

I want to do my utmost

Ten years have passed since he came to Japan from Nepal. In that time he has gone from lowly dishwasher to 32-year-old entrepreneur who owns 27 restaurants, a travel company and a real estate company.

At a mere 32 years of age he owns 27 restaurants, most of which are in the Tokyo metropolitan area. In addition, he operates a real estate business and a trading business. Let us find out about his success and dreams.

Tominaga : May I ask why you chose Japan instead of Europe or the US when you decided to go abroad?

Bhatta: One reason is, Japan is a Buddhist country in Asia and Buddha was born in Nepal. So I felt at home. But the main reason was that I was interested in the fact that the resource-poor nation had become the world's second largest economy in the 50 years following World War II and I thought there must be something I can learn from them.

Q: When did you start to be interested in Japan?

As a teenager, I watched the Japanese TV drama, "Oshin" that was broadcast in Nepal. The title character and her constant battles to overcome innumerable obstacles really struck a chord with me. My grandmother used to say that I was like a typical Japanese because of my meticulous nature. These words are etched in my memory.

Q: Was the first job washing dishes at a restaurant to learn about management skill while attending graduate school after you came to Japan?

Initially I was hired as a server because I was able to speak Japanese. But I decided to switch to a lower paid dishwasher position in order to learn every aspect of the restaurant business. I worked very hard as a dishwasher, and I felt my toil was appreciated when I got a raise in just 3 days. Then I asked for the position of server as the next step and was accepted. In one year I worked at more than 60 restaurants. I still keep more than 30 pay stubs from that period.

Q: Most of your restaurants are contemporary Japanese. May I ask why?

Say 1% of the Japanese population, if that, might want to try Nepalese cuisine, and there's no guarantee they will come back for more. But with Japanese food, they eat it every day here. I thought I could add my own twist to the existing management style of a Japanese restaurant.

Q: I heard you conduct thorough research of the neighborhood before setting up a new restaurant.

When the same menu was served in more than 50% of restaurants in a given area, I adapted my menus to follow suit.

When I research a very popular restaurant, I check for the most popular items and add them to my menus. You usually get what you pay for a restaurant. So I felt guaranteed of success if I could serve foods of the same quality at an affordable price.



BHATTA BHABAN Executive Chairman/ CEO, TBI Co., Ltd.

Our goal is to follow our 'love and peace' motto to create a company which is appreciated around the world.

Q: You own 27 restaurants right now and every one has a different concept with a different name. Why?

There is a risk attached to running chains. If one of them has an incident which harms its brand name, the whole chain suffers. Another reason is that people crave variety.

In the case of my restaurants, my customers could end up at two of them in one day without knowing they are under the same ownership. People always look for new restaurants and it's not only about food. Therefore I decided to grant my managers, the freedom to create restaurants in their own style.

This provides motivation, too.

Q: Did you like Japanese

food initially?

No, but I ate it every day to find out why people liked it. The major turning point for me was when I tried natto and raw egg over rice and found it delicious. There is a common saying: "When in Rome, do as the Romans do." In Nepal there is also a saying that when you go to the blind, shut your eyes; when you go to the lame, crawl instead of walk. My father told me this when I left my country. I made a vow to like Japan. If you love someone, then that person will love you back. The same applies to trust. I treat all of roughly 800 employees with this philosophy.

Q: What is the secret to your success?

I wanted to do business with a team instead of alone. The famous warlord *Nobunaga* said, "I don't have any talent, but I have 100 samurai warriors who can die with me for a cause." This is my favorite saying. Money is not the only asset; I have team members such as Ryoma Yamada, the most reliable partner. They can share my enthusiasm. I consider my employees to be "family" members.

Q: Recently you started a real estate business in addition to your restaurants. Could you tell us your future vision?

I came to like the Japanese word "Kansha" meaning "appreciation" after I came to Japan. I learned the spirit of hard work and raising the bar. I want to keep pushing myself by expanding into 100 different fields. In addition, I want to pass what I have learned on to many people including children in Nepal. That's why I established BB Trust in 2007. And I am planning to set up a new foundation here in Japan. Then I want to contribute to the development of education, economy, culture and art of Nepal as a chairman of *Non-Resident Nepali Association (NCC JAPAN)*.

I would like to get as many individuals and businesses as possible involved in this cause in Japan. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all people who are supporting my activities; customers, business partners and, above all, "my family" and my friends. For further information, please contact Inter-Pro Corp at interpc@cure.ocn.ne.jp