

## Smiles for Nepal - Educational support activities carried out in Japan and in Nepal

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This is the report I wish to give True Mother on educational support activities for Nepal carried out in Japan and in Nepal. I visited Nepal for the first time in 2014 when I participated in a study tour hosted by the Youth Federation for World Peace. It was a short ten-day visit, but the beautiful Himalayas and the children's bright smiles inspired me. In that study tour, we visited an elementary school and held cultural exchange programs. Moreover, I met my new Nepalese family and received so much love through the Sisterhood Ceremony and homestay, which have become unforgettable memories for me. At the same time, I could not forget the harsh educational environment the children were in due to poverty.

After returning to Japan, I joined the "Smiles for Nepal Project," a volunteer group organized by second-generation members. I worked on activities focused on educational support for Nepalese in Japan and abroad. Since college students conducted our projects, collectively, we were short on experience and everything was a challenge.

On April 25, 2015, within a week of when we were planning to visit Nepal, a magnitude 7.8 (Richter Scale) earthquake struck Kathmandu and we had no choice but to give up our plans. In a state of escalating concern, we raised donations for disaster relief and reconstruction and sent the money to Nepal.

### **The high price of education**

A year later, in March 2016, I went to Nepal during my last spring vacation from college. This became a major turning point in my life.

When I was reporting on our activities in the home of then-national leader Mr. Ek Nath Dhakal, Mrs. Dhakal showed me a video of a girl in a school uniform. The girl, who appeared to be around eight years old was crossing a racing muddy river by swinging on a branch like Tarzan. She explained to me, "She wants to go to school. But she must cross this river to reach her school. Every year, some children fall into the river and die."

This video confronted me with the fact that some children must risk their lives to receive an education, the most fundamental and universal human right. International aid agencies have carried out programs for decades, but nothing has changed. I realized that nothing fundamentally will change as long as humanity remains unable to eliminate the heart to expropriate and to deprive. In other words, we cannot change the world without True Parents' teachings and the blessing.

## **My stint as a missionary**

I decided to join the Cheon Il Guk Youth Missionary program because I wanted to practice True Parents' teachings. In April that year, I headed for Argentina with the fourth class of Cheon Il Guk Youth Missionaries and went through a training period that has now become one of the most precious periods in my life. I testified to that experience and what it meant to me in July 2018.

## **Reinvesting in Nepal**

Returning from Argentina, I got back to the Smiles for Nepal project after an eighteen-month absence. In September 2016, while I was away, the Smiles for Nepal Project invited three Nepalese (a school principal and two students) to Japan for a study tour. This gave students from both countries great opportunities to develop themselves. The students held countless internet conferences until late at night to consider the schedule for the study tour. They also scrambled to gain advice and cooperation from many people and enterprises. No one had recommended they take this on. This bunch of second-generation members simply wanted to do something worthwhile, to be effective, make a difference. Through this project, those young members gained a sense of personal responsibility.

In September 2017, we invited four Nepalese to Japan for the second study tour. The third study tour took place in August last year when three Nepalese came to Japan. We have never had an overabundance of volunteers or financial resources but support always arrived at the right time. Two Nepalese students attended a second-generation workshop after returning to Nepal. Another student's parents received the blessing under the care of Nepalese members.

I have always wanted to report to True Mother about our project. I wanted to tell her how grateful I was for her allowing me to work for Nepal, for guiding me every second, and for making me learn a great deal through challenges.

While the Nepal Summit took place in the main hall, we held the Youth and Students for Peace (YSP) symposium in another hall. There, I gave a presentation on the "Smiles for Nepal Project" as a Model S!NERGY. [Students x Ideas x Energy A presentation focused on introducing innovative ideas and creating synergy between fields (music x peace, fashion x environmental issues, etc.) and among people.] I spoke about my first visit to Nepal and gave an introduction about our projects such as the study tour. I called on the Nepalese students to stand up for their country. (Now is the time!) True Mother was not there to listen to my presentation, but I was able to see her at the blessing ceremony in the main hall that afternoon. I was tens of meters away from True Mother in the large hall, but I was happy just to be sharing the same space with her. Furthermore, I never imagined I would see her in Nepal. Seeing her there touched me beyond words.

I never thought this would happen when I first came to Nepal five years ago. I am sincerely grateful to True Mother for letting a young second-generation member like me participate in the providence to the best of her meager ability. I will keep up my efforts so I can one day report our activities in front of True Mother!