



Tibet Nepal Zimbabwe South Africa

Tibetans earning a living ... others just beginning to learn.

ROKPA graduates, Lojah and Chojong Mindru are now successful Tibetan medical doctors at Mipham Hospital in Ser-shul. Both studied at the **Mipham Medical School in Ser-shul**, where they were trained



in the tradition of purely herbal medicine gathered together by the outstanding master, Mipham Rinpoche.

In 2005, all 55 students passed their finals, but the college closed as the existing agreement between the local government and ROKPA ended.

Many of the students were funded by a local benefactor to start clinics in their own villages, whilst 16 others took a further government exam. All these are now able to help others and support themselves as doctors in hospitals following the Tibetan medical tradition. All the graduates, led by Lojah and Chojong are dedicated to ensuring this precious medical lineage will continue to be taught. For this reason they have met with ROKPA fieldworkers and Akong Rinpoche, ROKPA's President, to ask for support to re-open the college.

The medicine works well: two years ago, one very sick patient was in a Chengdu hospital for a year, totally paralysed, and told that he would die. He was then treated with Tibetan medicine by Lojah and his teacher. Now he can walk and is completely cured. Many others have been cured and the medicine is also much cheaper than Chi-

nese or Western alternatives. **For those just beginning their education, Mani Kengo Primary** is typical of one of the 19 schools where we support orphans and the poorest children. The small town is in a very deprived, desolate area. ROKPA began supporting the school in 2006 and now sponsors 100 of the 276 students. Forty ROKPA students graduated to middle schools in 2006 and ten who had stud-



ied art, work as painters in the area. The aim of Central Government for universal education is now making a visible difference. However, though there are small schools in many villages, there are few Tibetan teachers.

By law all children between primary and lower middle school have some government support. For these nine years, the government provides facilities, pays teachers and gives a £9 a month subsidy for each child for their food. With food prices now much higher, children whose parents are destitute or dead would go hungry without our help.

Nyima, the deputy headmaster told us: *continued.*

"ROKPA's help means the students food is much better now and there's enough for every meal. Now we even have meat sometimes. Because of ROKPA's sponsorship, more people want to send their children to this school."

It costs between £25-£47 a month to support a student at a residential school.

In Nepal - farewells and a welcome.

In spite of the increased political stability, the poverty of the Nepali people is still as great as ever. The Soup Kitchen served the same number of meals as last year, but our costs have almost doubled since 2006.

At the **Children's Home** it has been a time of farewells. Of the older children, Kanchi is now studying in Australia and his brother Dilip in the US. Karma was accepted at a boarding school in Scotland. Kesang has married and given birth to a child. Norbu, Kesang's brother, is now living and working on the other side of Kathmandu and Urmila has also married and continues her training as a nurse.

In the last year, eight new street children were taken in, who with the help of their siblings have settled well and are happily in school.

The acceptance of children into the ROKPA home is often a traumatic experience for both parent and child, but they are helped through it by the overwhelming support of the children already living there.



Signing with a thumbprint in front of Radha, the new administrator and Ram manager of the Guest House.

In early Spring this year, a young mother, desperately ill and unable to look after her son any

longer, begged us to take him in. We had already made her wait a year to be sure that this is what she really wanted. A loving mother who desperately wants the best for her son Rajen, she was only giving him to us so he could have the life she could never give him. But when the time came, parting with him was very painful.

She finally brings herself to sign the contract between herself and ROKPA, with a thumbprint. He is now ROKPA's responsibility, so we can make decisions concerning his education and health.

Looking on is Ram who came to the Home at the age of 12 and **Radha**. **Ram** is now married, has a child and works in the Home as well as at



his job as manager of the Guest House. As Rajen's mother grieves, some of the other children are watching and already caring for and loving him, while Radha comforts the child's mother. Sunil has agreed to be responsible for Rajen and he shows him that, with humour and kindness. At last, in tears, Rajen is handed over and becomes our new ROKPA child - brother to 50 or more children. His fate is decided: he will NOT become a beggar, or live on the streets. Instead, he will be part of a big loving family and go to school and be able to help his poor mother in the future - like so many of our children now do.

Pictures are taken so that Rajen will later understand how hard it was for his mother to give him up.

After a long heart-rendering cry - it was just all too much: watching his mother leave without him, getting washed in a real shower and getting new clothes, Sunil, 13, makes him laugh again!

Of course his mother will come back every week to visit, and now she knows that Rajen is in good hands.

A positive attitude

The political situation in **Zimbabwe** is still in deadlock. In the rural areas, people are starving and in the towns, the economy is at a standstill. Many can hardly survive but as always in Zimbabwe, people share what they have. Schools are barely functioning, some with only one teacher, but education is not free and few can afford to go. Child headed households are very numerous and children have dropped out of school to look after their siblings.

ROKPA is managing to provide **food, medicines and training - particularly in HIV/AIDS prevention, care and support** - for nearly 2,000 people. This is transforming the lives of the participants and helping them live longer.



Loice Dupe

here gives a testament of the benefits.

"Soon after my husband developed TB we were advised to go for HIV tests. We were shocked when told we were both HIV+. One month later he died. Then I was in hospital for several months. When I came out, we had nothing to eat and I had no money to buy the medicine I needed. I was really desperate.

"Then a friend took me to ROKPA. It was like a miracle. They bought the medicine I needed and I got more food than I could carry.

Then I began the first HIV training programme, which encouraged us to talk about HIV and AIDS in our group and also the community. It was wonderful to be in a group where everyone was HIV positive, as I felt accepted. The ROKPA staff were amazing and just welcomed and hugged us without any fear; they were so warm and loving. We had wonderful nutritious food and our bus-fares were paid, so we could afford to go.

"The next course taught us how to deal with HIV - good nutrition, growing herbs and vegetables, yoga breathing, Tai Chi, reflexology

and massage. These things made such a difference to me. We started each training day with a "Morning Circle", where we could talk freely about how we were feeling and what was going on in our lives.

We were also trained to be trainers in the community and to set up support groups for people with HIV. This was difficult at first as there is a lot of stigma. Now people often call me when somebody is sick - just doing a little reflexology helps, and I can answer lots of questions about HIV and AIDS. It's amazing when we go to hospital to get our medicine, you can always tell who's from ROKPA just by their faces - they aren't stressed, and they have a positive attitude to life."

There is huge need in all areas: food, medicines, school fees and for the training programme.

In South Africa

At the small community of **Groot Marico**, ROKPA's aim is to improve the lives of the 200 people in the area, most of them HIV positive. Currently we provide training in building skills, supply funds for emergencies and pay local people to run a creche. **The creche costs £200 a month** and provides the children with care and nutritious food, often the only meal they will



Creche teacher and children with a volunteer.

receive. However, unless funding is found soon, it may have to close.

Unemployment in South Africa is 30% and refugees flock to large cities like **Johannesburg** to try and make a living. The ROKPA **soup kitchen** currently provides 300 hot meals once a week, but would help many more if funding could be found. **£90 pays for 300 meals.**

£900 will pay for the skills training of four people for a year which will give them a better chance of finding employment.

ROKPA

Registered Charity No.
in England & Wales (1059293)
and in Scotland (SC038628)

Tibet

Nepal

Zimbabwe

South Africa

A Special Thank You to all those of you who worked hard to raise funds for us:

A Canalside Activity Centre group of six young people took part in a sponsored trek to Nepal earlier this year.



Organised by Saffron Burley, they raised the **GRAND** total of £940.

Thanks to all of you!

Pupils and Staff at Stewarton Academy in Ayrshire need a very special mention. Through different events, such as a compassion week, over the years since 2001, they have raised over £6,000!! A very big **THANK YOU to very special staff and students.**

Doug Scott's lecture on Everest, K2 and Kanchenjunga was well-received by a near sell-out audience in the High School Theatre, Isle of Arran, in August. Organised by **Sam Thornely and Janie Kyle**, this fundraiser for Doug's charity CAN and ROKPA raised £1,300 for ROKPA through ticket sales and a raffle. Thank you to Doug, Sam, Janie and all the intrepid helpers.

David Monro and Neil Forsyth raised £500 through a sponsored hike along the West Highland Way. Thank you David and Neil.

Have fun raising funds for ROKPA while knowing you are doing something really useful. We can help you make it easier by supporting you with ideas and equipment.

What is Rokpa?

ROKPA means to help or serve in Tibetan. Founded in 1980 by Tibetan Doctor Akong Rinpoché, it is a non-political humanitarian aid organisation, helping people in need irrespective of their nationality, religion or cultural background.

ROKPA in Edinburgh

Our main priority is the hosting of Tibetan students in Edinburgh and elsewhere. Droni and Tenpa have entered B.Sc and HND courses at the Scottish Agricultural College, and Palden, an intensive English course at IALS. All three will also be attending practical horticulture courses at RBGE. These will help their training to develop projects to conserve Tibetan medicinal plants.

During the summer they returned home to work as doctors, translators, teach compost-making and obtain more information on the future plant nurseries they will help to develop.

We also hope to find more opportunities for Tibetans to gain higher education in other parts of the UK and other countries. It is possible that one more student will be hosted by ROKPA in Cardiff in January.

ROKPA in Edinburgh also continues to recruit volunteer English teachers to projects in Tibet.

The cost of supporting a student in the UK has risen enormously and funds are desperately needed.

ROKPA in London

We are having a Christmas Party! Friday, 4th December. 6.30-9 pm at the Community Hall, InSpire at St Peter's Ltd, Liverpool Grove, SE17 2HH. If you have email, make sure we have it and we'll keep you posted!

Your regular help

A big thank you to all our regular donors as this support makes life easier for us and those children and people we help. It means that we can plan for their future as well as respond to immediate needs.

DONATE by phone! 013873 73232 ext 230

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