

BODHI TIMES

Founding Patron : His Holiness XIV Dalai Lama

Public Health Adviser: Dr. Maurice King

JUNE, 1995 NO. 8

Environmental Adviser: Dr. Bob Brown

A FEW GOOD WOMEN

SISTER JESSIE

Massihi Gyanodaya Abhiyan, the Campaign for a Literate Bodh Gaya, is a grassroots project in which a little goes a long way, thanks to Sister Jessie (Ma Jaishre Upadhyay), a Catholic renunciate from the Indian state of Kerala. Her work encompasses three programs for harijan (untouchable) children: education, career training and environmental regeneration through tree planting.

BODHI is beginning its second year of supporting Sister Jessie's work. "Our literacy mission is going very well," she writes. "We are slowly adding more activities to our education work. With a view to becoming self-supporting, we are starting a few cottage industries, such as book binding, envelope making and painting greeting cards.

"This month we are having a spelling contest and then exams. After that there will be a fifteen-day teaching seminar for the teachers," Sister Jessie continues. "They are to be taught to handle first and second grades. We will also plan a syllabus during that time, and introduce health service. I am thinking of inviting an experienced doctor to give some talks on health care. Already one of my teachers is preparing for health service from a book called *Where There is no Doctor*. Health care is the second biggest need in the remote villages, which lack access to any transportation within a radius of 20-25 kilometres (12-15 miles).

"Please extend our thanks and wishes to all your helpers and friends."

STELLA TAMANG

In Thailand recently, we met Stella Tamang, who in 1991 co-founded Mili Juli Nepal, a voluntary organisation to help indigenous Nepali women and children. They have set up alternative skills

and literacy classes for children who work in carpet factories. Fifty percent of Nepal's carpet workers are children; forty-seven percent of these are Tamang.

BODHI would like to support an HIV/AIDS education program to be initiated and developed by the Tamang, the indigenous Nepali tribe that supplies most of Nepal's prostitutes. Forty-five percent of the people in Nepal live below the poverty line. "Eighty to eighty-five



Sister Jessie with some students and teachers, Bihar, India, 1995.

percent of the population are ethnic and indigenous people," writes Stella from Kathmandu. "Among the poorest are the women and children."

A problem besetting Tamang children is prostitution. Many prostitutes are sent to India to work—perhaps 160,000, although exact figures are difficult to obtain. Approximately twenty percent of the up to 7,000 sent south annually are under twenty years old. They are now being sent to Bangkok, Hong Kong and the Middle East. Traditionally, pimps have kidnapped girls or tricked them into false marriages. Girls are beginning to see the sex trade as a means of survival and ask traffickers to take them to India.

Many prostituted Nepali women are now HIV+.

Information submitted by Shelley Anderson.

JANRAEM SIRIKUMPHU

We visited Janraem's Project in Mae Sai, a Thai border town in the Golden Triangle where Burma, Thailand and Laos meet. We learned of hill-tribe villagers who sell their girl children, sometimes before they are born, for drugs, a new roof or a television. We learned of local drug addiction transferred from opium smoking to heroin shooting. Ostracism, mental illness, HIV, AIDS and hepatitis B are some of the problems that drug addiction and prostitution drag in their wake.

Janraem started her project eleven years ago in a pig pen in her backyard, to enable girls from her village to read Bangkok street signs in case they wanted to escape. Janraem teaches her fifty female students—and their mothers—in a house provided by an anonymous Bangkok donor. Many hill tribe people are not registered at birth, so are excluded from the Thai educational system. Janraem teaches them the basics, plus a trade to keep them out of the sex market. She does not always succeed in this. Janraem showed us photographs of girls whose families have sold them, despite her efforts. She takes it hard.

We would like to provide health services to Campaign for a Literate Bodh Gaya and fund a Tamang folk song competition and health education program for Janraem's Project.

□

NEXT BODHI TIMES: HIV/AIDS

We will discuss HIV/AIDS in Asia, focussing on India, Thailand and Nepal.

TAKING PRECAUTIONS

In Australia, debate continues about how to improve the health of its indigenous people, the Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders. Concurrently there is very little discussion of how to reduce the transmission of HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa or how to standardise the management of tuberculosis in South India. The former is seen as legitimately Australian, a national concern; the latter is not really the business of Australians or Australian tax funds.

GLOBAL RESPONSIBILITY

At the same time, the government exhorts Australians to think of themselves as part of the global economic community. The carrot of increased national prosperity lures Australians to obey the rules of the global financial game. Since taking the bait, services have declined and personal security has fallen so low that a US-style home gun debate has taken root—but that's another story.

Along with rights and privileges come responsibilities. If Australians, Zambians and Indians are part of the same global economy, doesn't an obligation develop for interaction at levels other than financial?

If free trade is really for the benefit of all, then shouldn't economies of the rich countries benefit from improving the health of the poorer countries? Nearly everyone from the North (the rich countries) who has spent time in the Third World is appalled by its obvious poverty. Why is the main reason for lack of real aid from North to the South said to be lack of Northern resources? The North can afford enormous military budgets, butter mountains and multi-millionaire sportsmen.

The best aid is that which strengthens the resourcefulness and independence of the recipient, rather than encouraging a beggar mentality. We at BODHI believe the best way is through collaboration with indigenous individuals and organisations. What do you think?

Because we are a small organisation, BODHI can take chances, can be a support bridge until new organisations or projects gain a substantial track record and can apply for bigger bucks. We would rather support less material work, such as education, health care and community empowerment. Buildings

consume too high a percentage of our funds and can be too easily destroyed.

FUELING THE CONSUMPTION BOMB

The Berlin Climate conference has come and gone, with a business-as-usual approach by those profligate greenhouse gas contributors on a per-capita basis, the US and Australia. They were, of course, supported by the oil states. In Thailand we heard whispers of sinking sky-scrapers and salinisation of the canals in Bangkok. We learned of increased plant life in Antarctica, possibly a sensitive indicator of global temperature rise. We sweltered under a fierce sun, in a country where air conditioning will soon be de rigueur. Such fossil fuel-based cooling will exacerbate global warming.

Driving on the the outskirts of Bangkok to a recent conference, I was struck by the pace of highway development and by the grandiosity of the petrol stations. Seeing their familiar brightly lit logos and air-conditioned, glassed-in islands selling ice-cream (some called "Green Shops"), I could have been in California where, provided I had health insurance, I could be confident of receiving excellent hospital care if I were involved in one of the many accidents that occur in Thailand.

Thailand and many other Asian countries are rushing to the twentieth century instead of forging a way into the twenty-first. Oil companies will be happy with the demand for fossil fuel created by the mass motorisation of 2 or 3 billion Asians. Is it too much to hope that Asia will also lead the way to energy efficient public transport?

The Precautionary Principle, simply put, states that if the risk is high, then find an alternative. It paraphrases that old homily, "a stitch in time saves nine". Many environmentalists advocate the use of the Precautionary Principle and its derivative, a "no regrets" policy hoping to encourage a wise use of existing resources, including natural and biological capital. This policy means putting into place the most cost-effective energy saving strategies, as well as energy efficient technologies which would be least regretted if global warming turns out to be exaggerated.

FROM SAMOA TO THE SAVOY?

Unfortunately, the reverse policy, that of business as usual, still has many

advocates, particularly from those who most profit under the existing system. One Oxford University don believes that it would be much cheaper to house all those people threatened by rising sea levels in the Savoy Hotel for the rest of their lives than to take the steps, which he sees as economically deleterious, to slow down global warming. He finds this ethically acceptable.

In our global community, "one person, one vote" seems to be a long way off. As far as the reinsurance business is concerned, slowing global warming makes economic sense. It also makes sense if you live in the Maldives, on a Pacific island or in the Ganges delta in Bangla Desh. Alas, few people endangered by sea level rise have access to the resources or clout of comfortable academics in the West.



BODHI PRESIDENT NOMINATED FOR HUMANITARIAN AWARD

Susan Woldenberg Butler, BODHI president and co-founder, has been nominated for the Jamnalal Bajaj International Award for Promoting Gandhian Values Outside India for 1995. The award strives to serve the ideals to which Mr. Bajaj, a close associate of Gandhi's, dedicated his life.

Susan has been the driving force behind BODHI since its inception in 1989. Her tireless efforts and vision of what BODHI can accomplish are known by few outside our organisation. It is for this reason that we are heartened to see her receive this international recognition.

We thank Mr. John Gore, Director of International Internship Program at Lake Erie College in Ohio, USA, for nominating Susan, and for his efforts on BODHI's behalf.

Submitted by Scott Trimmingham

FESTIVALS & POSTERS

Thanks to BODHI Australia fundraiser Peter R. Hill for his energetic efforts at the recent Womadelaide festival in Adelaide, South Australia, and for his continuing work on BODHI's behalf,

and

to BODHI US director Dr. Martin Rubin for poster sales and support.

OUR ADVISORY BOARD GROWS

We introduce three new advisers; the next BODHI Times will profile Dr. Christopher Queen and Sulak Sivaraksa.

ROBERT AITKEN began studying Buddhism just after World War II. He founded the Diamond Sangha in 1957 in Honolulu, Hawaii, where he is the resident teacher. In 1974, this respected teacher received Zen transmission and the title "roshi" from Yamada Koun Roshi. Aitken Roshi has written many books, including *Gateless Barrier* and *The Dragon Who Never Sleeps: Adventures in Zen Buddhist Practice*. Aitken Roshi's first exposure to Japanese traditions was through a book of poetry given him by a guard when he was in a prison camp during World War II.

In the early 1970s, SHELLEY ANDERSON attended a lecture by *hibakusha*, the Japanese survivors of the first atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. A Nagasaki woman told that she and her family had become outcasts whom no one would marry due to fear of genetic birth defects. Accompanying the group was an American widow whose husband had been sent in to "clean up" after the blasts. He died of leukemia. The widow recounted how she and her family had become outcasts, how her daughter had trouble finding a husband. Shelley realised that, nearly thirty years later, the victors and the losers were saying the same thing and were still paying. Who won, and who lost?

Shelley quit her intelligence analyst job in the US Army as a conscientious objector and has worked for world peace ever since. She develops women's programming at and edits the journal of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation in The Netherlands.

SISTER MILA L. GIMENO was born in the Mandaya tribe of indigenous Filipinos. In 1989 she and twenty-nine sisters broke away to form the Missionaries of the Assumption. They felt that trying to convert to Catholicism people with

working belief systems was culturally inappropriate and hampered their credibility. Sister Mila works with indigenous (Matsilog) people, Muslims (Moros) and the urban poor. She practices a modified form of Liberation Theology, the activist Catholic clergy splinter philosophy of the 1970s and early 1980s whose adherents are either dead ("murdered") or imprisoned ("many"). Her dream is that indigenous and other poor Filipinos have enough food, clothing, shelter and medicine.

Their work has earned the Missionaries of the Assumption the classification of "rebel group" from both the Catholic Church and the Filipino government. They are under military surveillance; the school they run is bombarded with propaganda. BODHI hopes that publicising their work will help to keep them alive.

A FEW TIBETAN PROJECTS

Three **BODHI** volunteers are working in Dharamsala. Beverly Croyle and Meeka Rudd left Lake Erie College, Ohio, USA, to teach and do office work for three months at the Tibetan Medical & Astro Institute (TMAI). Beverly has been a homemaker for many years and is now doing something for herself. Meeka hopes to prepare for the Peace Corps. Mike Hughes is teaching at the SOGA School for new arrivals from Tibet, for the Tibetan Department of Education. Mike worked with Liberian refugees in the Marine Corps.

Thanks to the generous contribution of the Australian Tibetan Society, BODHI has funded 2/3 of the USD2600 required to provide a **water pump** at the traditional medical clinic in the Tibetan settlement at Bhandara, in central India. "Our most pressing problem is shortage of pure drinking water," writes Tsering Sangmo, office manager of the TMAI Clinic at Norgyeling Settlement. The clinic is run by her husband, Dr. Lobsang Chodor,

VOLUNTEER BULLETIN BOARD

Contact BODHI for further information about these voluntary positions.

- ◆ D.T.R. Hospital, Mundgod, S. India: Gather, compile and/or analyse statistical health data, teach computer to staff, office program planning. Largest Tibetan settlement in India. Room and board.
- ◆ Indigenous Women's Development Centre (IWDC), Chiang Mai, Thailand: needs accounting, marketing, nursery teaching, design and campaigns skills. IWDC acts as a link between displaced Burmese women and the international community.

who escaped from Beijing. The settlement's open wells dry up during the intensely hot weather and become contaminated during the monsoon. "The clinic serves many Indian villagers from the surrounding areas. This pump will go a long way in improving the health and hygiene of the area," Tsering adds.

BODHI provided a **trash collection system** to Gaden monastery in Mundgod, South India. This includes twenty-four large, metal bins plus the labour of three Indian coolies and petrol (gas) for a monastery tractor for three months, to coincide with the Kalachakra initiation in January, 1995. The tractor takes the trash to a low-lying piece of wasteland. "In India there is no more ecological way of dealing with trash . . . but a lot of it is recycled, such as glass bottles and old clothes," writes Ven. Tenzin Wangchuk, president of the Gaden-Nyingma Community Health Centre, which requested the trash collection system.

EXCLUSIVE POSTER OF HIS HOLINESS XIV DALAI LAMA

BODHI is proud to offer a 50cm x 58 cm (20" x 23") colour poster of His Holiness XIV Dalai Lama, photographed at dawn in Central Park, New York. This beautiful image of His Holiness is reminiscent of the nineteenth century French Impressionists. Poster design is of the highest quality, with maroon border and saffron lettering.

Art photographer John Bigelow Taylor has generously donated this image to BODHI and supervised poster production. Mr. Taylor specialises 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 *Learning from the Dalai Lama* (Dutton Children's Books).

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

Exclusive offering from BODHI. Price: from \$20-\$30 (your choice). Orders of more than 10: \$15 each OR make us an offer.
DONATIONS OF MORE THAN \$100 RECEIVE A FREE POSTER

WHAT IS BODHI?

Benevolent Organisation for Development, Health & Insight (BODHI) focuses on sustainable ways to improve health, education and the environment, particularly in developing countries. BODHI was founded in 1989 on the principles of skilful and compassionate action. BODHI is a Sanskrit word meaning "enlightenment," the wish to benefit all.

BODHI is not a religious organisation. We have supporters from many different faiths. We ask only for a kind heart. For many of us life is demanding, draining and sometimes demoralising. It can take all we have to make it through the day. But realising the interdependence of all beings is in our enlightened self interest. We must work together to reduce the world's much-discussed problems. If we don't, then who will?

PLEASE—WE NEED YOUR HELP

BODHI has been able to begin some exciting and innovative programs. We need your donations to continue. We can do so much more if you'll support us.

Please send your cheque, payable in US or Australian dollars, to an address below.

US donations are tax-deductible

BODHI Times is the biennial 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: Dr. Bob Brown, M.B.B.S.
Medical Director: Dr. Colin Butler,
DTM&H, FACTM
Editor: Susan Woldenberg
India Representative: Tenpa T.K.

BODHI US
PO Box 7000 GRD
Redondo Beach, CA 90277 USA
Fax: 310-3786518; Tel: 310-378-0260

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

BODHI AUSTRALIA
4 Queen St., Campbell Town
Tasmania, Australia 7210
Tel: (003) 81 1133 Fax: (003) 81 1675
Email: csbutler@peg.apc.org

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

KOLLEGAL HEALTH ED COMPETITION

In October, 1994, Australian nurse Wendy Birley travelled to the Tibetan settlement at Kollegal in South India to give a series of health education talks culminating in a poster competition. Topics were nutrition, tuberculosis, personal hygiene and environmental cleanliness. The competition was open to all the settlement's schoolchildren; 400 attended. Wendy used posters, a puppet and some worksheets as aids. The children sat in eight rows facing Wendy, who sat at a table to make it less formal. Mr. Sonam translated from English into Tibetan when necessary.

"GOOD FOOD, DON'T SPIT"

Wendy found the children attentive, but shy. They did not ask many questions. Nevertheless, "The talks went quite well," she says. "The children seemed interested and most of them absorbed the content as evidenced by what they drew on the posters, such as good food, don't spit, cover your mouth when coughing and use the dust bin."

Competition organiser Dawa Dhondup, of Tibetan Educational and Children's Home (T.E.A.C.H.), writes that the children have become more health conscious, for instance of brushing their teeth before going to bed. Dawa adds that the children are still talking about the adverse effects of cigarette smoking.

The three judges—Wendy, Tenpa T. K., BODHI India Representative, and Mr. Dawa Dorjee, Settlement Officer—marked each poster on a scale of one to ten, five for health content and five for the work. The winners were: Senior Division, 1st: Norzin Lhamo, 2nd: Dhondup Dorjee, 3rd: Phuntsok; Junior Division, 1st: Tenzin Kunkey, 2nd: Tenzin Choerab, and 3rd: Karma Tsedup.

SUNNY MORNING CEREMONY

"The presentation ceremony was held at the morning assembly at the school. It was a lovely, sunny, fresh morning. . . The schoolteacher and principal were present, plus Mr. Dorjee, his assistant, Dawa and me," Wendy writes. "I assisted Mr. Dorjee in handing out katas [traditional greeting scarves] and cash prizes to each student. He had previously made a speech in English thanking BODHI and me."

In his evaluation report, Tenpa T.K. discusses the importance of prize provision to stimulate participation and to motivate the students and their parents.

Many thanks to Tenpa T.K., who travelled from Mundgod, a journey of two days each way, to represent BODHI. Thanks also



Health education competition winners.

Photo: Wendy Birley

to Mr. Dorjee, the teacher and the school principal. Thanks also to Dawa Dhondup and Wendy Birley, for her continuing generosity.

BODHI hopes to sponsor a series of follow-up health education talks.

BODHI ADVISES POLICY PAPER ON CHILD LABOUR IN ASIA

BODHI is advising on a research project commissioned by AusAid, the Australian governmental department which determines overseas aid. Researchers at the University of New England, New South Wales and Monash University, Victoria, are conducting the project.

◆◆◆◆◆ THANK YOU

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

Dr Diane Amsterdam, USA
Charles Chadwick, Australia
Dr Bruce & Kay Coppa, Australia
Richard Cole & Aleta Drummond, USA
Dr and Mrs Arun Dasgupta, USA
Dara Eklund, USA
George Farley, Australia
Paula Fins, USA
Drs Tim Flanagan & Fiona Joske, Australia
Dr Mark Groves & Di Rudman, Australia
Prof. John Guillebaud, UK
Allan Hunt-Badiner, USA
Senator Dee Margetts, Australia
Dr Megan Passey, Papua New Guinea
Dr Shanti Raman, Australia
Toby Rhodes, USA
Greg Shuttlewood, USA
Lynn Susholtz, USA
Katia Wilder, USA
Murray Wright, USA

Special thanks to: the Australian Tibetan Society for funding 1/3 of the water pump at the TMAI Clinic at Bhandara, in India, and the Bodh Gaya Development Fund, Australia, for all its help and support.