

BODHI TIMES

Founding Patron: His Holiness XIV Dalai Lama

Public Health Adviser: Dr. Maurice King

DECEMBER, 1995 NO. 9

Environmental Adviser: Dr. Bob Brown

TENPA'S STORY

"I was born to the late Kunsang Ngodup and his wife, Kunsang Chozom Kharyakpa of Jeker Village, southwest of Mt. Kailash, in the western province of Ngawi.

"After the great exodus of Tibetans along with His Holiness the Dalai Lama in 1959, my parents sought asylum in India in 1962. We lost my younger brother due to dehydration during our escape. Upon arrival in Simla my parents got me admitted to the residential school. They worked as road builders.

"Unfortunately after two years I was attacked by polio and hospitalised for nearly 2½ years, after which I was able to walk, but with a limp. I rejoined my old school. After a few years we moved to Karnataka State in South India, where we settled as farmers. Again I had to spend a few years in hospital."

Tenpa did a pharmaceutical degree and worked as a pharmacist. His career includes hotel management in Ladakh before taking his present longstanding

position with the Deptment of Health of the Tibetan government-in-exile. He is Administrator at D.T.R. Hospital in South India.

"Ever since the day I've done any serious thinking, I have wanted to be of some help to my people, especially those who are poor, sick and ignorant. I was made aware of the importance of one's health by my parents lamenting my own poor health.



Tenpa T.K., BODHI's India Field Representative.

Photo by Wendy Birley

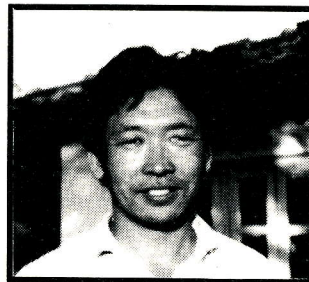
"They used to say that it was very difficult for our family to progress because we have only a sick and deformed son. This remark has made me determined to compete and work like any healthy child. I have never thought of myself as sick or handicapped.

MY PEOPLE'S HEALTH NEEDS

"An urgent need exists to change the public attitude from a dormant receiver to an active retriever of health facilities. People must accept responsibility for safeguarding their own community's health and the environment around them to promote their own health.

DAWA'S AWARD

India. The Central Executive Committee of the Tibetan Youth Congress selected Mr. Dawa Dhondup of Tibetan Education and Children's Home (TEACH) as the recipient of its 1995 Youth Social Award. Thinley Tibetan "Dawa has an area n o t m a n y make the has shown what individual Tibetans can and should do to help fellow Tibetans." Congratulations, Dawa. We're not surprised.



Dawa Dhondup, Kollegal, 1994.

Tibetan Congress Service P e m a writes in *Bulletin*: succeeded in where it has occurred to others to effort. Dawa by example

"Settlement officers should place greater importance on health and sanitation. Monasteries must allot a specific time for health education. Abbots and disciplinarians must check the misuse of public roads and open gutters and spaces around their monasteries to prevent their becoming open toilets and garbage dumps. The Department of Health must give priority to health education by providing enough funds and encouragement.

"I have faith that BODHI will help to achieve something in this field with its generous help and sound inspiration. I look forward to a fruitful future for all of us. Tashi delek!"

□

HIV/AIDS IN ASIA

Dr. Colin Butler reports.

THAILAND

The Thai region with the highest incidence of HIV is the far north, in Chiang Rai province, part of the Golden Triangle. Increasingly rugged hills, the start of the Himalayan range, break the fertile and flat rice paddies of Thailand, the rice bowl of Asia. In rapidly developing Thailand, life for its hill people remains marginal. Their soil is too poor and steep for rice. Traditionally, for decades if not

centuries, the hill tribes have grown the opium poppy as a cash crop. Many farmers use narcotics; originally they smoked opium; now they inject heroin. These people thus become vulnerable to HIV infection.

We heard frequent anecdotal evidence of hill tribe daughters being sold into prostitution by their parents, perhaps to finance a drug habit, perhaps to put a new roof on the family house. Prostitution scouts visit the hill tribe areas looking for girls, many of whom are children as young as eight or nine.

WESTERN CLOTHES, GOOD LIVING

Recruits may not realise what working as a prostitute means. One girl thought that being a prostitute meant wearing Western clothes. The girls are told that they will earn a good living and work in the city or town for a few years, with accommodation provided. They may become bonded

cont. p. 4

For an unusual

HOLIDAY GIFT IDEA
see page 3.

POWER, THE MIDDLE KINGDOM AND THE MIDDLE PATH

What do mining giants Freeport and BHP and the oil company Shell have in common with the French and Chinese governments?

NUCLEAR POWER

All, in 1995, put their profits, prestige and self importance before the interest of thousands of indigenous people. The French insist their nuclear brinkmanship is partly justifiable because of military dollars spent in the Pacific.

In the Chinese empire, near Tibet, to a muted world chorus of protest, the awesome Chinese government flaunts its contempt of educated global public opinion by underground nuclear testing at Lop Nor in occupied East Turkestan. In China, dissidence is so suppressed that Hilary Clinton, speaking in Beijing, could only hint at it. Direct challengers, such as Harry Wu and the Tibetan women at the Beijing conference, need protection from slavery by holding a foreign passport.

MINERAL AND OIL POWER

Freeport, Shell and BHP claim a similar immunity from morality by arguing that the foreign exchange brought by their operations brings money to indigenous peoples, thus justifying environmental and human rights abuses. In West Papua (known since the 1962 invasion as Irian Jaya, an Indonesian acronym), the US-owned Freeport copper and gold mine dumps nearly 80,000 tonnes a day of mining waste into once pristine rivers. Thousands of highland Papuans, supposedly beneficiaries of this progress, have been forcibly resettled to the malarious lowlands.

Across the border, in East Papua, the Australian multinational BHP's operations have been found guilty of contempt of court, for influencing the framing of legislation in the New Guinea parliament to prevent villagers along the Ok Tedi and Fly rivers from seeking compensation for environmental desecration. What in a dictatorship can occur by decree can be done by BHP in a democracy by dollars or threatened withdrawal.

In the Nigerian Rivers State Shell, the Dutch multinational, in alliance with the Nigerian military dictatorship, continues to oppress the environmental and human rights of the Ogoni people in order to enable continued exploitation of the oil rich fields under Ogoni land.

These multinationals illustrate human rights and environmental abuses brought



BOBO ON THE BED

Photo courtesy Prof. Ian Maddocks

COMPASSION FATIGUE

Bobo has it. After years of losing loved ones in her hospice work, Bobo now bonds only with staff members.

Humans get compassion fatigue, too.

by the alliance of forces from the democratic West and vulnerable governments in developing countries, desperate for hard currency. The threat to use nuclear weapons makes suppression of others' rights seem a trivial abuse in comparison.

THE MIDDLE KINGDOM

How can China, the middle kingdom, continue to flaunt its contempt for Western democratic and human rights values? Perhaps China feels that she can hardly afford not to. The world's most populous country, still growing by 13 million people per year, is headed for a population of maybe 1.5 billion before peaking—six times that of the US.

How will China feed her people? Rice needs up to five tonnes of water for each kilogram of grain. Both cropland and water increasingly co-opted for industrial development are becoming scarce in China, where famine is a living memory: in 1959-60, 30 million Chinese starved to death. Climate changes predicted by global warming may also bring famine to China through floods, as Korea and Cambodia have recently experienced.

As the Chinese prosper from industrialisation, their demand for more protein—both grain and animal—will soar. Fish will not come from the exhausted North Atlantic Ocean; grain will not come from drought afflicted Australia. Will it come from grain intended for McDonald's hamburgers? This interesting question, until recently, was considered irrelevant by the Chinese, who insisted that they could feed themselves.

Population control may not be

sufficient. China's harsh but courageous one child policy (my main criticisms are that this came too late and is applied too brutally) will not be enough to prevent further crises of famine in China. Increased Chinese grain demand will strain global supply, creating a global predicament.

GLOBAL HEALTH

Health is clearly related to human rights, food and other forms of environmental security. Yet, what is the medical profession doing about all this? China is not even a member of the World Medical Council.

LEADERSHIP

The United Nations seems incapable of real leadership. It is handicapped by increasing debt. Incompetent or corrupt staff are virtually immune from dismissal.

If the world is to pull out of its current nosedive, then the middle and working classes, the wealthy, the media barons and our leaders have to realise that survival depends not on the race to the bottom of the unfettered market (especially one that gives no value to ecological and social capital) but on a genuine sharing of resources stemming from realisation that we all share one planet. Is this possible? The evasion of censorship by the internet and the outrage against French nuclear testing give some hope that a global change in consciousness is underway. □

The next BODHI Times will include articles on the Grameen Bank, Mongolia and the Child Labour Conference.

A SPECIAL

THANK YOU

Australian West Papua Association for information.

Mr. Ken Goynes of Hobart and Hoechst Ag. for donating A\$600 of antibiotics.

Mr Gabriel Lafitte, Australia, for expert geographical advice and ongoing support.

Eoin Liebchen-Meades and the Bodh Gaya Development Fund, Australia, for much-appreciated help.

Dr. Tony Richardson, Australia and the US, for ceaseless, energetic poster sales.

Baron H. H. Thyssen-Bornemisza, Switzerland, for his continuing generosity.

Eileen Weintraub-Johnson and Mark D. Johnson, USA, for their support.

ADVISORY BOARD EXPANDS

PROF. JOHN GUILLEBAUD was born in Burundi, Africa, reared in Rwanda and educated in Uganda, Kenya and Britain. At an undergraduate lecture in Cambridge in 1959 he caught the vision that "Family planning could bring more benefits to more people at less cost than any other single technology now available to the human race."

Prof. Guillebaud has travelled to every continent promoting planned parenthood and concern for the environment. In 1993 he received the prestigious Evian/Birthright Health Award. He is a prolific author, an examiner for the London University Medical Degree and a member of several expert committees in the field. In 1992 he was appointed by University College, London as Professor of Family Planning and Reproductive Health, the world's

first practising gynaecologist to be given a personal chair in the specialty.

DR. CHRISTOPHER QUEEN is Dean of Students in Continuing Education and a lecturer in religion at Harvard University. He sees his teaching as activism and religion as a vehicle for social change. Dr. Queen is interested in how religion can help to change individuals, and how it can change societies. He has recently released his second book, *Engaged Buddhism: Buddhist Liberation Movements in Asia*.

The son of a Methodist minister, he was set to go into the family business when he decided that he could reach more people through teaching. Over the years he has taught religion and Bible, received his PhD from Boston University with his thesis, "Systems Theory in Religious Studies," and worked as Assistant Dean of Students

at Boston University. In 1990 he took his twin teaching/deaning careers to Harvard.

SULAK SIVARAKSA, lawyer, author, social critic and 1994 nominee for the Nobel Prize for Peace, is the most outspoken intellectual in Siam (an inclusive name preferred by many). Ajaan (a term of respect) Sulak was freed from his first charge of lese majeste only after a campaign backed by Amnesty International. Although no official reason was given for the dismissal of charges, Ajaan Sulak credits international pressure.

Ajaan Sulak's tirades against the corruption and environmental degradation brought about by mindless "modernisation" have led to another trial for lese majeste. Thankfully Sulak was again acquitted.

□

TIBET VISION PROJECT O . T . H . E . R . . N . E . W . S

BODHI supports Tibet Vision Project.

SAN FRANCISCO-LHASA

The Tibet Vision Project enables Tibetans in Tibet to see again. It "demonstrating state-of-the-art-for-the-developing-world cataract surgery to the Tibetan medical community," writes Dr. Marc Lieberman, M.D., Medical Director of the Nama Rupa Foundation, from San Francisco.

As this goes to press, Dr. Lieberman is still in Lhasa for the Skills Transfer Program. "No such eye surgery is now done in the Tibet Autonomous Region," Dr. Lieberman writes, "although two Tibetan ophthalmic surgeons have begun training in Kathmandu with one of the two co-sponsors of our project, Dr. S. Ruit of the Tilganga Eye Centre. Dr. Lieberman says, "Tibet Vision Project plans to 1) perform high-volume cataract and posterior-chamber intraocular lens implantation in

several hundred patients; 2) teach our Tibetan hosts these new surgical techniques with the equipment which we will donate; and 3) transfer the paramedical organisational skills essential to sustain high-quality out-patient cataract surgery. Our budget [\$25,000] includes the purchase of appropriate surgical microscopes and provisions to be donated to two Lhasa hospitals."

BODHI welcomes your donations.

VOLUNTEER BULLETIN

* **BHUTAN:** Australian **Robert Miller** is at Tibetan Medical and Astro Institute (TMAI) in Dharamsala after a trek in Bhutan, during which he was to gather information on and possibly samples of traditional Tibetan plants.

* **THAILAND:** The International Women's Development Centre-needs a **designer** specialising in cloth products and a **preschool educator** experienced in

setting up and running nursery schools, preferably in remote areas, with a knowledge of Burmese.

THE PHILIPPINES

Sister Mila writes of the Beijing Women's Conference: "The experience is for me a call to commit myself to be with grassroots women in their sufferings, a call to help in educating the women of their rights and dignity." BODHI made a modest donation to Sister Mila's trip.

MONGOLIA

"How does the devoutly Buddhist society which always turns to its lamas for healing and guidance recover from six decades of enforced amnesia during which the educated class of Buddhists were machine-gunned? Mongolia is rediscovering its heritage and needs all the help it can get from foreign friends," writes Mongolian expert Gabriel Lafitte.

❖ ❖ UNUSUAL HOLIDAY GIFT IDEA ❖ ❖

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.

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 term meaning "enlightenment," the wish to benefit all.

BODHI is not a religious organisation. We have supporters and advisers 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 extirpate 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

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HIV IN ASIA, from p. 1

slaves. In one terrible case, all the girls in a southern Thailand brothel were found chained to their beds.

Some eventually earn good money. Prostitutes' earnings finance some of the most beautiful temples in Thailand. We heard of one sixteen-year-old ex-prostitute who has given up on this life and is earning merit for the next by building a temple.

When they finally pay off their bonds, the girls sometimes bring home a deadly prize: HIV. They are sick, but they do not know why. Prostitution is theoretically illegal in Thailand, as is working while HIV positive. Many girls have regular blood tests but are not told why. A positive blood test does not necessarily change a girl's status or a client's behaviour.

NEPAL AND INDIA

Leaving the brothel sick without knowing why also occurs in Nepal and India, countries where HIV is even more poorly understood than in Thailand. The World Health Organisation already estimates the number of HIV-affected people in India at up to 1.5 million. In India prostitution, poorly regulated blood banks and re-used needles also threaten to hasten the spread of HIV.

WHY SHOULD WE CARE?

Given their appalling treatment of indigenous people, why should wealthy countries be concerned about HIV, particularly as it affects minorities in Asia? Reasons include:

- * The West has contributed to the spread of HIV in Asia by its demand for heroin and promotion of the sex industry in Bangkok during the Vietnam war.

- * Because carriers of HIV cannot be quarantined on return to the West, they represent an ongoing threat to the spread of HIV in countries such as Germany, the US and Australia.

- * Public health will ultimately fail if viewed as a national rather than an international concern.

- * The resources of developing countries are insufficient to address the burden of HIV infection, particularly as other diseases, such as tuberculosis and malaria remain far greater problems.

HIV/AIDS is a terrifying disease in the West because, as a virus, HIV has no cure. It is also a very expensive disease to treat: the many infections that Western AIDS sufferers get can be temporarily cured but they tend to get a series of such infections. Paradoxically, in Asia, where many diseases are effectively incurable due to poverty, HIV/AIDS is simply another fatal

BODHI BENEFIT CONCERT

TASHI DELEK TIBET

BODHI has been named sole beneficiary of Tashi Delek Tibet, held December 9, 1995 in Melbourne, Australia. All the bands are donating their services, as are the organiser and audio engineer.

BODHI will donate most of the funds to the SOGA School for New Arrivals in Dharamsala. Details in next newsletter.

CHILD LABOUR IN ASIA CONFERENCE

BODHI has facilitated the attendance of Stella Tamang, of Nepal, at an Australian conference on child labour in Asia, which includes such topics as the textile/carpet industry and prostitution in India, Cambodia, Thailand, The Philippines, Indonesia, Bangladesh and Nepal.



disease, not likely to be perceived as a major public health threat.

AIDS in Asia mainly affects nameless prostitutes and powerless tribal people who die quickly without much cost to the health system. If, however, as some predict, the spread of HIV into the general community approaches African levels, then the economic and public health burden for India, Nepal, Thailand and other parts of Asia will be impossible for the rest of Asia or the rest of the world to ignore, no matter how hard we try.

AIDS AND WOMEN

Shelley Anderson adds:

Many Asian women's groups are becoming increasingly concerned about AIDS. Many prostituted Nepali women are now HIV positive. One UN Development Program study on AIDS, conducted in three African and two Asian countries, found that 70% of the 3,000 women a day who become infected, and the 500 women who die daily from AIDS, are between the ages of 15 and 25.

Women's groups and health care providers in both these regions point out another frightening trend: prostitutes are becoming younger and younger. Researchers accredit this to an increase in poverty and customer demand. Clients believe that the younger the prostitute, the less the risk of contracting AIDS.

The female flesh traffic is big business all around the world. Because it is illegal, no one knows how much money is made. Estimates range from 9 to 100 billion US dollars per annum.

