LETTER TO THE EDITOR

YOU CAN YOU DO IT, DOCTOR!

Dear Editor,

Your editorial entitled "The Association of Medical Professionals: Need to Appear Free from Any Bias"¹ was not only intellectually stimulating but challenging too. I appreciate your editorial for its core ethical content, commitment to the professional integrity, and above all, for the concern how to uphold the medical professional neutrality in the dominating environment of partisan politics.

Long ago I had read a story piece entitled Adalat Chalu Aahe by some very famous Marathi writer (I remember this much now) in Hindi. In the story a rebel, who was imprisoned by the establishment and was in cuffs, save the life of the daughter of his own cruel jailer. The jailers' daughter was in delivery pains, and the rebel, no need to say, was a medical doctor. You will agree, I do not need to write the ethical lesson of the story.

However, my worry relates more to how to protect the integrity of the medical profession than just to make comment saying the medical doctors run their association election in panel and they are politicized from the very beginning. One of my personal friend, who was many times President of Nepal Engineers Association, has repeatedly been telling me how the political parties' president and general secretaries have been nominating persons in the imperiously formed panels to fight elections in the medical associations.

So in order to protect the NMA's professional ethical integrity

(dharma), which is basically the professional ethical works and identity of its members, the starting point should be the law. Respective law should clearly stipulate that the office bearers and executive members of NMA will be elected on the basis of their individual professional standing, and not on the basis of panel, party membership, affiliation or ideology. The NMA should incorporate the legal provision in election code as well. As the media is there, it will be very helpful in exposing the partisan political affiliation of the person contesting the election. But what when the media itself is partisan? So after the required legal provision, we must have to go back to the political parties and campaign for appropriate and sustained reform within the political parties. Because no body including the political parties is above the law, the 21st century's medical profession in Nepal should be guided and regulated by law. Therefore, value of the rule of law for "health, human rights and conflicts" must be well reflected in the upcoming ANEMECON-22.

Your said editorial thus has raised a reform question of a fundamental nature. Please keep your dharma up.

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REFERENCE

1. Editorial. The association of medical professionals : Need to appear from any bias. *JNMA*, 2004; 43 : I-II.