

Mobile Medical Clinics and Orphanage School, CHT, Bangladesh



Chittagong Hill Tracts, Google Maps

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 donations are used for school supplies, medical care for residential students and eight free medical camps in remote areas of the CHT.

