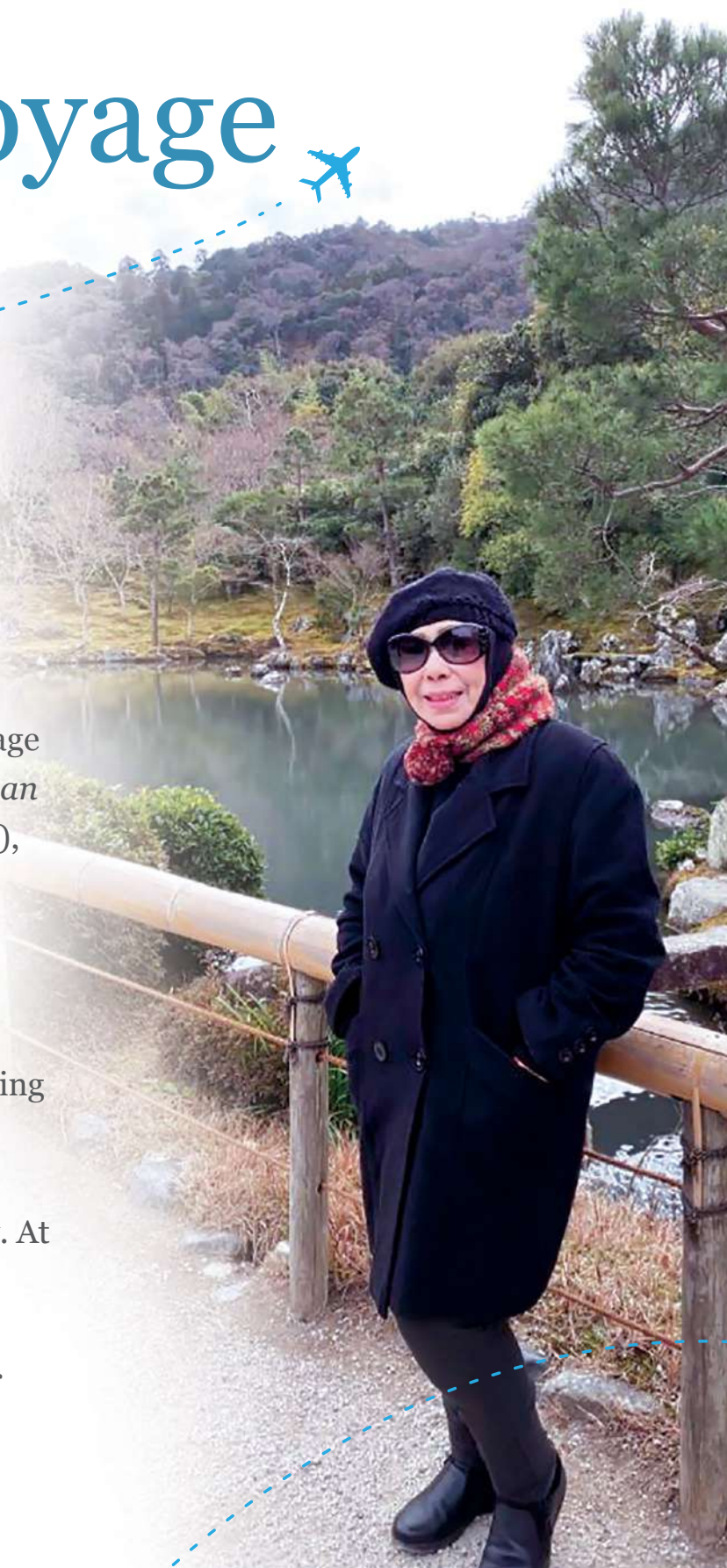


BON Valve-Voyage ✈️

**WAN LOTFIAH
ABDUL LATIPH,**

looking radiant and youthful at the age of 76 years, president of the *Persatuan Wanita Islam Malaysia* (PEWANIS), and an avid traveler.

When she was first diagnosed with aortic stenosis, it became clear that surgery was necessary. The idea having to go through open-heart surgery, coupled with the risk factors and recovery time scared her immensely. At that point of time, she refused the surgery. Eventually, the symptoms slowed her down and prohibited her from doing the things she loved.



INITIAL SYMPTOMS. Wan Lotfiah has been a patient in IJN for many years as she comes for her routine check-ups. But it was in 2009 when Wan Lotfiah first consulted her doctor, Datuk Dr. Aizai Azan Abdul Rahim about her constant shortness of breath and not being able to walk long distances that drew up a few red flags. She was sent for diagnostic tests - an angiogram and ECHO which then confirmed she had mild aortic stenosis. At the time, open-heart surgery was suggested to rectify the aortic stenotic valve which was not opening fully to allow efficient blood flow. But at the sound of surgery, she expressed that she was not keen to undergo surgery. Wan Lotfiah had simply opted to take medications to help ease the symptoms.

THE TEXT MESSAGE THAT CHANGED EVERYTHING. The symptoms did not get any better. During her travels, she had to be wheeled and driven around by her children, as she would get tired easily. Later on, Wan Lotfiah received a text from her good friend about a new procedure, Transcatheter Aortic Valve Implantation (TAVI). As it is a minimally invasive procedure, and the thought of not having to go through open-heart surgery, appealed very much to her. Later in her follow-up appointment at IJN (Institut Jantung Negara), she mentioned to Datuk Dr. Aizai her interest in the TAVI procedure. "Fortunately, there is only one doctor in IJN who can perform TAVI and that is Dr. Shaiful Azmi," he said.



IN CONSULTATION WITH DR. SHAIFUL.

Wan Lotfiah admits that she is a timid person when it has to do anything with medical, even a simple diagnostic test scares her faint. Dr. Shaiful was careful to explain the TAVI procedure both to her and her family as she relies on her family for emotional and mental support. He explained the different access points, and in her case, the preferred access point was via the groin. In the consultation, the many factors and risks were also discussed to ensure that Wan Lotfiah was a good candidate to undergo TAVI. Before any patient is deemed qualified for TAVI, the heart team assesses many different risk factors such as the severity of the damaged valve, age, lifestyle, diet, and any other associated diseases, amongst other things.

"Your family is the best team you can ever have."

WHEN FAMILY MATTERS. When Dr. Shaiful gave her the green light for the TAVI procedure she was relieved immensely. On the day of the procedure, her family entourage was waiting for her right outside the operation theatre. After the successful procedure, her husband, children and grandchildren simply stayed by her side throughout the hospital stay. "I need my family beside me, I can't do anything without them," she said softly, remembering the fond memories. She added, "I felt very energetic almost instantaneously after the procedure." She still took precautions but was overwhelmingly pleased with the results.

ONE STEP AHEAD. After she was discharged, it didn't take her long to start traveling again. This time, however, there was no need for a wheelchair. She could walk for miles and miles without feeling tired. "I was surprised that I was able to walk comfortably and enjoy my trip," as she recollects. Her family saw the difference in her stride and were happy that she recovered well.

