

Man on the Street

Meet Yukitaka Ueda — Vet

12/8/86

Yukitaka Ueda, veterinarian, opened the Paco Animal Hospital, three years ago in Uozaki, Kobe. A man of few words but with an enormous capacity for caring, his love of animals is apparent when one takes a look at his family of pets — cats Neko and Harry and Coco the dog — all former strays and victims of traffic accidents before being taken in by Dr. Ueda.

Invited by Dr. Ueda to take a look at one of his accident cases, I was horrified when the incubator lid was lifted and I looked down on what seemed like a dead cat with half its face missing. The cat was in a coma and its face covered in blood. It had been run over and its jaws broken.

Dr. Ueda didn't know who the owner was, nor who would pay for the treatment. As he gently stroked the frail-looking cat with his fingers murmuring "Get better, little fellow," the cat stirred for the first time in days, running a tentative tongue to the wiring that kept its jaws together. Watching his face suffused with joy, I could not help but hope that if I were involved in an accident, my doctor would be as caring as Dr. Ueda.

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"I've always loved animals since as far back as I can remember. I've had cats, dogs, hens, mice, pigeons, turtles — the whole gamut of pets. I decided I wanted to work in an animal-related field when I was in junior high. Of course, I could have chosen to be an animal breeder or trainer, or even worked on a stock farm. But as I was brought up in Kobe, I chose to be a vet as this was the only profession that could be practiced in the city.

Strange as it may sound, it wasn't until eight years after I'd graduated from Tottori University that I opened my own practice. Right after graduation, I decided I needed to get out of the rarified atmosphere of academia and medicine, and join the ranks of the salaried worker to better understand the society in which I would be functioning.

I entered a pharmaceutical company where I worked for five years, after which I studied on my own for a year, updating myself on what had been taking place in the medical field as related to animals. I later worked as assistant doctor for two years at my friend's animal



my work is not yet done. I'm up until 2 a.m., checking on my inpatients, and if I have a patient in shock, usually as a result of being in a traffic accident, I have to keep a sharp eye on the IV fluid as this, together with the constant temperature maintained in the incubator are what pulls the victims through. The IV fluid is especially important in seeing that the patient's blood flows to the brain, heart and other internal organs for when an animal is in deep shock, its blood circulation goes haywire.

Although it's difficult to compartmentalize my cases, I'd say that on the whole, I perform many more spay operations and bone settings than any other type of operation. I also treat quite a large number of tumor cases, both benign and malignant. In the area of internal medicine, I'm called upon most frequently to treat diarrhea, vomiting and diseases related to the respiratory organs.

It's funny, but many owners don't seem to realize that a cat or a dog is equipped with the same internal organs as themselves. Often, when I propose to conduct a few tests on the animals, owners are incredulous and at times, even dubious of my motives.

A few owners will also diagnose the animal's sickness themselves based on one symptom. They are usually so convinced that their diagnosis is correct that even when home remedies fail and they have to visit the hospital, they are reluctant to go

Name: Yukitaka Ueda
Age: 34, single
Education: Tottori University graduate
Salary: 200,000 yen per month
Holidays: Sunday and national holidays.
Religion: None
Hobbies: Listening to jazz, driving

Japan's biggest problem: The imbalance between Japan's material growth and emotional maturity. Although Japan has seen phenomenal economic growth since the war, and enjoys a proliferation of material goods, the Japanese are emotionally immature as seen in their discriminating attitudes, especially towards people of developing nations and in their slowness in extending a helping hand to the starving and destitute people of the world.

Life philosophy: To live my life so that I may have no regrets or feelings of shame in the years to come.

If I won ¥100,000,000: I'd build a general hospital for animals and an affiliated research laboratory.

patient.

But over and above the behavior of such owners, what really upsets me is the conduct of the know-it-alls. These are the people who act as if they know everything. They give ill-informed advice to owners like "I've had cats for many years and in my experience, such and such medication works," or "I'd advise against such a medication."

As a result, although I've explained the symptoms and the method of treatment to the owners, they become confused and don't know whose advice to listen to. I've had one owner bring in a dog saying she couldn't understand why it was sick as she'd been giving it laxatives to rid it of worms—she'd heard that this was the most effective means of keeping a dog healthy!

To such confused owners, I'd like to say: Trust the professional. They have the best interests of your pet in mind. Don't listen to what others say. They can be irresponsible as it is not the health and well-being of their pet at stake.

But I'm glad to say that not all