

BODHI TIMES

Benevolent Organisation for Development, Health & Insight
Founding Patron: His Holiness XIV Dalai Lama
Founded 1989
Founding principle: Skillful, compassionate action
Goal: Improve health, education and the environment in developing countries by providing a hook, not a fish

We are neither religious nor political, with supporters and advisers from many faiths. We encourage your ideas and acts of kindness.
 From the first BODHI Times, December, 1991 and still relevant: 'The planet faces interlocked crises of overpopulation, poverty and environmental destruction.
 BODHI believes that we must take a stand to face these crises.'

Mobile, traditional, preventative Mountain Medicine

In the age-old way of conquerors, the Bangladeshi Army allegedly subjugates young Jumma men in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) by providing heroin from the Golden Triangle. HIV/AIDS is a public health concern. BODHI hopes to work with the Jummas to find ways to address root causes. We're not sure how we will proceed, but are taking our cues — as always — from people in the CHT.

Initially, the extent of the problem needs to be determined. This can be done by data gathering, including through mobile medical clinics.

As this goes to press, we are awaiting a proposal for an initiative dealing with prevention and data gathering. This would include awareness-raising among the most vulnerable groups (high school and college students), creating peer groups and developing and distributing appropriate materials, such as posters, leaflets, fact sheets, video-audio materials.

Mobile medical clinics

Kirti Nishan Chakma from Moanoghar in Rangamati, CHT writes, 'I also propose to include a second/auxiliary component of 'community health' through

Medical care in Mizoram

BODHI's initial health care efforts in Mizoram, NE India are with Chakma Mahila Samity (CMS), a women's association whose president is Jyotsna Chakma Verula. She writes from Kamalanagar: 'The Executive Body meeting of Chakma Mahila Samity unanimously resolved to utilise BODHI's funds for health and medical purposes.'

The community's only health centre is too poorly equipped to meet people's needs, so they have to go to other town for treatment even for minor illnesses. Also, CMS would like to offer support with medicine and transportation to economically disabled members of the community who cannot afford to travel for medical treatment.

satellite/mobile clinics. This is very useful, given that public health services are virtually non-existent all over CHT.

'I believe we should consider the proposed project as a pilot, with a duration of two years. Successful implementation would allow us to learn and design a more comprehensive initiative for a further period.'

Moanoghar Mountain Home

Currently about 500 children from 12 ethnic groups live and study there. Some of the main objectives of Moanoghar are to provide shelter, food, clothes, general and vocational education and primary health care to indigenous poor, orphan and destitute children of CHT; to inculcate the idea of universal solidarity and peace with a view initiate income generating and employment projects for the people of CHT; and to eliminate the root causes of poverty.

As always, we welcome your input. We hope to have more for you in the next newsletter. Watch the website for the latest developments.

Green Tara Trust



Karunamati (inset) and baby in Nepal Courtesy Green Tara Trust

BODHI is providing A\$1,000/US\$634 in administrative funds for Karunamati's work with Green Tara Trust.

We've increased skills training support for Mitini Nepal to A\$3,000/US\$1,900 for a group facilitator's workshop run in a rural area with one of Green Tara Trust's sister organisations.

This covers training for two people, including travel and accommodation, food, etc. This will help develop counselling and communication skills and benefit their organisation.

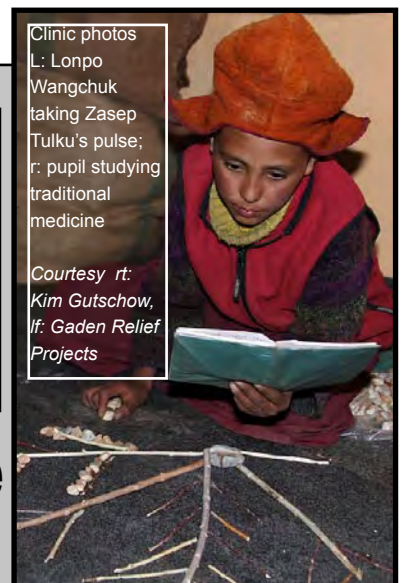
Please see p 4, Mitini Nepal committee formed.



Traditional medicine in Zangskar

BODHI is donating A\$1,000 for provision of medicines to the traditional health clinic of Amchi Lonpo Wangchuk in Karsha, in Zangskar, NW India. The town of Karsha has a population of about 400 people. The clinic serves local Zangskaris as well as the Chuchikjall Nunnery and Chuchikjall Monastery. It also provides instruction in traditional medicine.

'Lonpo Wangchuk is a jewel of Zangskar,' Zasep Tulku writes. 'He is now 74. He became a Bikkhu monk in Bodhgaya in 1980 after his wife died. She was a princess and sister of H.H. Kushok Bakula Rinpoche, who was prince and son of the Ladakhi king (Maharaja) Nangwa Thaye, who was Indian Ambassador to Mongolia for many years.'



Clinic photos
 L: Lonpo Wangchuk taking Zasep Tulku's pulse;
 r: pupil studying traditional medicine

Courtesy rt:
 Kim Gutschow,
 If: Gaden Relief Projects

Fools, food and fuel

Colin's work increasingly examines global food security, climate and other forms of global environmental change and economic policy. These are some of the questions Colin and his colleagues are asking:

What happens to the capacity of people in Africa to fight off HIV/AIDS when drought won't allow them to raise traditional crops for needed nutrients? Has the time come for wealthy populations to reduce their red meat consumption? Are genetically modified crops a boon or the latest scam? How do we thread our way to eternal vigilance through the quagmire of profit-driven corporate behaviour? What are the ramifications of global food insecurity for global security?

Fools

Even Alan Greenspan (economic guru to several recent U.S. administrations) acknowledges that we are now in a global economic crisis. Some commentators have dared to mutter the D word. D for depression. The bubble of greed that fuelled the great housing loan swindle has burst, splattering froth in the face of a thousand predatory bankers, corrupted rating agencies and toothless regulators. The leaders of the G7 and the heads of all the world's rich countries are frantically trying to restore confidence to the global monetary system. Confidence is essential, because much of the global economy relies on faith. Some, however, relies on fraud perpetrated against nature and the poor.

Longevity of any stock market recovery is unlikely if large-scale collective greed and poor judgement are permitted to resurface. The collapse of Enron and WorldCom in the U.S., and the imprisonment of Australian ex-billionaire entrepreneur Alan Bond had little lasting reformatory effect. The scale of the current collapse is larger; any transformation should be more durable.

Many commentators and governments now affect surprise, but many analysts have long predicted that the 'Masters of the Universe' — the wizards and wolves of Wall Street — would be brought to Earth by a global financial collapse. On the positive side, the award of the 2008 Nobel Prize in Economics to Professor Paul Krugman (a strong advocate for reduced inequality) is very encouraging; he supports increased regulation and the return of norms which limit extravagance.

Greed and hubris have forms even more sinister than the fleecing of naïve, hopeful but foolish investors. The poverty of economic theory has two main dimensions. The first is the immense undervaluing of natural resources. The scale of human technology increasingly allows the harming of nature, such as fish stocks, clean air and a stable climate. Conventional economics sets almost no penalty for this abuse. Consequently, consumers pay no short-term price. Instead, the poor pay. In future both poor and rich will pay.

However, as long as political leaders, oil sheikhs, coal barons and financial 'experts' have sufficient personal access to food and clean air and provided they retain sufficient confidence in the ability of their security forces to protect them from the consequences

of rising seas and displaced peoples, then their servants — the tamed, complacent and (generally) insulated economic caste — will also be able to ignore environmental concerns.

In contrast, the dissident ecological economist Partha Dasgupta has shown that the net per-person wealth of many countries has long been in decline, once income is adjusted for population growth and falling natural capital.* A recent European Union funded enquiry reported that the global economy loses more value through the clearance of forests than the current banking crisis, at between \$2 and \$5 trillion per annum. In other words, despite our illusion of affluence, the global population is every day becoming poorer. Such warnings continue to be ignored. The scale of nature still seems vast, especially for those policy makers and theorists who are disconnected from its damage. So we continue to destroy it.

The second fundamental manifestation of economic hubris is the justification and dismissal of the suffering of billions of human beings past, present and future. 'Market forces' have long been used to claim as 'fair' the simultaneous stratospheric pay for executives and the microscopic pay of ordinary workers, such as those who live in or come from developing countries and tend the families and skyscrapers of booming petro-cities such as Dubai.

Alternative and fairer economic systems are possible; the challenge is how this can evolve other than via a pathway through the ashes of a global collapse, which could easily become a terrifying dark age.

Food

In recent months food prices have spiked globally, leading to an increase in the already staggering number of hungry people in the world. The height, stamina and intelligence of more than 800 million

people have already been harmed by the chronic under-consumption of food energy. The food crisis has now attracted headlines because previously well-fed people are also at risk of energy under-nutrition. Some estimates are that a billion people lack macronutrients. There is speculation that this increase in the price of food has been driven by the diversion of a substantial fraction of the U.S. corn crop for bio-fuels. This is undoubtedly a factor, but other causes exist, such as the steep rise in the price of oil, weather problems (some of which are manifestations of climate change, and thus likely to get worse) and commodity speculation. About twenty times the volume of grain now used for fuel is diverted to feed animals, almost all of which are then killed for human consumption.

Just as the current global economic crisis was a foreseeable manifestation of fundamentally unsound theories, the possibility — indeed probability — of a future social crisis at a global scale remains high, due to deeply flawed economic and ecological thinking. This is not because ecologists are wrong, but because dominant economic policies ignore ecological realities and limits.

My aim is neither to frighten nor depress you. The obvious nature of the very severe economic crisis confronting us is leading to fundamental reflection and hopefully reform of economic principles. The entrenchment of new cultural norms could foster a culture of restraint leading to a reduction in global inequality and a society in which status and kudos are given to people who exhibit the ancient virtues of modesty, financial prudence and transparency. If that could be combined with an acceptance of limits, and with the diversion of funds from the military towards realising the Millennium Development Goals, then population growth could be substantially slowed. This paragraph has a lot of 'if's', I know, but the alternative is appalling.

As Sam Cooke sang, *A change is gonna come*. Let us work hard and work together to ensure that good things come from that change.

Fuel for thought: 2 recent papers

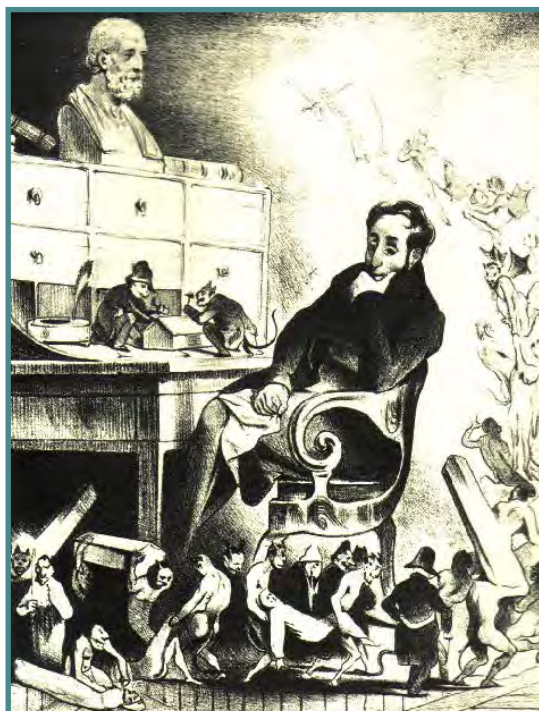
Butler, CD, 'Sustainable health for all by the year 2100?' (editorial), *International Journal of Public Health*:

How far have we actually come since the World Health Organisation (WHO) issued its once famous slogan, 'Health for all by the year 2000' in 1978? Do reasons for optimism still exist despite 'peak oil', global climate change and the persistence of so much poverty?

This paper argues that 'business as usual' will lead to impoverishment, declines in human well-being even in currently rich countries and the possibility of a new global Dark Age. Fortunately, many elements that could deliver a tolerable future already exist. For example, ecological economics offers a way to redefine the meaning and measurement of economic growth in ways which will reward sustainability rather than promote global collapse.

Our chief obstacles are complacency, despair and the illusion that the problems we face are neither our own nor of our own making. Public

cont p 3



Honoré Daumier, *Le Médecin* (The doctor), 1833

TASK

You may recall we told you about Towards African Solutions through Knowledge (TASK) last year (BODHI Times No. 33, Dec '07). The objectives of TASK Women's Health are to promote and protect the physical and mental health of women in the African continent through the provision of medical support, education and practical advice.

To achieve this affordably and sustainably, TASK hopes to use locally generated ideas, which must not conflict with established culture. Its search for models other than the traditional Western health care one includes the use of non-medically qualified personnel who have received appropriate training for delivering health care. Consideration will be given to the use of modern information and communication technology to facilitate the supervision of these personnel.

BODHI adviser Prof John Guillebaud writes, 'We are still at the early stage of fundraising and piloting our main concept in Western Cape and Kwazulu-Natal. One pilot being organised involves "virtual ward-rounds" for isolated staff in rural obstetric units (being advised re complicated patients in labour). Another pilot will audit use of the same mobile phone technology to increase the awareness and use of intrauterine devices by nursing and other staff.'

Please visit www.taskforwomen.org/default.asp for more details.

Image from the website www.taskforwomen.org of TASK, used with permission.



continued from p 2, **Fools, food and fuel**

health can and should be at the forefront of this new revolution.

Butler CD, 'Do we face a third revolution in human history? If so, how will public health respond?' (commentary), *Journal of Public Health*:

Energy security, 'peak oil' and climate change: what are desirable public health responses to the confluence of these topics? One is denial. If that anaesthesia wears off, we can try 'Fortress World,' in which enclaves of comparatively privileged citizens band together to nurture their assets and fend off outsiders.

However, while moats may be attractive in the short run, no plausible technology exists to keep out unwanted greenhouse gases.

A third response by the public health movement is to work for massive reforms such as new theories and forms of organisation, new forms of tolerance and far-sighted leadership, intelligent use of data and strategy and alliances with many disciplines beyond public health, including marketing, political science and ecological economics.

Is humanity willing to grasp the nettle of paying more cash for cleaner energy? Will we insist on substituting other forms of fossil fuel (such as coal, coal gas and methane hydrates) for oil, with accelerating consequences for greenhouse gas accumulation and thus for climate change?

As we began, so we close with more questions. We're interested in what you think.

* Ecological economics is a mature and rigorous discipline. It is dissident in the sense that mainstream economists — who should by now be properly discredited — have long denied the validity of an ecological approach to economics. They prefer, instead, to imagine the world as effectively limitless.

Great holiday gifts

- Susan's cookbooks *Heritage Highway Cookery*, *Favourite Recipes From Along Tasmania's Midlands Highway (Mostly)* and *Midlands Morsels, Favourite Recipes from the Heart of Tasmania (Mostly)* are available for \$20 + \$5 postage and handling.

- Profits of cookbooks sold through the newsletter and website are donated to BODHI.

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

Thank you

Dick Adams, MP, Tasmania, Australia
Dr. J.G.F. Anten, The Netherlands
Dr. Warren Bell, British Columbia, Canada
Ann & Eliot Bliss, California, USA
Annie Brennan, Tasmania, Australia
Sen. Bob Brown & Paul Thomas, Tasmania, Australia
Dr. Bill Castleden, WA, Australia
Ken & Karen Cohen, California, USA
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Kaye Jacob, NSW, Australia
Dr. Brian Learoyd, NSW, Australia
Catherine McGrath, Victoria, Australia
Prof. AJ McMichael & A/Prof J Healy, ACT, Australia
Prof. B Kichu Nair, NSW, Australia
Dr. Shanti Raman, NSW, Australia
Prof. David Shearman, SA, Australia
Dr. Victoria Von Witt, Tasmania, Australia

and
Ric and Jo Easton of **Bio-Distributors**, Sheffield,
Tasmania, Australia for their continuing 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

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

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One administrative chore towers over the year: database. We've needed an updated system for some time; it's been one of those things you think about, put on the wish list and forget.

Canada

Then **Conrad Richter** rode into our lives. Conrad, of Gaden Relief Projects in Ontario, Canada, created a comprehensive database he calls the mother of all databases. Susan is trying to conquer every last digit, with Conrad's inexhaustible patience.

We apologise for any glitches and thank you for your understanding. Please be patient, we beg of you.

Alison Wild had baby Laura on 31 May. She says that working on the new database has been a perfect task because she can do it in her own time. She and husband **Tim Smith**, along with volunteer and Vice-President **Jane Hudspeth**, are researching funding organisations from a list provided by our accountant **Greg Harper**.

Australia

In her attempts to promote non-violent conflict resolution, **Emilia Della Torre** will soon start to work with prisoners. She is continuing to work with asylum seekers within Australia. Work in international human rights law never ceases and Emilia's modest efforts continue undiminished. Next she will target a series of conversations with the judiciary responsible for upholding human rights standards in the ACT (Australian Capital Territory).

BODHI People



Bryan West and wife, Amy Weeks, daughter Charlotte, 4 & son Thomas, 2

Bryan West of Charters Towers, Queensland, has been a consistent supporter over the years and has now helped raise funds for SNEHA. Bryan gave fundraising events for BODHI some years ago when he was a schoolteacher.

Bryan's background is as a secondary teacher and until a couple of years ago he held a number of senior administrative roles in various schools. While taking time off work to look after his young children, complete a PhD in geography education at the Queensland University of Technology and undertake various never to be completed renovations, he started some freelance consulting in business development and on-line learning. He balances a love of dirt and gardening with further studies related to corporate governance and business administration. He may be contacted via bryan@fortresslearning.com.au.

United States

Marty Rubin arranged for BODHI to co-sponsor a talk by Egyptian-born journalist Nonie Darwish at the University of California at Davis. 'Searching for peace within' related to her personal journey and the issues of peace, democracy and women's rights in the Middle East.

Scott Trimmingham is looking for gay groups to speak to about our skills training project with Mitini Nepal in Kathmandu (see below).

A word about fundraising

Bryan West has found a donor for SNEHA, the school for Chakma and other children in NE India. Along with the annual donation from the Australian Jumma community, BODHI will be able to honour its commitment to this school. Scott Trimmingham and Michelle Engelsman are fundraising for Mitini Nepal, so that's another financial commitment met.

This freeing up of funds, along with administrative help, allows us to dream a little more, and to be even more responsive to evolving needs, such as drug addiction in the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh.

We'd love to hear from you with your ideas and dreams.

Help!!

We need help modernising the website, which is beyond the skills of the current volunteers. Things move so fast in this world! Please, if you've any skills, contact Susan at csbutler@sctelco.net.au

Mitini Nepal committee formed

Scott Trimmingham in the U.S. and Michelle Engelsman in Australia have formed a committee to raise funds for Mitini Nepal (see p1).

BODHI has committed A\$3000/US\$1900 for three years to Mitini Nepal skills training, mainly English and computer lessons.

Michelle is an intern with Greenpeace, an Olympic swimmer and a motivational speaker. Please visit her website at <http://www.me.net.au/>

Vale James Meyers 1921-2008



James Meyers, courtesy Tom Meyers

In October, BODHI lost a good friend and enthusiastic supporter in Southern California. At his funeral, many people told favourite Jim stories. Here's one of ours:

Our last memory is that, a few days before he died, Jim was not thinking about himself but about BODHI. He was very concerned that we'd received the donation he'd just sent. We were emailing back and forth, and kept expecting to hear from him in the morning's batch of emails. That was not to be.

We miss you, Jim.

Please visit the Latest Info page on our website (www.bodhi.net.au) for two Jim stories.

A project in Jim's name

At Jim's funeral, his widow Charlotte requested that BODHI be the charity of choice in lieu of flowers.

We'd like to start a project in Jim's name. Funeral donors have been generous, enabling us to investigate several projects.

We will tell you about the results of our investigations in the next newsletter.

Please visit www.bodhi.net.au for details and photographs of all our projects and activities

Making a donation

Please fill out and return

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. U.S. checks are tax-deductible.

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June, 2009
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BODHI TIMES

Benevolent Organisation for Development, Health & Insight
Founding Patron: His Holiness XIV Dalai Lama
Founded 1989

Guiding principle: Skillful, compassionate action

Goal: Improve health, education and the environment in developing countries by providing a hook, not a fish

BODHI provides a framework for altruistic people worldwide who are not comfortable working in traditional religious or secular organisations. We ask only for a kind heart.

What does BODHI do?

We work in low-income settings with local partners at a grassroots level on innovative projects that fall through the cracks of traditional aid in the areas of health, education, the environment, micro-credit and human rights

Fistful of new projects on the Subcontinent

BODHI in Burma, Bangladesh

Thanks to your generosity, we've begun funding two new projects: **Literacy & Life Skills to Burma's Poorest Children** in Monywa, Myanmar/Burma and the **Medical Camps in Mizoram** of the Chakma Mahila Samity Women's Group in NE India. Additionally, the support of one donor has enabled us to finalise a project in the works for years: **health education and deworming** in Arunachal Pradesh, NE India (see p 4 for details).

We've also expanded two projects in the slums of Pune, India: **health and early education for undernourished tribal children** and **expansion of health services to tribal women over forty** into a nearby village.



Mizoram, NE India

Dr Vanlala with Maw patient. Photo courtesy CMS

Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), Bangladesh

As this goes to press, we've just accepted a proposal for a **health clinic and mobile medical camps**. Also, we're increasing awareness among Western experts of the problem of **drug addiction**, taking initial steps towards addressing this issue.

We are donating funds from the Australian indigenous Bangladeshi community (collectively known as Jummas) to the **Moanoghar School and Orphanage** and to various Jumma projects, including the **Hazachara School**.

Kathmandu, Nepal. We've just received a report from Dr Jane Stephens of the Green Tara Trust regarding **skills training for the deaf**, for which we're considering using funds donated in the memory of long-time BODHI friend James Meyers, who died last November.

For updates on all of the above projects, please see the website and the next newsletter.



Myanmar/Burma

Two boys in Myanmar/Burma helped by Dr Ko Tar's education programme. Photo courtesy Dr Ko Tar

Current Projects

SNEHA School Arunachal Pradesh, India

Library, teachers' salaries & supplies to a school for indigenous refugee children, also some administrative expenses for head office in Delhi



Tashi Lhapug Health Care Centre Eastern Tibet

Seed funds for a traditional health clinic in remote Eastern Tibet, for medical care to 8,000 people



Mitini Nepal English & Computer Skills Training Kathmandu, Nepal

Skills training to enable Nepalese lesbians to live with stability, positivity and self-reliance



Udana Special Children's Centre Colombo, Sri Lanka

Support for a school for children with physical and learning disabilities in Sri Lanka's capital



Medicine to Traditional Health Clinic Zangskar, NW India

Medicines to clinic of Amchi Lonpo Wangchuk in Karsha, which also provides instruction in traditional medicine



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See www.bodhi.net.au for details and photographs of all our projects and activities

Ban banksters, reach for the sun

'I create trust in you, and then I betray that trust, and get you to give me something of value. And as a result, there's no more effective acid against trust than fraud, especially fraud by top elites, and that's what we have.'

Black on the essence of fraud

The best way to rob a bank is to own one

On his U.S. television *Journal* last 3rd April, public commentator and journalist Bill Moyers (<http://www.pbs.org/moyers/journal/04032009/transcript1.html>) interviewed William K. Black, former Director of the U.S. Institute for Fraud Prevention, now a professor in law and economics at the University of Missouri, Kansas City. Black, author of the book, *The best way to rob a bank is to own one*, provided a powerful analysis of the extent to which the current economic and financial meltdowns have been driven by fraud.

Black claimed that some bank chief executive officers deliberately made bad loans to boost their own profits, thus effectively becoming 'banksters'. Black argued they took this risk because they comprehended the immense scale of corruption riddling so much of the system, particularly its ineffective mechanisms of checks and balances. Black told Moyers that 'The art form is not only to defeat those internal controls but to ... turn them into your greatest allies. And the bonus programs are exactly how you do that.'

Black also criticised specialty lenders, who did most of their work in the area of sub-prime loans, widely called 'liar's loans' within the industry because so many knew they were frauds. These loans required no verification of income, job or assets. 'And you get a better deal if you inflate your income and your job history and your assets,' Black added.

According to Black, the FBI warned in September, 2004, just as President Bush was facing re-election, that the rising epidemic of mortgage fraud would create a massive debacle. He also claims that current U.S. Secretary of the Treasury Timothy Geithner has been involved in a cover-up, as was Secretary Henry Paulson before him. Geithner was a director of the International Monetary Fund before becoming President of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York in 2003 — a role which Black claims involved an important role in the regulation of other financial institutions. Geithner disputes this.

From this far away it is impossible for me to judge who is correct, but I was struck by one comment posted on Moyers' website by 'Alison'. In essence she asked: 'Why is it that no word has been uttered of accountability for criminal actions?'

Regarding the banking scandals in the U.S. and elsewhere, 'Alison' said: 'Surely there are people who are criminally liable for the collapse of the American and through it the world financial systems.' This has already displaced lives, worsened poverty, led to dangerous discontent and violence, and will cause death.

I would add: why is it that billions and even trillions of dollars (see box) have been allocated to rescue the financial system, yet the world tolerates both an increase in

the number of hungry to almost one billion people and the continued drift toward climate change catastrophe. The answer is that well-fed elites and many in the global middle class feel little if any sense of connection with the poor (see Medical Director's Desk, *BODHI Times* No. 14). One member of the global middle class — or global second caste — who does feel this solidarity is Dr Binayak Sen.

Prison for Indian doctor of very poor

In the Indian state of Chattisgarh southwest of Kolkata Dr Binayak Sen, a graduate of Christian Medical College Vellore is famous for providing health services to the very poor. Sen and his wife Ilina set up a charity called Rupantar and, in 1997, started a weekly clinic in an area plagued by malaria and undernutrition. He trained *adivasi* (indigenous) youths in 20 villages to be community health workers. Dr Sen also sees human rights as integral to health and well being, including those of tribal and other impoverished people. In 2008, this paediatrician and public health worker became the first South Asian to be awarded the Jonathan Mann Award for Global Health and Human Rights.

Million seconds: 11.5 days
Billion seconds: 32 years
Trillion seconds: 32,000 years

However, in June, 2007 Dr Sen was detained for allegedly violating the state's Special Public Security Act 2005 and accused of acting as a Naxalite, a Maoist revolutionary, someone trying to overthrow state power.

Numerous organisations and individuals, including 22 Nobel laureates worldwide have appealed for Dr Sen's fair treatment. (A list of famous protesters may be found at <http://www.binayaksen.net>). He appears to be incarcerated solely for peacefully exercising his fundamental human rights, in contravention of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which India is a state party.

The renowned Indian author and human rights activist Arundathi Roy is another Sen supporter (<http://www.countercurrents.org/roy080409.htm>). She describes the extent of a vicious civil war in this poor state, where a government-backed militia, the Salwa Judum, have driven many thousands of the country's most impoverished to hide in forests, fearing for their lives. They have no access to food, to markets, to schools or healthcare. Thousands of tribal people are being held in sordid encampments, guarded by armed police. Roy further states that hatred, violence and brutality are being cynically spread, pitting the poor against the poorest. I would add that this situation is reminiscent of numerous other times and places,

linked by a common theme of too many people fighting over scarce resources. [Rwanda, Somalia, the Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh, and for that matter, the southwest slopes of NSW during the early period of white settlement are just a few examples.] Of course, if people were prepared to live like caged mice, subsisting on a few crumbs per day, then the human population could grow much larger. However, humans desire other resources and freedoms. If, as is likely, India's agricultural economy worsens due to climate change and overpopulation, then situations like Chattisgarh will become increasingly common.

According to many of his supporters, there is little doubt that Dr Sen is in prison because he has spoken out against the state government's policy. He opposed the formation of the Salwa Judum. Roy concludes, 'His incarceration is meant to silence dissent, and criminalise democratic space. It is meant to create a wall of silence around the civil war. It is meant to absorb all our attention so that the stories of the hundreds of other nameless, faceless people — those without lawyers, without the attention of journalists — who are starving and dying in the forests, go unnoticed and unrecorded.'

On April 26 2008, the *Hindu* newspaper reported an unexpected benefit. Doctors across India started holding free clinics for the poor in tribute to the example of Dr. Sen, and to peacefully campaign for his release. Dr Sen's trial has now commenced. His health is deteriorating and he is being denied medical treatment at a hospital of his choice.

Reaching for the green sun

One thing that has recently encouraged me is the promise of large-scale solar energy, especially solar thermal in its various forms.

Dr Gerhard Knies, a Desertec (<http://www.desertec.org/>) promoter, points out that within six hours deserts receive more energy from the sun than humankind consumes in a year. In partnership with the European Union, Desertec seeks to establish linked power station across the North African deserts, to provide clean power to Europe and North Africa. Some of this power can then be used to desalinate Mediterranean water. Similar schemes could (and should) emerge in Australia, the U.S., China and India.

This optimistic note was also mentioned at the Copenhagen climate conference (<http://www.erantis.com/events/denmark/copenhagen/climate-congress/index.htm>) in March 2009, which I also attended.

For decades, optimists have claimed that high technology will rescue humanity from its predicament. On its own, technology will not only be inadequate but also could cause additional problems. However, social reorganisation, family planning and 'green' economics are not enough. Technology is vital. Apparently the main problem with the bowl-shaped mirrors used in the reflective dishes that generate solar thermal energy are that they get dusty and dirty. Let's hope some genius can solve that.

Thanks to Colin Soskolne for telling me about the Moyers-Black transcript and Giovanni Leonardi for telling me more about the work of Desertec.

Just released on bail



Dr Binayak Sen on his way to court in a police van in Raipur, India, 2008
Photo courtesy Racism and National Consciousness

See www.bodhi.net.au for details and photographs of all our projects and activities

Current Project

Over-Forty Women's Health Pune, India

- * Regular health checks for slum and village women
- * AIDS awareness, sex education and drug addiction treatment



Other news

Volunteer Michelle Engelsman has been generating publicity for the Mitini Nepal project in Kathmandu through articles in Australian and British magazines (<http://www.me.net.au/AgainstTheTide.JPG> and <http://www.me.net.au/LOTL.JPG>) and also on her own website (www.me.net.au).

Michelle is also, on her own initiative, writing end-of-financial-year letters to prospective donors.

BODHI Human Rights Committee

Last year, BODHI's Human Rights Committee created a Position Paper on human rights abuse in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) of Bangladesh and presented it to the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ). Kabita Chakma, BODHI Community Adviser and member of BODHI's Human Rights Committee, gives this update about her meeting with Justice Dowd and David Bitel in October.

'Justice Dowd tabled the CHT Position Paper at the October ICJ meeting in Geneva. It was placed on the priority list and is now with the ICJ Bangkok section, the regional office which observes the CHT situation.

'Justice Dowd raised concerns about the CHT's place on the priority list, as Bangladesh now has a democratically elected government. I pointed out that although a democratically elected government is in place in Dhaka, the CHT is still under military occupation. Specifically, the military runs and influences any form of administration there. I also referred to the CHT Commission's recent press release emphasising the demilitarisation of the CHT for peace and stability in the region.'

Current Projects

cont fr p1

Health for Under-nourished Tribal Children Pune, India

- * Medical & nutritional help to slum children aged 0-5 years
- * Awareness about family planning & early girl child marriages



Train the Trainer Kathmandu, Nepal

Pilot to increase literacy & health awareness among hearing impaired children



Revolving Sheep Bank Western Tibet

Micro-credit to nomads to help preserve traditional way of life



Green Tara Trust Kathmandu, Nepal

Administrative support to health services for Nepal's most disadvantaged



Bodhicariya Education Project Kolkata, India

Education of neglected children from tribal families



Please see website for captions

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Address change

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5,000 people benefiting Health education & deworming in Arunachal Pradesh

Susanta Chakma writes from Delhi

In April, the SNEHA (Chakma word for compassion) School began implementing a health education and deworming programme to help 5,000 people at Diyun, Changlang district, Arunachal Pradesh (AP). BODHI contributed an extra Rs/- 60,000 (approximately A\$2,000/ US\$1600), in addition to its annual donation of A\$5,000. The first deworming medication will be given in June when the school reopens after summer vacation. The health care facilities available in the area are almost zero. The nutritional status of the children, both school-going and otherwise, pregnant and lactating mothers and young and old is very pathetic.

There is a lack of hospitals and dispensaries. The Primary Health Centre at Diyun services the area's 50,000 residents. This is not adequate to meet people's needs. Many die of simple and curable diseases like dysentery, diarrhoea, malaria, viral fever and typhoid. There is a high mortality rate among the Buddhist Chakmas and Hindu Hajongs. Government Health visitors or departmental representatives rarely visit Chakma-inhabited areas. More than 90% of the people drink water from mud wells, streams and rivulets. In fact, all the Chakma and Hajong villages live in an environment characterised by undernutrition, infection, poor shelter and dearth of safe drinking water and sanitation.

In addition, floods occur in the area every year, resulting in the destruction of trees and plantations, degradation of agricultural and dwelling places/lands and pollution of drinking wells and water systems. The after-effects of floods are manifested in high levels of disaster, chronic diseases, hunger, malnutrition and unemployment.

In time of serious diseases and other emergencies, the only means of transport are bicycling and walking to the only Primary Health Centre at Diyun, which is about five to thirty kilometres from the villages. During the rainy season, it is extremely difficult to



Chakma and Hajong children at the SNEHA School, Diyun, Changlang, AP India, waiting for the Honourable Minister, Mr. C.C. Singpho, A.P. with flowers in their hands. Note bare feet, which are likely to enhance hookworm acquisition. *All photos courtesy SNEHA*

come down to the main area due to flooding and threats to life from wild animals. The programme of 'Immunisation or Mother and Child Health Care' has not reached the area.

Cause of the problem

The AP Government considers the Chakmas and Hajongs to be refugees and so denies them access to social, economic, political and educational rights. Not a single welfare programme has been implemented to help the Chakmas and Hajongs. The State Government banned employment in government service, agricultural field work, contract work and business for the Chakmas and Hajongs in the state. This resulted in the unemployment of a large number of educated youths. The ban on employment continues to today.

Problems to be tackled are lack of basic medication like deworming and immunisation in SNEHA Schools; lack of knowledge about basic health care including pregnant women, pre- and post-delivery and child care; lack of health education especially tobacco, alcohol, smoking; and poor health conditions, especially of women and children. The target

group of our health education and deworming programme is children and women.

The short-term objective is preventative: Health and Awareness Education for SNEHA school children, parents and people at large in SNEHA Schools and in seven surrounding villages. The long-term objectives are improvement in the health status of the children in the SNEHA School and surrounding areas, health awareness among the people and active participation in primary health care and environmental improvement.

Chakma youths in AP avoid drug addiction

Fortunately Chakma youths have not become addicted to drugs and alcohol so far. Further, we feel proud to say that there are no cases of dangerous diseases like HIV/AIDS because the society remains far from the things which cause these diseases. If children get quality education, meaning that if they acquire adequate knowledge and skills from the SNEHA School, then they can go for private jobs outside Arunachal Pradesh especially in metropolitan areas like Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and Bangalore.



SNEHA School students crossing the rivulets after school during winter season



Teachers and parents helping the children cross the flooded rivulets during summer season

See www.bodhi.net.au for details and photographs of all our projects and activities

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