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PROGRESS ON THE HIMALAYAN HOSPITAL

In July 1995 a small team consisting of Doctor Shelagh FitzGibbon, Peter Cook, a pharmacist, Derrick and Mary Grady, and myself went to the Himalayas to help in the Spiti Project.

Many pharmaceutical companies had been extremely generous in their donations of medicines and Thai Airways allowed us a 109 extra kilos free of charge.

We met with Doctor Laji in Manali and the following day set off on a 2 day jeep journey over the Rhotang Pass through the Spiti valley to Kaza. Our team now included Doctor Feico Halbertsma and 2 nurses from Manali. All 3 were planning to work in the hospital for 2 months. The weather was awful, at times we found ourselves walking across broken roads with ponies carrying our luggage.

Once we arrived in Kaza we were very excited to see the second floor of the hospital building completed and a caretaker in residence. The bathroom and kitchen were also up and running. Doctor Feico (from Holland) and the 2 nurses with Shelagh and Lارج were soon at work holding a clinic as people gathered at the door. Peter did a magnificent job setting up the Pharmacy and organizing the medicines on to shelves. The place is really beginning to come alive with an atmosphere of its own.

THE NEXT STAGE

- Of the building is to have the walls whitewashed and sealed to prevent dust from polluting the air.
- To place top quality linoleum on all floors and seal them with skirting boards around the edges to maintain cleanliness in the building.
- To address the issue of all year round heating with properly insulated exterior doors and windows, and put heaters in the rooms.

FUTURE PLANS – We urgently need considerable funds to complete the following:

- Include the setting up of a health clinic for the people of the Spiti Valley, to teach a healthy lifestyle and hygiene in all of its aspects to the children and adults in Kaza.
- To give young western doctors who are interested in furthering their experience, the opportunity to work in this hospital.
- To look into various ways of raising money to buy a jeep to enable doctors to visit very sick patients in the outlying villages.

Once again, thanks for your support.

Joan Pollock