity and self reliance.'

The amount that BODHI will donate is currently being determined.

## New committee member

BODHI welcomes Mr. Kulottam Chakma (right) to our general committee. He writes, 'I hail from Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) of Bangladesh. CHT is the southeastern part of Bangladesh bordering India's northeast & Burma's Rakhaine state. From early age, I became aware of the suffering of my people (Chakma, Marma, Tripura and other ethnic minorities collectively known as Jummas). The suffering was caused by violence and discrimination deliberately inflicted by the government & majority population of Bangladesh. For example in 1971 soon after independence, I heard how the victorious Mukti Bahini (Freedom Fighters of Bangladesh) massacred hundreds of Chakma Buddhists in the northern part of CHT. Their



'crime' was that the Chakma king Raja Tridiv Roy supported Pakistan during Pakistan-Bangladesh civil war in 1971.

'Due to my background and shared experience of persecution, I developed a strong sense of responsibility, love and compassion to my community. The urge to help my community comes naturally to me. After graduation from the university in Dhaka, Bangladesh in 1987 & after working with Bangladesh Biman (national air carrier) for more than a year, I set off for Australia in 1989 to do Master of Electrical Engineering. Another reason I came to Australia was to help my community bring their plight to the knowledge of Australian lawmakers. But I was disappointed with the indifference and realised that self-help was our main way to survival. That's why I still continue to help my community.'



# BODHI TIMES

**Benevolent Organisation for Development, Health & Insight**  
Founding Patron: His Holiness XIV Dalai Lama

June, 2008

No 34

*Our goal is 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 and is neither religious nor political. We have supporters and advisers from many faiths. We encourage your ideas and acts of kindness. Realising the interdependence of all beings is in our enlightened self-interest. Now more than ever, if we don't work together to reduce the world's much-discussed problems, then who will?*

## Disadvantage, discrimination & health

### Over-Forty Women's Health



Health education Photo courtesy Dr. Manda Mune

This project funds ten medical camps per year, reaching nearly 400 women over the age of forty who are facing or already experiencing menopause. BODHI's funds are being used for some medicines, equipment and publicity. Two female doctors and two female health workers volunteer their time and skills and some of the medical supplies.

Each camp takes half a day and is held at six-monthly intervals in the five areas of the Vishrantwadi slums in Pune, India: Shanti Nagar, Panchshil Nagar, Sanjay Park, Ekta Nagar and Rajiv Gandhi Nagar.

Dr. (Mrs.) Manda Mune, who is running the project, explains that doctors help to educate women about the causes, symptoms and danger sign, as well as the possibility and importance of early detection. In India, cancer is a common cause of death. Cervical and uterine cancers are particularly common, in part because of taboos and embarrassment about female health issues. We hope this project will help break down these barriers.



Mitini Nepal founders Laxmi (l) and Mira Courtesy Green Tara Trust

### Skills Training in Nepal

BODHI has committed A\$2,000 per year for the next three years to a skills-training project for members of the female gay community in Kathmandu, Nepal, who face fierce discrimination.

Dr. Jane Stephens will oversee the project, in which members of Mitini Nepal will learn English and computer skills.

Dr. Stephens, a British general medical practitioner, has been working in Nepal since 1993. She set up the Green Tara Trust in 1999 to provide 'health-related services to some of the most disadvantaged children, women and men in rural areas of Nepal.'

BODHI has donated US\$5,000 seed money to Gaden Relief Projects (GRP) in Canada towards construction of a health care centre to provide traditional medical care for the 8,000 nomads, villagers and other residents of the Tashi Lhapug district, a remote area 13,000 above sea level near the headwaters of the Mekong River in Eastern Tibet. Winter snows isolate this area, a rough ten-hour Jeep ride from the closest health care, even in optimal conditions.

Venerable Zasep Tulku is the spiritual teacher for the area. He was born in Tibet but lives in Canada. He also has a long connection with Australia. We have known him for nearly two decades. In 1988, Zasep Tulku helped establish GRP ([www.gadenrelief.org](http://www.gadenrelief.org)).

The current estimated construction cost of the health care centre is around US\$40,000. Please visit the websites of BODHI and GRP for further information.



### Tashi Lhapug Health Care Centre

L: Woman who will be helped by the new health care centre.; r: Tashi Lhapug Photos courtesy Zasep Tulku (l) and Evan Zaleschuk (r)

# Caring for our only home

**C**olin was one of only three Australians on the International Organising Committee (IOC) for the 6th United Nations Day of Vesak (UNDV) celebrations, held 13-18 May 2008, in Hanoi, Vietnam. The theme of the gathering was Buddhist Contribution to Building a Just, Democratic and Civil Society. There were eight workshops, including one Colin helped organise and chair called Care for our Environment: Buddhist Response to Climate Change.

This one-day workshop attracted over 100 people and 12 speakers from Vietnam, Sri Lanka, South Korea, Australia, Canada, Sweden, the U.K. and the U.S.A. Following is an edited report which Colin gave to over 1,000 participants from about 80 countries on the last day of the meeting. For further information, please visit <http://vesakday2008.com>

## Climate change & environment workshop

Venerables, distinguished guests, friends in the dharma,

Thank you to the organisers of this meeting for the chance to speak with you. Our workshop was about climate change and the need to care for the environment. This is the first time that these issues have been so prominent at a UNDV meeting, and in particular I want to thank Ven. Thich Nhat Hanh for his recognition of these problems and his influence in having them placed on the agenda. The other reason that climate change and the need to care for the environment is on the agenda is because the problems are now so large and increasingly obvious.

The Buddha taught about impermanence and dukkha, or suffering. Nature has always caused storms, earthquakes and epidemics. But in the last two weeks, two events have clearly shown an extra human dimension to Nature: the cyclone Nargis in Myanmar and the earthquake near Chengdu, China. The cyclone was made worse by sea level rise, caused by climate change, in turn caused by human actions. It was also made worse by the excessive clearing of the coastal mangroves for shrimp farms and firewood. These forests, if left intact, would have provided some protection against the storm surge that penetrated so far inland. The earthquake was made worse because it caused a large crack in one of the 40,000 large dams in China. Two thousand troops are now trying to repair it.

Collectively, humans are now a force of nature, but we do not yet have the wisdom to use that power well. Our group made five recommendations (see box).

From Vietnam Colin travelled to Geneva, Switzerland, where he had several meetings, including with UNAIDS and the World Health Organisation (WHO). In part this was to work on a UN position paper on climate change and HIV/AIDS, prepared jointly for UNAIDS and the UNEP (the UN Environment Programme). Following is the part of a preamble Colin wrote for a working group within WHO that will examine the relationship between emerging environmental factors and infectious diseases.

## Sanitary revolution or new Dark Age?

**U**nderstanding of the relationship between local environmental factors and infectious diseases, such as dirty water and diarrhoea, flooding and malaria, and air pollution and bronchitis continues to develop, albeit at a much slower pace now than in the late 19th and 20th centuries. Meanwhile, a newer generation of influences on disease risks, particularly infectious diseases, is emerging at much larger, often global, scale. As human actions change and disturb environments, whole ecosystems and components of the Earth system (especially the global climate), additional forces are contributing to the emergence, re-emergence and spread of infectious diseases. Because limits to growth are denied, humanity is endangering human well-being on a global scale. Mechanisms of this endangerment include growing oil and food scarcity, climate change, deforestation and the loss of fertile soil and potable water.

Rather than the microscope, technologies for the new basic science relevant to this field include satellites, atmospheric and oceanographic monitors and computer models. Instead of theories of contagion, the new paradigm draws on concepts and terms such as 'anthropocene', 'Earth system', 'ecosystem services' and 'eco-social interactions'. These new researchers communicate by the Internet rather than the telegraph and printing press. Instead of coal, gas and electricity driven by falling water, we are developing solar thermal systems and fuel efficient transport, housing and lighting. Instead of guano and the synthesis of ammonia, we are hoping to develop effective gene technology. While there are many legitimate reasons for anxiety, these new tools are an extremely powerful lever with which to forestall global collapse. In the process, we might even spread the 1840s technology of self-scouring sewers (with egg-shaped cross sections) throughout the world.

## 5 recommendations for the environment ...

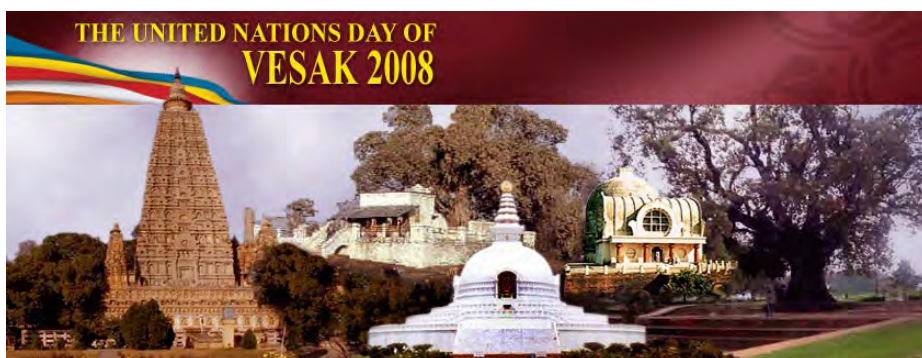
... made by the UNDV workshop in Hanoi.

1. That Buddhists of all ranks and in all places observe Earth Day each April 22, and try to make every day an Earth Care Day.
2. That Buddhists educate themselves about environmental problems and climate change, especially to prepare for the adverse changes which are inevitable and which are already occurring, for example by studying and embracing the principles of the Buddhist influenced Earth Charter. This is available in many Asian languages, including Vietnamese, Bangla, Burmese, Chinese, Hindi, Japanese, Korean, Nepali, Newari and Thai. Its website is <http://www.earthcharter.org>.
3. That Buddhists in all countries develop environmental leadership such as following the example of the late Thai monk, Buddhadasa. Buddhadasa rejected costly temples, preferring simple places to gather, such as under trees.
4. That Buddhists at the most senior level raise the issue of environmental care and climate change at the World Council of Religions where they seek to promote and participate in global spiritual and physical preparedness and response to these issues.
5. Finally, that these environmental issues be placed on the agenda for all future UNDV meetings and indeed for as many Buddhist meetings and gatherings as possible in as many countries and places as possible.

This unfolding paradigm has two essential components. One is of the interdependence of the global eco-social system. The other is its recognition of limits to economic growth (as that term is defined by the slowly waning but still dominant paradigm). The concept 'anthropocene' refers to this current era in which the scale and technological force of humanity rivals many natural processes. Humans are now a force of nature but as yet we lack the wisdom to use that power well.

We either stand at the onset of a modern analogue of the sanitary revolution — in which humanity as a whole recognises and greatly reduces the fouling and despoiling of its only home, our planet — or we may face in this century a Malthusian crisis of heightened mortality (initially, at least, experienced very unevenly between populations). The more extreme prospect — that such a crisis could cause the death of hundreds of millions of additional people this century, perhaps even ushering in a new dark age — renders the choice compelling.

An understanding of these contemporary issues and of the requisite new paradigm is now shared by tens of millions of people. However, for the moment it remains fanciful or unknown to most of humanity, including many experts. If the emerging global environmental situation is not as foreboding as appears, then the current state of global infectious diseases may not alter much. Even so, research into fundamental science of the kind here proposed will still yield valuable insight. But if those espousing the new paradigm centred around ecological and social sustainability are right, then the situation is urgent and this proposed work vital.





# Bodhicariya Education Project

Through the Australian Jumma community, BODHI is in its second year of support for the Bodhicariya Education Project, part of the vision of the Shishu Koruna Sangha (SKS) in Kolkata, India.

SKS was founded in 1986 by social workers and engaged Buddhist monks. It is 'committed to educating the children who remain uncared for and bereft of opportunities for education, particularly in the tribal families.'

Dilip Chakma (see p 4) attended school at SKS.



Above: SKS students in science laboratory and, below, gardening. *Courtesy SKS*

## Appointments

Colin has joined the advisory boards of three international organisations: the International Advisory Committee of the International EcoHealth Forum (<http://www.ecohealth.net/association.php>), the Scientific Steering Committee for a project with the Earth System Science Partnership (ESSP) concerning global environmental change and human health and, most recently, the International Association of Buddhist Universities ([www.iabu.org](http://www.iabu.org)). Colin is also returning to the Australian National University for a four-year, full-time position as Associate Professor at the National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health.

The ESSP studies the ways that the earth system is changing and the implications for global and regional sustainability. It was formed following the 2001 Amsterdam Declaration on Global Environmental Change, signed by 1400 participants, from more than 100 countries ([www.essp.org/index.php?id=41](http://www.essp.org/index.php?id=41))



Sangeetha handing out cleanliness packets *Courtesy Sonal Singh*

## Art competition in Nepal

According to her teachers, Sangeetha Basnet is beginning to develop a very keen interest in health issues. She is now actively engaged in the first aid activities of the school. She is part of a team under the leadership of the teacher Ramesh that is in charge of the school's First Aid Medicine Project, which aims to provide initial medical care for minor ailments.

BODHI organised a health seminar in the form of an art competition on the 5th of May for the children of the School for the Deaf in Kathmandu, Nepal. Ms. Kiran Sinha, BODHI's local representative, spearheaded this event. Mr. Ramesh Shrestha, a teacher at the School for the Deaf who himself suffers from this handicap, helped to conduct the programme. Around forty children attended. The subject of the art competition was personal hygiene and cleanliness, which Sangeetha introduced and spoke about. The students then drew paintings on this subject. At the end of the competition, pupils received paper, pencil, eraser, sharpener and colour pencil. On behalf of BODHI, Sangeetha handed them cleanliness packets with antibacterial soap for use in their daily activities.

## Good gifts

Susan's cookbooks make great gifts: *Heritage Highway Cookery*, *Favourite Recipes From Along Tasmania's Midlands Highway (Mostly)* at the cost of \$20 + \$5 postage and handling and *Midlands Morsels*, *Favourite Recipes from the Heart of Tasmania (Mostly)* @ \$15 + \$5 postage and handling. Susan donates the profits of cookbooks sold through the newsletter and website to BODHI. Please contact BODHI to purchase these unique gifts.

*Special offer: both cookbooks for \$30 + \$5 postage and handling (please apply for international postage rates)*

# Thank you

Bobbi & John Allan, NSW, Australia  
Tom Bliss & Merrily Weiss, California, U.S.A.  
Prof. Ken Cassman, Nebraska, U.S.A.  
Dr. Kristie Ebi, Washington DC, U.S.A.  
Dr. Peter Daniels, QLD, Australia  
Pat Earhart, NSW, Australia  
Dr. David King, QLD, Australia  
Caroline Ralston (Nagasuri), NSW, Australia  
Prof. Colin Soskolne, Alberta, Canada  
Alison Wild, Tasmania, Australia

Special thanks to:

\* Mr. **James Meyers** of Tarzana, California, U.S.A. for enthusiastic and passionate support  
\* Most Ven. Prof. Dr. **Lê Manh Thát**, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, and the other members of the International Organising committee of the 6th UN Vesak, especially Ven. **Thich Nhat Tu**, Prof. **Elise De Vido**, **Henry Dang**, Prof. **Lewis Lancaster**, and Ven. **Dhammasami**; and also the hard-working **Bhikku Dong An**

and  
Ric and Jo Easton at **Bio-Distributors**, Sheffield, Tasmania, Australia for their continuing, generous support.

## We need your help

Thanks to your generosity, BODHI has supported many exciting and innovative projects. To continue, we need your help. Please send your donation, in U.S. or Australian dollars, to an address below. Contact us for details of direct-debit facilities.

*Donations by U.S. and Australian taxpayers are tax-deductible*

*Australian cheques must be made out to 'BODHI Australia Overseas Relief Fund' to be tax-deductible*

**Founding Patron**  
**His Holiness XIV Dalai Lama**  
**1989 Nobel Laureate for Peace**

Medical Director Colin Butler, BMed., PhD  
Dir. Electronic Communications Denis Wright, PhD  
Community Advisers Shanti Raman, RACP, MAE  
Kabita Chakma and Kulottam Chakma  
Editor Susan Woldenberg Butler

### Advisory Board

Roshi Robert Aitken	Hawaii, U.S.
Shelley Anderson	The Netherlands
Prof. Solomon Benatar	South Africa
Sen. Bob Brown	Australia
Sr. Mila de Gimenio	The Philippines
Prof. John Guillebaud	Oxford, U.K.
Dh. Lokamitra	Pune, India
Dr. Maurice King	Leeds, U.K.
Prof. Christopher Queen	Boston, U.S.
Prof. David Rapport	Canada
Sulak Sivaraksa	Thailand

Email: [csbutler@sctelco.net.au](mailto:csbutler@sctelco.net.au), [www.bodhi.net.au](http://www.bodhi.net.au)

BODHI U.S.  
2743 Portobello Drive  
Torrance, CA 90505-7309 U.S.A.  
Tel: +1 (310) 539-2224

Directors: Colin Butler, Martin Rubin, M.D., Scott Trimmingham, Susan Woldenberg Butler

BODHI AUSTRALIA, Inc.  
4 Queen Street, Campbell Town  
Tasmania Australia 7210  
Tel: +61-3-6381-1675  
Directors: Colin Butler, Susan W. Butler, Denis Wright

**We greatly value your support and keep our mailing list confidential**

*Printed on recycled paper*

# Human rights ... Community advisers

*From its founding, BODHI has had an intense interest in human rights. This is illustrated by our preference to support minorities who face discrimination — Tibetans, Chakmas, dalits, and, now, lesbians. As support and interest in our work grows, we have formed a human right sub-committee. We stress, however, that our work is not and should not be seen as party political. We also make no comment on these pages or as an organisation, about human rights issues in Australia or the U.S., other than to note that numerous issues do exist. Bad as these are, our focus will remain on developing countries.*

## Activities in Australia

The position paper entitled, 'The Human Rights Situation of the Indigenous Peoples of the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh' was submitted by BODHI Human Rights Committee members Emilia Della Torre, Kabita Chakma and Susan Woldenberg Butler on 14th March, 2008 to the International Commission of Jurists.

Among her many activities as Co-ordinator of the Jumma Peoples Network of the Asia Pacific and BODHI Community Adviser, Kabita Chakma is endeavouring to publicise and counter the effects

of bamboo flowering and the associated rat plague in Bangladesh and NE India.

Susan has learned the basics of working on the website and is coordinating activities in Australia and the U.S. This often means unwelcome nagging, but she carries on valiantly.

## Medical care in Mizoram, NE India

Provision of medical care in NE India was raised at BODHI Australia's last Annual General Meeting (AGM). We have received two proposals, which we will discuss at the AGM in Campbell Town on 22 June.

## Activities in the U.S.

The talk by Dr. Wafa Sultan, Syrian psychiatrist and human rights activist, at the Davis campus

of the University of California on April 9, 2008 was cancelled due to death threats and security concerns (see below). Dr. Martin Rubin hopes to organise another speaker.

Scott Trimmingham is trying to find a grant writer in the U.S. and is looking for possible grants for the Kathmandu skills training project (see p 1). Scott may be contacted at [evergreentea2000@yahoo.com](mailto:evergreentea2000@yahoo.com).

## Community advisers

Dr. Shanti Raman will be engaged in teaching, research and activism in India, and based in Bangalore with her family. She has kindly offered to do some work for BODHI, which we are trying to co-ordinate.

As usual, Kulottam Chakma has been working tirelessly to improve living conditions for indigenous Jummas (Chakmas and others) in Bangladesh and Northeast India, which he visited recently. For a trip report and photos, please visit BODHI's website. See <http://kchakma.angelfire.com/tripura> for pictures of Kulottam's Tripura trip. He will post the Chittagong Hill Tracts & Kolkata pictures later.

We're thrilled to welcome law student Mr. Dilip Chakma to our Human Rights Committee. Dilip contacted BODHI after visiting our website. We're impressed with his idealism and commitment.

Welcome aboard, Dilip!

## New Human Rights Committee member

Dilip Chakma is a student at the National Law School of India University (NLSIU) in Bangalore, India. On 10 November, 2005, he and a small group of socially-conscious NLSIU freshmen formed Friends of the Chakmas (FOTC), a global initiative to campaign for support and solidarity of the Chakma people.

Dilip says, 'I have worked on papers related to 'third generation' rights with the main focus being the indigenous people of the northeast [India], a paper on law, poverty, and development, and another on the movements for autonomy in north-east India which is a hub of multiple ethnic diversities. Among other fields of law, my primary interest lies in areas like human rights and those that relate to law, poverty and development.'



## Hate ... speech ... works

*Dr. Marty Rubin, BODHI U.S. Director and Human Rights Committee member, works with his wife, Gail to counter the erosion of free speech in U.S. universities and colleges. He writes:*

An old children's rhyme goes, 'Sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me.' This is not quite accurate if examined from the perspective of hate speech, which is intended to invoke fear in others as well as incite people to pick up 'sticks and stones' and 'break my bones.' Hate speech works.

Cultural ideologies and leaders that encourage hate speech endanger us all. On university campuses, some student groups are notorious for their hateful speech and chants calling for the death and destruction of those with whom

they disagree. We believe in bringing speakers to campuses who can expose the duplicity of those who promote such rhetoric. We believe the right to free speech does not include calling for death and destruction as if it were a virtue.

## Dr. Wafa Sultan silenced in Davis

This past April we had been scheduled to bring Wafa Sultan to the University of California at Davis to speak out as a voice of courage. A Muslim, Syrian-born physician, outspoken against the abuse of human rights in her native land, she has been lauded by the *New York Times* and *Time* magazine for her courage in speaking out against those who would silence her. Unfortunately, Dr. Sultan cancelled her speaking engagement due to death threats. For the time being her voice has been silenced.

We hope to bring another speaker next year. Will she too be silenced by death threats?

Improving planetary health, education and environment also means we cannot ignore ideological conversations that call for the elimination of any people or country. Our hope is to "awaken" people to the dangers of complacent compassion.

## Lama Yeshe on compassion

As one of my spiritual teachers, Lama Yeshe, once said, 'Having compassion does not mean you lay down and let someone run you over in a Jeep!'

Having compassion does not mean you lay down in the face of calls for the death of any ethnic group or country.

Our goal is simple. Words of Hate ... not tolerated here.

**Please visit [www.bodhi.net.au](http://www.bodhi.net.au) for details and photographs of all our projects and activities**