

Exams, results & changes!

NEWSLETTER

Dear friends of Stichting Zanskar,

It's time for our yearly newsletter, with new stories by the children. The stories are in English. Most of the pictures are taken by the children. This newsletter is about Galden's move to Jammu, the arrival of Dechen and Angmo as caretakers for the children, the operation on Dolkar, about Lobzang for whom the foundation has been paying the costs of his stay at the Leh Lamdon School hostel for the two previous years, and who now lives in Chandigarh with the others. Disket, Jimmy and Rigzin, of course will also take the floor.



I passed class 11. The exams were in March 2014. I got my results at the end of May, score: 61,8%. I am happy with my academic achievements and was excited to go to class 12 class.

Class 12 is again a state board examination¹, so I will have to work hard to get good marks.

2014. In class 12 we are assigned different teachers. They are more strict than the ones in class 11. So, we kind of had to get used to the new teachers. On the other hand I have very beautiful and charming classmates. We are helping each other whenever needed. In my class there are only twelve girls. We form a nice group. I love them all. They are good at heart and very helpful.

My operation. On the ninth of June after breakfast around nine o'clock I all of a sudden suffered a severe pain. I felt that I had pain in my left kidney. I couldn't stop crying. Angmo and Galden took me to the

¹In India, board examinations refer to the public examinations that occur at the end of the 9th to 10th grade education (SSC), or at the end of the 11th to 12th grade education (HSC). The scores achieved in these exams are considered very important for getting into university, getting into professional courses or training programs, and even possibly in finding employment. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Board_examination)

doctor. The doctor told me that I might have urine infection and he injected me with pain killer twice. I fell unconscious for 2 hours. Galden had to carry me on his back to our house and inside my room.

On the next day we again visited the doctor. This time he told me to get an ultra sound test, so that he would get a better picture of my disease.

The outcome of the test showed that I had a serious problem. The doctor sent me to a gynecologist. It was urgent. The gynecologist told me to go and see a good surgeon at CMC hospital in Sector 17. I needed to be operated quickly. At CMC

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hospital Dr. RK Sharma advised me to get a CT Scan from the Super CT Scan Centre in Sector 8. The thing that was hurting me was diagnosed as a cyst (an extra mass), measuring 10.98 * 9.23 * 5.53 cm in the left ovary.

On the 16th of June I was admitted in CMC hospital. On the first day of my admission the nurse checked my bloodpressure, urine, blood group, etc.

On the 17th of June at 10:30, the operation started. The operation took one and a half hour. Before the operation I was put under anesthesia. After the operation I was put on a glucose drip till the next day. The blood test revealed that my body lacked blood. So they put me on a blood-drip as well: two bags of blood were transfused into my veins.

My sister (Sonam) came to stay with me in the hospital. The rule is that a family member has to look after the patient. My sister took good care of me,

washing my face , feeding me, taking me to the washroom.

I am so grateful to all the friends of Stichting Zanskar for giving me new life. Without all the help I would not have been operated in a healthy private clinic and gotten the care I needed.

I am so thankful to all of you for supporting me. I want to send out my heartfelt thanks to everyone.



Dolkar, July 2014.



Disket

RESULT FOR THE MONTH OF <u>March '14</u>				
SUBJECTS	MAXIMUM MARKS	MARKS OBTAINED		TOTAL MARKS
		THEORY	PRACTICAL	
1. English	100			85
2. Account	100			56
3. B eta.	100			78
4. Eco	100			68
5. Maths	100			65
6.				
TOTAL	352/500			
Percentage	70.47.			



I am admitted in class 12. School is tougher this year than it ever was. I must say that I am not 100 % satisfied with this year's average: 70,74 percent (see the report card above), but I expect to score at least 80 percent in class 12 exams. In class 10, I scored 90 percent. But the subjects I do now are very difficult, hard to master, because of the extent of the curriculum. Especially Accounting is a hard nut to crack. Wish me luck.

Disket

I feel very fortunate to be supported by Stichting Zanskar. Thanks to the foundation I am here in Chandigarh.

Here, in the 'house' of the foundation, I have the opportunity to live with children from different villages of Ladakh and, for a few months a year also with Simon and Saskia. In this setting (in Chandigarh as well as in Leh and Tashi Tongsmom (Ladakh)) I have learned to take good care of myself and others, take responsibility for everything that is given to us for use *as if* belonging to us. I learned to deal with money , and to look after Dina and Zeera, the two sweet dogs that are our protectors and friends.

The foundation has taken us to places of interest, within Ladakh: the monasteries of Alchi and Likir, natural reserves like Tso Moriri and Tso Kar; and outside of Ladakh to big historical cities like Srinagar, Jammu, Delhi, the hill stations of Dharamsala and Manali.

The foundation provides us with good living conditions during cold winters (warm clothes, blankets, heaters) and extremely hot summers (fans and coolers), allows us to live in a spacious house with a bathroom attached to our room and running water, electricity, gas.

We get everything we need. Apart from clothes, schoolfees, the foundation pays for the journey home

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during the summer and back to Chandigarh. The foundation facilitates extra curricular courses (I am doing taekwondo), and extra lessons in any subject, if needed. I can imagine this all being costly, and I realize it being a big concern for the people in Holland, Simon, Saskia and the board of the foundation to gather the means to support us.

Galden's departure: Galden is going to continue his studies in Jammu. Galden is a very responsible, helpful, good person.

He has been managing the house and our cause for

My stay in ladakh.

It was a joyful feeling to meet my family again after a year. But seeing my grandfather made me cry as he was ill since this winter and was in bad health.

Also Leh was not in a good condition as they were doing maintenance work on the drainage system and roads. The market was all dusty and roads were destroyed for the reconstruction.

I spent most of my holidays in my native place Markha valley. There I helped my mother taking care of the field, the small garden, chasing away the wild goats from the field and doing household work. I also roamed around in the village visiting relatives and friends, went to the gompa for some kind of prayers

as long as we are in Chandigarh, since 2010.

I will surely miss his presence. But I guess he will come and visit us every now and then.

He took care of us as a real parent: going to the bank to pay our school fees, coming to parents-teacher meetings, collecting our resultcards, bringing us to the doctor, or the hospital whenever we were sic. He never ever complained.

Thanks Galden, and thanks everybody who made my good life possible.

Disket, May 2014.

held there.

After two weeks I came back to Leh to attain the 33rd Kalachakra^(noot 2, pag. 4). During the kalachakra I stayed in Choglamsar with my grandparents, uncles and aunty. The house was crowded with people as the place was near the gonpa where the kalachakra was held. I came to know more of my relatives there. We put tents around the house and on the roof also. It was a busy time for us to cook for them and serve them.. There were thousands of people attending the kalachakra. And I came back to Chandigarh on the 11th of July.

Disket, July 2014.





Rigzin

I am going to college. The name of the college is Post Graduate Government College (Sector) 46. I am doing my BA (Bachelor of Arts) first year. My subjects are English, HCP (History and Culture Of Punjab), Philosophy, Political Science and Physical Education. I like the subject Physical Education most, both theory as well as the practical. I have participated in the inter-college tournament. I was selected for the college cricket team. I also participated in the boxing inter-college championship. There was a football competition within the college for the first, second and third year. I was in the first year's team and we won the final match. On the day of Athletic Meet I took part in the 800 meter race. I take an interest in sports and games.

There are around 2000 students at the college, and good and qualified teachers. In this college there are around 30 students from Ladakh.

The day I went to the college for the first time, I spent looking for my class rooms and meeting other students.

In April 2014 I had my first year exam. I got 62,5%. So I am in the second year now.

The College opens for students on the 1st of August.

My stay in Ladakh in June.

The day I arrived at Leh I took the bus for Chuchot (my hometown village). When I got out of the bus the first person I met was my childhood friend. His home is just near the road. We hugged each other and I had a cup of tea in his house.

Then I met my family and they were all very happy to see me. For a few days I lived at home as a guest. After that I started assisting my mother and my sister with their chores. I did some cooking, cutting vegetables. I planted around fifteen plants. I went to Hemis for *hala* (it means society work for a whole day as a volunteer). At Hemis they are building a meditation room for the monks. I painted our house: windows and the rooms inside with white distemper.

A few days in succession I went to visit my relatives. I went to Leh to see the work in progress. They are going to make Leh like Manali: there will be no vehicle running in between the markets.

They are making the road from Leh to Choglamsar wider, because of the visit of the dalai lama to Ladakh¹. He will turn 79 this year (6 July), and giving a Kalachakra sermon².

On the day of Buddha Purnima (birthday of the Buddha), me and some of my friends visited a few monasteries. First we directly went to Temisgang monastery. There was a cultural show. There we had our lunch and subsequently went to Rizong

monastery. Then to Alchi monastery. There was a rock show by an army band. At last we visited Basgo monastery. It was a nice trip.

On the 28th and 29th of June there was an archery competition. This competition is being held every year. It is part of the culture of my forefathers. This one was held early because of the Kalachakra².

I also participated in the archery competition. There were around forty people. We had to come with two arrows, a plate and a cup to eat and drink. We had to pay 500 rupees for the two days that it lasted. It was like a kind of picnic. In two days I hit the target eight times.

I really enjoyed this year's stay in Ladakh.

Rigzin, July 2014.

1. For the occasion of the 33rd Kalachakra Initiations by His Holiness the XIV Dalai Lama in Leh, Ladakh from July 3-14, 2014.

2. The Dalai Lama spent his 79th birthday and the days surrounding it delivering a Kalachakra for world peace in a small Himalayan town in the Ladakh district of India-administered Kashmir. In the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, a Kalachakra is an extended ceremony centered around a mandala that aims to initiate and empower disciples. (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/07/07/dalai-lama-kalachakra_n_5564616.html)





Roll No	2280540	Name	JIGMET TSETAN		
Mother's Name	SKARMA	Father's /Guardian Name	SKARMA PHURBU		
Date of Birth	11/05/1997				
Part 1 - Scholastic Areas - Academic performance :					
Subject		FA	SA	TOTAL	GP
101	ENGLISH COMM.	B1	B2	B2	07
085	HINDI COURSE-B	A2	D	C1	06
041	MATHEMATICS	B2	E1	C2	05
086	SCIENCE	B2	E1	C1**	06
087	SOCIAL SCIENCE	B1	C2	C1	06
CGPA					6

2013-2014 was an exciting and adventurous year for me. It was the busiest year ever. I played some important National Football tournaments. But I also kept in mind to score well in class 10.

I participated in several competitions, one of them in Rajasthan, another in Shimla. My moment of 'greatness' was when I played in the Administrator Cup in Chandigarh. I got a chance to play for the Chandigarh V-17 team against the best football clubs in India, like Mohun Bagan AC, NISA Manipur. It was tough to play against these teams, but it gave me a good feeling and great relaxation.

During my important class 10 exams in 2014, I fully gave myself to studying. My tenth class results came out in May 2014. I will be in the 11th. I would like to take arts stream to get closer to what I want to be. I will practice football and study for my 12th class diploma. The coming two years will be crucial years. I will attend every football trial. If I get selected in any of the clubs I will start a life as a professional footballer. If I fail then I will study football and become a professional coach.

Changes in 2014.

2014 was the last year for Galden in Chandigarh. Galden was the right hand of Stichting Zanskar in India. Without Galden, Stichting Zanskar could not continue. As well as being student, he carried the heavy load of responsibility for the younger students of Stichting Zanskar. He was like a father for me. He managed to study and at the same time pay bills, do the maintenance of the house, replacing whatever

was to be replaced, hired labourers, do his part of the cooking, cleaning and shopping, visit our schools on parent-teacher days, do the bookkeeping. So, that had to change drastically. Most of Galden's responsibilities were distributed amongst Disket, Dolkar, Rigzin and me.

Money is now given to everybody to buy things according to each ones task. I have to do the breakfast shopping each morning and the Sunday shopping once a week. And I am responsible for the maintenance of the house.

Life with Stichting Zanskar.

Stichting Zanskar is the biggest support for me. The foundation is supporting me in every way. I am having a unique beginning thanks to the foundation. I was taught to make choices, make decisions.

Decisions are taken by me and Simon and Saskia. And everybody in the house is asked to give his opinion whether in matters concerning the house, or the purchase of something, or the choice of a school, the stream to choose, and the subjects.

This is not a self-evident thing in our culture. Most people, or parents, want to see their children do science or commerce. They don't want their children to go to a polytechnic, or learn a trade, do a vocational training. We all have to become doctors, engineers and accountants. For money and status. We are not asked what we would like to do. Though it's not our parents that are to blame, -they are illiterate in most cases-, it is the Indian system. Therefore the arts

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stream has long been looked down upon.

Saskia and Simon have learned us to see things in a different way. Arts is as important as science or commerce. One can do arts and become a distinguished member of society. With a background in arts, one can pursue career options such as teaching, nursing, social work, law, politics, business, television, radio artist, content writing, acting, designing, singing and

I have been associated with Stichting Zanskar for the past 15 years. During this period the foundation provided me with everything a person needs for living: food, housing, clothes, books, computers, bicycles, travel-money (to go visit friends and family) and of course schooling: fees and whatever is part of school education. Simon and Saskia have always guided me to the best of their abilities, helping me to find out what I wanted and could best achieve.

Being the oldest, I have been entrusted with a lot of responsibilities, ranging from being the treasurer (managing money and bank accounts, paying the rent, the energy-, water-, gas bills, newspaper and internet subscriptions, phonebills, keeping track of the cashflow, doing the bookkeeping (which I find quite a job), going to parent-teacher meetings, make sure every device in the house was working properly, or repaired and replaced when defect. I had to go and find carpenters, electricians, plumbers and other handymen. I did all the big purchases. I had

many more. All important careers. Not to forget that of football player.

I am happy because of the support I get from Stichting Zanskar. I consider myself more a man of the world. I could have never pursued my dream without the support of Saskia and Simon, encouraging me to become a football professional.

Jimmy, May 2014.



chores in the house, like cleaning and cooking, washing dishes, bringing the garbage to the communal waste container, washing the dogs, bringing them to the vets. And still I had to study and have good results. It wasn't easy but I did it all. It was a good learning experience. I have no regrets.

Galden, May 2014.



Galden in December 1998 at the station of Krishnarajana gara in Karnataka.

Galden at the bus station in Chandigarh 2014, waiting for Disket's departure by night bus to Jammu and Ladakh.

I (Simon) agree, that we made considerable demands on Galden. He showed to have great endurance and good organizing skills, always ready to fulfill all the tasks given to him, in a cool manner. In the meantime he got his Bachelor and his Masters in Public Administration. I could see him having a managerial position in a local government, as well as in non-profit and private organizations.

Luckily he is not totally out of sight yet. Even though he is no longer living in Chandigarh, he is still taken care of. From August 2014 he will be living on his own in Jammu, at an eight hour drive from Chandigarh. He will be studying for his Bachelor of Education and at the same time prepare for the Civil Services Examination¹, which could give him a post in

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the Indian Administrative Service of the Government of India.

He will visit Chandigarh anytime he likes, and in December 2014, Simon and Saskia will make the journey to Jammu, to meet him in his new room.

Simon, July 2014.

1.The Civil Services Examination (CSE) is a nationwide competitive

examination in India conducted by the Union Public Service Commission for recruitment to the various Civil Services of the Government of India, including Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Indian Revenue Service (IRS), Indian Police Service (IPS) among others. The examination is one of the toughest examinations in the world with a success rate of 0.1%-0.3% with more than 500,000 applicants. It is conducted in two phases - the Preliminary examination, consisting of two objective-type papers (General Studies and Aptitude Test), and the Main examination, consisting of nine papers of conventional (essay) type followed by the Personality Test (Interview). The entire process from the notification of the Preliminary examination to declaration of the final results takes roughly one year. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civil_Services_Examination)



Galden had a managing task when he was in tenth class in Leh.



Galden as treasurer of the foundation in India, paying necessary bills.



Lobzang

Roll No	2274614	Name	LOBZANG STANZIN		
Mother's Name	PADMA DOLKAR	Father's /Guardian Name	NAWANG PHUNTSOG		
Date of Birth	17/08/1998				
Part 1 - Scholastic Areas - Academic Performance :					
Subject		FA	SA	TOTAL	GP
101	ENGLISH COMM.	C1	C1	B2**	07
002	HINDI COURSE-A	A1	B1	A2	09
041	MATHEMATICS	B1	C2	B2**	07
086	SCIENCE	A2	B2	B1	08
087	SOCIAL SCIENCE	A1	B1	A2	09
				CGPA	8

I spent the year 2013 in Ladakh. I passed class 9 with satisfying results and joined class 10 in March 2013. A very important year people say: class 10 is like a turning point in the life of a student.

My class 10 results were good. I was amongst the top ten of that badge at the Lamdon school in Leh (Ladakh). I was nominated as one of three for a scholarship at the Mahindra United World College in Pune. But finally I was not selected. The year 2013 will never come again. Whatever I did in 2013 I did well. Therefore I have no regrets.

2013-2014. Winter in Zanskar.

It was a cold freezing morning in the month of January 2014. The morning was cold while the sun rose

from behind the snow covered mountainrange.

I came to Zanskar to spend my winter vacation. Here in Zanskar the winters can be terribly cold with temperatures falling to minus 27 degrees Celsius.

Therefore, people are only able to move in a small area around the village, because of the sometimes massive layers of snow and the cold. They are not able to meet their relatives and acquaintances living in the nearby villages. The road connections between villages are inaccessible for months. During the summer and autumn villagers stock all kinds of necessities needed during winter-time. Wood and cow dung cake are the only heating elements in those freezing winters. They are also collected and stored before

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winter falls. Cattle are kept in the homes and fed dry grass. While spending time with my family, I was practicing and preparing for my upcoming exam in March. I had to go to Leh to do my exams.

When it was time to go back to Leh the roads were still blocked. The only way to reach Leh was through Chadar¹.

Chadar.

I started my journey toward Leh with some of my villagers. Some of them accompanied their children that are studying in Leh like me. They also spent the winter holidays in Zanskar. Chadar is the name for the frozen Zanskar river. All day we have to walk on a frozen sheet of ice. The nights we have to spend in caves. We have to collect wood for making food and for light in the caves and to keep ourselves warm. We all bring blankets, cooking pots, food like sugar, salt, flour and rice etc with us. After a four days walk we finally reach Leh. I stayed at my cousin's place for a

while till my exams were over, till I got that call from Galden in Chandigarh. He told me that I had to arrange an air ticket to Chandigarh. I felt very happy and on the 13th of April I flew from Leh and after a one day stay in Delhi I reached Chandigarh. I spent more than a month in Chandigarh and then went back to Zanskar for another month. After that I had to go back to Chandigarh because school was going to start. I joined Shivalik Public School. Being here I am feeling happy and hope that I can do my best in my studies.

Lobzang, July 2014.

1. The term 'Chadar' means blanket in the local language. Large sections of the river Zanskar, which is one of the mightiest rivers in Ladakh, freeze over in the dead of winter and are covered by a thick blanket of ice. This frozen blanket or 'Chadar' is the only way in and out for Zanskaris in winter, when the road and various other caravan routes are closed due to heavy snowfall blocking the high passes. It has been their traditional trade route in winter for Centuries. The seven to eight days walk from chilling to Padum is both challenging as well as an incomparably exiting experience. The landscape acquires a pristine grandeur in winter as the trail enters into the gorge of the Zanskar, where temperatures sometimes drop to -30 to -35 Degree Celsius.



Angmo

Dechen

I am Stanzin Angmo, 25 years old, and I am doing my M.Phil sociology at Panjab University Chandigarh.

How did I come in contact with Stichting Zanskar and the children and Simon?

Me and Galden are friends (we are both from Zanskar). Galden once approached me asking me if I was interested in staying in the house of the foundation with Dolkar and the dogs during the summer holidays. Dolkar wasn't going to Zanskar for some reason. I agreed.

Once, Simon and Galden came to visit me and my roommate Dechen, in our room. Dechen and I shared one room with attached bathroom.

Soon after that, Galden came with a renewed plan: Simon had suggested that we should stay in the

house of the foundation for a year, because Disket and Dolkar needed some female company. The last year had been a bit disproportionate, with four boys, them only being two girls, and they had felt a bit lonely.

We are living in the house since the 24th of May on. Jimmy had already gone to Ladkah for his summer vacation, Lobzang and Rigzin had left the day before we arrived. The beginning of June it was Simon's turn to leave, back to Amsterdam. Finally Galden had to go. We were only three then. But soon Rigzin and Lobzang came back, then Jimmy and Disket. So we are complete again. Seven. Though Jimmy is looking for a room for himself in agreement with the

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foundation.

Soon the situation will be four women, two boys. Let's call it the beginning of matriarchy.

Dechen and me, we are quite happy with our new situation. Disket and Dolkar are too. So, mission achieved. Our stay here is beneficial for the kids of the foundation, because our presence brings them joy, and makes things easier for them. The house is quite spacious and keeping it clean is pretty

Hi, I am Dechen Chondol, 25 years old, and I am a counter attendant at a Cafe Coffee Day shop, at one kilometer distance of the house of Stichting Zanskar (Sector 40A, 200).

I am also a second year student at the Indira Gandhi Open University (IGNOU) for distant learning.

At the cafe I work nine hours per day, six days a week, earning 7.000 rupees per month (\pm 90 euro). Part of my salary is held back by my employer and will be paid to me only after one year. From the remaining money, 5.500 rupees, I had to pay rent, buy food and some other basic life-stuff.

laborious. The girls are eighteen, eager to get some good advice from a couple of older sisters. We enjoy the space we have now at our disposal compared to what we had, a room on the third floor, without a balcony, or a separate kitchen.

Therefore, on behalf of Dechen and me, I would like to say thanks to everybody concerned, for the opportunity given to me and Dechen. It's great.

Angmo, July 2014.

I gladly accepted the offer to live as a caretaker for the girls and boys in the house of the foundation.

This opportunity enables me to save a bit more money, so next year I will be able to spend more time studying without having to worry about work.

I am highly grateful to the foundation.



Dechen, July 2014.



Pictures taken by Dechen, Angmo, Dolkar, Stanzin, and Rigzin.



Stichting Zanskar-stongde Fonds



This avalanche delayed our journey by six hours. We were the lucky ones. The ones in the blue car were less fortunate. (Rigzin)



This newsletter has been written by the children and Simon, edited and compiled by Simon. Format and Layout: Simon Schagen. Photographs: The children and Simon. Final proofreading: Saskia Kunst



For more news and pictures, please visit the facebook page of Stichting Zanskar-stongde Fonds

All information in this newsletter is subject to errors and changes.