



Rokpa Canada

ANNUAL REPORT 2004

October 2004

Letter from the President, Akong Rinpoche

Our work is to respond to requests for help, requests for education, food, medical care, training for work, strengthening of cultures and the preservation of environments. The impact that this involvement is having, continues to grow and evolve. There was a slight decrease in the number of projects compared to 2002 though our direct spending has increased by 2.6%.

In Tibetan areas of China, the projects we support have their difficulties at times, but are generally going well. Over the years the strength of our friendships with project partners has increased, making our support much more successful as we work together to achieve our aims. My advice and encouragement to foster the Tibetan culture and language in all the project areas is often responded to.

The situations in Zimbabwe and South Africa have been difficult. In Zimbabwe the development of the projects has been slowed up by the acute economic and political difficulties. In South Africa, local funding has been reduced and the Johannesburg Soup Kitchen has been

struggling to survive. This means that the support given by our international branches is even more important.

I am glad to see the progress of the new children's Home in Nepal. The building should be complete in 2005 and we shall be able to offer a loving home to more street children and elderly people. The stability of owning the property as opposed to renting, is very welcome too. Although the political situation continues to be unstable there, the projects are going well and of great benefit to many people.

As well as working overseas it is also important to help those in need in our own countries. There already are projects in some cities but I hope there can be more of these in the future, where there is a need.

I thank all of you who have contributed in any way to the work we are doing in Asia, Africa and elsewhere. With your support we can continue to make a big difference to peoples' lives. In particular, thousands of children will be given opportunities to become active in their own communities.

Message from the Board of Directors

In the Tibetan Homeland where the majority of the people are farmers and nomads, poverty and difficulty in accessing healthcare and education affects many rural Tibetans. Too many rural Tibetan parents die from treatable conditions, leaving children destitute or orphaned. The emphasis of Rokpa's work in the Tibetan Homeland is on education for the poorest children. Since the first school was supported in 1990, the number of education projects has grown steadily. Many children have now completed six years of primary education and are at different stages of middle school.

The Rokpa funded schools initially focused upon providing an academic education but changes in the local economy and job market made it necessary to broaden the curriculum to include vocational training. Quite a number of Rokpa supported children are choosing to graduate and find a job in the practical skill or craft they learned at lower middle school.

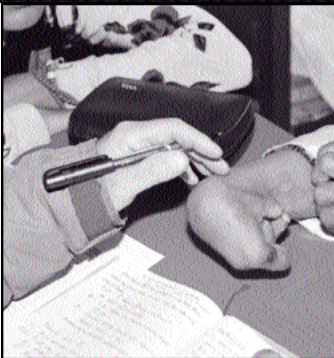
However, the huge contrast between the children's previous life styles and the opportunities that Rokpa has

opened up for them means that a very high proportion of these children are highly motivated academically and wish to continue their studies into higher middle school and possibly university. It is now Rokpa's intention to provide children from the poorest backgrounds with the possibility of an education from primary right through to university. This means that the progress of individual students is taken into account rather than the emphasis being on a particular school. Rokpa wishes to help these students to achieve the highest possible qualifications not just to improve their own individual lives, but because, through education, they will then be better able to help their communities.

Many are very committed to doing so and over 100 students are training as doctors. As doctors with the highest qualifications in Tibetan medicine, they will be able to guard this precious heritage, train others and make it available to a much wider public.

Rokpa is also deeply concerned with the language and culture of Tibet and continues to support the teaching of

(continued on back page)



Photos: Nick Adair

Rokpa Canada's Major Projects

Sichuan Tibetan College in Dartsedo

The aim of the Dartsedo project is the training of Tibetan students for the preservation and continuation of traditional Tibetan arts including tankha painting and the development of employable skills. These 47 students, of which 13 are girls, are from poor families with many children or from a broken home. They have been educated in Tibetan traditional arts at the Sichuan Tibetan College in Dartsedo since September 2003. Some students in this class are from Chamdo (Tibet Autonomous Region), some from Kanze (Sichuan) and the rest are from Derong (Sichuan).

Initially their main subject was Art. They also study Chinese, English and Tibetan. They will all study for 2 more years. This year some of these students made a request to change to secretarial studies and 19 of them have now done so. These students will also learn how to mend solar heating systems since these are used a great deal in Derong County. After graduation they will go back to Derong, which is large town, and will get jobs there as artists, government secretaries and repairers of solar heating systems.

The students are studying traditional Tibetan arts such as tankha painting and drawing, and poetry. In their first year of art studies they were taught drawing and then colour was introduced in the second year. They will graduate in 2006.

A unique aspect of the education of these classes is that they are taught in Tibetan. Almost all of the schools in Tibet use Chinese as the only language of instruction. While travelling in this region in 2003, three of the directors of Rokpa Canada met Tibetan doctors who could speak Tibetan but were unable to read or write Tibetan because they only studied the Chinese language. Rokpa schools encourage the study and use of Tibetan language. If Tibetan language is not supported there is a real danger that it may disappear in two or three generations.

During the 2003 Rokpa trip, three of the board members were able to meet the students, the school's headmaster and some of the teachers. The high quality of art work we saw was astonishing considering that they have only just started their studies. The school was also visited by Dr. Akong Tulku Rinpoche this fall.



Photo: Nick Adair

Yushu Orphanage Students At Hainan College of Medical Hygiene

On Saturday 18 October 2003 the 47 students left Yushu to take another step in their education to become Tibetan doctors. Since the outset of their programme in Yushu, government policy had changed and they could no longer obtain work as medical practitioners without at least a further three or four years training. They arrived in Hainan, situated 145 kilometres south of Xining, which is the capital of Qinghai Province. Hainan is a large market town in the Amdo region of Tibet. It is a mixture of Tibetans, Chinese and Hue Muslims. It sits at just over 3,000 metres altitude and appears as a strange oasis of trees and buildings in the midst of miles and miles of barren, stony desert with mountains on two sides in the far distance.

The head teacher of the Yushu school, not only ran the school but constantly sought out the best for all the students and knows them all individually very well. He had personally visited Tibetan Medicine programmes in Lhasa, Xining, Hainan, Gansu Province and Sichuan



Photo: Nick Adair

Province seeking the best options for the students. Hainan appeared to provide the best facilities and to give the best academic standards at the diploma level. (The qualification is called Dadron and is on the same level as a teacher training qualification. It qualifies doctors to work in village clinics. The full medical qualification will take a further two years, which some of the students may be able to pursue). Hainan was also the nearest university town to home for the students and also the most cost-effective choice. While Xining had cheaper food, the travel costs were correspondingly higher. There are hundreds of square miles on the Tibetan plateau where there are, as yet, no schools at all, and thousands of square miles where there are no universities. There is no state support for higher education in China, except for the most exceptional students and these are mostly at graduate level.

There are some significant improvements in the living conditions over the students' previous experiences. These included electric radiators in the classrooms and dormitories, higher standards of food quality, availability of television and new bedding. On the down side, they have to share 8 - 10 to a room, which is fairly standard in China. Previously there were only four to a room, although it was not at all evident that the students minded this. The head teacher will also explore rooms for fewer students in the summer months.

The students began their studies on October 19th, 2003. All are enthusiastic about the programme and especially the Tibetan Medical facilities. They will follow a fairly traditional timetable, except they will have to study six days a week. The more traditional timetable is 5.5 days. In summary, the programme has an excellent start with great satisfaction and enthusiasm all around. As of September, 2004, they have completed their first year and will soon be starting second year classes.

Medical Clinic in Yushu

For the seventh year in a row Rokpa volunteers are providing free clinics to the poor in eastern Tibet. On September 1, 2004, four physicians, an occupational therapist and an optometrist traveled to Yushu, in eastern Tibet, to provide free health clinics to the poor. There is no medicare system in China, and the patients seen at the Rokpa clinic often have not had any medical care, in spite of serious illness, due to inability to pay. Rokpa Canada sends the only team of primary care providers from anywhere in the world to regularly provide such care in the Yushu area.

As always, all team members paid for their own travel and expenses. They lodged at and conducted clinics at the Rokpa sponsored Yushu College of Traditional Tibetan Medicine for Orphans, in rooms with no heat, no running water, and no indoor plumbing. All of the medical equipment and prescription drugs used in the clinic are donated and are provided free of charge to patients.



Photo: Nick Adair

The team of four doctors saw over 1,000 patients. The Optometrist saw over 500, and the Occupational Therapist provided mobility aids such as crutches, canes, splints, and wheelchairs to scores of patients.

This year, thanks to donations from Rokpa Canada and Rokpa U.K., two patients, whose medical needs could not be met by the Rokpa clinic, received surgical care at the local hospital, as follows:

Ms. S.S., a 47 year old woman, whose quality of life was poor, due to gross distention of her abdomen (ascites) due to multiple liver cysts, had surgery and medications to eliminate the cysts. The cost for the surgery and all medications was 10,000 yuan (approximately \$1,500 Canadian).

Mr. W., a 33 year old man, sole provider for his wife and four children, received surgery to properly align and set the multiple fractures of his leg bones suffered two months previously in a motor vehicle crash. Since that time, he has been bedridden, and would never have been able to walk again without this surgical intervention made possible by Rokpa donations. His surgery cost approximately 9,000 yuan.

Rokpa Canada 2003 Donations & Programme Spending

Revenue

Donations

Donations In Kind	\$10,632
Fund Raising Activity Donations	\$31,406
Matching Grant Donations	\$300
Sales of Donated Goods	\$312
Other Donations	\$1,000

Total Donations \$43,650

Interest Revenue \$40

TOTAL REVENUE \$43,690

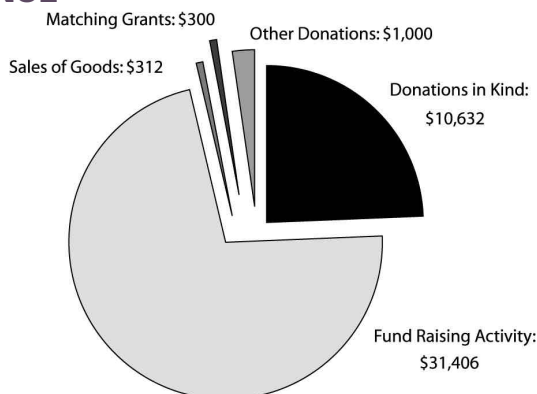
Funds Raising Donations by Project

Unrestricted Donations	\$15,806
Students at Hainan Medical College	\$12,655
Dartsedo Tibetan College	\$696
Trungpa Tulku Support	\$540
Surmang Kargen Reconstruction	\$525
Batsiranai Zimbabwe	\$500
Yushu Orphanage School	\$484
Nepal Soup Kitchen	\$100
Wilp Wlxo'oskwhl Nisga'a	\$100
TOTAL	\$31,406

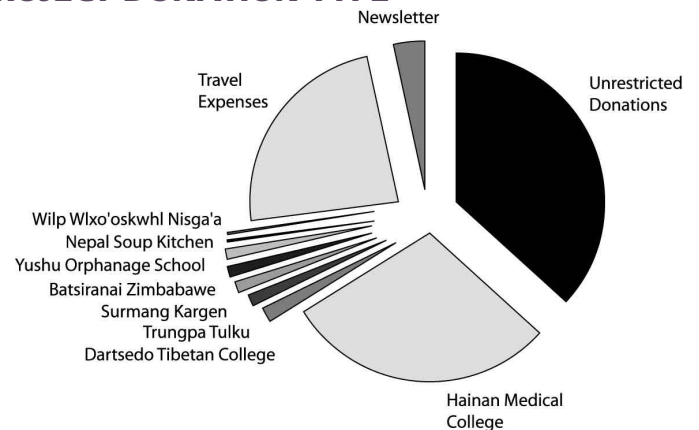
Donations in Kind & Sponsorship

Project Travel Expenses	\$10,167
Newsletter Sponsorship	\$1,465
TOTAL	\$11,632

REVENUE



PROJECT DONATION TYPE



(continued from cover page) Tibetans in their own language, encouraging local communities to learn and value it. The fundamental importance of Tibetan culture and language is frequently discussed with project partners and this emphasis is making a real difference.

Rokpa continues to start up and fund many health clinics, providing support for Tibetan medicine and salaries for doctors. This funding is vital as so many people are still too poor to pay for medical help. The free annual clinic run by doctors from the West in Yushu Town in southern Qinghai, attracts over 1,000 people during the four weeks it takes place.

The benefits of the environmental projects that Rokpa supports are now becoming apparent. The number and size of trees is making a visible difference and many areas are returning to their former beauty with an increase in flora and fauna. The support for rangers and tree planters continues, giving financial help to a large number of people.

The volunteer English teaching programme in Tibet continues to grow. Last year, three foreign volunteers worked at two Rokpa funded schools. This year we need teachers for four schools and the demand is already exceeding the availability of volunteers.

CURRENT PROJECTS

- Education 70
- Healthcare 11
- Environment 2
- Support (elderly) 3
- Printing 6
- Tibetan Culture 6
- Buildings 5

4,704 people are directly supported by Rokpa:

- Students 4,351
- Doctors 18
- Teachers 93
- Rangers 8
- Social support 132
- Staff 102

Photo: Nick Adair

Rokpa Canada 2004 Tibet Slide Show and Annual General Meeting

Date: Monday, December 6, 2004, 8:00pm

Location: Vancouver Shambhala Meditation Center (3275 Heather Street, Vancouver, BC)

Are you Interested in Volunteering?

Rokpa Canada has need for volunteers in a number of areas. Volunteers can help with our public events. Our newsletter and annual report needs people with writing or graphic layout skills as well as people simply to help with getting the mailing out. Physicians, dentists and other health workers are needed every year for the Rokpa Canada clinic in Yushu. English teachers are needed at the Yushu orphanage school and other locations in Tibet for periods starting from one month. If you have civil engineering or maternity nursing skills there are volunteer positions available in Tibet. If you want to help, just call or email us.



Volunteers & Corporate Sponsors

McNeil Consumer Healthcare, Novopharm, Pfizer Canada Inc., Pharmacia Canada, Solvay Pharma Inc., Universtiy of British Columbia Hospital Pharmacy

Splinting supplies (for making custom braces and supports) used by the Occupational Therapist were donated by the Occupational Therapy departments of GF Strong in Vancouver and Cowichan District Hospital in Duncan, and by Deborah Simpson. Mobility devices – crutches, canes and wheelchairs were donated by the Red Cross in Duncan and Victoria. Many thanks to those who contributed to make the work of the Occupational Therapist possible.

Rokpa Canada would also like to thank the following organizations for their support:



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HOW TO HELP

Name

Address City Province

Postal Code Phone E-mail

\$25 \$50 \$100 \$250 or \$.....

Please direct my donation as follows: To wherever the money is needed the most (undesignated donation)

To the following area or project (please specify): _____

Please note: Rokpa Canada uses all donations for project funding only. No donated funds are used for local administration costs or fundraising. To minimize costs, we encourage your donation via personal cheque or cash. However, you may donate using a credit card via our www.rokpa.ca web site link to www.CanadaHelps.org. Thank you.

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