

## India 2018 Student Dental Mission

Three Senior Dental Students of Texas A & M College of Dentistry traveled to the Class President's homeland July 18-31, 2018 to provide dental care to the community that had never had dental care. Pan Kaping spent his first nine years in Ukhrul, Manipur, India before moving to Dallas, where he finished Lake Highlands High School and the University of Texas at Dallas. Having worked in Dr. T. Bob Davis's General Dentistry private practice for over three years in Dallas, he was fully aware of the need observed upon arrival.

Joining him were close friend classmates Leke Olowokere and John Ratliff. Leke is of Nigerian descent although born in USA and has been on mission trips with Pan to Guatemala, as has John. John has spent several years since graduating from Ole Miss founding and operating a week-long sports camp for disadvantaged youth spreading the message "You Gotta Believe", currently located in Jackson, Mississippi. The proceeds go to help the underprivileged youth in Jackson. His interest in impacting young people has stimulated his participation in several dental mission trips.

Joining the trio were two seasoned Dental Missions Mentors, Dr. Bob Meyer and Dr. T. Bob Davis, plus Dr. Davis's younger son, Creth, who with Mrs. Diane Meyer provided the sterilization, instrument and supplies management. Dr. Meyer serves as Executive Director of the Christian Dental Society and along with his wife Diane do dental missions all over the world during his retirement from the Army as a Colonel in the Dental Corp (was dental director of the Ft. Carson Colorado Army Residency Program in his last assignment).

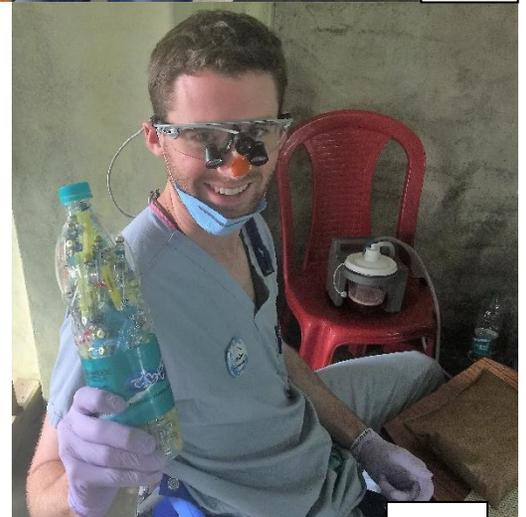
Interesting asides of Dr. Meyer was his West Point College Degree and later assigned the Army responsibility of establishing a dental unit whose charge was to deliver portable dental care to remote troops only reachable in a timely manner by parachute, with portable dental



Pan



Leke



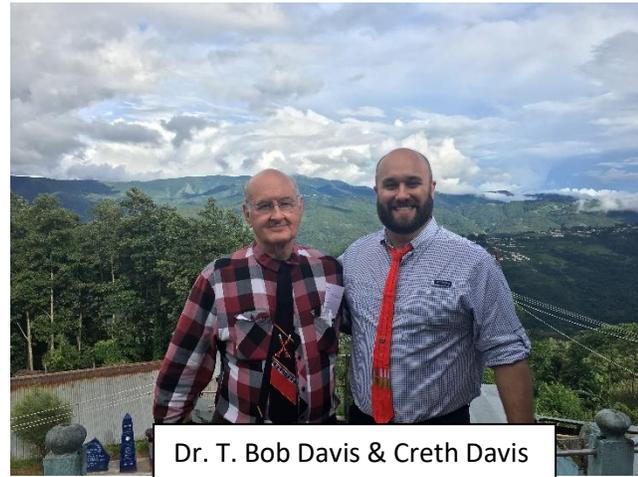
John



Dr. Bob Meyer & Diane Meyer

equipment in a backpack. Thus his expertise at portable dental care led to his current opportunities. Dr. and Mrs. Meyer have authored the definitive book on portable dental missions, *Portable Dental Missions Manual*.

Dr. T. Bob has mentored Texas A & M (Baylor) students for over 37 years with annual student dental mission trips to Mexico, Nicaragua and Guatemala. He has served as the ADA's Humanitarian 2018, one of the top awards ADA offers during their annual meeting, being the 11<sup>th</sup> recipient. The India trip was literally half way around the world, where dental care is urgently needed, where economics are limited but love and deep appreciation for the gift of dental care are so valued. The trip was conceived by Pan and Dr. Davis early in Pan's employment but took some six years to bring to fruition, a timely wait so that the students could actually provide supervised dental care!



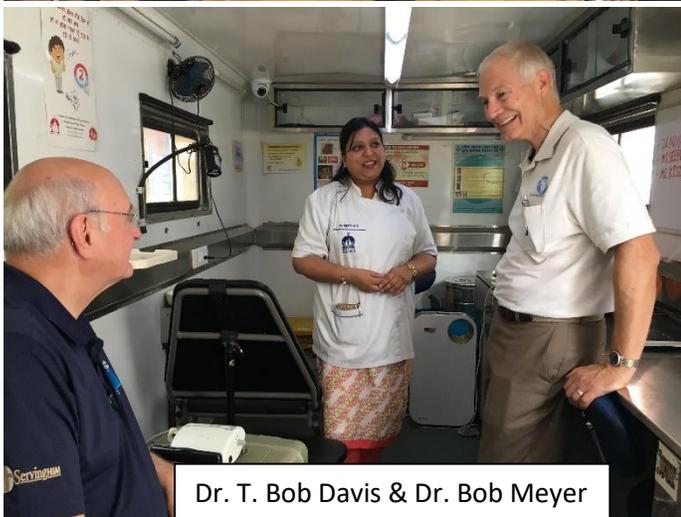
Dr. T. Bob Davis & Creth Davis

The trip was coordinated by Pan's Mother and Dad (Mr. Zak and Gia Kaping)



Mr. Zak & Gia Kaping

who had been on site for a month to set up and finalize details. They even provided the cooking and transportation, which included restoring a WWII Military Jeep-like-vehicle for the team's use. On the R & R Day, Wednesday, the team traveled through the mountains near Myanmar to a family wedding where the elders there reported



Dr. T. Bob Davis & Dr. Bob Meyer

no white nor black person had ever visited their remote village, this team being the first in their memory. They honored the volunteers with local custom-made ties, scarves and vests, which are part of the economy (as well as agriculture).

One of the special treats on the last day of the mission was a visit to and tour of the premier dental school in India, Maulana Azad Institute of Dental Sciences. Dr. Meyer demonstrated his portable dental systems and the team was treated to lunch and a good roundtable discussion of dental missions. The on-site observation of their Mobile Dental Vans and their Preventive

Dentistry Department was exciting to see. The warm gracious reception by the founding Dean Dr. Mahesh Verma and staff reaffirms the wonderful colleagues our profession has throughout the world!



Director/Principal Dr. Mahesh Verma (middle)