



## *Semi-Annual Report*

*June 2003*

The Himalayan Cataract Project has been setting the stage for an exciting period of growth in the first six months of 2003. We have rebuilt our [www.cureblindness.org](http://www.cureblindness.org) website. Our primary eye clinics and eye camps continue to improve eye care in the remote regions of the Himalayas. We look forward to a National Geographic Explorer film, and a People Magazine article on our June eye camps in the Upper Mustang region of Nepal. And we have received a USD \$300,000 grant from the USAID office of the American Schools and Hospitals Abroad to help fund the expansion of Tilganga Eye Centre in Kathmandu, Nepal. We greatly appreciate your continued support, which makes our progress possible.

### *Tilganga Eye Centre Expansion*

Our primary goal for this year is to raise money to expand Tilganga Eye Centre. In only ten years, Tilganga has evolved from a small outpatient eye clinic to a model tertiary eye center for the developing world. However, its facilities have not kept pace with the development of its programs, leaving it in desperate need of expansion. Our staff of eight ophthalmic subspecialists has the immediate potential to care for all of the 500-plus patients that line up outside of Tilganga every morning.



However, due to a lack of physical capacity in the hospital, we must turn away over 200 patients daily.

We have made detailed plans for a \$2.4 million, fifty by sixty foot, four-story expansion that will increase the quality and quantity of eye care we deliver at Tilganga. The first phase of the expansion will replace the current outpatient facility, which will be converted to subspecialty clinics. It will have a larger waiting room, a prescreening area, and seven treatment rooms. It will be staffed by our new ophthalmology residency program. In future phases we hope to build a 25-bed inpatient ward, an observation theater, and expand the Nepal Eye Bank and Fred Hollows Intraocular Lens Factory.

We are happy to announce that the USAID office of the American Schools and Hospitals Abroad has granted us USD \$300,000 to help expand Tilganga. We have already spent \$125,000 of our own funds to buy the land. We will also add \$200,000 of our funds to get the project started. However, we are still looking for at least \$500,000 of donations to complete the first phase. We will appreciate your continued support for this much-needed expansion project.

## ***Microsurgical Eye Camps***

The HCP has held several high-volume microsurgical eye camps in the first half of 2003. From May 1-5 we held a large skills-transfer teaching eye camp at the beautiful Pulahari Buddhist Monastery perched on a hill above Kathmandu. Patients were brought from villages outside of Kathmandu to the camp in the HCP's bus, provided by the Leach family. All of our surgeons from Tilganga participated. One of our surgeons from Nepal, and two of our surgeons from Bhutan trained at the camp. A total of 297 cataract surgeries were performed.

We held a remote skills-transfer cataract camp in Kalikasthan at the edge of Langtang National Park from May 11-15. Dr. Kunzang Getshen from Bhutan trained under Dr. Govinda Paudyal from Tilganga. Together, they performed 169 surgeries. Dr. Getshen has returned to Bhutan where we have trained three doctors in cataract surgery and we are training three full ophthalmologists.

From June 5-18, we held a series of eye camps in Upper Mustang, the poorest and most remote region of Nepal. It took five days of trekking to get into Kagbeni and Jomson. Our Co-Directors, Dr. Tabin and Dr. Ruit, performed 99 surgeries. Seventy percent of their patients could see 6/18 or better one day after surgery. These are the best results we've had at an eye camp. National Geographic Explorer was there and made a film about our camps, which they plan to show on television in September. People Magazine also joined us and will publish an article. Be sure to keep one eye on the National Geographic channel and the other eye in People Magazine for the Himalayan Cataract Project.

## ***Primary Eye Clinics***

We have opened four primary eye clinics and are in the process of creating several more to extend the eye care infrastructure to the remote regions of the Himalayas. Staffed by our HCP-trained ophthalmic assistants, the clinics provide basic ophthalmic care and coordinate public health outreach programs. Our clinics in Hetauda, Dhading, Manthali, and Phaplu cared for about 3,000 outpatients in 2002. Early in 2003, we held teaching eye camps at our clinics



in Hetauda (Hetauda Rotary Club), Dhading, and Phaplu, as well as one in Janakpur. We will open clinics in Nuwakot and Chautara in Nepal next year. We recently opened a clinic in Lhasa, Tibet. We will open a new clinic in Xining, in the Qinghai region of China, in 2004. We are currently training two surgeons from Xining and will hold a skills-transfer eye camp there this Fall. In January, 2004 we will open our Kalimpong clinic in India, and we will do about 2,000 surgeries at its opening camp.

## ***WWW.CUREBLINDNESS.ORG***

We have rebuilt our website to serve as our home base for comprehensive information about the HCP. The new website contains more information, and is easier to navigate than our previous site. It has several new features, and sports a flashy look with our new logo and photos. We hope you enjoy it, and share it with others.

***Thank you for your support ~ Geoffrey Tabin, M.D.***