

Honolulu. 10 January 1974

John.

Thanks for the Christmas greeting and the news of yourself (dad of Pat, who still has a hang-up about riding?). Appreciate your offer of help in the departments of scrounging & information services, and will let you know what's needed. We have an on-going feud with the postal authorities in Saigon who have been known to return packages by the sender rather than send them on to us (as we're only authorized Class II privileges) which makes it tricky having stuff sent over from the States, however if there's anything really pressing I'll let you know and perhaps it could be sent via Don D'Antonio. As for reprints I'll pass on any needs the doctors may have. One thing you might do on behalf of Dr. Pradhan is to keep an ear to the ground for any hospitals which might accept him for a residency this coming summer. He finishes at Minh Quy this June and is extremely anxious to go to the States for further training either that. He's constantly writing to hospitals & medical schools in the States and Canada in hopes of getting an acceptance somewhere, but hasn't had many promising nibbles yet. Do you know of any situations in Washington State, or elsewhere that might offer some hope?

I often think of your personal approach to training & development at Minh Quy nowadays, because we seem to be going farther and farther in the opposite direction: i.e. we seem

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to be growing more complex and more ambitious in our planning as opposed to your tendency to simplify & make the operation more manageable to Montagnard staff with minimum outside help. Now we're up to 9 international staff with others in the pipeline and are pretty well committed to the expansion & development route — hopefully though aimed at the same objective you had, a self-sustaining Montagnard institution, only in this case it's in a much extended time-frame and is based on a promise of relative peace for the foreseeable future (and also our ability to stay relevant, which could be very questionable if we over-develop it too quick a pace). With our present approach, if Kham changes hands we're screwed; otherwise though, and if support keeps coming through, we could do some very useful things — get more into training and preventive medicine (e.g. Under Sixes Clinic), revive Tom's VHW program, do some formal (or accredited) nurse training, etc. For the time being the war has slackened off, people aren't talking anymore of an imminent attack aimed at Kham-Muoi, and we hardly even think of the war. On the other hand, why are the other guys building roads & re-supplying? Our policy these days is an Act of Faith in some respects I suppose — but such a needed one and such a hopeful one that we're bound to pursue it. I should add that your Nurse-Practitioners are functioning just as you'd envisaged, and are making a real contribution to the afternoon clinics.

You are right when you remark that things seem to be getting gradually more organized — under-

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score the 'gradually' though, because there are many times when you feel you're taking two steps backward for every one ahead. Still though we are edging forward. Next major project is setting up semi-permanent shelter for the walking wounded (converted refugee houses from Mainau) and after that a sort of intensive care unit which will occupy a newly-roofed-over section between OR and Main Ward.

Putting up new buildings is relatively easy though, it's a lot harder making sure the activity inside them is well-organized. Which I guess has been a chronic problem here. But here too I think we're moving ahead — gradually —

Again, thanks for your letter & your offer of assistance — we'll let you know our needs (and would appreciate any suggestions you may have on Dr. Prockens' behalf).

Regards,

