



There have been big changes with the two programs we're involved with in Bodhgaya. The first is that after about nine years of applications and trying, the Prajna Vihar School has finally received FCRA approval. FCRA is the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act and having approval means that funds can go directly to the school from outside India, rather than by some more circuitous route. The approval did come with a catch though and one we didn't expect. The catch is that the approval applies to funds coming from overseas for buying land and building costs for the newer and bigger school. It doesn't apply to funds for running costs. So we're now working on getting the FCRA approval for running costs. We have been accumulating funds for the land and building costs and we expect to be sending over \$30,000 in the next few months.

The other big change has to do with Sister Jessie's work, the regional literacy and support program that provides literacy and broader education programs in villages, healthcare and economic self-sufficiency initiatives. We have known for many years that this program was very much held together and directed through Sister Jessie's efforts and it was dependent on her continued engagement. As it has turned out, there has been a change in direction and this is detailed in Kim Lewis' article on the right. Apart from the emphasis on self-sufficiency mentioned in the article, factors that may also have come into play are Sister Jessie wish to spend more time in retreat and possibly the increase in regulations related to funds for overseas. As a result of these things she has been less than enthusiastic about us continuing to raise funds for her. We have supported her work for seventeen years and are glad to have been able to have made a difference in the more remote communities. Sister Jessie intends to spend more time in Kerala (in south India) doing self retreats but will also be at her ashram in Dobhi overseeing the village schools. We won't be collecting funds for her for the time being but we will be monitoring the situation and see how things develop.

A number of people have asked over the years about whether donations to be BDA are tax deductible. We don't have tax deductibility status and it's not so easy to get for organisations such as ours. We do have an arrangement though related to tax deductibility with an organisation call BODHI for bigger donations (\$300 or over). If you would like to find out about this, please contact us.

To all of you that have supported our projects this last year or earlier: many many thanks.

Victor von der Heyde

Massihi Gyanjyoti Project (Campaign for Awakening Wisdom)

Sister Jessie's project to assist the poor of Bihar to a better way has been changing lives, families and their villages since 1991. Without exception, all who have seen her work in the far flung and forgotten villages of Bihar have been inspired by what they see, and believe that very few others could have achieved what Sr Jessie has been able to bring together.

Many of you would have read the accounts that have appeared in the pages of this newsletter and elsewhere over the years, and it is easy to understand how she has inspired us to action. Well, Sr Jessie has asked us to support the next step in her project of awakening wisdom.

She has now asked the communities, where she has worked so tirelessly, to take charge of their own destiny. To see themselves as individuals and communities capable and resourced to carry on the constructive changes that have occurred so far.



Sister Jessie (below) in her ashram

The ashram, homeopathic clinic, retreat centre and school will all be run by local villagers. The structure will act as a hub for the village teachers and visiting volunteers to continue building the social networks necessary to fulfil the projects aims. Sr Jessy will stay primarily in the ashram and be available for guidance, but her outbound work will slowly but surely decrease. Sr Jessy no longer wants the BDA to request donations of money.

The poor of Bihar need skills and practical advice. She encourages anyone who can give of their talents, and are moved to do so, to please make contact. Take a program or a task to share that will enrich the villagers and assist them to stand by themselves.

The BDA will forward any funds it has received to the Massihi Gyanjyoti Project. Please email Sr Jessy if you still wish to give directly. Her email address and details on her work are at www.gyanjyotiashram.org

Kim Lewis



PV students in the maroon school colours

Electronic Copy of Newsletter

A pdf version of this newsletter is available for sending to others. Just let us know at the email address below and we'll send you a copy.

Prajna Vihar School Expenditure 2008

	Rupees	Australian Dollars
Books, periodicals and educational expenses	71,161	1,902
Salaries and bonuses *	684,810	18,310
Phone	6,629	177
Water	682	18
Electricity	3,250	86
Stationary and functions	45,156	1,207
Travel and study tour	30,015	802
Milk, snacks, fuel	22,991	614
Building expenses and furniture	148,680	3,975
Audit and legal fees	28,000	772
Total	1,041,374	27,884

*This covers the fifteen teaching and two non-teaching staff (see page for details)

PV School tour

Victor von der Heyde

Each year the school tries to take some classes on a tour to significant places outside Bodhgaya and for many students it's the first time they have been outside Bodhgaya. In the back of many teachers' minds are the words of India's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, who said "Education without travelling is not perfect". The teachers try to provide the best education they can.

The most recent tour was to the historical Buddhist sites of Rajgir and Nalanda which can be reached in a day trip from Bodhgaya. The history of these sites goes back a long way: Rajgir was the capital of the Kingdom of Magadha in the Buddha's time 2500 years ago and the Buddha stayed

there at different periods and Nalanda was the site of one of the great monastic universities.

These days Rajgir has a chairlift going to Vulture's Peak where the Buddha lived for a period and gave an important discourse. There's a new Japanese stupa which has been built there. Most of the students had never seen a chairlift, let alone ride on one. In the words of the students:

When I saw the rope way I was thrilled. Our principal Sr. Shobha had arranged for the tickets. One by one sat on a chair which took us to Shanti Stupa which was on the hill. Oh! What a good feeling I had just to hang between earth and sky. I thought I was in an aeroplane. Down in the valley were trees and cattle. People and everything looked very small. The atmosphere in and around the stupa was peaceful. One monk was chanting. We took our offerings and performed a puja.

Mr Rajesh, our history teacher, was with us and he explained about stupa and the history of the place. We then went to Nalanda and heard about what had



Ruins at Nalanda

happened there. It was established in the 12th century A.D. when it was destroyed by the invader Bakhtiar Khilji. Hung Tsang, the Chinese traveller studied here in the 7th century A.D. He was one of many from East and Southeast Asia who came here to study there. I was very proud to know that my Bihar State had such a rich history in education.

Teaching Staff

Sr. Shobha	English, Sanskrit	Principle
Sr. Rashmi	English, G.K., Social Science	V. Principle, Class teacher UKG
Mrs Sumitra	Hindi, G.K., Moral Science	Ass. teacher
Mrs Manju	Maths, Moral Science, Games	Ass. teacher
Mrs Rashida	Geography, English, Maths	Class teacher III
Mr. Wajid	Maths, Physics, Chemistry	Class teacher VIII
Mrs Neelam	Biology, Hindi, Maths	Class teacher VI
Mr. Animma	Hindi, Sanskrit	Class teacher VII
Mrs Sapna	English, Civics	Class teacher II
Mr. Rajkumar	Maths, Science, Physics	Class teacher X
Mr. Mansoor	English, History, Computer	Class teacher IV
Mr. Pramod	Hindi, Sanskrit	Class teacher IX
Mr. Ajay	Maths, Physics, Chemistry	Class teacher V
Mr. Rajesh	History, Maths, Moral science, Social Science.	Class teacher I
Miss Preeti	Hindi, Moral science, Computer	Class teacher LKG

Non Teaching Staff

Mrs. Draupatdi	Cleaning
Mr. Basant	Night watch, in charge of bell (rings the bell)



PV Students in playground

New admissions for 2009

Class	Number	Age range	Religion
LkG	50	05	Hindu, Harijan, Muslim
UKG	07	06-07	Harijans
I	06	07	Haijans, Hindus, Muslim
II	02	08	B. C. Hindu
III	02	9	Hindu, Christian
IV	06	10	Hindu, Muslim
V	02	11	H.C.Hindu
VI	02	12	Harijan
VII	02	13	B.C. Hindu
VIII	01	14	H.C. Hindu
IX	07	15	H.C.Hindu,
X	02	15-16	Muslim, Harijan
Total	89		

The Total Number of the students in the school for 2009 is 584.

Note: This classification of religion and caste is the one used by the school with the terms used by the school and the local educational authority. H.C stands for Higher Caste, B.C stands for Backward Caste, which is still higher than Harijan (Low Caste). They're all Hindus. Sometimes the caste is not specified.



Donation Form

Please note that you can transfer funds directly to our bank account:

Bank: Bank of Queensland

Branch Cannon Hill

Account name: Bodhgaya Development Association Inc.

BSB: 124-001

Account Number: 10142193

If you do transfer funds directly, please let us know who you are and how we can contact you.

Cheques can be made out to "Bodhgaya Development Association Inc" and sent to

147 Richmond Road Morningside Qld 4170

Name:

Address:

Email:

Phone:

Amount:



Assembly at the PV School

BDA Finance Report 2008 - 9

Once again a reminder that our financial year runs from 1 Mar-08 to 28 Feb-09.

Donations this year were \$15,938.50 which, added to Interest Income, gives a total of \$22,178.96. Points of interest this year are:

Despite the Global financial crisis, just under 50% of your donations were received after the initial impact. Hopefully, the level of donations will be able to continue .. but blessedly .. from previous high year incomes we have funds in reserve. 6 new donors joined us. 26 recurrent donors continued support.

All donations are a generous act and a blessing. To achieve the funds from a relatively small group shows the extent of some of the bigger donations received. We make mention of the larger ones mainly to keep you informed of the source of funds. 7 donations were over \$500 (4 being \$1000 and more and 1 in total exceeded \$3,000). Thank you for your continued support for the children and projects in Bodhgaya.

Running costs of \$464.91 (included shortfall from previous year) plus Audit fees of \$500 have been reimbursed by Committee Members. Also, other sundries .. such as postage, newsletter costs .. not entered in the Accounts have been paid directly by Committee members. We give thanks to our Auditing Firm for keeping their fee at less than 50% of the chargeable rate.

Funds to hand this financial year

• Cloudroom - by donation for room use & Meditation Nights	\$ 315.00
• Dharma Teaching services by 2 committee members	\$ 771.00
• Dharma Teaching services .. others	\$ 450.00
• Direct Credit deposits to Bank A/c	\$2,695.00
• General	\$6,620.00
• Newsletter response	\$3,685.00
• Sangha communities/groups	\$1,402.50
• Interest earned	\$7,240.46

Donations were specified as ...

Pragya Vihar School	\$ 2,797.00
Sister Jessy	\$ 1,995.00
Interest .. Discretionary	\$ 7,240.46
Discretionary	\$11,146.50

Again, the Pragya Vihar School yearly commitment remains in Australia. \$4,500 was allocated to go to Sister Jessy but change to the banking system has delayed the transfer to India. Once we have satisfied the banking requisities these funds will be sent.

Once again ... Thank you all
Pamela Grayson
Treasurer