

**THE  
ROKPA**



**TIMES**



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**Jahrgang 27/December 2007**

**[www.rokpa.org](http://www.rokpa.org)**



### Dear ROKPA Friends

Golden autumn leaves are swirling around us as we prepare for winter and the forthcoming festivities. Here at ROKPA, we can look back on a busy and active year and, thanks to your faith and loyalty in supporting our work, also a successful year. I would like to begin this Christmas issue by expressing my most sincere thanks for everything you did again this year, for us, for the children in Tibet and Nepal and for all those whom ROKPA supports.

Your loyalty and your active support continuously encourage us to do better, to offer more thorough and more long-term help – exactly where help is needed! Loyalty is more important now than ever before – loyalty to our family, our friends, our country and – what all of us must have realized by now – loyalty to our whole world! The larger the obstacles we face, the more gratitude we feel for loyalty shown by others – the more triumphant, the sweeter our success.

ROKPA's loyalty belongs to the poorest of this world: the blind as well as the seeing, the children as well as the adults, the sick as well as the sound – to body as well as soul – to all those to whom fate has been less than kind, who have no-one left except ourselves!

This Christmas issue begins with a story of light in the darkness – a story about the eyesight of two people. It continues with the light brightening the hearts of the Tibetan people, which would sink into darkness without the spiritual light of the convents and stupas. We write about the light in the spirit of a three-year-old child – the light of a new friendship and a new hope. And of the light which our wonderful volunteers and contributors bring to the work we do and, last not least, YOUR light – the light of your personal loyalty to ROKPA, the light which brightens and eases our often arduous way with the support you, dear sponsors, are generously giving us.

Please refer to the last pages of this magazine to learn what YOU could do for ROKPA, starting this Christmas and for the entire next year – how you can personally kindle a warm and loving Christmas light to bring happiness to the heart of an indigent person.

In this spirit, we would like to send our very best wishes for a wonderful holiday to you and your family. May you enjoy health, love and enough happiness to make you wish to pass it on with full hands!

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## Where are all Those Candles from.... Where do all Those Lights go

...that bring warmth and a feeling of comfort and security to so many homes, especially during the cold and dark winter months? Who produces them in all their manifold colors and shapes, sizes and materials? Candles have been made for centuries, manually, with machines, in assembly lines, from sheer joy or from need!

Candles served as a source of artificial light before invention of the light bulb. Their symbolic nature has also offered strength and comfort to humankind for centuries. In ancient times, "tamed" fire was lit to honor pagan gods. Christians lit candles to worship their Lord. In Nordic and Germanic cultures, Yule candles were lit some days before the winter solstice to encourage the sun to vanquish darkness and to return. During dark times in human history, people would put candles into their windows as a sign of fraternity.

Nowadays we carry candles in the street to commemorate victims of meaningless violence. Candles are lit at roadsides to remind us of human lives lost in street traffic. And in our homes, we light candles to create a relaxed and solemn ambience. The symbolic character of candles shines far beyond Christian traditions. Do not all of us see a burning candle as a symbol of peace and hope, of love and warmth? When ROKPA began supporting blind couple Kopila and Thekbahadur Sarki, the main focus was on

their desperate situation. But we also learned where some of these candles came from ...



Blind couple Thekbahadur and Kopila Sarki have come to the ROKPA Office in Kathmandu to ask for help.

Life for the handicapped in Kathmandu is particularly difficult. "Normal" society, frequently overburdened with its own everyday problems, has hardly any opportunity to care for the socially disadvantaged. Marginalized people are ostracized and left to fend for themselves. Only the strongest and most resourceful among them manage to survive at all. Children, the old and the handicapped occupy the lowest place in the survival hierarchy. Without outside help, they stand practically no chance of improving their situation. Many of them do not make it, they perish with hardly anyone noticing.

But Thekbadhur and Kopila have grasped at the very last straw: In the street, they have heard of ROKPA – a place giving help where help is needed. With obvious discomfort, they come to the office of the ROKPA Children's Home to tell of their lives and to ask for help. But every word they speak seems to reanimate the two – for the first time, someone actually listens. For the first time in their lives, they feel that things might change.

"I had measles when I was seven, and then my eyesight was gone. I remember everything very vividly, the color of the fields, the shape of the huts, the red sunsets and my mother's face.

I went to the village school, even though I was blind. Friends would read to me from school books, and I would learn everything by heart.



Then a mobile hospital came to our village.

I was told that I could regain my eyesight, that I would have to go to Kathmandu for an operation. But my parents could not procure the money for an operation. It is too late now, all the nerves have died off. I went to Kathmandu when I was 17. I found work, and for six months, I learned to make candles. Unfortunately, it was not possible to employ me any longer after that. I found work as a receptionist in a small boarding house, and I learned Braille. But that employment also lasted for only half a year," Thekbadhur tells us. Despite the many obstacles hampering his everyday life, he feels his blindness to be only moderately restrictive. He has great confidence in his artisan skills, he knows he can do well.

His wife, Kopila, hails from the village of Pokhara. Unlike Thekbadhur, she has been blind since birth. She can actually see colors, and she visited the village school for two years. Unfortunately, a severe throat infection forced her to stay home for a long time.



With great skill and care, Kopila and her husband put the wick into the candle forms.

Kopila came to Kathmandu at age 17 and sold cigarettes and fruit in the street.

She was robbed constantly and finally could no longer afford to buy more goods. Eventually, she found work in the same workshop as her husband and learned to make candles. But she, too, lost her job.

ROKPA enables those with sufficient skills and abilities to earn their own existence. We can offer start-up support or interest free micro loans to finance basic tools and materials.

**CHF 1,000.00** allows ROKPA to help finance the set-up of a candle workshop, a basic tailor's shop, a tearoom or other type of small, basic business, enabling indigent persons to earn their own income and regain their dignity.

Please help us help other indigent families build their own existence.

**Make your donation with reference "Business Start up, Project No. 5810"** to our post office account 80-19029-5 or to our account with Clariden Leu AG, CH-8022 Zurich (Clearing number: 5065, SWIFT: CLLECHZZXXX, Account: 0065-0455090-11-1) or use the attached payment slip.





A well-versed team: Jumba, with only one leg, Thekbahadur, blind since he was 7 years old, Ekaraj Ramtel, whose fingers are crippled, and Kopila, blind since birth (from right to left).

"If we could buy three tools, approximately 50 kg wax and around 2 kg wick and kerosene, we can manufacture enough candles ourselves, which we can sell. Eventually, we would have some money left to buy more wax and kerosene and to make more candles," explains Thekbahadur eagerly. And suddenly, the office of the ROKPA Children's Home is witness to enthusiastic discussions and calculations.

The couple gaze expectantly into nothingness, their dull, blind eyes suddenly lighting up when we announce that we will help them set up their own little workshop.

Now, a few weeks later, they already have four more employees: Two blind people, a young man named Jumba, who has a wooden leg, and another young man named Ekaraj Ramtel, who lost his fingers in a fire. They work as a team, and they have already secured several orders. They will still need a great deal of support to be able to make a living with their work one day.

But they have already taken an enormous step: They have regained their dignity!

The blind man at the wall  
Without hope or desperation  
There he sits, his head held low.  
Just behold his resignation  
This is how his thoughts might go:

Miracles just do not happen  
Everything will stay unchanged  
Who does not see remains unseen  
Who does not see is transparent.

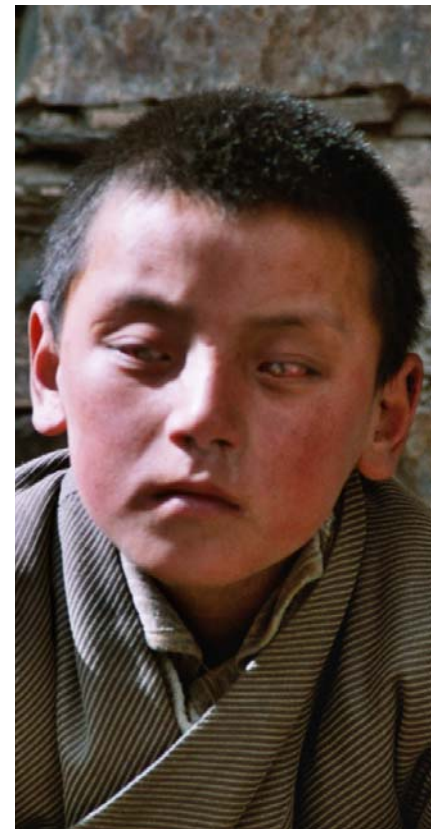
Steps approach and go away.  
What kind of people might those be?  
Why does no one stop and stay?  
I can't see and you can't see.

No kindness goes out from your hearts  
to send some warmth into your sphere.  
Were your steps not to be heard,  
I might believe you were not there.

Come here, closer! Come and sit,  
'til you know what blindness is.  
Lower your heads and close your lids,  
'til you know just what you miss.

And now leave! You're in a hurry!  
There's nothing wrong, go and pretend.  
But you would do well to worry:  
"Who does not see is transparent."

By Erich Kästner



## The <Light> in the Lives of the Tibetan People

What would Zurich be without its cathedral, the Grossmünster? Zurich without the Münster, without churches or cultural treasures, would not be what it is. Neither would any other Swiss town or village, were it not for its churches and monuments.

Churches, convents and other cultural treasures have been considered refuges, places of spiritual renewal and symbols for centuries, providing a pillar of strength to many. Even though the world around these edifices has changed and continues to change considerably, these monuments radiate constancy and stability, in good times and bad. They are open to everyone, rich or poor. A stupa is also a significant economic consideration. Many important national and local festivities are held around a stupa and attract tourists and pilgrims – a secure source of income for the local populace for many generations now.

Culture, religion and profound spirituality are deeply rooted in the lives of many Tibetans and determine their daily routine. Tibetan society is entirely defined by Buddhism, which came to Tibet in the 8<sup>th</sup> century.

### The Stupa – Foundation of a People

A stupa plays an important part in the lives of Tibetans. For one, it symbolizes the proclamation of Buddhism and acts as reliquary. It is also a votive shrine – a stupa is built on holy ground as a sign of gratitude for rescue from a crisis or emergency.

According to Buddhist belief, building a stupa is not exclusively an act of religion. Construction work means vast gains for all involved and helps leading them on the path to redemption.

Planning the construction of a stupa, determining its shape and size, is already an important process, generating positive energy and in turn contributing to a positive development of people's spirits. For the Tibetan people, the stupa represents a center of energy and a place of balance, with long-lasting influence on quality of life and social interactions of the people.

A stupa always attracts vast numbers of pilgrims and tourists. Thus, in addition to the spiritual benefit, it provides a very real and material benefit for the local population.



The country's secluded location led to the development of a very special type of Buddhism, which has always played a central part in the lives of Tibetans. Tibet's almost 6000 convents have influenced the education system, arts and crafts and politics, they have housed valuable knowledge, works of art and vast libraries. This culture is the cornerstone of a centuries-old, unique foundation. Most of the convents, stupas and valuable old statues were destroyed during the Cultural Revolution.

Rebuilding, preserving and strengthening this foundation is vital for the Tibetan people, equal in importance to the need for food, shelter, clothes and education. "Why?" you might ask. "A hot meal a day and a roof over your head should be enough for survival!" In the short term that is true, in the long term, however, our help can only have lasting effects if we involve and support the cultural values that form a people's identity. "Man does not live on bread alone...!"

Not long ago, Europe was witness to just how important this is. After World War Two, and despite hunger and hardship, cultural life in the formerly occupied areas developed with amazing speed. Churches were elaborately repaired, rebuilt or newly built. Particularly in difficult times following a cataclysm, traditional and cultural values give a populace belief in the future. These values and symbols provide people with the strength and confidence to achieve a better life. And do not these cultural and

Traditional values and symbols give strength to us as well? Could you imagine Christmas without churches and carol singing, advent and Christmas tree, without candles and moments of quiet reflection? Or the Jewish Hanukkah festival without the seven-armed Hanukkah candleholder?

Please help us rebuild cultural treasures such as convents and stupas, with their immeasurable importance for Tibet, to give the local population back their true identity.

ROKPA offers sustained help for self-help, tailored to the needs of the population. We firmly believe that we can only successfully enable the indigent to build their own, independent future if we support all their basic needs.

Tibetan culture, for centuries strongly influenced by Buddhism, is the cornerstone and identity of society.

ROKPA supports the preservation and reconstruction of Tibetan cultural treasures.

We do need your help for this! **Please make your donation with the reference "Preservation of Tibetan Culture"** to our post office account 80-19029-5 or to our account with Clariden Leu AG, CH-8022 Zurich (Clearing number: 5065, SWIFT: CLLECHZZXXX, Account: 0065-0455090-11-1) or use the attached payment slip.



# An Invisible Tie of Hope

By Lea Wyler

**She lies in my lap, relaxed and sound asleep. Her soul is sleeping, her hair is sleeping. She is so entirely lost to sleep that she seems to radiate calmness through the car. Tamdin Dolma is three and a half years old. Her family is from Luchu in Tibet. Her mother, still far too young herself, had left after she was born, unable to bear the heavy burden of responsibility for the small creature. Her father died a month ago.**

The grandparents, peasants who could neither read nor write and subsisted solely off their yaks and sheep, were left to care for

Tamdin Dolma and her slightly older brother.

Never having been able to visit a school themselves, they decided to do everything possible to at least ensure a school education for the boy. They were poor, there was no money at all. They gradually sold off all their cattle to pay for school fees. Now truly penniless, they were barely able to even feed themselves. And so they decided to give the little girl away, to be able to at least provide for the boy. An acquaintance had heard of their situation and asked us to take in the girl. And thus, the grandfather brought her to our hotel.

I meet her for the first time when I

enter the vast hotel lobby at night. She is lying in her grandfather's arms, looking up at us with serious eyes. Later that night, we make the "transfer": I take a picture, listen to the child's history, and dutifully write everything down – all of it a regular part of my work, all part of the routine. Of course I am moved by her story, by this small, serious child. I do not yet know just how deeply she will move me, how quickly I will grow to love her with a deep, pure love. The grandfather goes to sleep with the child on the second, empty bed in the hotel room – when she wakes up the next morning, he is gone. Tamdin Dolma now "belongs" to ROKPA – just like that!



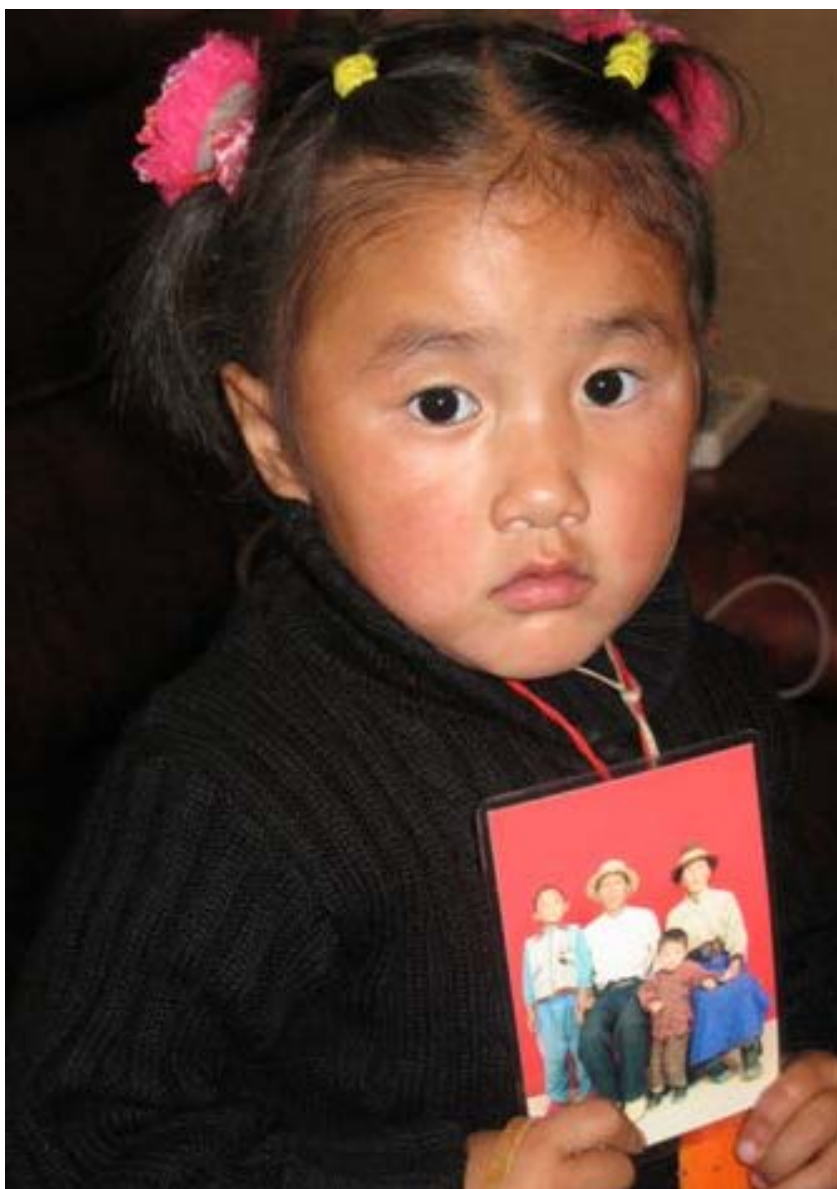
Soon we'll be on our way to Yushu where our biggest and oldest orphanage is located (built by ROKPA in 1992 and since then run by ROKPA). This is where last year we brought young Yangzom whom we told you about in our last publication in December. The journey lasts seventeen hours in an uncomfortable, tightly packed rattling old bus in which each of us (seven people and the child) has too much luggage and too little space for our legs. Tamdin Dolma is soon asleep on my lap and stays right next to me for every one of those seventeen hours. I've never had a child myself, but more and more it seems that other people's unwanted children are becoming mine. During these seventeen hours

Tamdin Dolma becomes one of my many children, and yet again I get the feeling that this particular child is my own! It is a relationship that arises somehow mysteriously without any great fanfare - an invisible silver thread that links this new old soul with mine. There is simply nothing you can do about it!

When we arrive in Yushu, the little girl will not leave my side. We get off at the hotel, where she is taken to the school and a young girl is chosen to look after her. Silent and serious, the little one simply follows instructions. She doesn't respond or cry - she just looks. Not through you but deep inside you. It's almost as though she can see your

innermost thoughts and knows both your good and your less noble sides. Tamdin Dolma is three and a half years old and already knows the secrets of life - and of death. She carries on looking until she knows who you are, then she looks away. Never before have I seen such a look from a child and rarely from an adult. We have things to do - visiting our projects, sitting all day long in a freezing room and working hard - this is where all our projects are put together - lots of paperwork. Most of the time Tamdin Dolma just stands there and watches. She watches our hands, our computers, our faces. She doesn't play, she doesn't talk - she just watches.

As soon as I get up, whenever there is a break, whenever we eat, she stands with me and holds my hand. Always. Others call her, try to distract her - she stays by my side, as though she means to say "Now I belong to you, so look after me, we belong together now." Last night. Everyone is waiting for me in the car. Tamdin Dolma senses that I am leaving and suddenly - after all that serious looking and experiencing and taking things in - something inside her snaps: she starts crying bitterly, loudly and will not stop. At last. She cries and cries and when someone tries to 'take her away' from me - I have to go! - she screams uncontrollably and with her little hand she grasps my jacket desperately, screaming and screaming. I hold her close. The car drives off - without me. Night falls. She whimpers and cries and is unable to calm down. My goodness - how can something like this be allowed to happen? Such a tiny creature - abandoned by her mother, her father then by her grandmother, her grandfather and now - by me. So far she has borne everything stoically but now she has had enough. It was the straw that broke the camel's back. I share her deep



sadness – the sadness of all the abandoned children of this world. How is it possible to heal such sadness?

But today is a new day with new hope. It is a day that brings a new miracle. Today Yangzom, who is also from Luchu and whom we brought here last year crying and feeling abandoned, is also waiting for me. She comes with us to lunch and I sit her next to Tamdin Dolma. As soon as Yangzom sees that there is no chair next to her for me, she starts crying. Tamdin Dolma puts her little hand into Yangzom's hand and looks up at her reassuringly.

I watch as the bigger hand closes around the smaller and feel a tremendous sense of relief. Yangzom speaks the language of her homeland and within a short time she is feeding the little one, cleaning her mouth and hands, and as we leave the room Tamdin Dolma not only holds my hand but also Yangzom's. She has found an older sister – one who will not leave her so soon and one who knows who understands exactly what the little one has been through. As I leave, I take a last look back and there they are – hand in hand, serious and calm – my two 'only' children. I can't be a mother to these children, but

thanks to ROKPA, they can escape a life plagued by pain and dependence on others and have the chance of a new freedom – with **YOUR help!**

We need your help urgently so that we can care for, feed and educate Tamdin Dolma and other children like her. **Please send whatever you can marking your donation "Orphan fund no. 9631"** to our post office account 80-19029-5 or to our account with Clariden Leu AG, CH-8022 Zurich (Clearing number: 5065, SWIFT: CLLECHZZXXX, Account: 0065-0455090-11-1) or use the attached payment slip.





## Perspectives of Tibet

by Lea Wyler

### On the Ice Mountain

I'm on the way from Xinning to Yushu and all I can see is a vast expanse of wilderness. On the road, the snow drives up hard against the car. In this area the roads are built above the terrain. That means we are always a little afraid that the car could veer over the edge. We are beneath a vast cloudy sky surrounded by brown hills. In the distance are the snow-capped mountains. There is a biting cold, a cruel icy wind. It's amazing that during our sixteen hour journey we keep seeing just a single person standing there – in the middle of the road, barely moving out of the way or somewhere in the fields wrapped up in yak fur and blankets, watching but doing

nothing. Where has he or she come from? Where are they going? It's amazing. Then we see a shaggy dog, its coat all matted, running along the edge of the road, apparently with no particular destination. Who or what could be waiting for it?

The distances are enormous. For many hours we drive along endless roads into the next horizon with just the occasional settlement. Those looking to buy items from the few shops do not enter. They merely stand at the entrance, lean inside into the dark and examine the precious commodities of an abandoned village stacked up on a counter: dust-covered brocade, yak-fur blankets, sheep wool hats, tea and cigarettes. Here we are over 4,000 metres above sea level. We move in slow motion – there is too little oxygen in the air – every step hurts. Headache, dehydration. Why do I keep doing this, year after year? I lose contact with the world, my thoughts become like dreams – everything seems unreal – blown away under a mountain of snow, abandoned.

It happens at 4,850 metres up on the frozen icy pass: our car's wheel suspension breaks – we can't continue. No sign of a human being for miles around – nothing moving whatsoever. Suddenly I'm shocked out of my dreamlike state as the reality of our situation changes completely. Now it's a matter of survival. Our chances are pretty small, the car has had it. For how long can we

### Can you too help where help is needed?

**Please send donations** to our post office account 80-19029-5 or to our account with Clariden Leu AG, CH-8022 Zurich (Clearing number: 5065, SWIFT: CLLECHZZXXX, Account: 0065-0455090-11-1) or use the attached payment slip quoting **"For whatever ROKPA needs most"**.

Many thanks.

stand this wind and cold? Has my life been worth living? Have I spent every moment doing something meaningful, doing what I had intended to do? "You should live the way you would like to have lived when you die." The words of my father go through my head as I stamp around the car and feel a bone-chilling wind whip through my body. ROKPA: Help where help is needed!

And by some miracle it is just then that a large jeep pushes its way towards us through the icy gusts of wind. It all happens very quickly. I'm bundled into the car and a few hours later I find myself in a warm room in front of a bowl of steaming hot soup surrounded by the astonished faces of Tibetans in their boots, yak furs and headgear. I give thanks to the local gods who saved me and who whisper to me "You still have much to do in this life. We're not going to let you depart so easily. Now it's up to you again. Help where help is needed!"





Bringing up orphans and giving them and the poorest children a future.



Supporting and promoting Tibetan culture



Feeding the very poorest



Giving abandoned old people a place to live



Building clinics in the remotest areas



Training young people in handicrafts



Helping the disabled



Providing the latest technology for young people



Arranging operations for young people with deformed spines



Helping sad children to laugh again



Planting trees and herbs to produce the remedies used in traditional Tibetan medicine and to protect against erosion



Protecting girls against exploitation and prostitution



Spending your donations directly and effectively and ensuring that our accounts are correct



ROKPA offers talented young people the chance of a lifetime and supports them through to the end of their university courses.

It is 27 years since ROKPA began its work looking after the poorest of the poor – a responsibility that continues to grow all the time. By way of example, ROKPA now provides an education for some 12'000 children and young people lasting several years and in some cases from their first year of infant school through to university graduation. ROKPA's help is not only wide-ranging it lasts over the long term.

Our work is not possible without your help. Please support our projects with a donation to our post office account 80-19029-5 or to our account with Clariden Leu AG, CH-8022 Zurich (Clearing number: 5065, SWIFT: CLLECHZZXXX, Account: 0065-0455090-11-1) or use the attached payment slip **quoting "For whatever ROKPA needs most"**.

## Working in the ROKPA street kitchen – a healing journey

**“It’s lovely being with these simple, warm-hearted people and giving them not just something to eat but a smile and a little affection.” For the eighteenth time ROKPA opens its street kitchen to provide a hot meal in the morning and at lunchtime every day for around four hundred children, women and men during the coldest months of the year.**

Every year volunteers from all over the world come here to look after the poorest of the poor. They cook for them, smile at them and serve them a simple lentil soup or a hot cup of tea. Why do they do it? Some of them, such as Annemarie Kölliker, have been coming for several years. “For me it’s a healing experience coming from the privileged society we belong to and spending time in another world, a world where luxury and well-being cannot be taken for granted. It’s lovely being with these simple, warm-hearted people and giving them not just something to eat but a smile and a little affection. These poor people are given very little respect in their own country and are often not accepted.”

Verena Jörg will be there for the first time this year. What made her sign up for three months’ work with the ROKPA street kitchen? “I’ve been retired for over a year so I have no commitments. I was looking around for a worthwhile

project. After several rejections and lack of interest from many charities, I found out about ROKPA and knew straight away that this was the project for me. They sent me the papers immediately and made me welcome.”



This winter ROKPA will be preparing around 28’000 hot meals and some 24’000 breakfasts for the very poorest people of Kathmandu. This involves cooking 4’600 kg rice, 2’400 kg vegetables, 2’800 potatoes, 500 kg linseeds, 24’000 bread rolls, 40 kg tea and 500 kg sugar.

**To do this we need your help! With CHF 200.- you can feed 400 people for an entire day. CHF 300.- is enough to give a street child two meals throughout one winter, as well as clothing and medical care if required.**

Please send your donation to our post office account 80-19029-5 or to our account with Clariden Leu AG, CH-8022 Zurich (Clearing number: 5065, SWIFT: CLLECHZZXXX, Account: 0065-0455090-11-1) or use the attached payment slip **quoting “Street kitchen project no. 5002”**.

**The best possible Christmas present!  
The Himalayan Dance  
Tour on DVD.**



We’d like to recommend this unique show presented by former street children. The DVD tells the stories of these young people accompanied by the perfect Christmas present. To buy the DVD, please call +41 44 262 68 88.

**Are you looking for some more unmistakable Christmas gifts?**

**Would you like to combine giving with a worthwhile purpose?**

Then why not visit our Fair trade shop at one of our ROKPA offices or one of our market stalls? You will be impressed by the variety, creativity and quality of our range of gifts.

**30 Nov. / 1.+2. December 2007**  
Christmas exhibition in Löhningen SH

**1. December 2007**  
Christmas market in Bassersdorf

The articles are made in the ROKPA Women’s Workshop in Kathmandu. All income from the sale of these products goes to help our aid projects.

If you would like to support the work of these women, please **send a donation** to our to our post office account 80-19029-5 or to our account with Clariden Leu AG, CH-8022 Zurich (Clearing number: 5065, SWIFT: CLLECHZZXXX, Account: 0065-0455090-11-1) or use the attached payment slip **quoting “ROKPA Women’s Workshop no. 5300”**.

# Volunteers for ROKPA

If it weren't for our volunteers, not only would our administration costs increase, we would also lose something of our energy and spirit.

**ROKPA's head office in Böcklinstrasse is regularly staffed by a team of around ten volunteers who work between a half and three days a week without pay. Their support is indispensable. But what is it that makes these people give up their free time for years to help ROKPA?**



**Marlies Peyer**

I feel sure that working for ROKPA I can make a useful contribution towards relieving the great suffering of the poorest and neediest people in Tibet and Nepal. The on-site supervision of projects by ROKPA's own people ensures that they are sustainable and transparent. Above all, these projects give young people a good education which in turn offers them a real chance of leading a better life.

I came to ROKPA by accident when a soup day was organised in my village and I heard Lea Wyler talking about her charity at an ecumenical service. I was so fascinated by her devotion to such a good cause that I wanted to help as well.

Since 1999 I've been working one and a half to two days a week as a ROKPA volunteer. I hope that my own commitment can act as a tiny contribution toward improving the quality of life of the very poorest people in this world.



**Hari Ammeter**

It all started with a radio interview with Lea which I found absolutely fascinating. I called the office afterwards to find out about ways of donating and was invited straight away to attend my first meeting

I liked the simple and friendly atmosphere of ROKPA's office and I was impressed by the dedication of the volunteer helpers. It was a way for me of doing something positive at very little cost (just a bit of my free time); unlike my other job, I could sense a real purpose in the work I was doing.

Since then, the organisation has grown. I am even happier now to be a part of it, and I'm grateful for the opportunity to be able to help people in need in such a simple way.

# Members of the Board of Patrons

The list of prominent personalities who have supported ROKPA makes impressive reading. These patrons support ROKPA with their name and their knowledge. They make use of their contacts to win further supporters for ROKPA or to provide specialist advice.



**Robert Schenker, President of WWF Switzerland and member of ROKPA Switzerland's Board of Patrons:**

"ROKPA works in countries where its donations can really make a difference. I have seen the professionalism and contagious

enthusiasm of its staff and volunteers with my own eyes.

ROKPA stands for development aid that really does reach the poorest of the poor and is never simply frittered away. Spending on administration is a model of good practice."

## Would you like to help us out?

### We urgently need:

- **Film editors** (to produce a film about the work of ROKPA)
- **A talented salesperson** to sell a range of ROKPA items on e-bay, incl. administration
- **People with graphics skills** to process our photographic materials
- **Web and graphic designers**
- **Editorial staff**
- People to help with **Fundraising**

Please call us on +41 44 262 68 88 or e-mail us at [info@rokpa.ch](mailto:info@rokpa.ch)

## What you can do for ROKPA

Let's raise a toast to a peaceful New Year! We'd like to wish you and your loved ones health, happiness and a good deal of staying power. Please stick with us in 2008 – your help is needed by many children and needy people!

◀ Are you one those who makes New Year resolutions? We'd like to suggest a few ideas that can easily be put into practice. ▶

### 7 good resolutions for 2008

1. I will organize a jazz evening or a house concert and donate the proceeds to ROKPA or another good cause.
2. I will collect COOP Supercard points, exchange them for air miles and transfer them to ROKPA. That way ROKPA can organize deliveries of aid by air.
3. I will give my grandmother a piece of woodland in Tibet for her eightieth birthday through ROKPA.
4. I will fund the soup kitchen in Nepal for a day and provide 400 people with a hot meal.
5. I will stop smoking and donate the money I save to ROKPA
6. I will make sure that 1% of my company's profits go to a good cause by donating it to ROKPA.
7. I will try and persuade a friend or neighbor to support ROKPA, too.



Give us a call, we'll be happy to advise you +41 44 262 68 88.

## ..and lots more!

Take Peter Scheucher, Deborah Klawonn and their children Sofie, Hanna, Franca and Nicola who donated the proceeds of their swear box from the summer holidays to ROKPA. Each person had to put twenty rappen into the box for every swear word. The original idea was to use it to buy ice cream but then they decided it would be much better to give the money to poor children. (Not that we want to encourage people to swear! You can of course use a ROKPA box for lots of other things!)

.....or the two friends from Rütli who decided to ask for contributions to their ROKPA donations box instead of birthday presents.

.....or why not lend a hand in our office alongside the many hard-working volunteers who transform it into a hive of activity when the time comes to box up and send out the ROKPA Times?



### **ROKPA is the Tibetan word for 'help' and 'serve'.**

ROKPA has set itself the goal of easing the lives of people in need wherever that need exists regardless of their religion or culture. Its main focus is on Tibet and Nepal where it runs numerous projects in the fields of education and health for children (schools, orphanages), the homeless (street kitchens, medical care), those living in remote areas (medical care, reforestation) and Tibetan herbal medicine. It also carries out work in India, South Africa and Zimbabwe.



## **We need your help!**

### **Bank account**

Clariden Leu AG • Bahnhofstrasse 32 • Postfach • 8022 Zürich

Account: ROKPA, no. 0065-0455090-11-1

Clearing number: 5065, SWIFT: CLLECHZZXXX

or post office account : ROKPA 80-19029-5

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