

## **STORY OF MY MEMORY by Kripa Sigdel**

Writing about memories and experiences that you are fond of is always a good thing. Here's the story of my 5-week experience as part of the 'Studies of United States Institutes (SUSI) program on New Media and Journalism in 2014. I gained special friends, special memories and a very special experience.

Let me start with the pre-story first. It was difficult to be selected. I had to go through an application and interview process. Then, finally when I was ready to depart for the USA on this special course, my happiness knew no bounds!



-Our first "groupie" together.

We arrived on June 22. The FIUTS staff welcomed us and instantly made us feel at home. The feeling of being in the United States and at the University of Washington was such a thrilling experience. The people I met and the time I spent made it more beautiful. I was so attached to that place. I cried a couple of times when I had to leave. (Now that I stop and remember that, I feel embarrassed as well!) But the attachment was so deep, I just didn't want to leave.

It's not that I don't want to be in Nepal. This is where I belong. But the fact that Seattle is just so far away was saddening. The fact that I couldn't visit again the people with whom I spent such a beautiful time, so often was saddening. The fact that spending time in Seattle--where I so wanted to spend my quiet hours sitting in some random chair near to the road and watching people go by--wouldn't happen again (at least at the times when I wanted) was saddening.

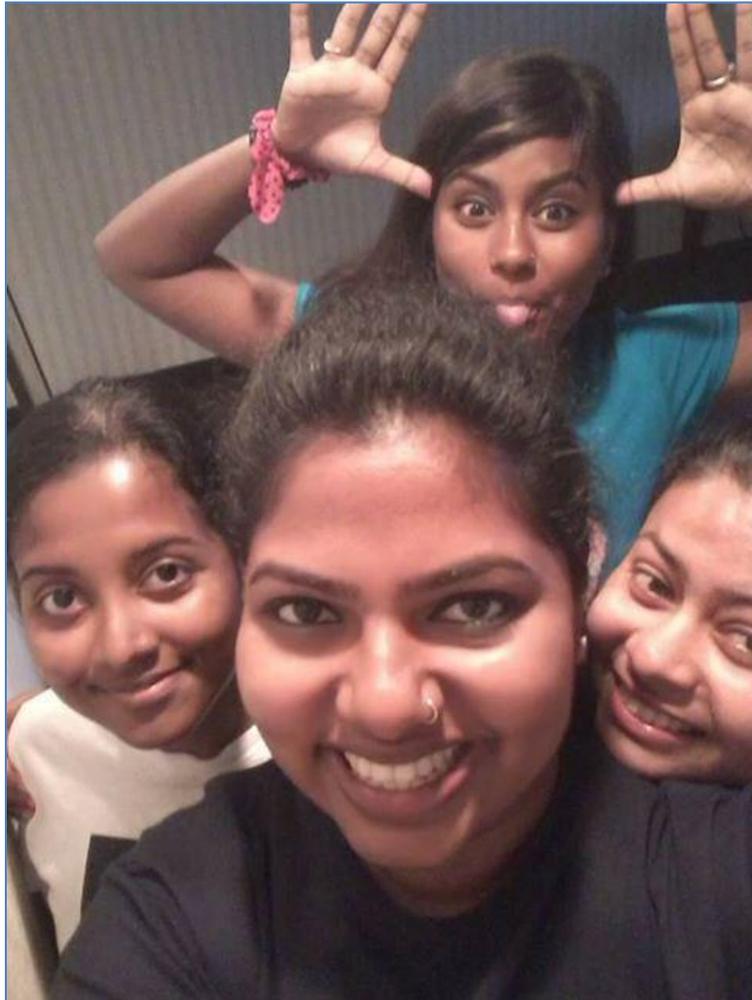
And I cried. I cried even louder when I left. (BTW, I feel embarrassed now when I remember how I cried and spoke at the podium at our last dinner at Seattle. Funny me!)

Sighhhh.....Now here comes the memoire of my journey:

I still remember the first day vividly. A 27-hour flight and red eyes didn't stop me going to my new room and unpacking on the very first day. My excitement was full on! And, instantly, I fell in love with the quietness.

I still remember listening to my roomie and her emotional stories (which I hated when she felt bad about them.)

I still remember my neighboring roommates. And their footsteps in the corridor.



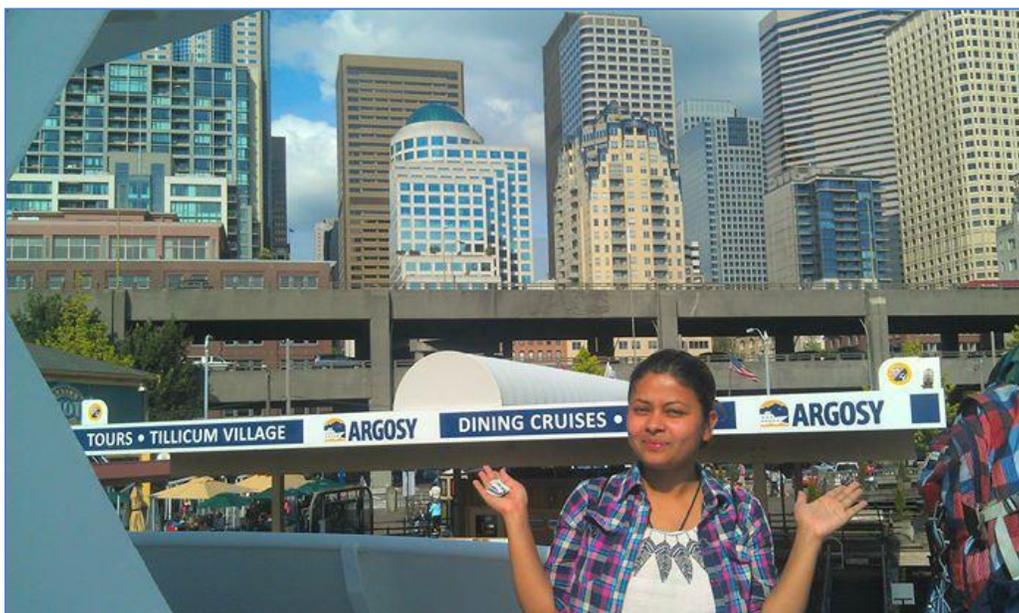
-My co-participants

I haven't even said how awesome the people were. It felt so good to be around such a bunch of smart, intelligent participants, who were some of the most awesome people I ever met. I still have all the memories of the program organizer, FIUTS, and the announcements they made, the trips they took us on, and the smiles they gave us. They didn't make me miss home once during those 40 days.

I still remember those cute and caring ambassadors. They made my life easier and happier in a new place.



-My ambassador-Xinglu!



The classes and university are something I will cherish forever. Our instructors never failed to make the class exciting. Guest lectures they had were amazing. They broadened my horizons and taught me new ways of learning.



-Willis Tower (chicago)



-my friend from India, Mitali Rathod

I remember.. the Chicago trip and the visit to Willis Tower, one of the tallest buildings ever... losing track and trying to figure out maps... and the large portions of food!

The buildings.....! Wish I have words to describe them...

... DC....Congress... the State Department, taking selfies in the White House, the bus trips, the shopping, the metros.... Every memory is so attached.



Everything about the place was special. Everything. No matter how much time we SUSI gang spend time together, the feeling of knowing them was special.



The feeling of being in that place was special. The feeling of knowing so many people from a different land --who accepted you as their own--was special. The feeling of being selected was special. The feeling of responsibility was special.

I didn't know how drastically I would change after I left that awesome place, but I tell you I am not the same as I was before I left Nepal. I left my little part of me there, and I have little part of that place with me.

The experiences I had, the classes I attended, the smiles I got, and the people I met broadened my horizons. I am more motivated and encouraged to believe in myself. American cultural perspectives and their awareness of social issues have made me more aware about Nepalese society and my work here.