

Journey through Mustang: A Trek of Unexpected Adventures

(5-25th JULY)

My trip to mustang was a very unexpected unplanned trip. It all started with a simple plan to obtain my citizenship and then do the Tsho Rolpa trek in my village Dolakha. But the weather wasn't supportive to my plans. I stayed the night in my village hoping for a better weather. Next morning, I waited till around 10am. The weather was still very cloudy and raining a bit too, due to bad weather condition and landslides I had to cancel my plan. I changed my plan to Upper Mustang as that it was rain shadow area which meant it hardly rained even during the



monsoon season. So I took a bus to Kathmandu which was 7 hours' drive from my village. And then took a micro to Pokhara, I reached Pokhara around 1:30 at night, stayed the night there, and googled the night away researching about upper mustang trek. I only slept like 2 hours as I had to catch an early bus to mustang. I Started my journey to Mustang at around 7 in the morning. The Journey took about 10 hours. My initial plan was to stop in Jomsom but I learned that the bus went up to Kagbeni. So I planned to stop there instead. I reached Kagbeni at around 5pm in the evening. After a grueling 24-hour journey on a local bus, I finally reached Upper Mustang. Despite the exhaustion, the stunning views along the way made the long tiring travel worth every moment.

The next day was when my adventure began, my first stop was Chele, it was 15km of walk, altitude above 3000m. I started my day early in the morning at 6am by walking around the village admiring the mountain that was peeking through the clouds. I then started my walk for the day at 7:30am, all energized by excitement. Not even 10 minutes of walking I passed by an old man stopped me and asked me where I was going I told him that I was walking up to Chele, he was doubtful considering how he saw me walk and told me 'I don't think you'll be able to walk all the way there' I told him that I'll keep walking until I can't and gave a big smile and walked my way. I encountered many other skeptical villagers



who questioned my ability to make the journey that also solo due to my unique condition – I have polio, my left leg is smaller and shorter than my right normal leg, so that makes me limp when I walk. I had jeeps offering me a ride but told them that I wanted to walk and enjoy the landscape and nature. I followed the map on my phone, walking trails all the way. I didn't want to walk the gravel road way. But there were so many trails that ended up nowhere even when the map was showing there was a way. I later realized that the rain had covered the trails, so



what I had to do was slide down the loose sand gravel hills down, and this happened multiple of time which I enjoyed a lot, not the getting lost part but the sliding part. There was one point where I got lost for nearly an hour, leaving my only option to slide down to get to the main gravel road, but since there was walls made to stop the landslide I slide till the short wall like 2m high, then proceed on to first throw down my heavy bag pack as I didn't trust myself to jump with it, and then jumped down. Navigating through the trails became a game of sliding down and climbing up loose sand and gravel hills, with occasional moments of getting lost. Which made it even more adventurous, sliding down was fun but climbing up the loose gravel hill was rather challenging, clinging to anything that could serve as a lifeline – plants, rocks, anything that would provide a semblance of support. And some ascent I had nothing to hold unto. I had to check each time if the stone or plant was strong enough to take a grip on to support me, because sometimes as I held unto some rocks and plants, rock, stone would just roll away and plants be pulled out easily. Every grip, every hold had to be scrutinized. This



part of the adventure was a journey of resilience, and finding strength in God, trusting him fully. Amidst the physical exertion and reflections, I paused to capture the beauty around me. The landscape, with its breathtaking views, the sky so blue and the mountain peeking through the clouds. It was astonishing.

After all the descent and ascent adventure I was finally closer to the village, I had been feeling burning sensation on my heels the whole time after 4-5 hours of walking already. Me having a very high tolerance to pain I walk until I could, but now 3km away from the village the pain was intolerable, burning like anything, I opened my hiking boots and saw that my tolerance to pain, and dogged determination had cause a very big blister, I changed to my crocs, which helped a bit. I was very close to the village I could already see it but the pain was too much now. I pushed myself to cross the last bridge and rested for a while in the shade,



and popped my blister because it was too painful, and was getting bigger as I walked more, when I popped the blister blood spilled out. I was so scared that it was something very bad, very worried experiencing it for the first time. The pain was unbearable, cause of the pain and the blister being in the heel area. I took more than an hour more to walk less than a km uphill road to the village full of big stones and gravel. I finally reached the village around 3pm. I felt so relieved reaching up the village, I took the first teahouse I saw, I rested awhile and googled about my blister and what I could do to get some relieve from the pain, I found out that it was still normal blister, and was called blood blister, my first time experiencing a blood blister. I was relieved knowing that it was normal and nothing to be scared of but also worried because it said that it takes a week for pain recovery and two to three for complete healing. My blister felt better without shoes so I was walking around the teahouse with socks only. I had an early dinner and told the tea house owner that I was going to leave early morning around 5am as my blister was going to slow me down. She was so kind, she gave me hot water in a thermos, and a cup for a tea and some peaches telling me that I shouldn't start my journey empty stomach. I then cleaned



my blister with the hot water, and slept hoping for no infection and that the pain would be tolerable that I'll be able to walk to my next destination.

Next morning, I kept on my crocs on it didn't help this time instead made the pain more cause of the sole was pressing against my blistered heel. So using my creativity I improvised by using my socks as insoles inside my boots so my heels weren't pressed that helped a lot and then started my journey fully trusting God that I will be able to do it. My blister was hurting but it was tolerable. I was walking very slowly. Then I passed by a truck that was stopping because the engine had heated up and he was waiting for it to cool down, he asked me where I was going and offered a ride to my next destination. I didn't decline the offer for a ride this time, given the



challenging situation. I hopped on the truck thankful that I found one but also nervous because truck drivers aren't to be trusted when it comes to offering rides to young girls. He started the drive and it was so slow because the truck was carrying stones to make roads in Lo-Manthang (which was going to be my last stop), also wasn't a good truck, and the steep road didn't help either. we also had to stop so many times each time the truck heated and he had to cool it down, I didn't even get off the truck afraid anything might happen if I do, only time I did was when we stopped for lunch, it was a long drive of regretting and nervousness and praying for protection the whole time. I wasn't as afraid when I hopped in, thankful to God for providing the truck in the right time but then after 4-5 hours of drive he started asking unsettling questions asking if I had family back home, friends up the village, if I had boyfriend, oh the lies I added one after another to make myself safe, his creepy questions and change in behavior made me scared now. He was also repeatedly telling me that I go with him till my last stop. I asked him how long that would be and he said that it might be night time by the time we reach. I told him I might stop in the next village, afraid to say a direct no because of his creepy behavior. Thank fully his truck could move no longer and it kept heating, one stop took like an hour for him to let it cool down, I was playing all kinds of worse imagination in my head at this moment. He told me that the truck could no longer go further and needed a fixing and that would take even longer. I took the chance to tell him that I will walk up the next village as it wasn't far



and just some hours of walk. The truck's breakdown became a providential escape, allowing me to leave behind a situation that had taken an uncomfortable turn. Oh how safe I felt walking up to the next village, getting away from the truck. But also thankful that I was able to come till the next village and that it was God who arranged everything from the ride offered to the truck damage from start to stop. God showed me his protection and provision. Sometimes it may not be what we expect but God can use anyone and anything even a creepy driver.

I then reached the next village Ghami, my stop for the night. I had snacks and wanted to go walk around the village, I asked for a slipper in the hotel flat one, as it didn't hurt my blister, unless I stepped on an uneven ground which there was many of but I wasn't going to let it stop from enjoying and exploring. So went around the village it was so beautiful, the houses, colors, I saw many horses one of my favorite animal and also really cute cows you don't get to see in Kathmandu. It was amazing to see how simple life was. No clothing shops, restaurants, no entertainment centers – just people living their simple lives with a profound connection to nature and each other. It was a revelation of how the simplest things can bring immense joy. The village was so small I completed going around in like 2 hours.

Back in the guesthouse I still walked around with socks only letting my blister rest. Had late dinner and my next day plan was to walk the next village Dhakmar only 2-3 hours away. So next morning before starting my journey, I had masala tea 'typical nepali tea' with spices (masala) and as I was the only guest I was offered free breakfast too. I was also offered their traditional



Tibetan tea, tea made with ghee (clarified butter) and salt. When I drank the first sip I wanted to spit it out, it was a very weird taste tea with ghee and salt, but the third fourth sip the taste didn't feel as bad anymore. I then thanked them for their hospitality and headed my way to the next village Dhakmar only 4.6km away.

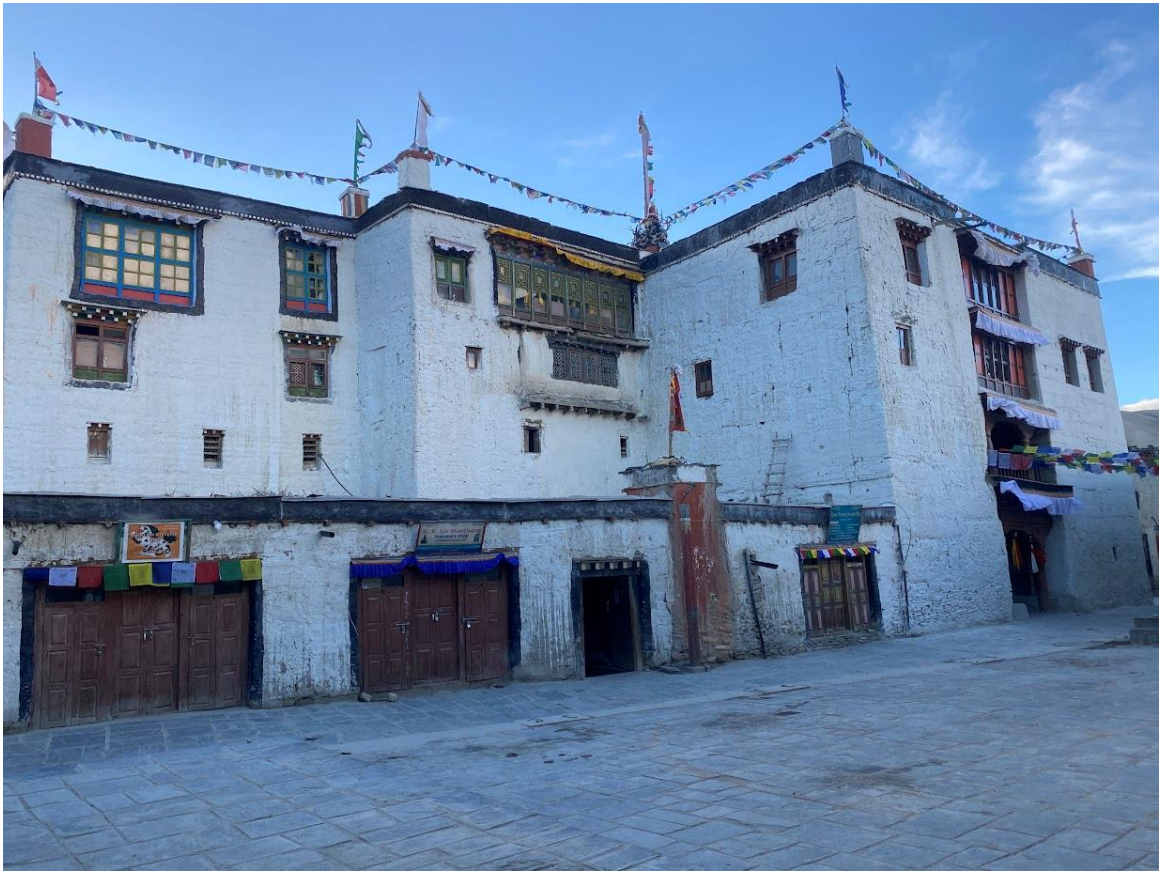
I started walking crossed the bridge, this time avoiding trekking trails as my blister would not be able to take it. I was feeling quite confident as long as it was flat road. I had walked some minutes in, then came a three road crossway, I followed the map but saw no trails to walk in, was roaming around there trying to figure out which way to take, I then gave up and planned just to take the jeep road and see if the map would re-route again. As I was walking I heard a



jeep and it stopped right where I was, I looked and it was the owner of the guest house I had stayed in with his mother in the back, he offered me a ride, I told him I was going to Dhakmar, I got in the truck and then we started talking, he asked me what I did, I told him I was a teacher and teach kids visual art, he then told me that he had a school and would be great if volunteers would come and teach in the school, 1-2 months. I told him that I was on holiday and asked if two weeks volunteering was possible too, and that I'd love to do it if it was. He was very happy and said that'd be great. So I told him that I'll go to Lomanthang and on my way back stop to Ghami and teach in the school. Change of plan again, he was going till Charang my next stop after Dhakmar,



Charang village



Palace in Lomanthang

so I skipped Dhakmar and went up to Charang, from there I took a jeep that only took 45min to reach Lomanthang the last stop of my Upper mustang trek plan. While waiting for the jeep I explored the enchanting village, it was so beautiful, I especially like the colorful painted walls, Apple trees, fields. Upper mustang is the desert of Nepal, but also this is one place I saw everything together, snow mountains, rivers, vast dry land like desert, trees and green fields wherever there was village settlement, it was just too amazing to see. My jeep had now arrived I drove 45min up the last stop in mustang Lomanthang (3800m high), took a hotel, this was the first clean and proper bathroom I experience. Was the best in all of the trip. I went around the village all evening. One of the alley of the village I saw sign 'view point of upper mustang' before I got in I was expecting that I'll be climbing somewhere tall and I get the view, it was a normal house normal family, father of the family giving the service of the view of Lomanthang village his house terrace and sharing history of it charging Rs.50 per person. It was so interesting, I had done some research and knew very little of its history, but hearing from someone who lived it was amazing, he showed me the 6m walls around the Lomanthang village, the village had only 178 houses, mustang had a king till 2015, but the royal family wasn't living in the palace anymore as earthquake 2015 had damaged the palace, and when I say palace it's not the



big gigantic palace like in Kathmandu of any other place. The royal palace, though small by traditional standards, held immense significance. All the houses there were made with mud. Upper mustang is also called as the forbidden kingdom of Nepal, as they didn't allow any outside visitors until 1992. A tourist has to pay \$500 permit to enter upper mustang for 10 days and \$50 each day added to their trek. He also told



me how all of village used to travel to Pokhara for 13 days on a horse back when it was winter, as winters are bitter cold in mustang, and return back when the weather got warmer. I had a really great time listening

to the history and his life and experiences, felt like I had traveled back in time. The isolation of the region had preserved its unique lifestyle and traditions and culture. It has remained pure and unchanged for centuries. After the learning about its history and taking in all the full beautiful views, I wondered around the labyrinthine alleys of the village. This was the only village where I saw many small shops,



clothes shop, small restaurants, shoe shop, food, electronic shop and all necessary ones. I went around the

wall and outside the walls too. It was pretty late and getting dark by the time I was done. As I was making my way back to the hotel I got lost in the evening as all alley all looked the same, I got rounded up in the same spot more than 3 times, finally met a woman who directed me and found way back to the hotel at around 8:00am. Had my dinner and early rest. Next day plan- to explore the caves around Lomanthang.

By the grace of God now my blister pain was so much better. I was feeling confident of being able to walk again, with the support of makeshift blister protection. The cave was 9km easy flat road walk to the cave. So that's 9km up and 9km back to the village. I had breakfast early morning the Tibetan tea, was getting use to the tea, becoming one of the local there. I had the same experience here, people asking me where I was going and If I could do it, the best answer- a big smile. Since I



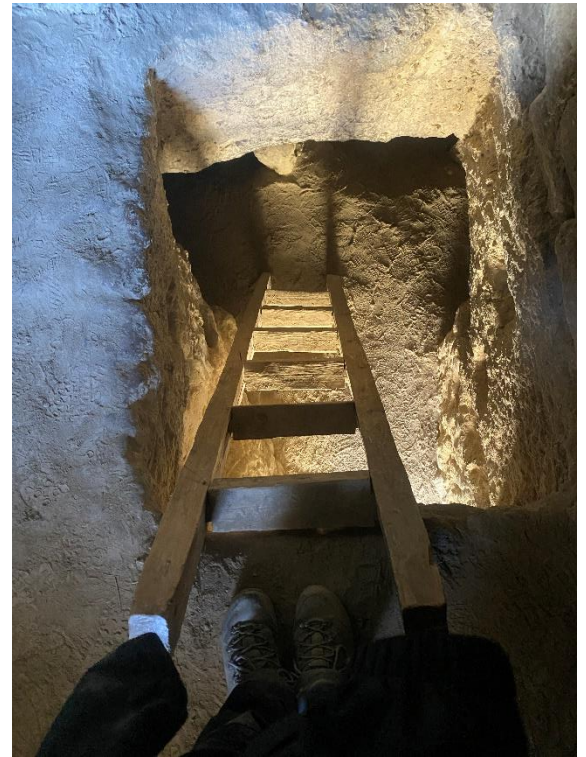
was very small and started noticing I walk different than everyone, I started being aware and sometimes insecure of people staring at me, but as an adult now I'm so used to people staring at me and me giving back a big smile, or innocent kids asking their parents their parents why, how pointing at me. So was the same here in mustang too people staring, surprising looking at me walking up the hills and dry roads all alone. I walked up the road, was such a beautiful view of massive formation of rugged cliffs plateau and snow-covered Himalayan Mountains, wild flowers, rocks and mountains, every forms as interesting as the other or sometimes more. I walked slowly soaking in the views. Along the way the road was so dusty my shoes would sink into the dust, was fun kicking the dust and walking, these small things made my journey even more adventurous and enjoyable. I

Finally reached the cave, these caves are called sky caves, no one knows why or how it was build, later in the time it was also used for meditations, there are thousands of sky caves spread all over upper mustang. This cave had a narrow entrance but as you went up there were different cave room very dark, it was 5 storeyed up with a very steep wood stairs to climb up to, and from space of the cave where sunlight passed through you could see the beautiful rocky mountains and the village too, it was an adventurous climb, I got all



my jacket pants white with the dust as the climb it was as adventurous as the cave itself, it didn't have much

height me just a 5'1" had to bend, and the echo of me thumping on the cave felt adventurous too, some space was too dark I was scared something might pop out of there and pounce on me, although I knew full



well that there were no animals here, the villagers said that foxes come sometimes in the village but they are afraid of humans. How mind works even in a place I know where it's so safe no animals, once I saw dark spaces inside the cave I was imagining stuffs. Life's like that we know we are protected safe in God, but once we face a situation where we are scared, afraid, uncertainty we tend to forget how God is there and that in him we are safe. Someone who never leaves us despite whatever we go through. I stayed in one of the view side of the sky cave hole, soaked in profound thoughts and enjoying the view, while cold wind was blowing. I enjoyed these moments where I would have time to reflect on God, reflect who he is, talk to him, while enjoying his creation. After that peaceful moment I started my way back to the village, this time walking faster as I had walked super slow on the way up enjoying the view taking pictures, by 3:00 I was back to my hotel already. After some rest and shower, I headed down for dinner, the hotel owner asked me about my day, he was very interested to hear It all. And I told him that I was planning to travel back in the morning. He told me that his son was also travelling down to Jomsom. If I had not had conversation with him I wouldn't have known that there was only one jeep that left the village every day, and it was in the morning, my plan was to go around some more and then take a jeep in the afternoon or evening. I'm glad that the conversation happened, because I was usually eating alone as I was the only guest in most of the teahouses I stayed in, this one night I ended up having dinner same time the family was having in. The way God lead me from one place to another, send the right people, the way he changed my plan and guided me all the way to my last destination Lomanthang was amazing. I was going with the flow, later God gave me the phrase 'Going with God's flow' which resonated within me, how much of a difference it made saying 'going with the flow' to 'Going with God's flow'. Reminding me that life's journey isn't always linear or predictable, yet as long as I walked within the current of God's will, I would be sheltered and provided for.

Everything went so great even with plan changing each day I woke up, I plan something for the next day and God would lead me to another, this has taught me to listen to God's voice, to decipher his plans and follow his will and not mine. And that's what makes this trip so special cause it wasn't planned by me, God had his own itinerary for me even before I started. And I was following his itinerary, itinerary full of surprises and adventures, I was only knowing what it was as it was happening, he was teaching me to trust him and have faith in him that he is in control. And all throughout my journey till Lomanthang I could see God was not just guiding me but also walking with me and even carrying me when I needed. He was so ever present the whole trip, I could feel him through the nature, through the winds, the magnificent landscapes. In every step, I felt his companionship, his guidance, and his unwavering love.



So ending my full trip till Lomanthang now it was time to head back to Ghami as planned to volunteer in the school. Even this volunteering was my dream come true, God arranged it for me in such an unexpected way. I took the jeep back to Ghami at 7am in the morning, the journey wasn't long, by 11am I already reached Ghami. Returning to Ghami, I felt the warm embrace of familiarity. I was back in the hotel I had stayed in Ghami. Went in and was greeted with tea, culture of Nepal to greet with tea and some snacks sometimes. Had a talk with the school owner's wife and she arranged for some teacher to pick me up. She said the school was just 15-20 minutes away, it took us more than 30 minutes of walk. I reached the school and was introduced to the principal and some teachers who were free, we worked out a routine where I would take some classes. I got 5 classes a day. The routine was same every day, after finalizing the routine of having 5 classes a day I went to my room to rest. In the evening I went out to play with the kids who stayed in the school cause their house was too far away to travel every day from home, more than half of the school

students stayed in the school, I taught them a new game of hopscotch, traditional Nepal game of jumping on numbered boxes, they were so excited to learn and I too enjoyed jumping and playing with them. Felt like a kid all over again. As the day ended I was looking forward to what God had in store with my school volunteering adventure.

My School Volunteering Adventure:



My school volunteering experience was beyond my imagination. I got chance to teach kids new things, like drawing, crafts, games, new fun activities too. What I felt like they would know they had no idea about it.

First day I arrived I taught them hopscotch. It was new for them and they enjoyed it a lot I taught them new styles to braid their hair, taught how to draw color, new fun games like bingo, number games. I could see they were enjoying learning new things and they craved to learned new things and do something new. Every day routine was the same wake up at 6:30 study, sleep, play, dinner, and the day ended by 8:30pm as there was no certainty that the solar light could go throughout the night, with load shedding time to time. So as I brought in new



games and new fun things to do, some kids would be knocking at my door in the evening anticipating for something new and fun, and for me to play with them. I felt so privileged that I got this chance to give out

and I was in the right place. These kids are Tibetan kids which means they can't have Nepali citizenship but aren't actually Tibetan either. That's why there are Tibetan refugees camp in Kathmandu. And their first language isn't Nepali, they spoke Tibetan language, so I experienced some communication barrier, the kids only used Nepali when they were talking to me and switch to Tibetan mid-sentence as they continue the talk with each other.

While I enjoyed the wholesome moments of teaching and interaction, daily life brought its own set of challenges. The simple basic meal, sleeping and the inescapable smell around the place and communicating. The food was very simple, some nights the dinner was just rice and dhal which is very unusual. Lunch mostly rice dhal and spinach that one of the farmer grew in his backyard, only vegetable I had was spinach and potato radish in the two weeks' time, I had meat once, egg once, and my guess they only bought that because I was staying there as a volunteer. The cook guy said that they



only had meat egg in special time and occasions. They also had a typical Tibetan dinner which was dough boiled and made into a soup which wasn't as bad as having just rice and dhal, it tasted good and was new for me. So that was it the food for two weeks, how I missed having the luxury of extra tasty food. There was no network here, had to go to specific part of the school or playground just to get one line of network which wasn't reliable, Wi-Fi would come and go throughout the day. And there was no light in the evening to all throughout the night, only solar light and light would come back only next early morning or late morning, so no Wi-Fi all night until next morning. But These challenges were an integral part of my experience, enabling me to understand the reality of the place and its people. I was experiencing their normal and it wasn't at all normal for me. I immerse myself fully in the experience, cherishing every simple moment.



Sleeping at night wasn't at all easy with tiny insects biting and crawling on me, I slept with tissue on my ears as I was scared that at night it might crawl up my ears, I could

feel insects crawling and would have to violently shake the blanket and myself to shake it out, peace for some time until they came back again, so I would be awake so many times cause of the insect's bite. And the inescapable smell of the place, it was organized and not dirty but wherever there was carpet really unpleasant smell of feet, shoes and socks smell was there. Every time I sat down to play with them in the carpet, and as I entered their class I would get the strong whiff of unpleasant smell. The mix of carpets, feet, shoes, and socks smell created the signature scent of my experience in the school. The discomfort and unfamiliarity became a place for personal growth, revealing the depth of my own resilience and adaptability. It was all this experiences that made my time in the school so unique, wholesome and so blessed.



I also taught them UNO card game, this was the one they loved the most with the hopscotch game I taught them the day of my arrival, after I taught them UNO I played with them every evening till my last hours in the school. The thing was that they already had the UNO cards but no one knew how to play that it was just there in the room I stayed in. At first I thought they would know as it was in the teacher's room. I taught them how to play, they loved it, we had so much laugh playing it. The next morning it was not even 7am yet and some kids were at my door knocking waking me up, I opened the door to ask them what happened and they said they



wanted to play UNO, I told them we could play later but they insisted they wanted to play. UNO was the hit game, it also gave me have an opportunity to connect with the kids, laugh and talk with them, know them better, create a connection with them. Another was the hopscotch game even boys were playing it now. It was such a good feeling seeing them enjoying what I had taught them. As I played more |with them my connection with them grew. One kid even left a note at my door requesting me to call his parents 'the note said miss please call my parents and tell them to come and bring me snacks' I felt so sad reading the note as parents could hardly come to visit the kids due to school's distance location. Kids see them usually on holiday breaks only. The school closes for three months because of the bitter cold winter that teaching and being outdoor isn't possible for the kids. One kid was also asked me to call his parents to ask them bring him socks

as he didn't have one anymore, I didn't want to break any school rule by calling their parents without the warden knowing, so I just gave him one of my socks which he was very happy about, but I think his main reason for asking was because he wanted to talk to his parents.

Time went by fast teaching them and spending time with them. It was already Saturday. I took a break and planned to hike up Dhakmar the village 3,800m above sea level. It was the village I missed because I wanted to have more time to volunteer in the school. Thankfully it was close by the school village total of 4-5 hours of slow walk. My blister was already healed now I didn't need the makeshift support in my sole anymore, which felt great, to walk in my own comforts again. It had rained the other night which I was happy about because that meant that the hills were more red, and that was what I exactly wanted to see. This was just a whisper thought in my head that how wonderful it would be if it rained I would be able to see the vibrant red cliffs and rocky mountain, and it came true, God heard my wants even when not said aloud just the whisper of it. Every of my thought was precious to God. It was like how a parents when they see their kid want a toy through



window and secretly buys it for them knowing they wanted it and gifts them to surprise them. God my father kept surprising me with the most amazing gifts throughout my journey. It was amazing experiencing God time and again and connecting with him, re-building my relationship with him. Dhakmar is famous for its red cliffs and rocky formation and ancient cave system. As I walked up the village, this was one village where every view every turn of an eye I was blessed with magnificent views. As It had rained the weather was perfect not too hot. But I was worried that the clouds would block my view, But God yet again was walking with me, this time walking in front of me and removing the clouds ahead of me, I walked my views ahead had blue skies, I would turn back to check if it was really happening blue skies following me where ever my view was, and each time I turned I would see except



ahead of me everywhere was covered with clouds no clear view. Blue sky followed me all morning, I had wonderful view, but the cloudy view wasn't bad too, still enjoyed it had its own beauty. I wasn't expecting to see another sky cave, was pretty excited when I saw it and it was a steep climb up, worth the climb the view the cave had as I reached there, I sat for a really long time enjoying the village views, it was breathtaking. After enjoying the view, I made my way down now the view was very much clear already. On my way down I enjoyed the green pastured where horses and cows were grazing, and behind them the wonderful red rocky mountain. I sat there like an hour near the stream, taking so many pictures, enjoying



the horses gazing, this was one of my favorite view from all my trip and I knew I would be missing it as soon as I left so I stayed as long as I could before making my way back to the school again. As soon as I reached the school I was greeted with kids waiting patiently for my return to play UNO. So my evening once again spent playing UNO with the kids until it was dinner time. The connection formed through these games transcended language barriers and cultural differences.

The last classes I had with them I taught them so many new games we played more than 5 games in an hour, they wanted to learn it all. It was so much fun so much laughing, even the other teachers were enjoying as they saw the kids play and laugh. I had art and craft class with the upper grades 5-8, we made paper lantern and later hung it in ceiling of the dining area. And I also helped grade 6 with their class decoration. Seeing kids being so grateful and appreciative made my heart so full. I saw through the kids how fortunate I am to have so good education in a good school, a place where



I was provided materials and could do art and be creative, aunty Dini buying art books for me to learn arts from, as I was interested in arts, encouraging me, I could read and write and had very good teachers too. The kids here when I went to teach grade 1 the first day the whole class of 8-9 students used one small box of pencil color. Every classes everything was sharing 2-3 boxes for 12-13 kids. The thing is its very difficult to transport stationary and it gets pretty expensive, so the materials use in the school was very strict which was very understandable. But more than materials the more important thing was this kids were learning how read and write. They were getting free education, the school was run half by government and half by the village mayor collecting funds. The main warden of the school said that there were only two big school like in Ghami whole of upper mustang, other villages had very small school and there was lack of good teachers in every village. I felt so grateful for this opportunity I had that I could help bring laughers and do new things with kids.



On July 18th there was a program in Dhakmar village, the same village I had hike to on Saturday. The kids had been practicing dances every evening all week. We finished the classes for the day. The kids then got ready for the program. I was wondering how are we going to go, are we going to walk. To my surprise when the transportation arrived it was a tractor. I was expecting a truck or maybe that the kids will be walking as there's no bus, van here. Only trucks and tractor, so if transportation is needed they would call the tractor driver and they would come by and give a ride where it was needed.



We had to wait really long like an hour for the tractor to arrive. While I was still waiting for the tractor to arrive some kids who were staying back came up to me and asked if they could play UNO without me, it wasn't allowed to play without a teacher, I felt sad and made them promised me that they would take good care of it and give it back to me when I returned. They were so happy but had to secretly play cause if other teacher knew we all would be in trouble. The next morning after the program they told me they played all night and was playing early in the morning too. They thanked me so many times for letting them play by themselves too. Seeing them enjoying it that much made my heart happy that I was able to bring something new and teach them something they were going to remember their whole life.

After a really long wait the tractor arrived all the kids and some of us teacher squished up the back and some teachers in the front seat. It was a great fun adventurous ride to the village. After we reach the village the program didn't start as the guys there was fixing lights and arranging everything and it took really long time, they used solar lights, electricity cut is mostly every evening, and fixing up the solar light wasn't easy, took nearly more than an hour. While I was waiting I played with the little kids age 4-5, a cute little boy, we made a plastic fort with a carpet and stayed in while it was raining out, it was such a profound experience despite



not understanding each other's language we made jokes and laughed the evening away in plastic carpet fort with the sounds of the rain. Then the program started at around 8:00pm.

This small kid still didn't want to go in but it had started raining heavily now we had to. I got to see their cultural dance it was completely different for me and my first time seeing Tibetan dance. The kids and the village people performed different dances the whole night till around 11:00pm, one dance, song was nearly 10min long. After the program finally finished it was where to sleep now, return or stay the night in the village hotel as it was still raining a bit. But me and two other teachers we planned to walk back. The walk back to school was also filled with laughter's as we shared our stories and experiences in the pitch dark with only our phone lights, we couldn't even see each other's face. It was such a fun night walk. When we reached school it was pass 12am already.

It was the last day already, as planned I was leaving on Saturday morning, I asked the warden about transportation and it was pretty expensive to reach Jomsom by jeep. The warden then called the school owner and had a talk with him. It seems he was travelling till Jomsom on Saturday, and suggested that I come by on Saturday morning back to the hotel rest and we travel back in the next early morning at 6am on Sunday. I gladly agreed more time with the kids, and my expense saved, I was worried the cash I had wasn't going to be enough if I had to go by jeep. And had to take out some more amount when I reach Jomsom as that's the only place ATM was available, after Jomsom to upper mustang there's no atm. God is so good, he had been my provision whole trip and till the end he was faithful and provided and arranged everything for me. So one more night with the insects haha. It was Saturday morning, I had packed and was ready to leave by 9am but then some kids wanted to still play with me, I planned to spend the whole morning with them, we played all kinds of different games, carom board, cards, specially UNO as I was playing with the small kids the older kids came by with a paper made gift box, they had prepared me a small gift and letter, I was so touched by their show of appreciation. The paper made gift box had a wrist beads band a beautiful one, local hard cheese, and small cute letters, I felt like crying as I smiled and thanked them for the sweet gifts they prepared. I also took some last group photos. And then it was time to leave, As I was leaving kids came running to say their final goodbyes, asking me if I was ever going to come back and teach them again, after all the goodbyes I left one last glance thinking how much I was going to miss the experience here and the kids. How my soul was satisfied, how blessed I was with the whole experience, how my heart was full. Though my



time at the school was short, the impact it had on me was immense. This experience was a reminder how life's most profound moments are often found in the simplest of places, that even in the midst of unfamiliar surroundings, human connections and shared joy, smiles and laughter's can create cherished memories that last a lifetime.

After saying my goodbyes with the kids I walked back to the main village again, back to the hotel and rested. The next morning, I woke up early and then we started our journey down to Jomsom. Mid way of our journey we had to stop, construction was going on and the road construction people told that we had to wait for like 30min, until they laid down the whole drinking pipeline. The school owner who I had travelling back with he got off the jeep and started talking to the people and the main guy there requesting to let us pass through so they covered the side of the road that already had pipe laid down, and let us pass through in less than 10min. I then knew that who I've been calling school owner, he was also the mayor of the village. I was so surprised to know that, because people usually like to show off and let people know firsthand conversation who they are how important they are, but he didn't even mention one time that he was the mayor of the village, just mentioned that he helped run the school with the government. I was really inspired seeing such a humble man doing so much for his village. Not letting his position but his work and contribution to the village show who he is, It was an honor for me to get the chance to know him and through him getting the opportunity to volunteer. How perfectly God lead me exactly to his hotel, and him having to travel that day just when I was leaving too. If I had not got lost that day on my way to Dhakmar I wouldn't have met him, wouldn't have had a conversation about the school, or volunteering as well.

My journey taught me to let go of control and embrace the unexpected. Every challenge, change of plans, and interaction served as a reminder of the beauty in surrendering to God. Through ups and downs, I learned to trust in God's plan to go with God's flow and to trust the strength he's given me and the resilience within myself. My trip to Mustang was not what I initially envisioned, but it turned out to be a journey, an adventure beyond my wildest dreams. Amidst breathtaking landscapes, cultural immersion, and personal growth, I discovered how important it is to let God take control and not only saying let his will



be done but also learning to hear his voice and acting on obedience fully trusting him in faith following his lead by embracing the unplanned. This adventure left an indelible mark on my heart, reminding me that sometimes the best experiences and memories are found and made in the unexpected.

