

BODHI TIMES

FOUNDING PATRON: HIS HOLINESS XIV DALAI LAMA

Public Health Adviser: Dr. Maurice King

DECEMBER, 1994 NO. 7

Environmental Adviser: Dr. Bob Brown

BODHI AROUND THE WORLD

BANGLADESH: BODHI is supporting SatelLife, a satellite hook-up, between the University of Tasmania at Hobart and the National Health Library in Dhaka. Dr. Ian Lewis reports: "Bangladesh has approximately 120 million people, of whom 47% are under the age of fifteen. Only 20% of the women and 40% of the men are literate. The GNP is US\$188 per head. Poverty affects approximately 70% of the population.

Doctors are so poorly paid in government

service that many neglect this work to earn money in private practice. Medical research grants are so small that researchers cannot afford telephones or faxes. Facilities to aid researchers and update doctors' skills are inadequate.

SatelLife allows contact with fellow professionals, libraries and laboratories worldwide." Dr. Lewis served as a WHO consultant to Bangladesh during 1993, is Professor Emeritus at the University of Tasmania and is a founding member of Medical Association for the Prevention of War, the Australian affiliate of International Physicians for the Prevention of War, which won the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1985.

EUROPE: Dr. Michiel Marlet has offered to be BODHI's European contact. Dr. Marlet will send European newsletters from the Netherlands and forward mail. See Page 3 for Dr. Marlet's address.

BODHI NEAR EVEREST: Dr. Ken McConnell designated BODHI as the charity of choice for his 1994 Australian expedition

to Mt. Lhakpa-Ri, near Everest, overland from Lhasa. Dr. McConnell recently won the prestigious Shipton/Tilman Award, being the first Australian to do so. The Australian Medical Association sponsored him on the successful International Everest North Ridge Expedition in 1993. Dr. McConnell has offered to lead an expedition to Tibet's Mt. Kailash in 1996 for BODHI supporters. More as this develops.



His Holiness XIV Dalai Lama in his garden in Dharamsala, India.
Photo by: Dr. B.C. Khanna

Since 1979 only two Asians, His Holiness XIV Dalai Lama of Tibet and Aung San Suu Kyi of Burma, have received the Nobel Prize for Peace. Besides being leaders of largely Buddhist nations, both are admirers of Mahatma Gandhi, perhaps the greatest and most effective advocate for nonviolent change of the twentieth century. Gandhi, another Asian leader, never received the Nobel Prize for Peace that he so clearly deserved.

His Holiness and Aung San Suu Kyi have much else in common. Each represents the democratic- and freedom-loving aspirations of his or her people. Each has become an international symbol of peace and hope for oppressed people everywhere. Whatever the destinies of Tibet and Burma, the extraordinary fortitude of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Aung San Suu Kyi enriches the 20th century. These leaders exemplify the highest qualities to which we all can aspire.

INDIA: We now support three programs in Bihar. See Page 3 for details.

NEPAL: We are investigating providing volunteers to work with Tibetans in Nepal.

THAILAND: BODHI is contributing toward the provision of bicycles in remote north-eastern Thai villages so that children can travel to and from school. The bicycles remain the property of the school. This is one

of the projects of the Maya Gotami Foundation, begun in 1989 by Ajahn Gavesako, a Japanese Theravadin monk who trained for fourteen years in Thai forest monasteries.

BODHI is researching the work of Janraem, a 24-year-old Thai woman in Mae Sai, northern Thailand. For the last ten years, Janraem has been educating children from the Akha and other hill tribes of Burma.

Many of them fled the fighting in Burma and

are unable to attend Thai schools because of their illegal status.

"Janraem looks for girls who are on the verge of being sold into prostitution by their families, and offers to board the children at her school and give them an education," writes Shelley Anderson of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation in The Netherlands. "There is vocational training (sewing, biscuit making, hair dressing) too, so the girls can make their own living, supporting themselves and their families, and can avoid the sex trade... Given that the UN estimates that 1,000,000 children (the majority of them girls) are sold into the sex trade each year, her initiative is really pioneering and considering the

tight control the criminal world has over Mae Sai, courageous."

TIBETANS IN INDIA: BODHI now has eighteen projects in various stages of research, development, execution and evaluation among Tibetans in India.

OTHER ASIA: BODHI is investigating projects in Mongolia, Laos and Sri Lanka. We also hope to work in Burma one day. □



Aung San Suu Kyi, in her sixth year of house arrest in Burma.
Courtesy of Australia Burma Council

From The Medical Director's Desk:

LEAPFROGGING THE IRON HORSE

In ancient Tibet a prophecy warned of the coming of the iron horse, meaning unbridled technological growth. Now the iron horse is galloping through the South, bringing technological advances to massive numbers of people. Bangkok's traffic jams are notorious, a perpetual snailing stampede. China's sulphurous smogs conceal entire cities from satellites. Inefficient production and distribution of energy exacerbate the mushrooming demand for electricity in Asia. Refrigerators have made ice cream popular in China again.

I have coined the term, **The Technology Trap**, to refer to the resultant transnational pollution that threatens global security. Keeping up with the Singhs and the Wongs may snap The Technology Trap. To avoid it, we urgently need to "leapfrog" to environmentally sustainable technologies. Yet Canada, the U.S. and Australia, with their abundance of sunlight, scientific expertise and relatively low population pressure give only lip service to attempts to limit greenhouse gas emissions. These three powerful countries should be leading the herd to safety, to a sustainable future of greener pastures.

PRIMITIVE ECONOMICS

A fundamental cause of the ever-deteriorating quality of the global environment is what I call **Primitive Economics**. Economic theories evolved when the natural world was considered an inexhaustible resource to be plundered. These theories treat natural capital as free goods. Blanketing the earth with more "development"—expensive, exclusive real estate overlooking views which belong to fewer and fewer people—seems to be a goal of our current economic system, even if millions of people worldwide live under canvas or sewer pipes. Flavors of ice cream seem more important than breeds of tigers. Conventional economics has regarded natural capital as valueless, even though clean air and water, the cooling rain-giving tropical forests and the stratospheric ozone layer are essential for life. This archaic economic thinking still dominates our world. The state of the world's stock markets is thrown at us daily, yet where can we find the "Natural Capital Index?" The global library of species still has not been catalogued, but we are burning not only the books but the shelves upon which they stand. Do we really want—or need—a global culture of McDonald's hamburgers and Kentucky Fried Chicken? Can we afford it?

Appropriate costing of natural capital will help to create financial and economic incentives to change our behavior. In the meantime, wider access to education, health care and family planning in the poor and

overcrowded countries of what we call the Third World—our world—must be a priority.

TIME CAPSULE

In Hobart recently, Susan and I had the pleasure of meeting Professor John Guillebaud, of the Margaret Pyke Planning Centre in London, during his speaking tour to Australia. Born in Burundi and partly educated in Rwanda, John has dedicated his professional career to providing greater access to family planning on a global canvas. He is an indefatigable campaigner for the global environment and the world's women and children. On Global Environment Day, 1994, in London's Kew Gardens, John, along with British naturalist, David Bellamy, and the former U.K. ambassador to the U.N., Sir Francis Tickell, buried a time capsule containing essays from today's children apologizing to tomorrow's children for our current destruction of the environment. John and BODHI hope that this becomes an annual event in many parts of our world, until the time when we no longer have to apologize.

CARNAGE IN RWANDA

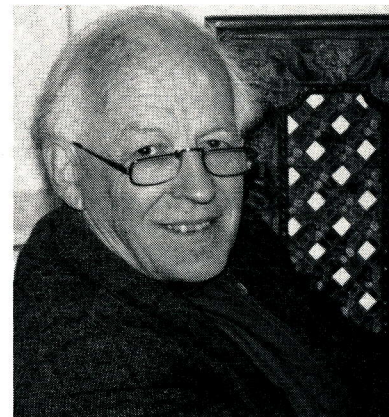
The civil war, mass killing and subsequent flight of more than 1 million refugees in the central African nation of Rwanda illustrate the desperate need for both accessible contraception and sustainable development in sub-Saharan Africa. With a prewar population of more than 7 million in a land area the size of Haiti or Cuba, Rwanda is the most densely-populated country in Africa. Growing by three percent per annum, the World Bank recently estimated Rwanda's population will reach an incredible 37 million before stabilizing. Low literacy rates, especially of women and girls, characterize impoverished and densely-populated countries such as Rwanda.

The population catastrophe in Rwanda exemplifies what BODHI's Public Health Adviser, Dr. Maurice King has called The Demographic Trap. The population has fallen, but only by the most barbaric methods imaginable: epidemic disease and machetes. Who can imagine that the aid money now pouring into Rwanda will be enough to educate, empower and enrich Rwanda's

children sufficiently so that when they reach adulthood—which they will so quickly—they will have an average of only two children per family?

THE CAIRO POPULATION CONFERENCE

Prior to this conference the press reported an alliance between the Pope and Islamic fundamentalists to thwart the efforts of most of the world's leaders to reduce human population growth. Current population estimates for the year 2050 range from 7.8



Dr. Maurice King, BODHI's Public Health Adviser, at his home in Leeds, England.

billion to 12.5 billion, a 45-110% increase over the present global population of 5.5 billion.

There are encouraging signs. Despite the Vatican's opposition to forms of contraception other than the rhythm method, most Catholic countries are practising contraception on a massive scale, at least in the developed and relatively developed worlds. Italy, Ireland and Brazil have all experienced rapid declines in population growth rates.

In the Islamic world, Indonesia and even Bangladesh appear to be passing through demographic transition, or the switch from a large family where most die to a small family where most survive. China, by coercion unacceptable in a free society, has also succeeded in limiting population growth.

In the next newsletter I will discuss **The Consumption Bomb**, a term I have coined to describe the relationship between over-consumption and ecological disaster. □

RABIES WATCH

The oral rabies vaccine, first used to reduce rabies among wild European foxes, has been trialled recently in the U.S., where a handful of people continue to contract rabies from infected mammals such as raccoons and bats. At \$1 per dose, the U.S. believes that it is cost effective. To immunize a wild population, bait is dropped from the air. Although this approach is currently beyond the means of countries like India, the oral route may be an appropriate and cost-effective means of vaccinating the semi-wild dogs that plague Tibetan refugee settlements, as well as villages and cities throughout the Third World.

Chris Townend, of the animal welfare group Help in Suffering writes from Jaipur, India, of a new vaccine they are testing to induce sterility in female dogs. If successful this vaccine would have many advantages over the existing male sterilization vaccine.

BODHI IN BIHAR

BODHI now supports three projects in Bodh Gaya, in Bihar, India's poorest state with her highest illiteracy rate. It was in Bodh Gaya that Buddha attained enlightenment 2,500 years ago.

▲ LITERACY CAMPAIGN

Sister Jessie is an Indian Christian renunciate living with Buddhists and working with Hindus. She left lush Kerala in the far south for hot, dusty and dry Bodh Gaya, in northeastern India, many years ago. After completing a two-year silent retreat, Sister Jessie found her sleep disturbed by images of poor women selling grass by the side of the road. The harijans, renamed from "untouchables" by Mahatma Gandhi, are at the bottom of the caste system, which remains strong in India.

"I am a believer in *give a hook and not a fish*," says Sister Jessie, who has dedicated her life to teaching harijan children to read and write. With the help of volunteers and two part-time workers, she travels to twenty villages in and around Bodh Gaya. Her work is financed entirely by public donations.

"Once every two weeks all our teachers come together on the roof of a building or under a shady tree, or by the river bank, for three hours. An ongoing training program is given in which I teach them different teaching methods, skills, lesson planning, indoor-outdoor games to make the class attractive and lovable, nursery rhymes, story-telling . . . Any new thing we want to teach the children first I teach the teachers.

"This year, during the monsoon, all the children are expected to plant at least three tree saplings. An awareness lesson through the help of some paintings . . . was given the teachers . . . of tree plantation for environmental protection and for better rains . . . At present the classes are under trees, by river banks, in open fields, anywhere . . .

"A word about the teachers: three-quarters of the teachers are harijans themselves. Though they are under twenty-five years of age, all of them are married and fathers/ mothers of four, five, six or even seven children. . . As the sole breadwinner of a family of seven, eight or nine people, these teachers are to be given at least 450 rupees (US\$15, A\$25) per month.

"As the parents are too poor to buy the pencils, texts, etc., we buy pencils, texts, etc. in the thousands and distribute them. Some other items we need money for are to make the roof of a

mudbrick school building, to buy blackboards and a hand pump."

BODHI's initial donation was used for a training course for forty-five teachers. BODHI hopes to develop a program for health education at Sister Jessie's village schools, possibly culminating in poster competitions, or possibly funding a visiting health worker or training a community health worker.

▲ RHEUMATIC FEVER VACCINE

Responding to Mr. A. K. Chaudhary's concern about rheumatic heart disease among the rural poor in Bihar, the medical school of the University of Queensland in Australia has contacted Dr. Colin Butler, BODHI's Medical Director. The school is developing a vaccine for rheumatic fever which it hopes to trial on Aboriginal children. Ultimately, the vaccine may be used in Bihar to reduce rheumatic fever.

▲ PRAJNA VIHARA SCHOOL

Constellating around the Prajna Vihara School are Hindus, Muslims, Catholic nuns and Buddhist monks. The Prajna Vihara School was founded in 1990 at the request of local villagers by members of the local community and foreign visitors. "Our school works to uphold the spirit of love and respect for the various religious and secular traditions," writes Christopher Titmuss from England in a letter to Australia's Bodh Gaya Development Fund. The obstacles of monsoons and being forced by their parents to work in the fields or beg sometime prevent the school's 115 children from attending class.

Something else contributes to the high absentee rate: poor health. Thomas Jost, a teacher in Darjeeling and a Prajna Vihara board member, writes from India, "On my last visit to the school, almost 20% were absent, being at home and sick. Especially in the monsoon the poor diet and lack of sanitation take their toll. Most children suffer from skin diseases, diarrhea and fever. One child is critically ill with open TB, and two children have shown the first signs of leprosy. We try to keep an eye on the health of our children and help where we can. Certainly a monthly visit of a doctor to the school and provisional funds for medical emergencies would be very helpful. Hygiene and health-related issues are taught at the school, and

are also brought up with parents, but change comes slowly for the better."

BODHI hopes to develop a program for health education at Prajna Vihara, possibly including poster competitions or funding a visiting health worker. □

OHIO VOLUNTEERS TO INDIA

BODHI is pleased to be working with Mr. John Gore, Director of the International Internship Program at Lake Erie College in Ohio, USA. He found us thanks to Heidi Melz of the Tibet Fund in New York. We are sending some of Mr. Gore's student volunteers to work with Tibetans in India.

MUNDGOD DUET

BODHI is helping to provide health education and sanitation checks, culminating in competitions with cash awards for villages comprising the isolated Tibetan settlement at Mundgod, the largest in South India.

BODHI is also providing a trash collection system requested by the Gaden-Nyingma Community Health Centre.

HEALTH ED TALKS— POSTER COMPETITION

In October, 1994, registered nurse Wendy Birley returned to the isolated Tibetan settlement of Dhonden Ling in South India to give a series of health education talks to the settlement's schoolchildren. Subjects included proper use of prescribed medication, tuberculosis prevention and environmental health. The talks culminated in a poster competition open to all the settlement's children. The winners received cash prizes and will have their posters displayed in Australia and possibly the U.S.

Many thanks Mr. Dawa Dhondup of Tibetan Educational And Children's Home (T.E.A.C.H.), who acted as Project Officer; BODHI Field Representative Mr. Tenpa T.K., who traveled from Mundgod to help judge the posters; the local school teacher; and Wendy—again—for her generosity.

Details will appear in the next BODHI Times.

EXCLUSIVE POSTER OF HIS HOLINESS XIV DALAI LAMA

BODHI is proud to offer a 20" x 23" (50cm x 58cm) poster of His Holiness XIV Dalai Lama, photographed at dawn in Central Park, New York, 1991. It is the most beautiful image of His Holiness that we have seen, reminiscent of the nineteenth century French Impressionists, more like a painting than a photograph. Poster design is also of the highest quality, with a maroon border and saffron lettering. This poster is an exclusive offering from BODHI, and is available for \$30, plus \$5 shipping.

Art photographer John Bigelow Taylor has generously donated this image to BODHI and supervised poster production. Mr. Taylor specializes in objects of art and antiquities, as well as travel and architecture. He has worked around the world with museums and private collections. Among his numerous credits are: *Wisdom and Compassion — The Sacred Art of Tibet* (Abrams) and the forthcoming *Learning From the Dalai Lama* (Dutton Children's Books). He lives in New York City with his wife, Dianne.

Kuan Chang, a New York graphic designer and artist who works with Mr. Taylor, has kindly donated his design talents to this poster. Mr. Chang has designed books, catalogs and other material for many museums, cultural institutions and publishers.

WHAT IS BODHI?

Benevolent Organisation for Development, Health & Insight (BODHI) was founded in 1989. Bodhi is a Sanskrit word meaning enlightenment, the wish to benefit all. Based on the principle of compassionate action, BODHI focuses upon sustainable ways of improving conditions of health, education and the environment—particularly in the Third World—which are inextricably linked.

Our founding patron, His Holiness XIV Dalai Lama, is the winner of the 1989 Nobel Prize for Peace. Our public health adviser, Dr. Maurice King, is one of the fathers of Third World primary health care. Our environmental adviser, Dr. Bob Brown, is Australia's leading environmentalist.

We have no evangelical role, nor is any religious affiliation necessary to work with us. We ask only for a kind heart. For many of us modern life is demanding, draining and sometimes demoralizing. It takes all we've got just to make it through the day. But it is in our own enlightened, or bodhi, self-interest to realize the interdependence of all beings. We must stand together to extirpate the world's much-discussed problems. If we don't, then who will?



CHOCOLATE DRIVE

Tasmanian volunteer Ina Oebleis ran a chocolate drive as a fundraiser for BODHI earlier this year. Thanks also to Annie Willock and Maggie Scott for their help.

BODHI TIMES is the biannual newsletter of Benevolent Organisation for Development, Health & Insight (BODHI).

Founding Patron: His Holiness XIV Dalai Lama
Public Health Adviser: Maurice King, M.D., F.R.C.P., F.F.P.H.M.
Environmental Adviser: Bob Brown, M.B.B.S.
Medical Director: Colin Butler, B.Med. Sci.(Hons), B.Med., DTM&H
Editor: Susan Woldenberg
India Field Representative: Tenpa T.K.

BODHI U.S.

P.O. Box 7000 GRD
Redondo Beach, CA, USA 90277
Tel: (310) 378-0260 Fax: (310) 378-6518

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

BODHI AUSTRALIA

4 Queen St., Campbell Town
Tasmania 7210, Australia
Tel: (003) 81 1133 Fax: (003) 81 1675

Directors: Colin Butler, Damien Morgan, R.N., B.Ed.
Susan Woldenberg

BODHI EUROPE

Dr. Michiel Marlet
c/- Etnalaan 27
5801 Venray The Netherlands

Printed on recycled paper

THANK YOU

Without our loyal supporters, BODHI's work would not be possible. Thank you.

Guy Caldwell, Australia
Michael Chevalier, England
Michael Childs, USA
Eileen Feigenberg, USA
Oz Fontecchio, USA
Virginia Ford, Australia
Ruth Grant, USA
Jeffrey Griffin, USA
Pende Hawter, Australia
Dr. Nick Higginbotham, Australia
Judy Howe, USA
Karuna Knights, Australia
Bill Linskey, USA
Laurence C. R. Mills, Australia
Christine Milne, Australia
Dr. John Morris, Australia
Peg Putt, Australia
Dr. A. K. Saha, Australia
Professor Frank Schofield, Australia
Ann Spanel, USA
Julia Trotter, USA
Nicolas & Kristen Van Gelder, USA
Thomas & Catherine Verica, USA
Louis Waters, USA
Eileen Weintraub-Johnson, USA
Katherine Whitman, USA
Annie Willock & Bart Wisse, Australia

Special thanks to Dr. Michael Aris of Oxford, England, for allowing us to use the photograph of his wife, Aung San Suu Kyi. We would also like to thank Direct Relief International, Santa Barbara, USA.



CALL FOR AUSTRALIAN VOLUNTEERS

The pursuit of tax-deductible status in Australia snails along. Though we have enough members (but don't let that stop you from joining!) the hold-up is lack of sustained volunteer involvement. Please contact us—from any state or territory—if you can help on a consistent basis. We would be most appreciative if you would do this.



MAILING LIST UPDATE

Anyone we have not heard from for two years will be deleted, unfortunately.



NEWCOMER TIBETAN REFUGEES

BODHI Australia board member Damien Morgan submitted the following report. Damien is currently undertaking a Master of Education at La Trobe University in Melbourne. He is researching the factors affecting the health of the newly-arrived Tibetan refugees into India and Nepal, focussing primarily upon health services. Damien will present the results to the Tibetan Government in Exile, with whom he then aims to work to develop a health education program specifically for newcomers.

Life in India is not easy for newcomers from Tibet. To escape, many have left behind

PLEASE—

WE NEED YOUR HELP

BODHI has been able to begin some exciting and innovative programs. We need your donations to continue these efforts. We can do so much more if you'll support us. Please send your check, payable in either U.S. or Australian dollars to any of the addresses below.

U.S. donations are tax-deductible

families and friends or risked their own lives or those of their loved ones. Numbers of newcomer refugees have increased every year since the late 1980s, to 4,500 in 1993. The last three years have seen an increase of 62%. All resettlement locations are almost or completely full. Monasteries, such as Sera Je in South India, must house newcomers in the puja halls, which is like housing the homeless in churches in the West. Monks do not like the idea but have no choice.

Lay newcomers are categorized by age and sent to appropriate schools. These, too, are reaching the bursting point.

NEWCOMERS AND HEALTH EDUCATION

Having come from Tibet's cold, dry climate, most refugees are completely unprepared for the behavioral changes they must make in order to maintain health. This is a major problem. No health education system targets these newcomers directly, nor is there any acknowledgement of their specific needs as acute-phase refugees. Newcomer morbidity rates are considerably higher than those for the rest of the Tibetan community in exile in India.

The Reception Centers offer no formal and little informal health education for newcomers. Tibetan health workers in various clinics teach the newcomers basics of good hygiene. Unfortunately they are not always able to carry out the health workers' instructions due to lack of adequate facilities.

Major clinical health problems of the newcomers when they arrive at the Kathmandu and Dharamsala Reception Centers include frostbite, diarrheal diseases, infected sores, pulmonary infections and a range of skin conditions related to the sudden change of conditions they have encountered. Like people in any community, the clinical health problems of the newcomers result from more than inadequate medical care. As acute-phase refugees, they are extremely vulnerable to the social effects on health of education, housing and employment. The support services available from the financially-beleaguered Tibetan Administration are no longer coping with the numbers of incoming refugees. No solution is in sight. Aside from their immediate health, educational and welfare problems, the lack of financial resources places the newcomers at grave risk of becoming a distinct social underclass within the Tibetan community in India. □