

BODHI TIMES

Benevolent Organisation for Development, Health & Insight

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We aim sustainably to improve health, education and the environment in developing countries by providing a hook, not a fish. BODHI was founded in 1989 on the principle of skillful, compassionate action and is neither religious nor political. We have supporters and advisers from many faiths. We encourage your ideas and acts of kindness. Realising the interdependence of all beings is in our enlightened self-interest. Now more than ever, if we don't work together to reduce the world's much-discussed problems, then who will?

Two peoples united by discrimination

In 2005, BODHI began to support a school for Chakmas, a tribal people living in the north-eastern Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh who were displaced from East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) in the 1960s. Their original homeland is in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), in southern Bangladesh. There the Chakmas, together with other tribal peoples (collectively known as Jummas) face continual repression and land-grabbing by the far more populous Muslim Bengalis. The intrusions of new settlers are supported by the Bangladeshi police and army, who persistently ignore the human rights abuses.

BODHI supports the work of Parbatya Bouddha Mission (PBM) in the CHT. Founded in 1983, PBM is led by Ven. Sumanalankar, whom Colin met in Nagpur, India in late 2005. Ven. Sumanalankar is assisted by a group of socially engaged monks and lay people, including social workers, day labourers, educators and philanthropists.

PBM provides an orphanage, health center, school and vocational training (weaving, sewing and carpentry), as well as a place for moral education and meditation.

PBM cares for 209 children from various ethnic minority communities in the CHT. Some do not

have parents or are too poor to afford schooling. Students stay at PBM and attend classes at the residential school inside the PBM complex, where they receive free accommodation, food and healthcare services. 'The residential school also provides free educational facilities to local village students,' Ven. Sumanalankar writes.

BODHI supporters Padma and Swapna Chakma, who live in Canberra, Australia, visited PBM in December 2005. Padma writes: 'PBM is really a

valuable project for our Jumma people. Hundreds of orphans are getting shelter and an education. It is the best humanitarian project I have seen. I highly recommend this organization, which has a very good reputation, skills and integrity.'

BODHI's donation of A\$3000/US\$2130 will be used for school supplies, medical care for residential students and eight free medical camps at the locations in the CHT in which they are working.



Students at PBM Courtesy PBM

STOP PRESS

An atrocity occurred as this was going to press. New settlers ransacked a nearby orphanage, terrorizing its staff and students. Ven. Sumana Mahathero managed to escape. PBM requested permission to donate about A\$400/US\$330 to the affected orphanage. We agreed. See website for updates.

Below: Dapodi clinic attendees; right: boy in hostel, Ulhasnagar
Courtesy Karuna Trust



In 2005 Colin visited the Dapodi Clinic, in **Pune, India**. This serves the people of a nearby slum of 85,000 people. It also provides health outreach to nearby villagers. He was impressed by the doctor, Mrs. Kalpna Gadlingkar, who worked in the clinic for about a quarter of the salary could she could earn in private practice. We have donated A\$3000/US\$2130 to support this Clinic. Anemia is a major health problem, along with TB and HIV/AIDS. Currently, all pathology tests require a visit to the nearby hospital, which can result in a delay of many hours. In practice, such tests are rarely performed. To make this easier we are hoping to purchase and donate a portable hemoglobinometer, specifically designed for low cost and portable use in developing countries. This was developed by Dr Roy Rickman, ([www.http://www.diamedica.co.uk/products.htm](http://www.diamedica.co.uk/products.htm)) who (like Colin) is a graduate of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. Running costs for this instrument are low, and all the chemicals needed are locally available. Its cost is 660 pounds sterling. Your support makes a difference.

There is much else that can be done. We hope this is the start of a long and beneficial relationship.

Genocide through indifference

As I write I am reflecting on the sometimes quivering, emotional voice of Stephen Lewis, the U.N. envoy on HIV/AIDS in Africa (<http://stephenlewisfoundation.ca/>). His 2005 Massey Lectures, 'Race Against Time' are currently being broadcast on Australian radio (<http://www.abc.net.au/rn/bigidea/>). I highly recommend this broadcast, which uses unusually forceful and frank language.

While focusing on HIV/AIDS in Africa (not just a tragedy, but a form of genocide by neglect), Lewis also savages the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. These cop it for their role in introducing fees for basic health care and education in Africa, in the so-called 'Structural Adjustment Programs' (SAPs). SAPs, imposed in exchange for more credit, were especially notorious in the 1980s. True believers claimed that the introduction of 'free markets' would create winners from losers and lead to an economic boom. In most countries they failed dismally. It is little

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A rush for male circumcisions (probably partly effective against HIV) is underway in Swaziland
”

consolation that SAPs, strongly criticized at the time, are now largely discredited. In my darker moments I think their failure was intended. It is more likely that these programs had genuine and well-meaning supporters and that they were approved because they suited the powerful of the time, who then as now were largely contemptuous of the health of the poor.

THE HOLLOW MEN OF THE G8

Lewis is also strongly critical of the double standard of trade and aid policies practiced by the rich and powerful club who constitute the G8, none of whom have come close to meeting the target of government provided overseas aid of 0.7% of GNP. Of the G8 club, he is particularly scathing of the meanness and double standards of the US, Japan, Italy and his own country, Canada (whose Prime Minister Lester Pearson, had originally devised the 0.7% target.) Lewis shows how these countries repeatedly find ways to evade their promises. It is true that nearly all of us place personal well being before that of strangers, but how much money do we waste on trivia? (And don't draw me on the topic of military spending).

PHANTOM AID

Lewis draws attention to 'phantom aid,' citing the work of Action Aid (<http://www.actionaidusa.org/realaid.php>). According to their report, phantom aid constitutes up to two thirds of aid that is claimed to be delivered. Phantom aid does not target poverty relief and is not tied to the sale of goods and services from the donor country. Much aid is wasted on technical assistance, usually paid to highly priced consultants who fly in and fly out. A recent example of phantom aid from Australia is the payment by AusAid of A\$679,000 to Trevor Flugge for eight months' work in Iraq in 2003. Flugge and his company, the Australian Wheat Board, knowingly provided illegal kickbacks to Saddam Hussein's regime

(<http://www.reportage.uts.edu.au/stories/2006/special/flugge.htm>). At best, Flugge's work might be considered a form of export enhancement. It was surely not aid. Flugge's appointment was criticized by Aidwatch and Oxfam.

MORE ON THE DOUBLE STANDARD

Old enough to recall how the Uruguay Trade talks were supposed to provide a more level playing field for developing countries, Lewis is also deeply skeptical that the current Doha round of trade talks will achieve its stated goal of enabling poor countries to access markets in rich countries.

Speaking at the recent American Academy of Science meeting, Per Pinstrup Andersen, a distinguished expert on nutrition and development, observed that none of the 26 international conferences on poverty and hunger in the last 30 years have achieved their goals and targets. Few have come close. People have short memories. Pomp surrounds the pronouncement of targets, usually held in luxurious, well-fed environments, and little publicity is given to their non-attainment.

DEMOGRAPHY OVERLOOKED

Excellent as Lewis is, his analysis seems likely to overlook the causal contribution of demographic factors in the collapse of much of modern Africa. Devoted readers of this column (if there are any!) know that I am obsessed with the harmful economic effects of excessively rapid population growth. Of course, many countries in sub-Saharan Africa now have low or even negative population growth rates because of the ravages of HIV/AIDS and in some cases warfare. This sad fact does not negate the demographic argument. Instead, consider the current decline in growth rate (if not numbers) as the second part of a \cap -shaped curve, where a steep rise in population is followed by a crash. If this slowed growth is due to fewer births, then it would probably be economically and socially beneficial, unless overdone as in Russia and — if sustained too long — parts of Europe and one day even China. But the current decline of population growth in Africa is mostly from excessive deaths, many of them among people who should be highly productive. This worsens the problem.

Unless good governance can be introduced the cycle will repeat itself, a phenomenon technically known as 'irruptive.' While non-phantom foreign aid will not guarantee good governance, it will surely help.

A large question rarely asked. A large question remains which is rarely asked: who really wants to see the end of abject poverty? Hopefully you and I do, but the current global situation seems not all that different to the US in 1850 or the British Empire in 1750. Much modern affluence is underpinned by the poverty of the masses. Effectively, there exists a system of quasi-slavery; a global 'claste' system (see BODHI Times 14). We need a new William Wilberforce (whose campaign

led to the abolition of slavery in the British Empire in 1833) and a new John Woolman (a Quaker whose work preceded Wilberforce).

Fear of the other is likely to drive 'strategic demography' for the foreseeable future. There is growing evidence from basic neuroscience that humans are deeply wary of people who look and act differently. A rational way to respond to this fear of the other is to think and behave as part of a discrete group. It then follows that personal safety and advancement lie in constantly seeking to advantage that small group, rather than the bigger group we are all part of. We have evolved with this strategy, but we can expand the group with which we identify.

EURABIA AND TERRORISM

The historian Niall Ferguson has criticized multiculturalism — the idea that peoples of different ethnicity, religion, education and socioeconomic circumstances can be fused into a single cohesive mass — as naive optimism. He warns that the higher birth rate among the Muslim countries that flank the south and east of Europe bodes ill for the contrastingly 'senescent' European Union. He has used (perhaps coined) 'Eurabia' to describe 'the subtle Muslim colonization of Europe's cities — most striking in places like Marseille, France, where North Africans populate whole suburbs.' Let's hope Ferguson is wrong. His vision implies a bleak future. Ferguson will be proven wrong if enough people can be convinced that a fairer, more inclusive world is in their own interest. We have far to go, but the cost is high if we fail.

The Dalai Lama has recently linked global terrorism with inequality, stating: 'This new terrorism has been brewing for many years. Much of it is caused by jealousy and frustration at the West because it looks so highly developed and successful on television. Leaders in the East use religion to counter that, to bind these countries together.'

His Holiness also warned of the futility of a harsh crackdown on terrorists: 'The problem will escalate [if bin Laden is assassinated by the West] ... If there is one bin Laden killed today, soon there will be 10 bin Ladens.'

CRYING WOLF?

I conclude by responding to the implicit criticism of work similar to ours by Prof. Furedi (author of *The Politics of Fear*). He argues that raising claims about the Cold War, terrorism and global warming are forms of sensationalist propaganda. Of course, activists and the press do exaggerate threats, sometimes at the cost of more important issues and risks. But the past century saw the emergence of Nazism, the Chinese famine, the Spanish flu, the epidemic of HIV/AIDS, and the Rwandan and other genocides — and that's just the beginning. Would Furedi really claim that people who foresaw and attempted to warn of these disasters warranted disrespect?

Full references on website.

I am now working for Deakin University in Melbourne (but living in Tasmania) as a Senior Research Fellow in Global Health. I am researching the viability of a new post-graduate course in global and international health. I remain linked to the National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health at the Australian National University in Canberra as a Visiting Fellow.

BODHI trains the trainer: Deafness in Nepal

BODHI supporter Dr. Sonal Singh [an Associate Professor in North Carolina originally from Darjeeling, India, who retains strong Nepali connections] writes: 'Nepal has thousands of speech and hearing impaired children. There are a few satellite schools for the deaf throughout the country, but none are as well equipped as the school for speech and hearing-impaired children in Naxal, Kathmandu. This school has 300 students from all over the country. It is the only such school which provides education up to 10th grade, and it runs a residential program for children who mostly live in privately run hostels. Most of the children are from rural villages, and most drop out as they are unable to afford the cost of education and urban lodging ... We will try to ensure that they complete at least the elementary level education up to class 10 [the highest level of education possible for hearing impaired children in Nepal] and that they receive adequate health training as a part of the curriculum with the intention that they adapt and share this with their communities when they go back home.'

'The objective at present is to aim at increasing the literacy level and health awareness among speech and hearing impaired children in Nepal. The results of this project can be used as a pilot for other projects. Subsequently we plan to survey the rural and mountainous regions of the country to establish the causes and prevalence of deafness. We will involve the children graduating from the program and their community of other hearing impaired children in this phase of the project.'

'The project started with one student (see below) in April 2006. It will be effective because there is a desire amongst the people to learn and know how to read and write. I will do annual evaluations to ensure that the project is running smoothly.'

We will provide US\$600 a year to this train-the-trainer project for Years 1 & 2 in the names of Dr. Ken McConnell and Simon Brown (see page 4). See website for project proposal and budget.



Sangeeta Basnet (left) and schoolchildren (above)
Courtesy School for the Deaf

'Sangeeta Basnet is a 12-year-old girl with complete deafness from a family in the village of Dolkha, Charikot in the mountains of Nepal. Charikot is a hill town about 90 miles east from Kathmandu in the direction of Mount Everest. She became deaf at the age of 5 years, secondary to untreated typhoid fever. She is otherwise in good health. She is the youngest of 10 siblings with seven sisters and 2 brothers. Sangeeta is currently in Kathmandu with her father, who works as a peon. She started school late, at the age of 9 years due to extreme poverty. She is currently in class 3 at the School for the Deaf in Kathmandu. In her class of 25, Sangeeta is among the top 5-10 students.'

We're updating our website to include detailed information and photos from all of our current projects.

Gift idea

Susan is donating part of the sales profits to BODHI (and all those generated from website sales) of her cookbook, *Midlands Morsels, Favourite Recipes from the Heart of Tasmania (Mostly)*. By devoting a page in the cookbook to BODHI, she hopes to reach new audiences not otherwise accessible. Please email BODHI to purchase this unique gift (\$15 + postage). Thanks to all of you who have placed orders.

BODHI advisor Shelley Anderson, recently co-nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize, will be using a recipe from *Midlands Morsels* in an upcoming IFOR cookbook for peace. Please visit IFOR's website (www.ifor.org/WPP) to order a copy.

Thank you

Dr. Warren Bell, British Columbia, Canada
Tom & Merrily Bliss, California, USA
Dr. Anna Brooks, Tasmania, Australia
Prof. Ken & Sue Cassman, Nebraska, USA
A/Prof. Bill & Wendy Castleden, WA, Australia
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Prof. Mark & Dian Elvin, NSW, Australia
Prof. John Hamilton, NSW, Australia
Judith Lipton, California, USA
Dr. Gerry & Sally McGushin, Tasmania, Australia
Jeffrey Whitman, California, USA

Congratulations to **Dr. Sue Wareham** for receiving the Order of Australia Medal. Let's hope this justly deserved award gives her even more influence in her work for peace in this trouble-filled world ... Thanks to **Buddha House, Adelaide** for purchasing 10 posters of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in Central Park. (We still have some available) ... Special thanks to **John Bell**, Tasmania, Australia, whose unwavering generosity and enthusiasm has enabled us to keep the Revolving Sheep Bank in Tibet afloat.

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

Australia 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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Passings

In recent months BODHI has lost two treasured friends. Dr. Ken McConnell, a colleague of Colin's from medical school (Newcastle, NSW), died on January 21 in a climbing accident on Mt. Wellington, Tasmania. Ken recommended BODHI to the members of four expeditions he led to Nepal and Tibet, between 1994 and 2000. Some of our most loyal supporters accompanied Ken on these trips, particularly that of 1994 to Lhakpa Ri in Tibet. Ken had recently qualified as a psychiatrist.

Ken had great compassion for, and was extremely generous to the Nepali community, who did so much to make his expeditions successful. Ongdi Sherpa, who was particularly close to Ken and his partner Anna, writes from Nepal: 'I'm really proud of him. He was a really kindly person ... All the staff say so sorry to hear the bad news. ... Life has no guarantee.'

Simon Brown, a local friend with whom we shared endless afternoon teas (at which he drank strong black coffee with four sugars), died after years of uncomplaining physical suffering. He supported our projects staunchly and attended the last three annual general meetings of BODHI Australia.

The families of Ken and Simon each nominated BODHI as the charity of choice in lieu of flowers at their funerals. See page 3 for details.

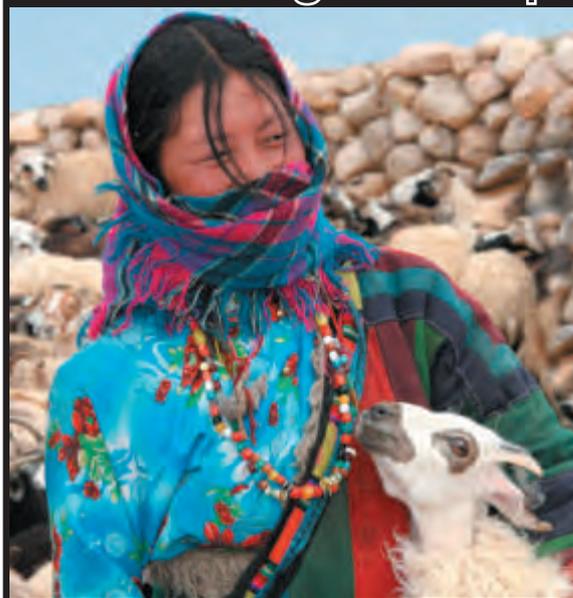


We miss you both



Dr. Ken McConnell (above left courtesy Anna Brooks) and left, silhouetted against Mt. Everest (courtesy Lesley Hall). Simon Brown as a schoolboy in Tasmania (above right courtesy the Brown family)

Revolving Sheep Bank expands



Copyright M. Goldstein

Recipient and sheep

Thanks to the **Revolving Sheep Bank's** outstanding success, together with Susan's growing grant-writing expertise, the U.S.-based Bridge Fund has granted US\$4500 for Year 1 of an expansion of the RSB into an adjacent nomad area in Tibet. We now need to fundraise for the remaining four years, and hope to continue gathering momentum now that the 5-year trial in Phala has been completed.

Prof. Goldstein writes, 'In our interviews with the nomads [in August, 2005], everyone was extremely pleased and grateful for this program, whether or not they received a loan. They all felt that this program is the ideal way to help alleviate poverty for nomad households, because in contrast to a one-time gift of money or animals, it allows the household to develop a stable new resource base that they can maintain in future years. Both of the first two recipients said that they never believed they would be able to achieve the level of security and well being that they now have.'

'Similarly, both the local nomad officials in the trial communities, and the government officials at the next administrative level, the xiang, were also extremely positive about the impact of this program and requested that the program be continued by expanding it to other communities under their xiang. In fact, when we attended the annual Horse Racing festival in this area, many nomads from other communities under the xiang came and asked if we could start this program in their community, promising that they will manage the resources well and not let them be wasted.'

To see Prof. Goldstein's report and photos, please visit our website

Dh. Lokamitra new adviser

We are delighted to welcome Dhammachari Lokamitra of Pune, India, to our advisory board. He has worked tirelessly among the Dalit community since the 1970s. Dh. Lokamitra submitted the following.



Photo courtesy Lokamitra

Lokamitra was born Jeremy Goody in London in 1947. He was ordained into the Western Buddhist Order (WBO) in January 1974 as a Dhammachari, and given the name Lokamitra. In 1975 he became Chairman of the North London Buddhist Centre of the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order (FWBO). In 1977 he visited India, stopping in Nagpur to meet some of Sangharakshita's former disciples. By chance he arrived on the 21st anniversary of Dr. Ambedkar's momentous conversion to Buddhism in Nagpur in 1956 along with 500,000 followers who were previously designated as Untouchables in the Hindu caste system. This day changed his life. Encouraged by Sangharakshita, he decided to remain in India. For the first twenty years he helped initiate and guide the activities of Trailokya Baudhya Mahasangha, Sahayaka Gana (TBMSG), the Indian name for FWBO, and its social wing Bahujan Hitay especially amongst the followers of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. In 1984 he married a local Buddhist and they have two children.

TBMSG now has over twenty Dharma centres, as well as four retreat centres, while Bahujan Hitay runs over 25 hostels for children who otherwise would not easily get an education, as well as about 80 community health and education projects in the slums of Bombay, Nagpur, Pune and other towns.

In recent years Lokamitra has concentrated on the following projects:

1. Establishing the Nagarjuna Institute in Nagpur to train Buddhists from different parts of India in basic Buddhist teachings and practices;
2. Developing the Jambudvipa Trust in Pune. This trains and advises social workers and activists from socially deprived communities in different parts of India, and is especially concerned with responding to the needs of such communities in times of calamities. Jambudvipa made make a considerable contribution to relief following the Gujarat Earthquake and the Tsunami in South India; and
3. Creating understanding and bridges between Buddhist followers of Dr. Ambedkar and other Buddhists in India and abroad. Please visit www.jambudvipa.org for information about this inspiring work.