



**bijlage 2**

**Brief en  
verhaal  
van  
Wangtak**



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Wangtak, Ladakh – Zanskar, 25-09-2019.

Dear Saskia and Simon,

I hope things are going great at your end. The summer has come to an end here and the leaves have started changing their colours, soon to go for a long sleep.

I have left my job at the Fellowship Programme. It's not because it was a bad job but my desire to be in Zanskar at this time when things will change drastically in the few years to come. Even working at Leh seemed like I had migrated away from the place where I really should be.

It is a major decision and a little bit of risk at least but I am all excited about what lays ahead for me. I along with three other guys have started working on solar water pumping solutions in Zanskar.

We have chosen Pishu, as you know that Pishu completely relies on the snowmelt for irrigation, the village doesn't even have a glacier. In 2018 they had zero cultivation and 61 livestock losses due to scarcity of water.

We started on this project at the beginning of May when the road had just opened into Zanskar. Since then we have visited the village 4 times and we have made a short film with our immature skills but it does a decent job of delivering the problem of the villagers. I attached the link to the video in the mail.

Our primary source of funding was supposed to be a crowdfunding campaign but after approaching the government we have finally been able to convince and secure the funding for all the materials required for the project. We are lifting the



spring water below the village along with the water from the river 1 km up to a reservoir with a head/height of 76 meters. It's important to do now because the roads will soon be blocked and we can't do anything for the next six months.

In a few days, we will be going to Zanskar to actually install and start the groundwork, we should have completed it by the 10th of October this year. I will let you know if it actually succeeds.

Our bigger vision is to work on such solutions in Zanskar and not only help them with their necessities but actually helping them grow plants and crops that could generate revenue soon when the roads will be more accessible. The plantations

and cultivating fodder could not only support livestock but also create bio diversities and carbon sinks in the future when carbon release will be huge for this fragile ecosystem we have.

I will be completely based in Zanskar from this winter onwards. Will be experimenting in conserving water during winter in the form of ice, with the help of the solar pumps. I will be documenting the observations and also film them.

Apart from this exciting project I will be completely running my travel company and I am also partnering with a rafting company to promote rafting in Zanskar.



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The job that I did made me realize that I am not meant for a regular job but to do many things and most importantly to become a bridge connecting what's good with the tradition and the benefits of modernity.

I wish you visit Zanskar again someday soon. I am finally going back to where I came from and it feels great.

With love,  
Lobzang Wangtak

Links

Pishu Solar Powered Water Lifting Project  
(Bring Water and I Will Dance)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=waeoyODv3pQ&t=134s>

Bardo Odyssey

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h\\_tKFQoGc-0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h_tKFQoGc-0)





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## My Story

I was born in a poor family in Zanskar.

When I was young I thought the place where I was born is the entire world. There were hardly any modern facilities. Roads were there but we could only see a vehicle in a dozen days. When we children saw a car on the road we all ran towards the car and we were bewildered by seeing a block walking with four round legs, making a hard sound and people sitting in it. At that time we wished that we would also once have a long drive sitting in this block.

When I was four I went to the government school in our village. We had to learn the English alphabet. At that time I thought: What is the use of learning those funny symbols? I hated school at that time, because early at ten I had to leave for school, come back at four and I found those fun-



ny symbols damn tough.

Sundays came, we left our houses early in the morning, we gathered at the central spot of the village. Then we all went to the village's pond, swam there and made clay houses and we spent the whole day playing. Those were the days when I thought my life would be my village and nothing is bigger than my village, nothing is bigger than that. Now I realize how wrong I was. We went back home when it got dark.

At home, my parents scolded me, saying I should have been back for lunch and I was a bad boy. They let me learn those funny symbols, which I still see every day in school.

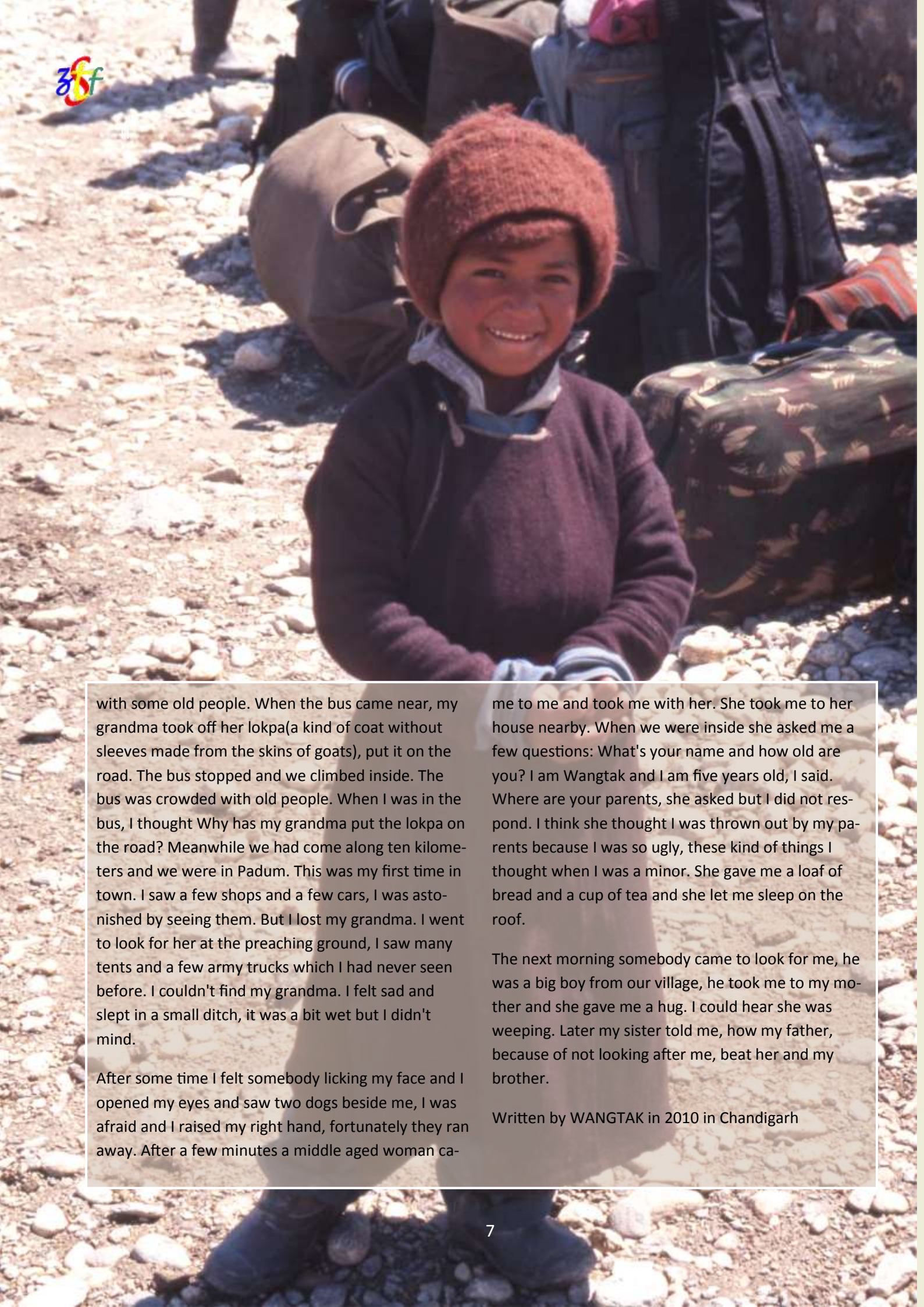
My father stared at the ceiling while listening to the radio, my mother made food for all of us while my brother and sister also had to learn those

symbols, but for them these symbols had become more complicated because they were combined together and formed words.

One thing I cannot forget is the day I was lost in town which is known as Padum. I will tell you the story: We were working in a field, I do not remember it well, but I think it was the harvest period.

My father had bought me a new pair of shoes, pants and a shirt a month before. The next day there was going to be a preaching ceremony by the Dalai Lama and the old people were going to Padum one day earlier and my grandma was going to leave soon as well. I wanted to go with her, and I cried and asked my father to let me wear the new clothes. He was irritated but did not like to see me crying so he told me to go and put them on. As soon as I wore them I ran to the road. Nobody recognized me.

I was there with my new clothes, waiting for the bus



with some old people. When the bus came near, my grandma took off her lokpa(a kind of coat without sleeves made from the skins of goats), put it on the road. The bus stopped and we climbed inside. The bus was crowded with old people. When I was in the bus, I thought Why has my grandma put the lokpa on the road? Meanwhile we had come along ten kilometers and we were in Padum. This was my first time in town. I saw a few shops and a few cars, I was astonished by seeing them. But I lost my grandma. I went to look for her at the preaching ground, I saw many tents and a few army trucks which I had never seen before. I couldn't find my grandma. I felt sad and slept in a small ditch, it was a bit wet but I didn't mind.

After some time I felt somebody licking my face and I opened my eyes and saw two dogs beside me, I was afraid and I raised my right hand, fortunately they ran away. After a few minutes a middle aged woman ca-

me to me and took me with her. She took me to her house nearby. When we were inside she asked me a few questions: What's your name and how old are you? I am Wangtak and I am five years old, I said. Where are your parents, she asked but I did not respond. I think she thought I was thrown out by my parents because I was so ugly, these kind of things I thought when I was a minor. She gave me a loaf of bread and a cup of tea and she let me sleep on the roof.

The next morning somebody came to look for me, he was a big boy from our village, he took me to my mother and she gave me a hug. I could hear she was weeping. Later my sister told me, how my father, because of not looking after me, beat her and my brother.

Written by WANGTAK in 2010 in Chandigarh



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