



# THE NSGI TIMES

100th Anniversary of New Era of Buddhism  
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April

## Living the GOSHO

### Peace Is the Heart of the SGI

There can be no doubt that all people, from the ruler on down to the general populace, rejoice in and desire the stability of the nation and the peace of the world.

From "On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land" (WND-1, 23).

## WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

- Daishaku Ikeda

Peace is the wish of all people; it is the long-cherished dream of humanity.

Our dialogues to create a peaceful world begin by reaching out to others as one human being to another with a shared wish for peace. In doing so, we can transcend all differences and spread mutual understanding and fellow feeling.

Peace is the heart of the SGI. Founding Soka Gakkai president Tsunesaburo Makiguchi dedicated his life to the cause of peace. Let's continue to talk with others about the life-affirming philosophy of Nichiren Buddhism and build an even greater network for peace.

*SGI President Ikeda's Editorial*

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## Spreading Joy from One Person to Another

The American futurist Hazel Henderson, a dear friend, observed with a smile that the way to blaze a trail is simply to take one courageous step forward, and then follow it with another and another.

Nothing comes from dwelling on the past. Nothing changes from sitting passively in silence. On the other hand, taking vibrant action gives rise to hope, and speaking out with courage rouses inner strength.

Our dedicated members are actively exerting themselves for the happiness of others and the welfare of their communities. While brightly encouraging and supporting one another, they are tirelessly engaged in dialogue in order to realize a peaceful and prosperous world based on the humanistic ideals of Nichiren Buddhism. How noble and empowering our incomparable SGI network is!

**Nothing comes from dwelling on the past. Nothing changes from sitting passively in silence. On the other hand, taking vibrant action gives rise to hope, and speaking out with courage rouses inner strength.**

On April 28, 1253, a great declaration rang out with the power to illuminate the lives of all humanity. It was Nichiren Daishonin's first proclamation of his teaching of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, issuing from his home province of Awa (present-day southern Chiba Prefecture) and echoing into the eternal future of the Latter Day of the Law.

For the rest of his life, the Daishonin continued to proclaim the correct teaching, fully prepared for the inevitable persecution doing so would bring. In "On Repaying Debts of Gratitude," he writes: "If in this present existence I am so fearful for my life that I fail to speak out, then in what future existence will I ever attain Buddhahood? Or in what future existence will I ever be able to bring salvation to my parents and my teacher? With thoughts such as these uppermost in my mind, I decided that I must begin to speak out" (WND-1, 727). As SGI members striving for kosen-rufu today, we are carrying on the same selfless spirit demonstrated by the Daishonin from the time of his proclamation of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. Engaging in the struggle for kosen-rufu may entail many hardships and our days may be hectic, but this is the path to attaining Buddhahood in this lifetime and the

unsurpassed way to repay our debt of gratitude to our teachers or mentors in Buddhism and to bring true benefit to our parents.

When the Daishonin first publicly declared his teaching that day in Awa Province, it was not to a great gathering, but only to a small group of people (cf. WND-1, 651). Our discussion meetings, small-

group gatherings, and grassroots efforts to engage in dialogues with those around us to help them form a connection with Buddhism carry on this tradition of Nichiren Daishonin.

My mentor, second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda, said: "When we dedicate ourselves fully to the great vow of kosen-rufu, our lives brim with the same power, good fortune, and benefit as the Daishonin, with the same boundless joy that he felt. Faith in Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism means having indestructible courage. The courageous faith of a single individual opens the way to victory in all things."

This conviction, pride, and joy are the heart of our eternal Gakkai spirit. As we press forward from April into May [when we celebrate May 3, Soka Gakkai Day], let us bring forth even more powerful and radiant life force.

On April 28, 1960, a few days before my inauguration as third Soka Gakkai president, I pledged together with representatives of Tokyo's Bunkyo Chapter to which I had such close and fond ties [having served for a time as acting chapter leader]: "Let's make fresh strides forward in Japan and around the world! Let us fight and win together as long as we live!" Taking this pledge to heart, one men's division member went on to become the first Toshima Chapter leader. He resolved to share his joy at overcoming a serious illness and bankruptcy with as many people as possible and show them the courageous strength of those who dedicate their lives to the Mystic Law. He led Toshima Chapter to achieve



the highest new membership growth for three months in succession [in June, July, and August 1962].

Nichiren Daishonin writes of how the joy of the Law spreads from one person to another, and how merely hearing the voice of someone rejoice can cause another to rejoice in turn (cf. WND-1, 68).

Let's take another step forward today! Powerfully chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, which is "the greatest of all joys" (OTT, 212), and engaging in inspiring dialogues with one friend after another, let us adorn the 760th anniversary of the Daishonin's declaration of his teaching this year [on April 28] with further triumphant progress in our movement.

A lion's roar resounding with truth—your voice can free your friends from suffering and illuminate society.

(Translated from the April 2013 issue of the *Daibyakurenge*, the Soka Gakkai monthly study journal)

## STANDING ALONE - TOGETHER

“Be the protagonists in the new era of worldwide kosenrufu”



Ms. Matina Shakya  
Youth Chief

“If you stand for a **REASON**, be prepared to stand alone like a tree, and if you **FALL** on the ground fall like a **SEED** that grow back to **FIGHT** again.”

With this spirit if we all take our stand, then nothing would stop us growing. The theme for this year is intended to make each youth members protagonists in their unique mission of life intact with the countrywide kosenrufu movement of Nepal SGI. Conducting the 17<sup>th</sup> YGM, simultaneously in all outstations and the headquarter for the first time was the breaking dawn for the new era of kosenrufu for NSGI.

Standing alone as a phrase, might give us an idea of being alone, however it doesn't mean that. It signifies we are strong enough to handle things all by ourselves. This emphasizes the immense potential that we inherit and to manifest it, we need to stand alone. It also takes perseverance to stand up for what we believe in and that is where we do our human revolution. It is also said that a person is not independent unless s/he has the courage to stand alone because it takes everything to do so, unlike joining the crowd. In doing so, we may face countless obstacles and hindrances but in the end we will find ourselves in places where no one has ever been and become victorious in our lives.

Ikeda Sensei's encouragement to us to be 'protagonists', when he states: Each of us is a protagonist, a person responsible for creating world peace and happiness for all humankind, he counts on every youth members to take the baton of worldwide kosenrufu. Buddhism teaches that through our consistent daily practice

of chanting we can transform our lives for the better and this positively affects and extends to our families, communities and society. With every small and big attempts we make to give others happiness, we can actualize our mentor's dream. The starting point for this is always the individual and we refer to this process as human revolution. By committing ourselves to the great vow for kosen-rufu, we can manifest our own inherently enlightened life-state' and by taking action with an ungrudging spirit, we can free people from suffering and help them revitalize their lives. These awakened people in turn, through the power of dialogue, can inspire others, giving them fresh courage and conviction.

The theme comprises STANDING ALONE, joined with being TOGETHER. As we know, individualism is highly valued nowadays and it can seem strange to consider a stand-alone spirit, with having an aspect of unity. In Buddhism 'standing alone' is not the same as 'doing it alone'. Without unity, a stand-alone spirit can manifest as an autocratic, domineering attitude - more like a 'do-it-alone' spirit where the only thing that matters is to get something done. The danger here is that we behave more as a human 'doing' rather than a human 'being' and respect and consideration for others are lost. Moreover, we gakkais, have a shared vow with our mentor to make our world a better place to live where every person is responsible for their and others happiness. Hence this shared mission of worldwide kosenrufu binds us all together.

We should know that the real challenge in our Buddhist practice comes when we are all alone. In those times, we need the resolve to strive in faith and win, even if no one else sees our efforts. This spirit will keep us going no matter what and be victorious ultimately. It's important not to give up hope and never be defeated. The success of our movement lies in fostering countless courageous individuals who possess this stand-alone spirit. Both President Toda and president Ikeda have stressed that the key to this lies with the power and dynamism of youth, who will be the protagonists of a new age.

In these troubled and difficult times we need many individuals to have courageous dialogue of encouragement with many people for us to turn despair into hope, apathy into engagement and indifference into compassion. Armed with the incredible teaching of Nichiren Buddhism we can step onto the stage of our mission as eternal activists, protagonists in the drama of the establishment of correct teaching for the peace of the land. This is the surest way to open a new era of worldwide kosen-rufu.

## Now is the time .....



Mr. Arzun Rakkhal  
YMD Chief

“Victory for one, Victory for All”. I just think it was yesterday we had this theme in the 16<sup>th</sup> YGM. However one year has already passed and we youths for Nepal's Kosenrufu movement have not done much work. Youth leaders realized that now is the time to take action, if not now then never. I question myself and our youths that if not now when? If not here in Nepal then where? If not we then who? If not for the kosenrufu & peoples happiness then what?

This is the correct time for New Era of Worldwide Kosenrufu Movement. We the people of Nepal, birthplace of Shakyamuni's have to take the initiation for the New Era of Worldwide Kosenrufu Movement. I pay my greatest gratitude for the Youth Leaders for their untiring efforts to make the 17<sup>th</sup> YGM successful. It all goes to National Youth Leaders for their strong planning for the past 2 months. It was not easy because everyone was busy and despite the busy schedule we managed our time for the planning meetings. All the efforts that we had made taste very sweet after the grand success of the meeting. It was very challenging this time to organize the YGM because we were organizing it in 4 different venues; Illam, Hetauda, Pokhara and Kathmandu. However we succeeded in the end and felt that as a protagonist we started the Journey for New Era of Worldwide Kosenrufu. I hope all youth will become the protagonists of worldwide kosenrufu and the starting point is the place where we are. We have to bring our own human revolution, then our family and friends then community & society, nation and the world. For this good cause, let's start from today, we have to do it!

**Now is the time to take action, if not now then never. I question myself and our youths that if not now when? If not here in Nepal then where? If not we then who? If not for the kosenrufu & peoples happiness then what?**

So far from the 17<sup>th</sup> YGM we have to summon up determination which could really nurture us and lead us to become a protagonist and bring human revolution.

These are the following determination we all need to take action on this year;

■ Developing a training model for all youth members based on the book, WAY OF YOUTH

■ Fostering capable district and block youth leaders in every district and block by carrying out training for the successors which will shed light on the responsibilities, way of carrying out a discussion meeting, presenting, visiting, studying etc. It will be carried out in small groups.

■ Carrying out enrichment workshops in all outstations, throughout Nepal.

1. Seven habits of effective meeting
2. Emcee training
3. Photography
4. Writing skill/report writing
5. Handicrafts

■ Frequent visit at outstations at certain times throughout the year by National Youth Leaders.

■ Organizing a talent show to create a platform to polish all youth members unique potential like dancing, singing, art, cooking, speaking, writing etc.

■ Starting counseling for youth members (friendship, love relationship, study, career, family issues)

As the theme in this 17<sup>th</sup> YGM “Standing Alone – Together” we all will stand alone and work for the kosenrufu movement of Nepal and share the victory reports of all these above determinations in next year's 18<sup>th</sup> YGM. Sensei says “Everything ultimately depends on whether there is someone who is willing to wage a desperate all-out struggle, someone who will take one hundred percent responsibility without relying on or leaving things to others, someone who will work with selfless dedication for the sake of the people without any concern for what others think. Such a teacher is true leader and a genuine Buddhist.” We all need to enrich and deepen our faith, practice and study, through our determined action.

----- Nam myoho renge kyo -----

## Bag of medicine with empty hope



**Mr. Ujjwal Aryal**  
Hetauda

I am from Bastipur, Hetauda. I belong to a middle class family involved in the agriculture business.

I was introduced to this wonderful SGI Buddhism by Mr. Ram Mani Aryal in 2064 B.S. surrounded by beautiful warmhearted people. I now have the confidence to stand tall and fearlessly challenge any obstacle that comes my way. I realize change within brings change in my surroundings. I can now lead others in the direction of happiness.

My father has been suffering from Ulcer and lung disease for the last 15 years. Doctors said that operating is not possible at this stage. It was necessary to sell our land in order to afford treatment at the Bharatpur Cancer Hospital. Our efforts and money were in vain, and operation was not possible. We returned home with a bag of medicine and little hope.

Five years back, while preparing my SLC exam, my father suddenly became seriously ill. He started vomiting blood. We borrowed money from our relatives for his treatment and again took him to the Bharatpur Cancer Hospital. Besides preparing for my SLC exam, I took time to chant Daimoku for my father's successful treatment. While chanting, my prayer was to find an excellent doctor for my father and that he would muster strong faith to overcome his illness. After few days, my parents returned home with heavy hearts. My father's legs couldn't bear weight so he couldn't stand nor could he feed himself. When I asked mother about my father's health condition, she was overcome with grief and her lips were sealed with pain. I came to understand that the Doctors had given up hope and suggested that my father spend his few remaining days at home. I could hardly believe my ears—my father had little time left in this world. But my faith in prayer to the Gohonzon motivated me to be bold and stand alone to fight with the devil of the sickness. I told my mother never to lose hope till his last breath.

"No prayers go unanswered" flashed in my mind like an arrow hitting the target. Engraving deep faith in Nam myoho renge kyo, I started chanting day in and day out sincerely.

Neighbors came to visit my father as their last meeting with him. I was very discouraged by the people but I keep on chanting with great hope burning deep in my heart. NSGI friends and leaders visited my home and encouraged me to deepen my faith and not to be defeated—no matter what. Hearing them, I mustered hope and remembered Nichiren Daishonin's words; "... winter never fails to turn into spring." Their sincerity energized me to chant more and sincerely. The nine day deadline forecasted by the doctors was passed. Now I deeply feel the power of daimoku and protection from the Buddhist deities. I deeply feel that my father is going to be alright.

I shared with my mom to do whatever we can until his last breath and we decided to take him to Bir hospital at Kathmandu. We again borrowed money keeping all our property in collateral. Every day I deposit abundant daimoku that helps him to fight his disease. My daimoku was like a lion's roar and as gosho says, "Chant Nam myoho renge kyo like a lion's roar, what sickness can therefore be an obstacle. (Reply to kyo'o) When I talked with my mom on the phone, she joyfully speaks of gradual recovery. He began feeding himself again. I was very happy to hear that.

During this painful time, GD Sahana also visited me and gave encouragement to fight more fiercely with the power of daimoku. I talked with my father on the phone and shared him that I'm chanting for his speedy recovery. He deeply felt my sincerity and gratitude and said: "I'm feeling much better now due to your prayers."

A month later, my father returned home. He was standing on his own feet with the support of a stick. The day he left in an ambulance is vividly clear in my eyes which fill my eyes with tears of joy today. I can proudly say today that "winter always turn to spring" when you deeply rouse faith in the Gohonzon and chant daimoku.

I thanked Gohonzon and all our leaders and members for encouraging me in my hard times to win. I was able to gain victory facing life and death challenges.

Today, my father is healthy and walks here and there on his own. He does his work on his own. Looking at him I always feel revitalized in faith and am ready to face all challenges in my life and dedicate myself once again for kosen-rufu.

## Best candidate of the year



**Dr. Abhinav Dhakal**  
Kathmandu

I am feeling privileged to share my study related experience on the occasion of 17<sup>th</sup> YGM. I have been practicing Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism for the last 2 years. It was right when I took a big decision to do future specialization after my MBBS in United States for my career. Applying for the scholarship was the only choice to pursue my dreams. The challenge did not end there, as it would take 2 years of preparation and would cost more than 10 lakhs to get it. Besides, cut throat competition from all over the world would be waiting for me. It almost seemed like entering a battlefield alone unarmed. At that time, I needed support and courage to walk my path, when Grishma introduced me to this great law. Since then I feel I've lived every day being a new me.

After I started attending meetings and praying consistently, I gradually started to feel the power of the Gohonzon. My faith and senior leaders' guidance became an impetus for my stronger self with more patience and courage. I used to study 12 to 16 hours daily and as a result I was able to score 99% in my first step exam for the Scholarship. Before joining SGI, never in my dreams did I realize my potential. This practice not only made me more confident, patient and courageous but also filled me with vitality to exert myself to the fullest.

Then I started preparing for the second step exam being more determined and for the next 4 months I continued studying for 12 to 16 hours a day. Along with my determination to study, I also increased my chanting time day by day. Though initially getting a higher score to get the scholarship was my priority, Navin dai's guidance in the meetings changed my viewpoint at a crucial time. As its said, making our mission clear no matter what we do, would enable us to create value and would be adding up to our effort for kosenrufu, I reckoned, I had to study so that I'd be someone who would be contributing for humankind. Hence I changed my approach and started taking my studies more seriously by

understanding its propositions. It was more enjoyable. The result was unimaginable, I not only scored excellent grades but I fell within the top 3% of total 50,000 candidates from all over the world in the second step exam for the scholarship.

The rest of the exams, that is the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> stages, would be taken in the United States. When I applied for the visa, I only got it for 2 months where I needed it for at least a year. In 2 months duration, only one exam would be over. The situation would be challenging, if didn't get a stay visa for at least a year I would then have to apply again for the final exam. I had deep faith on the Gohonzon and I did not lose hope. As a result, I got the stay visa for a year in the immigration office at the airport. Few of my friends who got stay visa for a year only got 6 months stay visa.

The real challenge set in after reaching US. In the following 14 days, I had to give my 3<sup>rd</sup> exam which was practical. Candidates are to examine American patients and the probability of international students passing this step was only 40%. Despite the short time to prepare and odds against passing, I got through this step too. To be honest, I was never scared like that before as I was for this exam, the reason being all my hard work throughout would go in vain if I couldn't pass this step. I gave my last step exam the following month and attained 99%. I was satisfied with my results.

Now I was eligible to apply in the hospitals for the scholarship. After referring CVs of candidates, they would call them up for interview and if they get selected, they would be finally doing their MD. Though my scores were pretty impressive and I got through the practical exam in my first attempt, to my despair, I got very few interview calls. I really started getting nervous and worried. Nevertheless I could retain my hope remembering sensei's guidance which was "Don't be impatient since you have embraced the Gohonzon, your situation will definitely improve and there is no need to worry. Sure there will be hard times, when you feel like crying but as long as you have the gohonzon, your life will become bright and joyful." Engraving these words within, I used to pray and I could feel all my fears casting aside. I had a deeper sense of accepting lower hands in life and could comprehend that my knowledge wouldn't go wasted even if I don't get a position. During those times Grishma and I used to do united prayer over the Skype for more interview calls.

As time passed, I got several interview calls as expected. I did pretty well in all of them among which 3 deans of 3 different hospitals personally emailed me after the

interview saying, "You are the best candidate we have seen this year." What could be ever more virtuous to hear such comments at the end of the day? For about 3 months, I continued giving interviews in various hospitals and I finally got the scholarship in St Francis Hospital in Chicago. Out of 6000 candidates, 300 were given interview calls and out of 300 interviewees 15 were selected. I can't express in words, how I felt when I heard my big news of falling within this group. Everybody was happy hearing the good news, but my feeling was different. Not that I wasn't happy but I could perceive all big and small moments of my journey like a flashback from where I stood. Like it's said, "The chase was better than the catch" I got carried away with my emotions sensed all throughout my walk rather than what I achieved. I could sense a new Abhinav, rather a rejuvenated Abhinav who is now ready for yet another walk after the turn that I recently took in my journey called life.

I could not believe those changes in myself in this past 2 years since I joined SGI. Prior to embracing this law, I had a sense of pride that I could achieve anything I want and used to day dream of doing well. Nonetheless when it came to exerting, I didn't have something that would push me through and bring out the best in me. Praying to the Gohonzon, I could eradicate my fundamental darkness and overconfidence. I realized it's important to give our full effort to actualize the dreams we desire. In Buddhism it is said that we all have indefinite potential and to manifest this we need to keep reminding ourselves of our unique mission in life. By offering prayer every morning and evening, we are doing the same. Hence if we feel lazy to do that, we will not be exerting ourselves to the fullest. It's important not to lose hope on ourselves and our gohonzon (our own reflection), even if nobody stands by us. I feel if we engrave this spirit then nothing would be unachievable.

I'm starting being in the MD from this coming July. One thing that I came to realize is life is a never ending struggle. The battle which I started 2 years ago then seemed the most important battle, which I fought and achieved victory. For now I feel yet another battlefield is awaiting me where there will be many more challenges with few sought and few unsought. But now I have this feeling that would keep me going no matter what. I am determined to bring out the best in me during my stay in the US and also impart NSGI to people I meet in any way I can.

Lastly, I can't thank enough the entire SGI family for where I stand today. Specially, I'd like to acknowledge - Sahana Aunty, my parents, Nabin dai, Urika Didi, Grishma, Matina and Pranav who were always with me in this journey and always showed me the right direction in the right time.

## Member's Stories from Illam



**Dinesh Yolmo**  
Illam

I have been working in a school in the post of principal from last 2067. When I joined the school it was not running well, there was no proper building for the classrooms, there was financial problem and we were not getting help from any other source. Seeing the situation, I was very discouraged and felt that I will not be able to do anything to change the situation of the school.

In 2068 I was introduced to Nichiren Buddhism through Basanti Lama Pradhan. From this practice I feel that I've improved my situations and I've overcome my obstacles. Ikeda Sensei writes "Difficulties are to be regarded as peace and comfort. When ever, you find yourself beset by some new harsh, trial, adopt a positive attitude and face it bravely as an opportunity and strengthen yourself."

Now my daily life has changed with encouragements from my leaders and the school is also running well. The people in my society, the guardians and the government are also providing help. This year our school will be provided with a school building by District Education Office, Illam. When I face any obstacles or problems I begin to chant for the solution and I'm doing daimoku regularly. Ikeda Sensei said "Daimoku is the great medicine. That can cure everything from personal to the challenges facing society and humanity as whole. The key is to decide to win through faith and keep on chanting to very end. Daimoku is a source of limitless courage." Our chanting Nam Myoho Renge Kyo changes ourselves and this exerts a positive effect on our environment and all those around us.

I am now conducting meetings in our place and attending the meeting held in Fikkal too. I am happy that our Illam district had been announced as Makalu District of NSGI and would like to thank Basanti for her great contribution.

Last but not the least, I have determined to foster more youthful members for kosenrufu and share this Buddhist practice, which is the source of immeasurable hope, with as many youth and other people.



**Kalpana Tamang**  
Illam

I was introduced to Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism by my sister Basanti lama Pradhan and have been practicing for 2 years.

Before my introduction to this practice I used to have a kind of fear and worry about simple things or problems. I used to get angry with my husband, scold my children, had a stubborn nature, was always in an angry mood and spent the time doing nothing or just gossiping or sleeping the whole day.

I started liking this practice and continued it after reading Himali Shanti and NSGI Times. After a few days I felt myself changing, so I determined to continue with my faith, practice and study. Now, I have control over my anger and face every problem through my faith.

I have two sons and whenever my youngest son become sick, he faints for quite a long time. He couldn't overcome it even after so many medications. I was loosing hope of curing him but now for me it was like winter turning into spring. Since I started practicing Nichiren Daisoinin's Buddhism, I have been praying for his good health. Though he is pursuing his education far away, in Kathmandu, he has not experienced any health problem recently. For this reason, I am always grateful to the Gohonzon. Ikeda Sensei always says; "Pray with faith in the Gohonzon, your prayer will not go unanswered" With this guideline deep in my heart I am always advancing fighting each problems, giving continuity to my practice. Now I can feel many changes in my life.



**Bunu Tamang**  
Illam

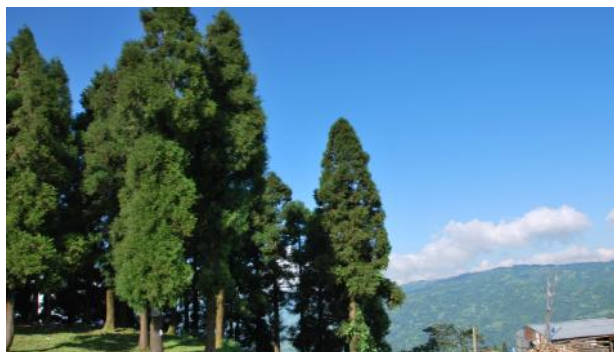
I am the youngest daughter of a large family. I have been practicing this great (SGI) Buddhism for one year now. My mother's friend, Tara Sherpa introduced me to this practice.

My daily practice, that I perform every morning and evening, has already brought about positive effects in my life. I started praying to overcome my problems and began to notice positive change in my environment.

I really wanted to attend the 19<sup>th</sup> General meeting in Kathmandu, although at first my parents wouldn't allow me to go. After chanting lots of daimoku and encouragement from my seniors, my parents finally agreed to allow me to attend. It was my first trip to Kathmandu which is quite far from home.

At the General Meeting I had the chance to meet so many members and learn many things. I am very thankful to my mother and Basanti Lama for encouraging me to participate in Nepal SGI activities.

Nichiren Daishonin has taught us to walk the sublime path of Buddhahood. I too, together with others will do the same. My prayers have increased my courage, determination and happiness in life. We are very happy to hold our first Youth Division GM in Fikkal. I am determined to introduce this Buddhism to many more people here in Illam and support the Kosen rufu movement in Nepal.



# MY SAY ON MY VISIT TO 17<sup>TH</sup> YGM IN ILLAM

**Niva Shakya**  
YWD Vice Chief

As per the plan of conducting the 17<sup>th</sup> YGM in all the outstations simultaneously, I was assigned to go to Ilam with GD Sahana Shrestha. I was excited and a sense of responsibility grew in me as a leader to do my best to contribute for the success of the event.



*On the way to fikkal at kanyam tea garden*

On 13<sup>th</sup> March I took off from Kathmandu to Fikkal, Ilam in order to conduct a workshop and attend the general meeting. GD Sahana Shrestha and WD member Keiko Daleileu had already reached there before me. On our arrival the leaders and members of Makalu district had come to meet us. We were warmly welcomed by all. A proper planning and good preparation could be evident from their sharing on the arrangements they made for the program. I was happy to meet in person the district coordinator Mrs Bisanti Lama and YMD Dinesh hyolmo,



*Participants of the workshop*

with whom I was in constant contact over the phone for the past month. While sipping our Ilam tea and exchanging greetings I could feel the excitement and zeal increasing among the members of YGM.

The workshop on love and relationships was conducted with 15 members, most of whom were youth. All the participants actively participated and the interesting fun, games and activities in between made it even better. This workshop in a way provided an opportunity for the members to come close to one another. A lot of personal experiences were shared and issues on love and relationships were discussed as the workshop commenced. Human emotions such as laughter, tears, smile, doubts, silence, appreciation and realization filled the workshop's air and I could tell that all of the participants were moved in their hearts and appreciated the workshop. The fact that took me by awe was that the members opened up and shared their life experiences as if they had known us for ages. The

youth especially found it useful as it contained real life relationship problems, finding their solutions and ways to deepen relationship.

The 17<sup>th</sup> YGM, the next day was also a grand success, given that, everyone present there were recharged with a wide smile across their faces. The team work and prior



*Cheerful members at 17<sup>th</sup> YGM*

preparations for the program was commendable. The leadership camaraderie shared between Mrs Basanti and Mr Dinesh was significant. I myself felt revitalized looking at the hard work they have put into making this program happen.

Member's experiences were encouraging and everybody enjoyed the cultural part of the program. It was my greatest pleasure to be able to sing a song and break my leg, dancing with the youth members there.



*Dinesh Yolmo sharing his experience*

GD Sahana Shrestha and senior member Keiko Daleileu's words of encouragement added up to the untiring spirit of the members in Makalu district. Likewise I shared on the theme of 2014 "standing alone together" and national determination for the year.

District coordinator Mrs Basanti Lama's strong determination to foster 100 strong members by next year and develop three blocks across Ilam is outstanding. Considering the fact that, in a short span of time and amidst her personal problems she was able to introduce



*Basanti lama Pradhan sharing her determination*

this wonderful practice to so many people, she has indeed proved to be a true protagonist in this new era of kosenrufu.

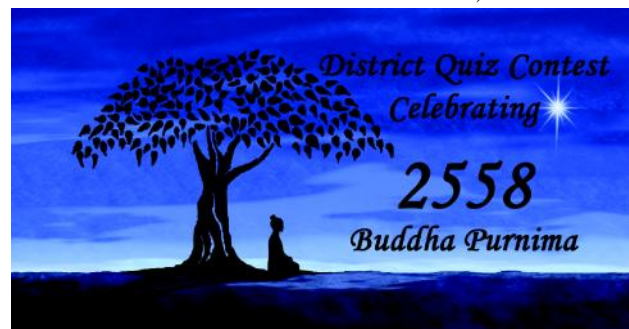


*Hopes of kosenrufu in Ilam*

The spirit of the leaders there undoubtedly shows that they have taken this practice by heart and that they would work hard to advance kosenrufu in Ilam. However, I would not be mistaken to say that, they require proper guidance, encouragement and support from national/district leaders in particular and in general of all the members across Nepal.

All in all, I had a great time. Basically the love, care and warmth received is unforgettable and I guess that is what it means when we talk about the SGI family. I am so very grateful to Youth chief Matina Shakya for this chance to go to ilam and understand this philosophy to a greater degree. I had gone with a desire to contribute to the program and though I'm not sure how much I could, I am certain that this visit has in turn contributed to my own human revolution.

Lastly, I would always pray for the members, for their goals to be fulfilled and district to prosper. To my friends in Ilam, the memories of the good times we had will always be cherished. Let the sun of new era of Kosenrufu in Nepal rise from the very east of the nation (i.e- Makalu district)



Nepal Youth  
17th  
General Meeting

Standing Alone  
(To be eternal protagonists in the new era)



Nepal SGI  
Youth  
7th  
General  
Meeting



One - Together  
(the new era of worldwide kosenrufu)



People who are rooted in the here and now, who are not defeated by their limitations, who don't compare themselves to others, who confidently advance along their chosen path—such people are happy, such people are truly great.

-Daisaku Ikeda

... is not going alone. A man is not independent unless he has the courage to stand alone.

... who walks alone is likely to find himself in places no one has ever been. - Albert Einstein

... young is to give up on yourself and not to challenge yourself for fear of failure.



## The Time Has Come .....



**Yurika Shakya**  
Youth Advisor

I was thrilled as well as feeling anxiety in my heart but as we reached Hetauda my anxiety turned into joy seeing members sparkling and hopeful eyes with full preparation despite their limited resources and infrastructure.

A day before Youth General Meeting workshop on contemporary issues of youth "Study and career" was design in participatory form. I along with advisor to youth Navin Manandhar as facilitators and 24 participants did not notice how smoothly and lively the time had passed with insightful learning. After that workshop we can clearly see the enthusiasm and hope to strive hard in their lives in order to win in life. I knew it was a successful workshop when one of the Young Women Division members commented that she felt regret to miss the SGI meetings and activities prior to this meeting, but the end of that workshop brought a fresh departure in her life. She was determined to attend each and every meeting as well as all other activities of SGI.

Next day, 35 vibrant youth and student division members gathered at the YGM venue early in the morning at 8am. Two youth members experiences really touched the heart of all and it also illustrated their commitment to show actual proof of their faith in Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. (please refer the full version of experience in page..... )

I very much find that time has come for us to act vigorously in the propagation of this Nichiren Buddhism to make each and every one happy. I again find that we national leaders have to strive hard to foster capable leaders in order to spread this Buddhism properly from now onwards. So yes, I am very much determined to fulfill that determination with strong prayer, study and senior leaders guidance, where even I can pursue my human revolution to win in my own life and to show the validity of this Nichiren Buddhism and to repay my debts of gratitude toward my mentor Ikeda sensei.

## When Youth arise, the time will change.

Congratulations to all Nepal SGI Youth members for having a grand and joyful 17<sup>th</sup> Youth General Meeting commemorating March 16, Kosenrufu Day. The General meeting has brought new vitality to all the Youth members to advance together in the era of worldwide kosenrufu. This YGM was conducted in a special manner compared to what we have done in the past. Celebrating together with all division members and our families and friends has definitely opened the way to achieve worldwide kosenrufu. Thank you to all leaders, members, friends and families for making 17<sup>th</sup> YGM a grand success. Special thanks to our Women division members. We could glimpse a very Youthful Spirit in their performance. Through such united efforts, we will continue to make each YGM historical.

The 17<sup>th</sup> YGM was a marvelous Members. Nevertheless, the our other division members be forgotten. The youthful joyful laughs, charming various cultural activities, burning hopes, and the stand wonderful elements of our

Ikeda Sensei writes "The ushers in a new dawn. When change. When the youth When the youth win, happiness." Kosenrufu is a attract the Youth. This year inviting our friends and families really made 17<sup>th</sup> YGM special. Their involvements and contributions are highly needed for a successful YGM. And, I believe our new friends were also happy to go home with fresh vitality, new hope and enjoyment. Furthermore, I am very happy to know that our youth members realized what they are capable of and also looking forward to bring out their inner potential through participating in Gakkai activities. It is truly inspiring to see energetic endeavors of our youth members, challenging themselves to achieve brilliant victories, persevering with courageous faith in the noble struggle to spread happiness for the people.

In order to advance Kosenrufu in Nepal, the most important thing is to develop capable members and leaders. The major focus will be on nurturing faith, practice, and study of youth and helping them to realize and bring forth the amazing power of the Mystic law from within their life. We'll also focus on giving one-on-one guidance



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conducted in Kathmandu achievement of the Youth effort and contribution of and new friends cannot spirit of WD members, faces, beautiful smiles, encouraging experiences, alone spirit were the 17<sup>th</sup> YGM.

emergence of Youth Youth arise, the time will advance, evil will flee. mothers will shine with movement that can really attract the Youth. This year inviting our friends and families really made 17<sup>th</sup> YGM special. Their involvements and contributions are highly needed for a successful YGM. And, I believe our new friends were also happy to go home with fresh vitality, new hope and enjoyment. Furthermore, I am very happy to know that our youth members realized what they are capable of and also looking forward to bring out their inner potential through participating in Gakkai activities. It is truly inspiring to see energetic endeavors of our youth members, challenging themselves to achieve brilliant victories, persevering with courageous faith in the noble struggle to spread happiness for the people.



**Grishma Chitrakar**  
YWD Vice Chief



**Ram Mani Aryal**  
Lhotse District Leader

I am very happy to have received some valuable guidance and to gain practical knowledge in my life in the 17<sup>th</sup> youth General Meeting. Ikeda Sensei's says

"Youthfulness is not determined by age. It is determined by one's life force. One who possesses hope is forever young. One who continually advances is forever beautiful."

I believe youth can last a lifetime. Inner youthfulness is not a matter of our physical age. Rather, it is determined by the passion with which we live, the enthusiasm with which we learn, the freshness and energy with which we advance towards our chosen goals in life. We all know that we can change the impossible to possible.



**Rabina Parajuli**  
Machhapuchhre YWD District Leader

The 17th Youth Division General Meeting, held on March 15, 2014 in Pokhara, was one of the most successful meetings ever held for Machhapuchhre District. This was due to maximum participation of members from all divisions. Every member and guest felt comfortable and were able to enjoy the meeting to the utmost.

The experiences shared by the members touched the heart and showed that faith and determination definitely help us to attain our goals by bringing out courage from within.



A workshop based on 'work' was conducted which the members found exciting and instructive.

As a result of this meeting, I have decided in future to make more frequent communication with members and try to do more home visits. It is my determination to encourage the members in any way that I can in order to promote Kosen Rufu in Pokhara.

I would like to thank everyone for attending this historic meeting and particularly those who worked so hard to make it a total success!





**Samjhana Diyali  
Hetauda**

*Spring comes after winter,  
happiness comes after misery and  
the golden dawn comes after a dark  
night.*

It has been about 4 years that I followed Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. I was introduced to Nichiren Daishonin Buddhism by my uncle (mama) Bishnu Hari Tiruwa and my friend Rajkumar Moktan, I have my 4 family members my mom, dad, brother and me. As I knew I spent my childhood happily and

interestingly. There were not any deep troubles in my life and my study was diligent. In this way, I was living a happy and exciting life.

However when I entered my college life, I used to be very stubborn. Even very small obstacles were like a great hill for me, perhaps I did not have to suffer any type of hindrance. I used to be so desirous that I thought every desire and need should be fulfilled for me. I used to think that every problem and trouble were from my parents, not mine. I didn't care for anything at my home.

One day NSGI Leaders Ms. Gita Moktan, Mr. Rammani Aryal and others SGI members came for home visit at my home. They awoke me hearing them that every problem at my home were mine not only my parents. Our problems and troubles were the key for victory or success in our life. After that I changed my behavior and used to solve my family's problems.

My brother Sunil was also introduced to this religion. So, my parents supported us in our SGI activities. At first I used to

be afraid to pray at home, but later on hearing guidances, I started to chant at home that gradually deepen my faith in Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism.

As I was preparing for the BBS 1<sup>st</sup> year exam, teacher told me to pay due fees before the exam. But it had been 3 months since my father was not getting salary from the office. So, I became worried about my exam. But at the same time I remember guidance, "lack of success is the symbol of success, problems make our faith strong." Then I increased my prayer from half hour to one hour. As a result after five days my father got his salary and I was able to pay fee earlier the exam.

Sun with cloud, lotus flower with mud and flower gulls struggle each other and give happiness and pleasure to us. Like that I have decided to fight with every challenge and obstacle to be successful in my life. Without any obstacles or troubles we wouldn't be able to reach our aim. I am trying to make a successful life, solving all the problems in my life. Now I have Gohonzon. Continuously dripping water eventually makes a hole in a stone. So, I have aimed to face and deal with every obstacle and hindrance in my life.



**Tham Raj Khadka  
Pokhara**

I started my study in a normal school. After finishing my school, I came to Pokhara in search of work where I got a job at a hotel. At that time, I wished to be a successful Manager like the one I saw in that hotel. In search of better opportunities I went abroad but I came back to Nepal after a few years and started IT business in partnership.

Three and half years before, I was introduced to Mr. Prem Katuwal who took me to the SGI meeting. 'No prayers go unanswered' is what I learned on the first meeting. I put my deep faith in Nam Myoho Renge Kyo and started chanting sincerely.

I am a very optimistic person and take everything positively. I could see good reasons behind while facing problems. I was convinced that spirituality is not the luxury but necessity, that's why I love to chant whenever I get free time. Due to some difficulties in partnership, I had to drop out of my IT business and started to search for a job.

I got a suitable job in Water Front Resort and then I was offered an executive post job in a five star Hotel Pokhara Grande. This was like a dream comes true. I am getting promotions every year and my wish lists are almost fulfilled. This is all because of my sincere prayers towards the Gohonzon. My success in each endeavor is a proof of my sincere prayer. Today I can share that if you pray with deep conviction, "No prayers go unanswered".



**Anmol Pradhan  
Kathmandu**

My parents used to introduce me as a short tempered angry young man. I broke many things in my room because anger was not in my control. My parents were worried about me, so my mother introduced me to this Buddhist practice in 2008. I was then studying my bachelor's degree and am now studying Chartered Account.

Earlier I didn't feel like attending the Gakkai meetings and always tried to run away from it. But gradually my inconspicuous prayers brought conspicuous result and found the meetings joyful and enjoyed as well. Deep in my heart, I felt like I was surrounded by good friends and protected. A new hope with courage burns to face life's challenges.

A journey of faith begins with a small step of chanting sincerely. While travelling I enjoyed each step towards victory. Since

## No Prayers Go Unanswered

my childhood I was a sick child so where ever I go, a pocket full of medicine travels along with me. My medicine was my good friend. When people show their sympathy simply saying 'oh! ill boy', it irritated me very much because I was tired of hearing it frequently.

I resolved "If this chanting has got the power, let this cure my sickness." I deeply offered my wish in front of the Gohonzon to be healthy. As I used to hear often at the meetings 'no prayers go unanswered', I felt the power of daimoku which made me strong physically and mentally. My mind was at ease and very much optimistic that generated positive flow in my body. I kept on chanting with deep faith, practice and study and determined to win to be healthy. Finally, I was also able to show the power of daimoku with actual proof. I am free from medicine after 12 years of habitually taking medicine. A fresh departure in a journey of faith leads to a healthy living.

Besides illness, there are many challenges to face in my life. My family is facing huge debt that brought disharmony in my family. My whole families are members and chanting but why is there disharmony and sufferings in our life? I used to feel lonely and depressed. Gradually problems dragged me once again to my lower life state, got short tempered and one day I broke my but sudan in anger. I was deadlocked and blinded with frustration.. Leaders came to

my home and encouraged me to be strong and optimistic. As Gakkai member, we should not be defeated. Now, I have engraved sensei's 'not to be defeated' spirit in my life and stand again to challenge and determined not to run away from problems. I am able to take every challenge as a good opportunity in my life. I believe and take every phenomenon as reflection of my past and present life. I fell many times but my prayers lifted me from the ground to challenge again with much vigor and joy. Now I am pretty much confident to face any challenges that lie ahead of me and would also like to thank Gohonzon for choosing me to face that sort of problem.

With this vigorous confident in me, I am able to do my best in every work. Inspired by my workability in my work field my colleagues, friends and relative appreciates me and my work. It made me feel like a sparkling star among my colleagues. Today I am marching ahead facing the challenges in life. Transforming my karma and keeping a goal to be a good human, today I have established my own educational academy and consultancy with my own knowledge, skill and sweat. I've also opened one recruitment agency focusing on the unemployment situation facing today's youth in Nepal. I am eagerly working hard to achieve my goal of adding one more digit in 5 digits in my earning and declare in the next General Meeting.

## A GREAT SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY

I was assigned to go to Pokhara with Young Men's Division Chief Mr. Arjun Rakhali to conduct the 17<sup>th</sup> YGM meeting. When I was asked to go Pokhara I felt very happy and immediately agreed, however, in the end, due to my office responsibilities, I had to cancel my visit. The importance of my attending this meeting to encourage the Youth there brought out my sincere prayer to the Gohonzon and I finally made my way from Kathmandu to Pokhara to attend the meeting! It was the first time in Nepal SGI history that we were to conduct Youth Division General Meetings in four separate locations. I was very excited that it was to be carried out in this way and was filled with a great sense of responsibility.

On 14<sup>th</sup> of March I, along with the YMD chief set out for Pokhara. After eight long hours of travel we finally reached our destination. We were warmly welcomed by Young Men Mr. Dipendra Gurung and MD Block Chief Mr. Musang Magar at the bus stop. As we were going to conduct a workshop and General Meeting on the same day we had lots of work to do so we were very busy with planning. Members from Pokhara also visited that evening to help in working out all the details for a successful meeting. Afterwards we did a vigorous Gongyo for the total success of the YGM meeting.

On the next day, the 15<sup>th</sup> of March we awoke in the early morning ready to conduct a joyful meeting and I can still see all the members wearing their great smiles beaming with hope. I felt so happy when I saw the many members in attendance.

The meeting started with a half an hour prayer followed by a joyful welcome by our MC Miss. Rabina Parajuli. The meeting began with a joyful Gakkai song "Sanskriti Shanti ra Sikshya ko lagi" and afterwards there was Ikeda Sensei's daily guidance read by a YWD member Sarla Magar and the strong determination of Machhapuchre shared by YMD Mr. Dipendra Gurung. YMD chief, Mr. Arjun Rakhali focused on the theme of "Stand Alone Spirit" and I myself shared the national determination of Youth. The experiences of the members were really admirable and encouraging. Finally, we had encouraging guidance by the District Youth Coordinator and a few words of thanks by Mr. Musang Magar.

After that there was a wonderful cultural program presented by the members of Pokhara which everyone enjoyed very much. The YGM meeting ended with commemorative photographs and refreshments.

After half an hour break we conducted our next session. This was a 'workshop on work'. There were sixteen participants including us. All the participants were from different fields; bankers, hospitality, teachers. Some had their own businesses



**Sabina Shrestha**  
YWD Chief

and others were students. Since the workshop was activity based everyone enjoyed this time immensely and I was happy to see that they shared openly their experiences with each other and encouraged each other. Several of the members commented that the workshop made them feel as if they had known the other participants for a very long time. All were encouraged and moved by the activity to implement what they had learned in their daily lives.

After the workshop I requested that all YWD remain for an hour as I keenly wished to speak with each individual as it was not possible to visit each one in their homes. I am very thankful to those 6 YWDs and 2 student division members who gave their valuable time after a day-long program. YWDs and YMDs went to different locations in the hall. Mr. Arjun Rakhali led the YMD meeting and I the YWD group. First everyone introduced themselves and we shared our personal experience. Listening to everyone's experience was really encouraging and the hall was filled with deep emotion. I would definitely say that everyone attending made a fresh determination to lead a kosenruffu movement in Pokhara.

On the last two days of our stay myself along with Mr. Arjun Rakhali had the opportunity to visit some members in their homes and we are so happy to meet them and their families.

Lastly I would like to give thanks to Nepal SGI for providing me with the opportunity to go Pokhara. It was a totally amazing experience for my life as I learned many things and was happy to share my experience of Buddhism with my beautiful SGI friends of Pokhara. Last but not least I would like to thank Mr. Musang Magar and Dipendra Gurung for all their painstaking efforts and also thank all the members for making the meeting grand success.

## The faith in the mystic law changed my perception of work.



**Dipendra Gurung**  
Pokhara

*"Small things matter. What may look like a small act of courage is courage nevertheless. The important thing is to be willing to take a step forward."*

- Daisaku Ikeda

After the completion of bachelor degree, I started my career as an intern at the bank where I was recruited as a staff after 4 months internship and transferred to head office. Work at office was not as easy as I had expected. Working late hours under the pressure and seniors discrimination among employees discouraged me and other employees. Then the smell of frustration rises and few resigned from job and others are seeking to change the department. I was also one of those victims. I was so much frustrated that I was almost ready to quit my job.

During my internship at branch I had made good relation with one of the employee who turned to be the member of Nepal SGI and introduced me to this Buddhist practice. Though I couldn't understand the chanting on the very first day, I was encouraged to attend next meeting which filled with vigor and confidence in me. Positive attitude of members, encouraging sensei's guidances and member's experience gradually motivated me to muster faith in the Gohonzon. The faith in the mystic law changed my perception of work. After sincerely chanting, I am much determined to face challenges at my work place, to continue whether my boss support me or not with full dedication to my work. I made a vow to myself that I would perform my

duty honestly, faithfully and with full dedication. The change in perception brings joy at my work. Then one day my boss resigned from his job. And the new in-charge took his place. Everybody was satisfied because the newly recruited in-charge treats every employee equally. After one year I was turned as a permanent staff. And at the same year I was promoted twice. I was so thankful and pay my gratitude to gohonzon for which I developed a strong determination during my hard time and got success in my work.

Besides this, I was also a shy nature person. It was very much difficult for me to speak in front of group of people. I used get so nervous and lacked confidence. After attending regular SGI meeting, senior leaders and friends encouragement helped me to share news from newspapers, Sensei's guidance and health issues from NSGI Times on every Saturday meeting. Slowly and steadily I started to gain confidence. I still find difficult to speak in front of crowd but I won't hesitate to speak. No matter what the consequence is but I am trying my best.

## A spirit of standing alone: A spirit to be together

JENISHA MANANDHAR

This year youth of N-SGI celebrated 17<sup>th</sup> General Meeting at four different places with a total participation of more than 300 members with their families and friends in Illam, Hetauda, Pokhara and Kathmandu. On 22<sup>nd</sup> of March, youth division gave the final mark to an event at the Kathmandu Peace Centre. Naswa Ranjit and Kajol Bajracharya initiated the event with a warm smile and guidance. Altogether there was a total participation of 300 members with their families and friends. They called upon Grishma Chitrakar for the welcome speech and the victory report. She heartily welcomed everyone and presented the victory report of general meetings at Pokhara, Illam and Hetauda. Different workshops were undertaken at each of these places based on the topic: Love, Relationship and Work. Members at these places shared experiences and made the meeting worthwhile there as well. Chitrakar reported that pictorial presentations were shown at the side of the stage..

After the victory report, came an amazing dance performance of Saraswati and Sabita Sapkota on the song Nakacharo Dailai. Then Ms Monica Shrestha came forth onto the stage to share her experience. The experience she shared touched every heart in the hall. She had CA exams to prepare at that time along with taking care of her mother suffering from breast cancer. She shared how her prayers helped her gain the strength to deal with the circumstances and the way miracles mend the situation making it easy for her to prepare for studies and even secure high marks. She said, "Obstacles help you shine and



Members in Pokhara

strengthen your faith in Gohonzon." There was another experience from Anmol Pradhan who talked about the inner behavioral changes he went through and also the failures he had to face. He put forth, "I realized my potential then after



Members in Kathmandu

All I needed was motivation and encouragement which I am getting at the moment from my friends of SGI." He is also trying to solve unemployment problem by establishing a recruiting agency.

Then, Smarika Upadhyaya stepped onto the stage for a song. She sang so beautifully with an ease that every heart in the hall was filled with her song Jaha chhan Buddha ka Ankha. Right after that was another song by Matina Shakya, supported by Rojit Shakya on guitar. She sang Let it go with her melodious voice that lifted everyone up. N-SGI has indeed got beautiful nightingales! The next performance was by the students from Ikeda International School playing the National Anthem and 'Shoulder to shoulder' song through mouth piano and madal. They gave a wonderful synchronized performance throughout.

The theme driven by youth this year is "Standing Alone- Together". In order to share what the theme is all about Matina Shakya, our Youth Division Chief was called upon the stage. She presented standing alone in a positive light and explained how togetherness in standing alone helps to create happiness around. After this, there was an experience from Abhinav Dhakal. His experience was related to education and his achievement

in his field of study. His hard work and prayers helped him secure highest possible rank in his studies. Every hand was clapping with joy for the victory he achieved. This experience was followed

by the experience of Yoko Aoki Japanese, member who shared her entire experience of prayer, Kosen-rufu, in Nepali language, overcoming all her language barriers.

Youth of N-SGI are very talented and then we were treated to the even more amazing talents of the women's division who performed a splendid drama about a change that N-SGI brings in a person and the necessity of understanding in family. Jhilmil (Kanta Rijal) and Asharam



Members in Hetauda

(Sushila) were unforgettable. "I am in love with Asharam," laughs Perishma Sharma as she watches the drama with great interest. The audiences were laughing their heart out because of the typical Newar tone having Asharam and bubbly Jhilmil. It was followed by astounding dance performance on 'One breath, one life' by the youth members. The dance was pleasing for our eyes and very well choreographed. Likewise, the next performance was a song by the members. While they were singing on one side, there was a pictorial presentation of work undertaken so far under the initiation of youth division on the other side. The works were all dedicated for the well being of society and the song pulled upon the strings of our hearts and left us with goose bumps on our bodies.

Arjun Rakhil Magar, YMD Chief, came forth to share the determinations of

this year. Determinations were to make the way of youth a training model, continue the work done last year, and undertake home visits and many more.

As guidance is what all need for our betterment, Anjali Basnet, VGD was called on the stage for the guidance. She said, "It is a great cause of pride to see you all grow." She shared the importance of courage in life to achieve whatever one needs to achieve. Likewise she talked about the importance of commitment and how one should never forget it.

The 17<sup>th</sup> Youth General Meeting was more youthful and filled with enthusiasm this year. It clearly portrayed that youth division is filled with talented people-talented in anything they do. This year it was different to previous years in every possible way from event schedule to presentation. The event was indeed a tremendous success.



Members in Illam

# Treasures of the Heart

Among the vast number of parables in Buddhist literature, SGI President Ikeda wrote an essay around the core teachings of Buddhism and their relevance to our daily lives.

## The Sun Rises on the Horizon

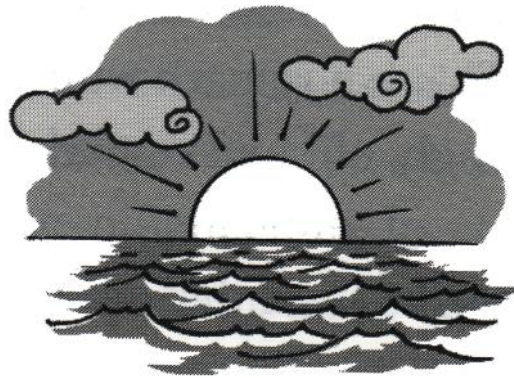
I am a native of Tokyo with a typically frank disposition and so I often find myself an easy prey to deception. My teacher, Josei Toda, used to console me, saying, "It's better to be deceived than to deceive others." At the same time, he added that you cannot be a great leader unless you have sharp insight into a person's character.

At any rate, it is very difficult to know a person. In many cases, you cannot judge a person by his appearance alone. Even if you think you understand a certain individual, you might be surprised at the spiritual depth he unexpectedly displays on some occasion. When it comes to understanding the depth of human nature, you cannot grasp the innermost core of a person through just a casual association. Constant companionship will nurture a deep friendship, which will develop into deep mutual understanding and humanistic growth.

A person betrays his true personal character by the company he keeps. An ancient sage stresses the importance of having wise teachers and good friends, saying, "If you want to know what a person is like, take a look at the friends he has. If you want to know what a ruler is like, look at the subjects he has surrounding him." Just so, a person with an attractive personality draws good friends to him, just as a magnet attracts iron. Thus, friends can emulate each other and help to improve one another.

Recently I read a newspaper article with the headline 'Child-raising Mothers Are Isolated'. It refers to the recent rise in popularity among young mothers of the 'Friends Wanted' column printed in a childcare magazine. This phenomenon shows that many mothers have an earnest desire to make friends so that they can have heart-to-heart talks, as well as support and improve one another. Young mothers are busy doing family chores and raising their children and are more likely to be separated from society at large.

Moreover, think of the value of friends from a lifelong perspective. After your children are old enough to go out on their own and you must begin to consider yourself an independent person, how spiritually rich and colourful your life will



be if you are among friends who mutually inspire each other.

Nichiren Daishonin, too, makes a statement about friendship in one of his writings: "You have associated with a friend in the orchid room and have become as straight as mugwort growing among hemp." In other words, when you associate yourself with a man of high virtue, you are able to develop yourself into a person of good and upright character. Indeed, true companionship brings about the abundant fruits of life just as fertile soil ensures a rich harvest.

**That is why man needs wise teachers and good friends. Sometimes they use harsh words to cultivate your growth, while at other times they give you warm encouragement, like the sun. Only with such people is it possible for a man to live a life full of satisfaction. Then your life will be like the brilliantly shining sun that smiles upon us from above.**

Shakyamuni Buddha in one of the sutras likens a good friend to the rising sun on the horizon:

Monks, all of you are aware of the way the sun rises in the morning. Prior to the sunrise, the eastern skies begin to glow. Then a huge flaming light emanates from the horizon, and soon the sun begins to rise. In other words, the brilliant eastern skies signal the sunrise's imminent appearance. In the same vein, when you monks aspire to the noble eightfold path to nirvana, there are also certain omens. They are the possession of good friends. Those of you who have good friends will, with certainty, master the noble eightfold path and acquire virtuous attributes.

I think this is a beautiful and apt analogy. I have visited India twice and have observed the sunrise there on several occasions. My heart filled with emotion when I thought of Shakyamuni Buddha, who had preached the truth to his disciples a few thousand years ago, as he had looked at this same sun.

Shakyamuni himself is called "the wisdom to become enlightened without a master", a person of Buddhist wisdom who become enlightened without a teacher. However, this enlightened man must have known the human being to the core. Man is fragile; left to his own devices, he can never master the correct path, let alone attain enlightenment.

That is why man needs wise teachers and good friends. Sometimes they use harsh words to cultivate your growth, while at

other times they give you warm encouragement, like the sun. Only with such people is it possible for a man to live a life full of satisfaction. Then your life will be like the brilliantly shining sun that smiles upon us from above.

The bond of friendship is one thing, and the relationship of family members or neighbours who live in the same community is quite another. Blood relationships or relationships based on geographical proximity are, in a sense, passive and fixed. On the other hand, friendship is something you positively seek out and cultivate. Unless there is constant mutual effort, the friendship will deteriorate and ultimately fade away.

A consistent, firm, beautiful friendship sometimes extends beyond racial differences and national boundaries. In this sense, I feel that a person's company is a mirror which most vividly reflects the degree of the depth, integrity and creativity in the way he lives.

A renowned man of literature once said: "A true friendship means that no matter what you may say, your friend never misunderstands you." In the course of a longstanding association, distrust may sometimes naturally creep in. However, trust is not something you demand first from others. As you yourself continue to have deep trust in the nature of others, you will, in due course, be able to acquire true friends.

Buddhism is based on faith. Even Shariputra, known as the foremost in wisdom among all of Shakyamuni's disciples, attained enlightenment through faith. Shakyamuni constantly urged his disciples to associate themselves with good friends in order to cultivate "faith", and his words seem to me to be those of a perceptive man who had a complete grasp of man's inherent strengths and weaknesses.

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