

Ed Coward

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BROOKHAVEN NATIONAL LABORATORY
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REFER:

MEDICAL DEPARTMENT

December 8, 1970

Dr. Tadashi Miyake, Director
Kyoto National Hospital
Fukakusa, Fushimi-ku, Kyoto
Japan

Dear Dr. Miyake:

I have a copy of your letter of November 18, 1970 to Dr. Rall and a copy of his reply dated December 2, 1970, relating to the possibility of interesting a young Japanese physician in a position in the Marshall Islands. I would like to elaborate further on what Dr. Rall had to say.

Our primary interest is in having a resident physician at Rongelap Island who would take part in our medical studies of the people of Rongelap and Utirik Atolls who were accidentally exposed to fallout radiation in 1954. We carry out annual medical surveys of these people with a group of about 12 physicians and technicians and the findings are documented in various medical journals and in complete form as a publication from our Laboratory. I am enclosing a copy of the latest complete report which summarizes findings over the past 16 years.

We feel that the exposed Marshallese deserve more specific medical attention than it is possible for the Trust Territory medical personnel to render during the intervals between our annual examinations. We are particularly concerned about the development of fallout-induced thyroid abnormalities in these people and the difficulty in maintaining strict adherence to thyroid hormone medication. We are also greatly concerned about the interim documentation of medical findings, the need for better diagnoses and treatment of sickness and autopsies in the case of death.

I believe a physician would find the fallout medical studies most challenging and stimulating in themselves. However, there is also ample opportunity for research in other directions. The various ethnic groups in Micronesia afford a wealth of opportunity for study of a variety of genetically inherited and metabolic diseases. A number of studies are going on and we are interested in participating and

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furthering research in this field. As examples, it has been noted there are interesting differences in incidence of diabetes, cataracts, gout, hypertension, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis and genetic abnormalities in various populations, the incidences of some of these being particularly high in the Marshallese people. Note in the report enclosed a number of genetically inherited characteristics that we have already studied in the Marshallese.

I would expect close liaison between your physician and our group at this Laboratory with the possibility of visiting our Laboratory for discussions and planning of research programs. On Rongelap we have a laboratory which can be equipped for limited types of research. In the Marshall Islands at Ebeye and Majuro (within one or two hours by plane service) are hospital medical centers where Marshallese medical practitioners and at least two physicians (one from the United States, one from New Zealand) are available for consultation and possible research collaboration.

This correspondence must be considered as preliminary at this time since I do not yet have authority to negotiate the hiring of a physician. However, if we find an interested, qualified physician, I will attempt to obtain such authorization from our Atomic Energy Commission which has a great interest in this project.

I hope I have satisfactorily answered your questions and if I can furnish any further information, please let me know. Looking forward to hearing from you,

Most sincerely,


Robert A. Conard, M. D.

RAC:ls
Enclosure

CC: Dr. J. E. Rall
Dr. J. R. Totter
Dr. E. P. Cronkite
Dr. V. P. Bond

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