From the hills to Himalayas

An experience worth sharing

College was finally over and the last 3 months were really hard. I was very excited to get a 6 months leave and again worried about how to spend such a long time. The days were going real slow for me as I was used to spend time in college with friends. I just watched movies and played games but eventually it became boring. I wanted to go on a long trip and I thought to call my friend uzol who was also willing to travel. We never went on any trekking trip before but heard a lot from others so we decided to go on a trek but the big question was Where and When? I was born in the valley and never really travelled outside valley other than few places So, I was clueless about where to go. But, uzol was from a beautiful place Dolakha(A mountainous district of Nepal) and he had a dream of going to Tcho-Rolpa(A glacial lake at 4540m) but things never added up for him. So, he decided to go there and I agreed immediately. We decided to leave after a week so that we could get enough time for preparations.

Finally today was the day to start the trek and I don’t remember sleeping the last night as my mind was full of many questions and thoughts regarding the trip. As we planned to meet on the bus park by 7 in the morning we got there by time. I still remember the short hair I had, black ray-bon, a bag filled with clothes and a big boot. We were filled with excitement and we couldn’t wait for the bus to depart. The bus trip was worth remembering as half of the time I was scared to death and at the same time amazed to see the beauty of valley as it was first time I was travelling to northern part of Nepal. Imagine going through the high hills on a narrow curvy road on a bus filled with people everywhere and the driver who aims to overtake every single bus ahead of him it was one of the scariest thing for me but as I could see the beautiful sunshine on those majestic hills and green rivers flowing across them watching such a beauty I was soon lost in place where the noise was gone and all I heard was sound of water splashing on big rocks and the birds singing. I was lost so deep that my mind was flowing with the river, my heart was singing with the birds and my soul was feeling the warmth of those reflected light from the hills. I could feel the air outside it was something new and amazing for me. The air was so fresh and the beautiful smell from the deep forest were flowing with the air into me. Finally after a long ride on the bus we reached charikot(District headquarter of Dolakha). The trek was only beginning but I was already filled with adventure and I couldn’t wait for more. The night on the hotel was amazing as we bought lots of drinks and snacks and we had many things to talk about the trek.

It was the time for us to take a different bus to lambagar(the last bus stop). As we went further and further I could see the number of houses decreasing but more people with smile on their face. After a long ride the journey finally came to an end. I couldn’t see much outside because as we were little late to get the bus and we ended up having last seats. Unfortunately, we couldn’t make it to the last stop as it was raining and the roads were really dangerous to drive. So, we had to stay at a place near lambagar. There was a hotel where we got a room. A hydro power construction was on-going in that place So, it was populated with many peoples and vehicles. It was very noisy over there and you could hear the explosions, noisy vehicles 24/7. After going to our room we got changed had some food and went for some sight-seeing. Being a nature lover it was really sad for me to see the state of that place. Some people were happy as it increased their business but some were sad to give away their sleep and to see their beautiful landscape getting destroyed. We went to bed early that night as travelling in the bus made us very tired. We couldn’t bring any cameras but uzol had his iPhone and he was very proud of the camera. We thought to charge it overnight and use it to take only few pictures. The next morning when we woke up I saw that the charger is unplugged as I mistakenly kicked it when I was asleep and all we had was 18% battery. That day I knew how mad a person can get. We had to buy few medicines, an umbrella and few biscuits to eat on the way. The shopkeeper asked us where we were heading and he was shocked to know that we were going to Tcho-rolpa. He said “It’s impossible for you guys to go there on your own and specially without any maps, guides, trekking stuffs” and the next question he asked was “Where else have you gone for trekking” obviously the answer was nowhere he started laughing and wished us good luck and advised us to go back home. We were really shocked to hear that from him anyways we were already starving for the adventure and we ignored what he said and started our journey.

Finally, the trekking started after walking for few hours we saw a sign showing way to Tcho-rolpa and we went according to the signs. It was the end of motorways. There was a big hill ahead of us and we had to go through the stairs to reach to the top. It took a while for us to reach at the top it wasn’t an easy thing to go through so many stairs with a heavy bag pack. At the top was a village called Simigaun. The view from the top was really beautiful the hotel we stayed last night looked very far away and the river looked very small but still we could hear the sound of the flowing water. There was a small hotel where we stayed to eat some food and to ask directions, advice for the trip but we heard the same thing as the shop keeper said us in the morning. We thought we couldn’t make it and as the food was very expensive over there and they said it would be more expensive as we go up and we were low on budget. It was completely opposite to what we expected, we thought since it’s a village the food would be cheap. We wanted to make our first trek successful. So, we decided not to quit. There was a porter with us on the hotel and he said that he had a friend who tried going up there but he couldn’t make it and came back. After having our food, we started hitting the road and after walking for about 40mins we saw something so majestic, brave and so pure. It was a big mountain shining with some gold flakes on its peak because of the sunlight. I started feeling something different something strange I believe I will never have words to express it. It was the first time I saw a mountain so close. As we were walking we came in a point where we had two directions. Now, we were in big trouble we waited there for few hours in a hope to meet someone and ask for directions but not even a single soul and I believed we should be taking the way towards the hills and uzol preferred the way towards the river we used rock paper and scissors to decide and uzol won. I was complaining and arguing about my logics as it was hard for me to accept his choice. Finally, we got to meet some people going towards Dolakha and they said we took the right choice if we took the other way we would end up in a village that was 2 days far and no settlements on the way. Uzol started buzzing on me about it and I had to bear him the whole way it was not an easy time. You know how it feels when you lose an argument with your friend for which you think you had strong reasons.   
 After a long day we finally reached our destination where we planned to stay. We were surprised to hear about the money we had to pay there for the night as it was per person not per room and we were on budget so that was hard for us. We had no choice so we ignored it and decided to enjoy as much as we can. It was really cold so all we did was sat beside the fire listening to the stories about the mountains which were amazing and we didn’t realise how fast the time went. It was the first time for me that I walked so much it was nearly 10 hours on those high hills and rough terrains. My leg started feeling numb in the midnight it was very painful all my muscles were aching a lot but on the other hand uzol was ok having a good sleep. I thought my legs need some rest and I tried to fall asleep but I couldn’t because of the pain. In the morning it didn’t go as we expected I thought I couldn’t walk but uzol helped me and we decided to move on slowly. As we were walking the hills got bigger and it was cold, the river was becoming more calm but it was more deep the river in the mountains defies the laws of physics they were colourful as blue as the sky and somewhere as green as the grass. After a walk of few hours there was a bridge that had only few knots holding it and a big river with freezing water was flowing fast under us. It took us a bit of courage to make it through the bridge but it was worth it. The track ahead was completely filled with beautiful rhododendron’s. It was like walking in red carpet for us but it was the invitation from nature. It was like a stairway to heaven. The weather in the mountains are very unstable it started raining all of a sudden and I was using an umbrella to help me walk as I was having problem with my legs and when I tried to use it I realised that I had broken the top of the umbrella and it’s not working now. In the middle of a dense jungle we had no place to take a shed so we just walked.

No phones ringing, no horns, no noise it was just the rain the river, mountains and the trees on the jungle singing such a melodious song that took my soul somewhere away from me I was falling so deep into it that I could hear the echoes of rain and feel the rhythm of those dancing leaves. This time it was my heart smiling not the face. I felt like all the empty spaces on my heart is getting filled. The place was so quiet and so peaceful. It was tough in the other hand as well walking in those small tracks while it was raining. I slipped so many times on the way that I had to use my both hands and crouch to walk. The rain finally stopped and there was a beautiful rainbow as we walked we were getting closer and closer. It was not the same rainbow that I used to see in Kathmandu the colours were strong it was big and it was special. After a long day we finally reached to a village where they had big solar panels so we asked if we could charge our phones as we had no battery to take any pictures and we got the cheapest thing to eat once again it was boiled potatoes. We were having boiled potatoes for the whole time. Since we heard that they have telephone over there so we thought to give a ring to our families because of no phone networks we couldn’t contact them. When we went to the phone booth we got to know that it was 50 rupees per minute to make a call and if we ask to make a call from our home it was 25 rupees. It was really shocking for us because it usually costs 2 rupees per minute in Kathmandu. We had no choice but to make the call Uzol ranged his parents and asked them to tell my parents as well that we are okay. We went back to the hotel and asked for the bill. It was really shocking to see the bill. We were charged 250 for the potatoes that was fair enough but there was another 500 and it was for charging our phones. They told us that it’s 500 for full charge and 250 for half that was unbelievable. We tried our best to convince the hotel owner saying we had no money to pay we are in a critical condition. He believed us but we had to pay 500 in total. For us that was the most stupid thing for which we have paid on our entire life.

We left the hotel and started our journey the steps were getting shorter and the breathes even shorter. We were at an altitude of around 3800m that was the highest for both of us and it was extremely cold. As we went higher we could see no vegetation’s at all those dense jungles became yesterday’s story. All we could see was big hard rocks and a cold desert. It wasn’t so appealing as we thought. Suddenly I could feel something touching me and waking me up again and again giving me the energy to continue my journey. I looked up in the sky and it was like white small feathers coming from far away falling form the blue sky. It was the first time we saw snowing and we got so excited that we forgot all the hurdles and obstacles we went through. Every single day we experienced something new something different. Walking in the snow was a lot better and easy one compared to the rain. We finally reached the last village after which there was no human settlement. Houses were made up of stones there. I wonder how people lived there as there was nothing to grow no forests, for me it was impossible to live there but when I saw people over there with a big smile on their face I realised that I was looking for a luxury not a reason to live. We went to a hotel there where we were greeted nicely because they told they haven’t had any customers in a long time. They expected a lot form us and gave us fancy menus but we told them our story and asked for boiled potatoes again. They weren’t much happy about that. They had a store filled with chocolates bars, noodles, biscuits it was nothing less than a grocery in Kathmandu the only difference was there was an extra 0 in the price. The chocolates were around 500. It was really hard for us to convince our stomach which was getting only boiled potatoes from last few days. We slept early as we had to go to the lake and head back down at the same day. Early in the morning we woke up hungry and we could see those foods staring at us I couldn’t stop myself so I decided to steal something as they were asleep. We robbed few noodles and chocolates that was worth around 3000. I was never scared that much in my life. I was feeling guilty and selfish at the same time. My heart couldn’t win over my stomach so we kept all of them on our bags and we headed for the lake.

The beauty over there was something different there were no big rivers neither big jungles but we were surrounded by big mountains all over I felt so safe to be protected by the big mountains. The journey was now different and hard we were at around 4100m. I started feeling dizzy and sick. I got altitude sickness it was like my eyes were getting closed slowly. I felt like my whole body is freezing slowly and I was barely able to make any step. I was in a really bad condition but I thought not to give up as it was so close but yet so far for me. I barely managed to make few steps. Uzol was not affected by the altitude sickness he was ahead of me. He thought that I should not come any further and we should stop as I was getting worse and worse. But about 800mtrs away we could see a unique landscape and thought that might be the lake. We made a choice to go up to there and then stop the journey. He was faster and he reached there before me. I was asking him if he saw the lake but he didn’t answer. I was struggling hard to reach there I hardly managed and when I reached there I could feel the tears coming through my eyes and my heart was beating as fast as it could we were so happy. Despite all the troubles we finally made it. There was a big white mountain and on its lap there was a beautiful lake it was so big and clean. I could see the sky so close from there. We have a slogan in Nepal “Heaven is myth Nepal is real” that was the day I started believing it. We stayed there for couple of hours clicking few pictures listening to our favourite songs and we enjoyed those noodles and chocolates. It was time for us to head back. It was worth the effort for us. Since, we barely had few moneys left with us we had to walk as fast as we could and it was downhill so we made to simigaun late night on the same day. There the hotel owner was kind and she was happy that we made it to Tcho-rolpa and she charged us as less as she could. In the next morning we made it to the bus stop for Kathmandu we barely had enough money for the fare but we somehow managed to make it. On the bus I was thinking about how my life got changed so fast.

Till yesterday I was travelling somewhere and now I am back to the usual life. For me it has been the most valuable experience that I have ever earned in my life. I still remember every single moment as they are deeply rooted in my heart. I have learned something which I could never learn in any classes that I take. It was the time that I spent for me. I realised the importance of food and the opportunities that I was getting. I learned many things by experiencing from there. Without uzol it was impossible for me to complete the journey. A friend in need is a friend indeed.