



# Dharmacharini Nagasuri

BODHI's Pune, India Liaison

*Dharmacharini Nagasuri (civil name: Dr Caroline Ralston), a member of the Western Buddhist Order was BODHI's as our liaison with projects in Pune, India in 2008. She has academic qualifications in history and women's studies, with women and development issues predominating. Dharmacharini Nagasuri has done four 6-month visits to India, during which she works with Buddhist women from the most deprived communities and helps them develop small projects, offers team building workshops, project proposal and report writing skills, and women's empowerment generally which includes teaching both meditation and Dharma.*



Nagasuri (seated) with Dr Manda Mune (standing) and women at Burmasheel, 2008.

Photos courtesy Dr Manda Mune

## Snapshot of visit to Balsangopan Kendra Day Care Centre

December, 2008

Submitted by Dh Nagasuri



The project room like all others in the slum area is a single room made of corrugated tin with concrete floor, no electricity, one doorway and small window to let in light. Along the wall which includes both the doorway and the window was a single stone bench on which there is a 2 burner gas cooker, pots, pans, glasses etc. The lunch was cooking there when we arrived about 12 noon. About 30 children from a few months to 5 years old were in a room approximately 10 feet by 12 feet. There were 3-4 very young mothers helping and 2 older sisters with younger siblings.

The teacher and the supervisor were there. There had been a death in the cook's family and she had gone to her village for 2-3 days. The food was cooked by others. There are communal toilets nearby and the floor was clean. While we were there the children each had a hard cooked egg. Most can now feed themselves but the teacher, supervisor, young mothers and older sisters helped feed little ones who still are unable to feed themselves.

The children's general cleanliness was impressive, as was the fact that not one of them had a runny nose, cough or cold — this in the middle of winter in any Indian environment is amazing. When they started the programme the children came unwashed, with dirty hair and many of them perilously thin. It was thought that one or two of them would not survive. Now all are clean, their hair is washed, their clothes are clean and they look active and 'with it', even if small for their ages. Some are still very thin on western standards.