

BODHI TIMES

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Founding Patron: His Holiness XIV Dalai Lama
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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 with traditional religious or secular organisations. We ask only for a kind heart.

What do we do?

We work in low-income settings with local partners on innovative projects in the areas of health, education, the environment, micro-credit and human rights

Tackling indoor air pollution

Smokeless stove trial underway

The last *BODHI Times* featured a typical village hearth in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), Bangladesh and touched upon indoor air pollution — a larger health problem globally than its outdoor counterpart. From that seed are sprouting two new projects, inspired by Dr David King in Brisbane, Australia: use of smokeless stoves in Diyun, Arunachal Pradesh, India and pit ovens/stoves in the CHT.

Just weeks before this went to press, Colin took Susan to meet long-time colleague Professor Kirk Smith (pictured below, in black), the world's leading expert on indoor air pollution and health (<http://ehs.sph.berkeley.edu/krsmith/>). Prof Smith discussed how recent research has shown that the health benefits of indoor stoves with metal chimneys that channel smoke away from the kitchen (compared to traditional smoke-filled hearths) are less than previously thought. This is because in many settings a



substantial cloud of smoke forms outside houses, and some of this seeps back inside. Incomplete combustion of fuel makes this smoke especially toxic. To improve combustion, researchers are now trialling fans which can be fitted (and hopefully retro-fitted) into stoves with chimneys. Some stoves use an ingenious technology which converts heat into electricity, allowing mobile phones to be recharged (see



for example Biolite Campstove: <http://biolitestove.com/campstove/camp-overview/features/>). A good resource is the Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves (<http://www.cleancookstoves.org/the-alliance/>).

Smokeless stoves in Northeast India

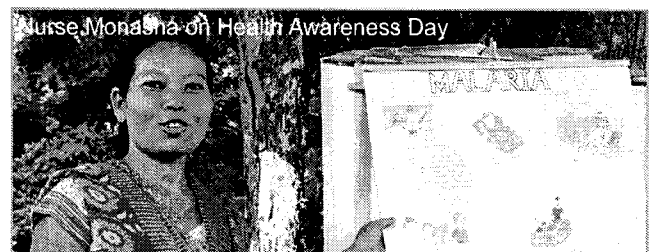
Kris Chakma, BODHI's South Asia Program Coordinator, has built a smokeless stove (chula) of concrete at his home in Diyun, AP — the same village in which is located the SNEHA School that BODHI helps fund (see below and p4). We are waiting

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Health awareness classes

Diyun region, Arunachal Pradesh, NE India. Reported cases of diarrhoea and malaria have recently been reduced, perhaps because of a seasonal change, but cases of jaundice (possibly Hepatitis A) have been reported. While a vaccine exists for Hepatitis A, it is currently not cost-effective to use in India. In developing countries, Hepatitis A is common and affects mostly children, in whom it is generally not serious. Another problem, also vaccine-preventable, is rabies.

Almost every Chakma family or household has one or more dogs, but not a single dog is inoculated against rabies. Many households also have cats and some have pigs. In recent times, Chakmas have not taken seriously bites from dogs, cats, monkeys and pigs. This is probably because there have been no recent cases of rabies.



However, rabies is endemic in India, and untreated bites from a rabid animal are 100 percent fatal (though correct treatment before symptoms develop is fully protective). SNEHA is promoting an anti-rabies awareness program among the students and parents. See p 4: *SNEHA health results*.

<p>3 Current Projects</p>	 <p>Mobile medical clinics CHT, Bangladesh Remote medical & nursing care & health education</p>	 <p>Traditional healers Kathmandu Valley, Nepal Training in maternal/child care & refresher courses</p>	 <p>Sex education Northern Thailand For underprivileged & migrant youth in Chiang Mai & Lamphun</p>
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Cool the tinder

My analysis of recent conflict is that human society can sometimes be likened to material that can either catch fire or simply rot. Fire is a form of violence; but many forms of social collapse are possible, such as famine or pandemic. Among other places, I have in mind Arakan (Myanmar), Bodoland (western Assam, India), Congo, Indonesia (e.g. West Papua), northern Nigeria, occupied Palestine, Rwanda (to where BODHI's environmental adviser, Bob Brown, was recently refused entry for trying to develop the suppressed Rwandan Green Party), Sri Lanka, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Uganda and Yemen.

What causes a fire? Flammability and a spark. What causes social flammability? Insufficient resources: too many expectations, too much greed and often 'youth bulges' resulting in high unemployment, especially of young men who might resort to group violence. These conditions can create both human predators and the vulnerable groups upon which they prey. As we know, solidarity means safety in numbers. Police and military in too many cases support the predators rather than the law; they turn a blind eye to violence, especially when perpetrated by mobs. A recent example of humans in groups behaving like predatory pack animals occurred in southern Bangladesh, where houses and temples in Cox's Bazaar were ransacked, as were surrounding homes in the Chittagong Hills.

Buddhists in that overcrowded country have long been vulnerable to violence by the Muslim majority but, plausibly, some of this renewed violence was inflamed (in a sense transmitted) by recent attacks by Burmese Buddhists in Arakan (Myanmar), a state just across the border. There, the victims are not Buddhist, but Rohingya, the long-persecuted Burmese Muslim minority. Unlike Buddhists in Bangladesh, most Muslims in Myanmar are not even recognised as citizens.

Man is wolf to man Roman proverb

Man may be wolf to man, but Franz de Waal points out in *The Age of Empathy* that many non-human animals exercise compassion and tolerance. Humans can too, but this is easily strained when resources are scarce — when the tinder is dry.

Some Rohingya fled to Bangladesh to avoid fresh violence in Arakan, though hundreds drowned in the attempt. Their arrival further strained resources, but the most important mechanism of transmitted aggression is probably the transfer of knowledge, a spark falling on tinder that is already dry. Perhaps adding to this spark was knowledge in Bangladesh of even larger-scaled violence against Muslims (though this time not perpetrated by Buddhists) in another adjoining region, Bodoland in northwestern Assam, India. This was caused by violence between Christians, animists and Muslims, living largely separate, mutually suspicious lives, aggravated by relentless population growth in an area that remains fixed in size. There are limited industry; other ways to attract resources such as eco-tourism have potential in Assam as long as some nature can be

preserved and violence diminished. In Assam, up to 400,000 people were recently reported as homeless (see picture at right).

Violent attacks are increasing in northern Nigeria, where I spent several months as a medical student in 1985, when it was comparatively peaceful. Mainly Christians and Muslims are fighting, including the terrorist group known as Boko Haram, which means literally 'education is sacrilege.' In common with Arakan and Bodoland, Nigeria has continuing high population growth. Causes for hope are Bangladesh's increasing literacy and slowing population growth.

What can we do?

Material need not catch fire; societies can instead stay cool, beautiful and productive. We can attempt to reduce sparks by not being incendiary in our speech, but even more important is to dampen the tinder, so that occasional clumsy words or actions do not start a fire. How can we achieve this? For 23 years, BODHI has been trying to promote development that will dampen the kindling, particularly by promoting education and basic health care. Trying to cool the tinder is also becoming an increasing focus for my academic work. It is painful to observe the suffering of others and the inflammatory unrest unfolding around the world.

What can thoughtful people do? To start, we can appeal for our community leaders to more carefully consider the issues of overpopulation, inequality and limits to growth. The defeat of Governor Romney in the U.S.



Presidential election shows that these issues are not forgotten, even in the centre of the capitalist world. You, I and most other readers are fairly protected and safe at the moment. We are relatively privileged, embedded deeply in socio-ecological-economic groups which protect us. (I hope a few very poor people can read this, but for a start you would need to read English — it is very hard for BODHI to communicate with the extremely poor.) But if we the privileged don't work to improve development for all, then even we may be imperilled in the future. And following generations certainly will be.

Why do I say this? Hurricane Sandy, currently estimated to have cost US\$50-100 billion, was almost certainly worsened by climate change. It caused over 100 deaths in the U.S. (and almost as many in Haiti), and significant



suffering, especially to people who lost electrical power, sometimes for weeks, in cold, unlighted, multi-storey buildings. However, according to Dr Jeff Masters, Sandy was not the most expensive climate change related disaster in the U.S. in 2012. He gives that dubious honour to the persisting U.S. drought, which is being likened to the Dust Bowl of the 1930s.

What else can we do?

What else can we do? I don't expect us to be saints; I think spending 1-5% of our efforts and resources on thinking and acting to reduce the risk of social fire is not an excessive request. Regarding the attacks in Bangladesh, perhaps some of us can write to the Bangladeshi government, asking it to enforce its existing laws to protect minorities. Some of us might write to Aung San Suu Kyi, asking her to be far more vocal in defending the Rohingya in Burma.

However, I think other actions are going to be more effective. For instance, we can also encourage voluntary simplicity and other ways to walk more lightly on the planet, though I don't believe that we can do enough on the scale needed. But, for example, do we really

need to hold our wedding on a Pacific island, as has become increasingly common for Australians? As an academic, my main work is to challenge and try to change the position of a very powerful current of thought within academia — social science in particular — which argues that there are no 'limits to growth', whether applied to people, oil, ecosystems or food-growing capacity. I think that ideology suits a powerful minority and will lead to calamity on a

larger scale than we can foresee at present, though signs of the emerging fire are already very alarming and widespread, to those who look. I do not want them to join up to form one massive conflagration.

As a Buddhist activist, my main goal is to challenge and inspire quiescent and complacent Buddhists to be more concerned with these issues, not by promoting violence but by promulgating education and health for most, if not all. In the long run a fairer, more educated, less wasteful world is the only way we can stay safe and secure. All spiritual practitioners need to retain a wish to be fair to help all sentient beings regardless of their faith and attempt to put that belief into practice. As humans, we need to find alternatives to joining the local pack — the local extremists. That is a recipe for social breakdown and even catastrophe.

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Sex education, neglected & migrant youth

After work, Shan migrant camp, Chiang Mai, Thailand. Shan and Hmong people from Burma live in temporary camps built by construction companies. The men work on construction sites while the women do mostly domestic work. They have no access to Thai health care.

BODHI's local partner is concentrating its outreach efforts on these migrant workers, bringing sex education, contraception and

advice to the most neglected elements of Thai society.

This one-year project is just ending. We will continue funding it for another year while Arunrat and her team seek support from the Thai government and local NGOs. Some of the drugs will be donated so we will reduce our funding by about half, to USD5,000.

Watch our website for the report.



continued from p 1 **Smokeless stove trial**

for a proposal from Moanoghar for pit ovens/stoves in the CHT.

Kris made a presentation about smokeless stoves at the SNEHA School to 200 people from the various villages around Diyun Circle of the Changlang district of Arunachal Pradesh. He also learned about community attitudes and needs in the villages of Jyotipur, Avoipur and Dumpani. People were concerned about smoke emission, firewood consumption, less heat generation and the chance of catching fire.

Kris writes, 'The outcome of the informal research has been very impressive, with the communities looking forward to being trained and to volunteering. The smokeless chula was

also very impressive regarding efficiency and effectiveness. However, people are worried that they may not be able to afford even the Rs.800-Rs 1000 it would cost to make a concrete chula, which is more durable than their present ones. Otherwise, the concept is readily accepted.'

After the presentation, participants said they were very interested in the concept and committed to using smokeless chulas in their homes. Further, people especially the ladies are interested to learn how to make smokeless chulas and very anxious to start at the earliest opportunity. They prefer to be trained in Diyun as they cannot afford to leave their houses.

You can read Kris's report and follow this project's progress on our website.



Avoipur village, AP, India. The Avoipur headman in the front row is wearing a light, checked shirt and grey trousers and sitting with the policeman in the coffee-coloured shirt. Other participants are both parents and villagers from different villages such as Avoipur, Dumpani, Jyotipur, Jyotsnapur, Rajnagar, Diyun town, Sompoi and Dumpattar.

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A note on the text: We are using a different type that is more legible online, as most of our newsletters go out electronically. Please let us know if you have trouble reading your hard copy.

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Tweeters & LinkedIn-ers**

We need your help

Your loyal and generous support allows us to continue helping the voiceless, the dispossessed and the forgotten. Thank you.

Australian cheques are tax-deductible if made out to BODHI Australia Overseas Relief Fund. All U.S. checks are tax-deductible.

Also available: direct-debit facilities (contact us) and PayPal in both U.S. & Australian dollars.

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1989 Nobel Laureate for Peace

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Other projects

From the slums of Pune, India

In addition to its continuing educational and nutritional support for local tribal 0-5 year-old children, BODHI is now paying the salaries of two kindergarten teachers working through our local partner JEEVAK with nomadic tribal children. They are, right: Kalpana Kamble (right) at Gautami Balwadi. Kalpana's husband could not see a way out of poverty and hanged himself three years ago. She is raising their three daughters. Amrapali Balwadi teacher, Menaskhi Salve, is pictured far right.

BODHI's local partner representative Karunadeepa writes from Pune, 'The children are given Vitamin B complex, calcium and iron, as well as Vitamin A and de-worming medication. They also receive two eggs per week, donated by the National Egg Corporation. We also had a health check-up of all the mothers whose children attend the 0-5 year-old education and nutrition program at the creche. The tribal people say our Balsangopan Kendra is far better than government-run centres, as we are better equipped and are showing good results. Some of our outcomes are:

- The children are looking comparatively tidy, hygienic, using washed clothes. They also wash hands before handling food and after defecation.



- There is satisfactory weight gain in the 2-5-year-old age group, by at least 2 kilograms. Children who were feeble three years ago are now looking healthy.
- Children can now sing nursery rhymes. They are learning to write alphabets and numbers, and also to recognise English letters and pictures on the charts. They draw pictures like leaves, flowers, birds, balls, balloons, boats and kites.
- Children have developed motor skills and now make different fruits and other items of clay.
- Malnourished children now behave with confidence.
- Parents understand the importance of hygiene and are happy to see their children healthy. They are now re-examining early child marriage practices.
- Parents are showing interest in trying to learn some skills.

Income generation & education for the parents

JEEVAK is also working with the parents on income generation and awareness camps on hygiene, nutrition and early marriage. Dr. Sandhya Kamble gave awareness camps on hygienic habits and early marriage, which 24 women and 0 men attended. Experts from the Food Craft Institute talked about nutrition to the 26 women who attended. Parents like the nutrition program and are making the things they were taught in the training, which they feed to their children. This is really very impressive.

Income generation has been a challenge. Around 24 women have asked to take a short course in something simple that can lead to income generation, like knitting, putting henna on the hands and making bead jewellery.

'We are planning to start something from December, 2012,' Karunadeepa writes.



Why support SNEHA School

Continuing the Medical Director's theme of equipping the next generation to lessen the violence and chaos we are leaving them, education is vital. The SNEHA School in Diyun, Arunachal Pradesh, India, approaches its tenth year. See SNEHA's website and BODHI's for more.

The SNEHA School teaches values of compassion and right action as central to its curriculum. For example, on Socially Useful Productive Work days students clean the school compound and water flowers and gardens. Health awareness is also an important part of the curriculum.

Some SNEHA health results for the 207 boys and 160 girls in Diyun

- At least 95 percent maintain hygiene by washing hands with soap and water after defecation.
- Water-borne diseases have reduced drastically. In the entire year there were only one or two cases of dysentery or diarrhoea.
- Malaria was a big problem among the students before health education began. Possibly simultaneous fewer mosquito numbers have contributed to this reduction.
- That parents are receptive to the health education program is shown by the fact that instead of sending children to school on an empty stomach they now prepare tiffin for their children to eat during recess. Consequently, gastritis has reduced drastically.
- All SNEHA School children brush their teeth.
- Ninety-nine percent of the children now bathe regularly and come to school neat & clean.

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