

My name is Tenpa and I am 25 years old. I am a student of medicine and began my studies at The Yushu Tibetan Medical College for Orphans. I think you all know that school, because it was founded by Akong Rinpoche with your help.

My parents died when I was a child, but I was very lucky to be helped by Rokpa. Before I entered the Yushu School, I lived in my uncle's home, but our living conditions were very poor. They were so bad that nobody wanted to see me, even my relatives. I was so sad and wondered what bad things I had done in my last life. At that time I could not imagine how great my future life would become. I could only think about how to maintain my life for a few more years.

In 1993 I heard that Rokpa had founded an orphan school in the Yushu Prefecture, and that I could apply to join the school. I entered the school

and this made a big change to my life. Thanks to Rokpa I could get whatever I needed. In particular I could learn new languages without paying anything. After entering the school I could think of how to live my life and also how to help other poor people. In my school the students all had very sad stories, just like me. Thanks to your kindness I



have now grown up to be a young man and I have learnt so many things. I will graduate from college next year.

If it wasn't for Rokpa's help we wouldn't be so happy living our lives now and making plans for the future. Rokpa gave us a wonderful life and a brighter future. Rokpa is also the source of kindness and happiness in our lives. I think you are the greatest in the whole world! Often I think of how you give us so much and wonder how I can give the same back to you. For that I only have one idea and that is to help other poor people as much as I can.

I speak for all the orphans and poor people when I say that we will never forget your help and your great kindness, and that we thank you very much. Finally, we all hope that Rokpa will continue its good work and succeed in the years to come. Best Wishes, Tenga



Rokpa Canada

Fall 2005

ANNUAL REPORT

Highlights from Rokpa International AGM

This year, Rokpa International's 25th anniversary year, the International Annual General Meeting was held again in August in Scotland. The AGM had representatives from over 10 countries including Rokpa Canada director Jon Morris. Here are highlights from the meeting.

New support projects were introduced, underlining both President Akong Rinpoche's creativity and awareness, and the many opportunities to help Tibetans help themselves.

Some of the key projects for Tibet include:

- developing small, local Tibetan medicine factories to address the declining quality of Tibetan medicines in Tibet,
- pursuing higher education opportunities for Rokpa sponsored students,
- initiating alternative energy projects at Tibetan monasteries, utilizing innovative wind, solar and hydro technologies.

By educating Rokpa's most promising students in medicine, business management, legal aid, quality control and environmental engineering, Rokpa expects a major "spin-off" effect on both the Tibetan standard of living and self esteem. For those students with strong interpersonal and English language skills, there are good jobs in the tourism industry. Tibetan tour guides are in high

demand and have the added benefit of sustaining the Tibetan perspective that Western tourists prefer.

Rokpa International's support project "hot list" for Nepal, where the needs are more urban, includes Health Education, Women's Workshops, and Micro Financing. Rokpa's President and Founder, Dr. Akong Rinpoche, had some special objectives for Rokpa Canada. First, he encouraged a second visit to Canada for some of Rokpa's Tibetan students. The six students that visited Vancouver, Canada in 2002 have become extraordinary ambassadors for Rokpa in Tibet. Their verbal and written English is superior to most other students and their broadened perspective of the world has allowed them to become valuable mentors.

Second, Akong Rinpoche would like to see Rokpa Canada expand by starting new Canadian branches in provinces other than British Columbia and thereby increase the awareness of Rokpa's good work across Canada. The Rokpa Canada board would appreciate hearing from any bold social entrepreneurs interested in this initiative.

A major BBC TV documentary about Rokpa International was broadcast in prime time. Rokpa's Dance Troupe toured Europe to rave reviews, including a top 5 star rating at the Edinburgh Festival. Rokpa DVD's were professionally produced to capture the Dance Tour. "Learning the Tibetan Way" is a powerful video about Rokpa's educational aid programs.

The 2005 Rokpa International AGM provided Rokpa Canada with a fresh look at the progress made in last 25 years and a renewed enthusiasm for the future. The continued support from Canadian donors and volunteers is at an all time high. We are committed to helping those in need, help themselves. Thank you Rokpa members, volunteers and donors, for your kind support!





Rokpa Canada's Yushu Medical Clinic

For the seventh year, Rokpa Canada again sponsored a free medical clinic for the poor in Yushu in August 2005.

Yushu, called Jyekundo or Jyeku in Tibetan, is the capital of Yushu County and Prefecture. It is the largest town in the area, in the heart of the Kham region of Tibet. It is located just south of the Yangtze River, called Dza Chu in Tibetan. For centuries it has been an important cross road for traders, travellers and monks. To the east is Chengdu, to the north Xining, to the west the road to Lhasa and to the south Chamdo. Within easy travel are important monasteries of the Kagyu, Nyingma and Sakya lineages including Surmang, Dzongsar, Sechen, Domkhar and Dzogchen monasteries.

This year the team consisted of five physicians, one nurse, one physiotherapist and one occupational therapist. They were later joined by an optometrist. The clinic was once more located on the grounds of the Rokpa sponsored Yushu College of Tibetan Traditional Medicine for orphans. The translators were graduates of this school who are continuing to study traditional Tibetan medicine.

The clinic was a great success. Over 1000 patients were seen in the clinic. As well patients who required surgery in the Yushu hospital were assisted. More than 40,000 doses of acetaminophen for pain relief were given out. More than 70 canes, as well as crutches and walkers, and three wheelchairs, including two to teens who were bed bound as a result of prior infection with polio were distributed. The optometrist conducted a refraction clinic for persons with vision deficits, giving out free eyeglasses to each patient who required them.

As in previous years, the most common medical conditions treated were osteoarthritis, high blood pressure, and stomach problems. However the clinic also continues to be challenging. For a start, each day there are many more persons wishing to be seen than we can accommodate, and making the decision of who will get a "ticket" allowing entry to the clinic is always a very emotionally difficult task.

In addition, some of the patients the team sees can leave a lasting impression. One morning the first patient seen by a doctor was a teenager who has had spinal TB for some time and could not get treatment due to lack of funds. He was almost unconscious, responsive only to painful stimulus. There was nothing the clinic doctors could do for him. One doctor's first two patients of the day were desperately poor and depressed, women who live alone, one a beggar who cried all through the appointment. Patients suffering from both poverty and pain were constant themes for all of the doctors and therapists.

The doctors used the emergency medical funds collected by Rokpa Canada to assist patients in several ways. They paid for tests for a baby with a cardiac defect to determine the extent of her problem. Her heart was found to be greatly enlarged but corrective surgery was beyond our means, as the estimate for this one surgery was \$10,000.

Rokpa Canada paid for several other tests including x rays, ultrasound, and blood work, to assist with diagnosis of several clinic patients. Finally, they paid for tuberculosis medicines, including a full year of treatment for two patients who had been diagnosed with this easily treatable, and potentially fatal disease, but had been sent away from the hospital with no treatment, due to the fact that the patients did not have the money to pay for the medications. In addition, the team was able to pay for surgeries for two other patients; a woman with a massive parotid gland tumour, first seen last year, who had her tumour removed successfully; and a young girl with a massively enlarged liver from cysts who had them surgically removed in the hospital. In 2006 Rokpa Canada will again send a medical group to Yushu. As in all previous years all travel expenses are borne by the medical volunteers. You too can be part of the team! We are always looking for physicians, therapists, and others to help with the clinic work.

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



When people ask me, "How was your trip?" I'm never quite sure how to answer. The 4 weeks I spent in Yushu were filled with so many diverse experiences. It's hard to capture them all in spoken or written words. This being my first time to Asia and to a third world country, I had absolutely no idea what to expect. The countryside was stunning, the travel was arduous, the town was dirty, the "toilets" (and I use that word liberally), were challenging, the politics were complicated, the food was monotonous, yaks were prolific and the people were absolutely beautiful. Getting familiar with the culture and the Tibetan people was the highlight of the trip for me. Staying at the ROKPA school and working in the medical clinic provided me with opportunities to work closely with the Tibetan people opportunities that I never would have had if I were traveling around the country.

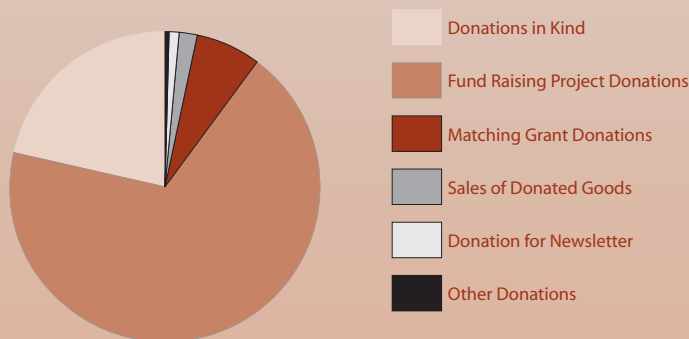
As an occupational therapist, part of what I do is assess people's living environments and enable them to function easier in their homes and communities, either through the use of equipment or simply by rearranging a person's home. I was fortunate to visit many homes and offer my assistance to people who have physical limitations, and were not able to come into the clinic. Every home I walked into, whether it was a small shack or a place with 4 solid walls and a ceiling that didn't leak, there was always tea and snacks served. This generosity amazed me, as most of these people have very little or nothing in the way of money or things. They were the most gracious, loving and spiritual culture that I have ever had the pleasure of becoming acquainted with. It was quite a humbling experience, and I count myself fortunate for having had the opportunity to become involved with ROKPA, and the Yushu Medical Clinic.



Donations & Programme Spending

2004 REVENUE (\$CDN)

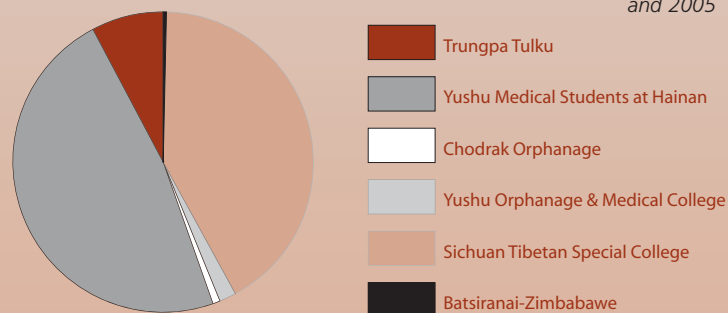
Donations In Kind	\$10,280
Fund Raising Activity Donations	\$32,798
Matching Grant Donations	\$3,250
Sales of Donated Goods	\$899
Donation for Newsletters	\$500
Other Donations	\$200
Total Revenue	\$47,927



2005 TRANSFERS TO ROKPA INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS (\$CDN)*

Sichuan Tibetan Special College	\$14,300
Chodrak Orphage	\$270
Yushu Medical Students at Hainan	\$16,354
Trungpa Tulku	\$2,660
Yushu Orphanage & Medical College	\$624
Batsiranai - Zimbabwe	\$120
Total Donation Transfers	\$34,328

* Includes Canadian donations raised in both 2004 and 2005



There can't be many better ways to refresh one's soul than to volunteer to be a part of the annual Yushu medical clinic! Everyday brings a new experience with its challenges and rewards. This year's trip was no exception and began with "The Bus Trip" from Xining to Yushu, a 22 hr ride, dodging large rocks on the road or flying bags in the bus. In quick time the large auditorium of the school was turned into our clinic which allowed

FROM TONY WILSON, YUSHU CLINIC PARTICIPANT

the whole team to be in one room, an opportunity that worked well as we shared clinical problems and solutions as they arose. As word about the clinic spread there was no shortage of patients lining up, presenting challenges with crowd control and effective triage of patients! We were most fortunate to have the same translators as last year and their enthusiasm, generosity and personal warmth was remarkable their companionship will be missed.

Another successful clinic, new friends and experiences, we leave exhausted but refreshed in spirit. Sign up NOW!

I had not expected to go to Yushu this year. The summer was going well. Work had slowed down at the University clinic with students having gone home for the summer. I was doing laps outside in the sun at Kitsilano pool. When someone could not go on the trip, I became a late addition.

We stayed at a school for orphans and the younger kids seemed predisposed to cuts on their fingers. Band Aids were always in demand I learned to keep a supply in my pocket to avoid being met with potential disappointed faces. I was fortunate to bring a battery operated lantern, as it turned out my room would have no electricity. I purchased local batteries when mine ran out. The local batteries lasted about 15 minutes before the lantern started to fade. I wouldn't have been too fussed except that the idea of a ghost invading a patient's body had been brought up earlier. I didn't really believe in ghosts, or did I? We were there to operate a medical clinic. The patients would arrive and hopefully get a "zero," which was a piece of paper with a zero written on it and would entitle them to be seen. It became apparent that the

patients did not have regular medical care and that we were providing a highly valued service. I had been initially pleased to reassure patients that he or she did not have "jaundice." I learned later that this "jaundice" pertained to one of the three basic humours of Tibetan medicine and not a manifestation of liver pathology. I hoped that my misplaced reassurance was therapeutic. I recalled that the locals perceived depression as chest pain. I wondered what I would do about cardiac chest pain with our limited resources. I saw patients with chest pain and found that depression was indeed the case. I still wonder

FROM HUBERT CHAU, YUSHU CLINIC PARTICIPANT

what I would have done about cardiac chest pain. (And don't ask what I did for depression) My time there was only 10 days, as I had to return to Vancouver for work. I had developed many more fond memories in that short period. I still get a chuckle recalling my first attempt at saying "thank you" in Tibetan "Garden shed" was not quite right.

Dartsedo, called Kanding in Chinese and historically called Ta-chien-lu, is traditionally the first Tibetan town on the eastern frontier just before the start of the Sichuan plain. It was the jumping off point for tea caravans from China traveling towards Lhasa. The Cheto River rages beside the main street, on its way to form the Dardo River.

Rokpa Canada has been sponsoring students at the Sichuan Provincial Tibetan School on the edge of Dartsedo. Rokpa International is supporting 230 students in Dartsedo. They come from a various counties in the region. Some of the students will finish there studies next year. In order to fulfill the Chinese governments changing requirements for registration, the medical

students will be continuing to study for another three years.

There are 39 students in the class we are sponsoring, 13 women and 26 men. They come not from just Dartsedo, but also from Palyul, Ganze, Taro, Dawu, and many other locations.

All just passed their exams this summer, and will now be doing a further 2 1/2 years of classroom studies, followed by 1/2 year of practicums. The new studies will be at the university level, which is equivalent to studying at Hainan. Hainan is the university where the six students who came to Vancouver in 2002 are studying. The Dartsedo school has an agreement with a few Sichuan universities to be giving university level training, all of it in Tibetan language. It is

very unusual for classes to be taught in Tibetan. All other Chinese government run schools teach only in Chinese.

The students costs come to 6000 yuan (about \$1000) per student per year, which includes all tuition, food and lodging, and supplies.

The school has a holiday each year from January to February, with classes from March until early July, and then starting up again in early September. Students on holiday may go home, or work to make money, or stay in the hospital to do extra study.

When they have finished training, the students may work privately or get a salaried job. They will be qualified to work anywhere in China as doctors of traditional Tibetan medicine.

Volunteers and Corporate Sponsors

- Baffin Regional Hospital Pharmacy
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- GF Strong Rehabilitation Centre
- Linda Owen from Vancouver Community Services,
- Novopharm Pharmaceuticals
- Solvay Pharma
- Trish Sylvester-Lee from Remington Medical
- UBC Hospital Pharmacy
- Vancouver, Duncan and Victoria Red Cross Equipment Loan Programs

- Ms. Cynthia Bonn
- Dr. Hubert Chao
- Ms. Sharmeen Mazaheri
- Ms. Alice Sinclair
- Dr. Isaac Sobol
- Dr. Tony Wilson
- Ms. Penny Wilson

Rokpa Canada 2005 Annual General Meeting

Date: Monday, November 28, 2005, 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.



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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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