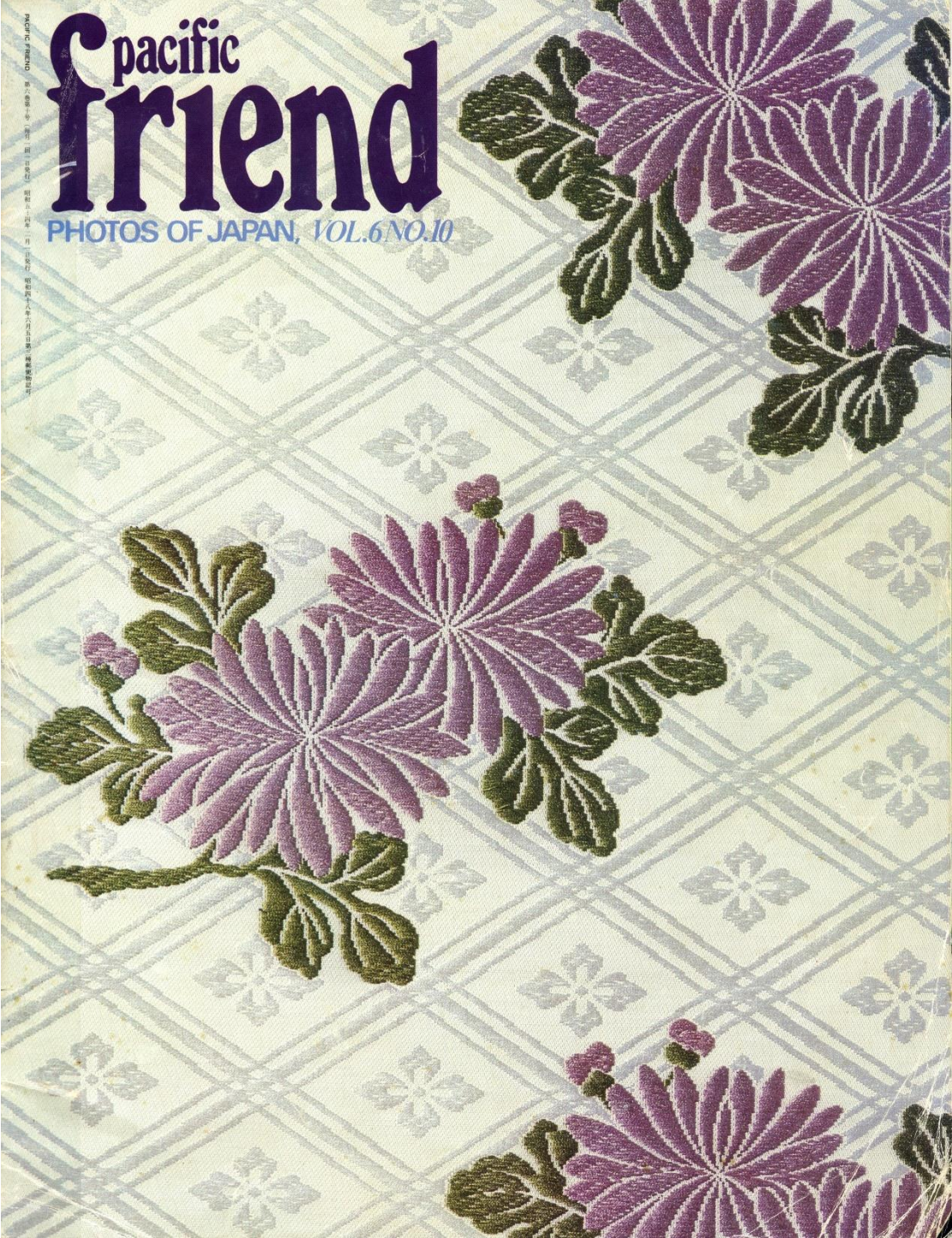
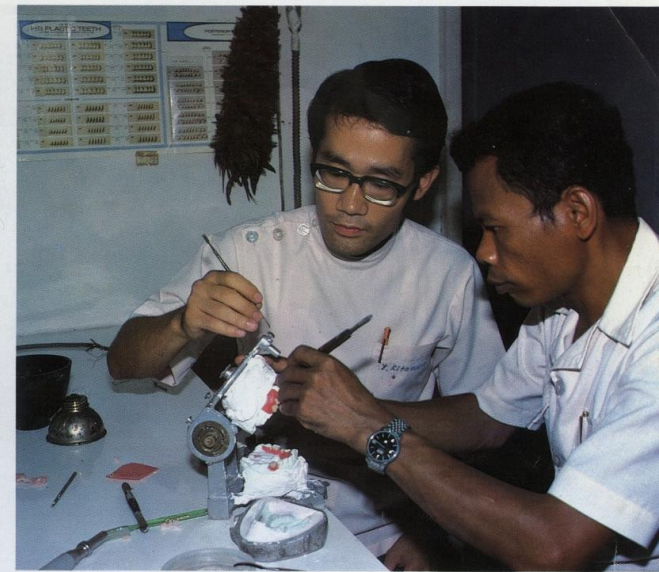


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JOCV Dentist Finds Work In Malaysia Satisfying



↑ When not treating patients, Dr. Kitamura makes false teeth and dentures. Such work would be unthinkable in Japan where dental work is highly specialized.

↑ Yutaka Kitamura works in the dental clinic of the Orang Asli Hospital in the suburbs of Kuala Lumpur. In one day forty or fifty patients visit the clinic for dental treatment.



→The outpatients have been taken care of and now it is time to take care of the dental patients. For many of the patients, this is their first visit to a dental clinic.



↑ Everyday utensils and folkcraft products from various areas throughout Malaysia are part of Dr. Kitamura's collection. Each item is treasured as it holds precious memories of the many places he has visited.

→ In addition to treating dental patients, Dr. Kitamura is also kept busy instructing the villagers in proper dental hygiene and the benefits of regular teeth brushing.



↑ Dr. Kitamura visits the Orang Asli village close to the hospital. He speaks the language fluently and feels quite at home with the villagers.

→ Visiting the many clinics at the medical posts is one of Dr. Kitamura's most important duties. About ten days in every month are taken up with administering dental treatment at these medical posts.





←Dr. Kitamura lines up with the hospital staff in front of the Orang Asli Hospital for a souvenir photograph. Because he is good natured and sociable, he has made many friends among the Malaysian people.

Although the country is 80 per cent forest, it is rich in natural resources such as rubber, tin, and palm oil, and supports peoples of various races—this is Malaysia. Malays, Chinese, Indians, Pakistanis, and peoples of Western extraction combine to form a large heterogenous society which makes up the Malaysian nation. The Orang Asli people are one small ethnic group in Malaysia whose 57,000 members mainly inhabit the densely wooded mountains of Malaysia. In 1953, the Malaysian government began directing its energy in health and welfare programs for the Orang Asli people and established the Department of Orang Asli Affairs, Ministry of Home Affairs to supervise the education, agriculture and medical facilities of this group which comprises only 0.5 per cent of Malaysia's total population.

A twenty-kilometer drive by car from Malaysia's capital, Kuala Lumpur, suddenly leads one onto a mountain road overshadowed by trees, providing an abrupt contrast to the modern cloak worn by the city. The road leads to a jungle clearing and there stands the Orang Asli Hospital. Orang Asli means "native people" in Malay. The hospital was built by the Department of Orang Asli Affairs for the Orang Asli people.

Yutaka Kitamura, 30, a member of the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers, has now been two years in the hospital's dental clinic. Yutaka says he first became inter-

ested in going overseas after hearing about JOCV from a senior at his dental college. However, the realities which he faced in Malaysia were quite different from what he had expected while still in Japan. The language was, of course, quite unfamiliar, and equipment was also different from that used in Japan. "When I took up my post there I was quite at a loss," explains Dr. Kitamura. Although he encountered the same problems met by other overseas volunteers he quickly adjusted himself to his new surrounding. Yutaka is now very happy and is very much at home in his new overseas environment. He said "It was well worth going against my parents' wishes to volunteer for JOCV."

Dr. Kitamura has two main duties. The first consists of working in the hospital clinic and giving dental treatment to the Orang Asli people at the hospital, as well as to outpatients. Treatment is free and the clinic is always crowded. This area has always had rather limited dental facilities and the patients include Malays, and Chinese as well as the Orang Asli people.

The second duty involves making the rounds of the 100 or so medical posts that dot the Malay Peninsula. Two fellow dentists who work with Dr. Kitamura at the hospital, take turns in joining the Japanese dentist on his once or twice a month visits to the outlying medical posts. Gradually, these trips have come to assume greater importance than the work at the hospital.

Most of the Orang Asli people live deep in the mountains which are virtually inaccessible to ordinary traffic, so helicopters, Land Rovers, and motor boats become essential means of transport. Naturally, these medical posts lack dental equipment and even the clinics are temporary affairs set up in village clearings or in jungle huts. The job is not an easy one and requires seven to ten days to complete. People here have limited knowledge of dental hygiene or preventive medicine and do not ask for treatment unless they are actually in pain. Thus, the primary job of Mr. Kitamura and his colleagues entails bringing people to the medical posts and clinics. Dr. Kitamura said that his experience in Malaysia has taught him the true benevolent quality of medicine.

JOCV members usually remain at their overseas posts for two years, and Dr. Kitamura's stay in Malaysia will soon expire. As departure day looms closer, Dr. Kitamura brightens up at the prospect of spending the remaining limited time with his Malaysian friends and to do this, he is quite willing to sacrifice the time he could spend with other JOCV members. "My two years in Malaysia have flashed by," he says, "But in that short time I have learned many valuable lessons." Dr. Kitamura feels that through his Malaysian experience he has come to understand the true meaning of the give-and-take in human relationships and that this lesson will serve him well in the future.



←Karate is a popular sport in Malaysia. In his spare time Dr. Kitamura, a second-dan (grade) in karate, exchanges his hospital uniform for karate apparel and he teaches other staff members who wish to learn in this martial art.