

## **Journey to UAE: the land of Hospitality**



Winter vacation is generally meant for refreshing our self: a time of renewal. My last winter break was special and memorable: ‘special’ because I got numerous opportunities that makes me feel special, ‘memorable’ because what ever happened last winter were all I have never expected and turned out to be very extraordinary. Amongst all others let me now share about my trip to UAE.

With prayers of my parents, best wishes of my friends, and blessing from above I got an opportunity to represent Bhutan in an international forum, the 6<sup>th</sup> International Scout Gathering in Sharjah, UAE. During my past winter vacations I have been at home helping my mom most of the time and I seldom travel. I have never travelled as far as Phuntsholing let alone going to a foreign land. So the moment I was told that I have to travel alone to UAE I thought it would be a challenge. It is also my first time to travel by flight and I was curious about pretty much everything. On top of that I had to take the flight from Bagdora, India. That was quite annoying yet it was a good opportunity to learn and discover.



My journey commenced on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2014 from Thimphu. I check in at Central Lodge in Phuntsholing in the late afternoon. The next day, as the daybreaks I departed from Phuntsholing leaving behind the natural and cultural beauty by stepping into a foreign land. Descending

all the way from the high hills and valleys I could feel the warmth of the plain gradient. Trucks, Cars, Motorbikes, cows, people and all follow the same trail without any proper order. Just half the way and the car I travel broke off. The driver and myself sought help from several other cars but no one turned up for help. We were in the middle of Chalsa forest. It was quarter to 11 and if any further delay I would miss my flight. So I hired another Taxi. But unfortunately after travelling for 30 minutes I had to stop again for another 30 minutes at the intersection of railway and highway. My first travelling experience gave me goose bump. But finally I could reach Bagdora half an hour before the flight takeoff. I rushed through the immigration procedures and I could board the flight just on time. Even after I couldn't calm myself thinking that if I can pass the next transit on time. However, to my relief the person sitting next to me was a Nepali guy who is also following the same route and flight as me. Thank god, without wasting a second I dose off to sleep.



Three hours spent in the air-jet was enough to reach New Delhi Indra Gandhi International Airport. We landed safely and waited for several hours and again boarded the flight to Dubai. It was 2 AM as we land in Dubai airport. Upon completing the airport procedures I took my luggage, wore my scarf and walked towards the exit where I met my scout mates. And happily I arrived at my camp around 5 AM. After a quick nap it was



time for the actual events to begin. We were warmly received and welcomed formally and introduced to the Camp.



It was a great privilege to be a part of such grand international event. Scout representatives from more than 120 countries were gathered for the 10 days event. I always find myself intriguing to work in an international atmosphere with people of diverse background. So being the lone Bhutanese in the event didn't

make any difference to me. Each of us was instructed to prepare a 10 minutes presentation on culture and tradition. Well, Bhutan is famed for its unique culture and tradition and that was the time for me to showcase our true identity with pride.



The remaining days passed like a second. From Museum to parks, zoos to aquariums, desert to beaches, high rise buildings to skyscrapers, with an unending sightseeing schedules. Set in the vibrant environment, which is as rich in culture as it is in technological advancements, Dubai proudly stands as one of the top tourist destinations. It is also the home to the tallest skyscraper of the world, Burj-Khalifa,

luxurious shopping malls, the famous palm island, world's biggest

fountains and many more. Truly a haven, Dubai is fond of first class vehicles, first-rate hotels, incredible buildings and et al.

We were also given our own space for exhibition. In order to best portray our uniqueness, I exhibited our textiles designs, paintings, photographs of our Kings, sculptures and architecture, currency notes, coins, dagpa and bangchungs, badges and several handbooks of Bhutan Scout with the background of mentse and



khadars. I also light incense sticks and prepared few Bhutanese dishes. I could capture the attention of many visitors and every visitor felt compelled to click at least one photograph before they leave my booth.

What was even more interesting was the International Night where all participants wore their traditional costumes and perform their culture dances. Once again our Bhutanese dress was appreciated and loved by almost all the people gathered there. I felt very proud to be Bhutanese. As a passionate singer I sang them few Bhutanese songs and they were all amazed with the kind of music (dranyen and yangchen) we have. And surprisingly I was awarded The Medal of Excellence during the closing event. It was such an achievement that I have never dreamt of.





Eventually the event has come to an end and it was time to bid goodbye. The past 12 days has made us feel like a family despite our differences. And to depart was the hardest part yet something that we cannot escape from. So we exchanged hugs and kisses, emails and phone numbers, smiles and handshakes, messages and tears, etc and departed to our respective countries. The scouting event was sponsored by the His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan Qasimi.



Upon reaching back at home, I buried myself under the blanket, placed my head over the pillow and recalled the past days. I realized that I have learnt and experienced a lot more than what I expected. Beyond the classroom lessons and teachings it has opened my eyes to the world that is infinite. I feel learning is incomplete without such exposure and where we can socialize and gather are indispensable tools that are pre-requisites for quality education. Let such brilliant panorama remains as long as the world exists.



Lastly, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Director General Mr. Chencho Dorji of DYS, Chief of Scout and Commissioner for giving me this wonderful opportunity. I promise to do my best and impart all the valuable lessons I have learnt to my fellow scouts in Bhutan. In the best of my capacity I will work harder to promote scouting in our country to

serve the nation with utmost dedication.

Thank you very much

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