



Dr. Kazuo Tsubota (left) of the Minamiaoyama Eye Clinic is a Keio University graduate who has studied at Harvard University and chairs the Ophthalmology Department at Keio University School of Medicine. His patient, Ken Caplan (right), president of Mita Arts Gallery, considers his LASIK surgery at the clinic as a miracle that completely changed his life.

Work Miracles

Minamiaoyama Eye Clinic

Before he met ophthalmologist Dr. Kazuo Tsubota, Ken Caplan didn't believe in miracles.

Rather, he accepted that his extreme shortsightedness meant he must be resigned to a lifetime of dreadful eye-glasses or inconvenient and uncomfortable contact lenses.

But a chance introduction through the gym where both men are members changed Caplan's entire outlook on life.

"I had always had problems with wearing contact lenses because I have sensitive eyes and they would get red and itchy, even if I changed them a couple of times a day," explains Caplan, the 38-year-old president of Mita Arts Gallery Co., Ltd. "I've never liked wearing glasses; and because I do a lot of sports as well as my work, my vision was really causing me problems."

Caplan knows that, as an art dealer, it is critical

to be able to see clearly. "Things were particularly bad when I went to auctions and everyone was smoking," he rues. "Or when I had to take a flight to London or New York on business. My contact lenses would stick to my eyes as they dried up."

His eyesight was so poor that it came close to the medical definition of a handicap. So it didn't take much to convince Caplan that undergoing LASIK surgery at the Minamiaoyama Eye Clinic would go a long way toward solving all his frustration.

"It is a very straightforward procedure that has been refined over the 17 years since it was first developed," explains Kazuo Tsubota, M.D., Ph.D., who earned his medical degree from Keio University before studying at Harvard Medical School and

"It is miraculous and has completely changed my life."

currently chairs the Ophthalmology Department at Keio University School of Medicine.

The procedure involves administering an anesthetic through eye drops, incising a flap on the eye's outer layer and using an excimer laser to reshape the cornea, then replacing the flap. In comparison to earlier, more rudimentary operations, according to Dr. Tsubota, LASIK surgery is completed quickly and efficiently, with no stitches required and the eye simply healing itself.

"By making an optical correction to the cornea, we are effectively putting in a permanent contact lens," he continues. "It takes about five to six minutes to complete, and the patient is usually able to see better almost straight away."

Dr. Tsubota performs about 600 of these operations a year, and his clients have included several well-known sports stars, including professional golfers Nobuo Serizawa and Tsuneyuki Nakazawa.

"It was all completed so quickly that I can hardly remember the procedure," says Caplan. "I understand that some people have a more gradual improvement, but for me it was very obvious, very quickly."

Like most of the patients at the Minamiaoyama Eye Clinic, which is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year, Caplan had done his homework before choosing with confidence.

Many people considering the procedure are concerned about the possible discomfort involved and being nervous on the day, but Caplan emphasizes there is nothing to worry about.

"I talked with several friends who have had the procedure, and I spoke at length with Dr. Tsubota and saw the facilities here at the clinic," he explains. "The quality of the care was clearly excellent, and very quickly I was able to



The twinkle in Caplan's eyes and his broad smile tell the whole story.

overcome my fears."

He adds: "And just as they had said, it was very quick and completely painless."

Caplan also points out that, while the operation is relatively expensive, "it works out a lot cheaper than constantly buying contact lenses over the long run — and I would never compromise when it comes to something as important as vision."

From his perspective, "it was money very well spent because I feel more confident and I can do a lot more things — like jumping in a pool — without having to worry about my vision."

As he looks back, Caplan admits he wishes he had done the procedure a long time ago, "It is miraculous and has completely changed my life."



Dr. Tsubota possesses an expertise in surgery and patient rapport.



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