

ABOUT THE COVER



Yukiko Shimizu is my patient and my wife; she is also a dentist. When she was a student in dental school in Japan, she decided to have orthodontic treatment to straighten her teeth. A couple of years later her teeth were straight, but it was not a perfect smile for her.

I enjoy taking photos of Yukiko and our children. I have always noticed, however, that it was hard for Yukiko to smile naturally, showing her straight teeth. I was always telling her, “*Smile bigger! I can’t see your teeth.*” For Yukiko, that was a real challenge. Forcing her to give a big smile for the camera spoiled the relaxed, happy moments that I was trying to capture on film.

One other concern for Yukiko was her occlusion; she always felt that when she was relaxed, she had too much space between her molars. She needed to over-close her jaw to have contact, and that position did not come naturally.

But even with these concerns, Yukiko was reluctant to have her teeth enhanced. However, she began to notice more and more happy patients in my office and gradually changed her mind. Soon after, she asked me if I could show her how she would look with longer teeth, so I added composite to her front teeth and gave her a mirror. Then everything changed completely—she was incredibly excited about her prospective new smile. Yukiko found that the proposed enhancements changed not only her smile, but also the overall impression she made. This was a magical moment.

I examined her and received all of her records from Japan. According to the records, only tooth #5 had been extracted prior to orthodontic treatment, to bring down the high-positioned canine (#6). That caused the midline to shift to the right. In order to give her longer teeth and to increase facial height, I used an NTI appliance to get the centric relation and open her bite. I made fixed temporaries to see how she felt with the new bite and smile.



Before



After

The midline shift was not a noticeable factor here, so I placed priority on giving her smile a symmetrical appearance, longer front teeth, and a comfortable bite. Empress (Ivoclar Vivadent; Amherst, NY) crowns were bonded onto teeth #4 and ##6-13. After that, I bonded Empress™ crowns onto teeth #2, #3, and #14 to support the new occlusion.

Today, Yukiko is much more confident about her new smile, and she no longer is frustrated about her occlusion. Now, when I take family photos, I can see Yukiko's self-assurance, due to her natural-looking smile. It's amazing how something like this can improve a person's well being. We truly believe that "it's not just a smile, it's a new life."

Acknowledgement

Dr. Shimizu dedicates all his accomplishments with this case, to his father, Masaomi Shimizu.

Cosmetic dentistry and clinical and portrait photography by Dr. Ned Shimizu, Houston, Texas. Ceramics by Chang Y. Kim, M.D.T., R.D.T., C.D.T. Prowest International Dental Services, Houston, Texas. Cover model, Dr. Yukiko Shimizu, Houston. Cover photograph by Evin Thayer, Evin Thayer Studios, Houston. Dr. Shimizu can be contacted at www.wedesignyoursmile.com. 

