



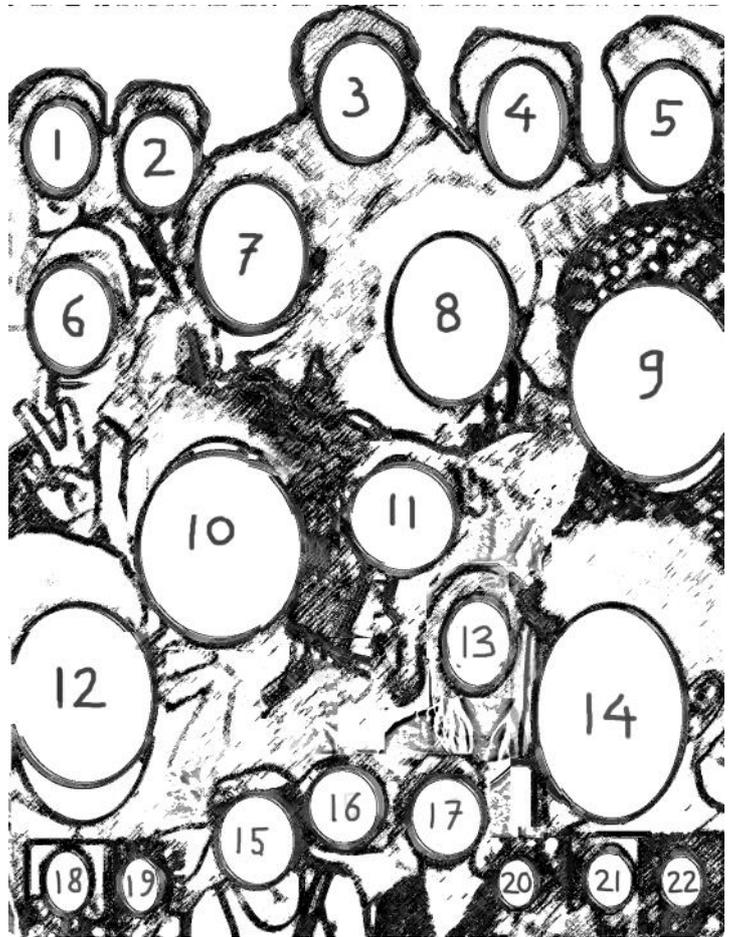
Stichting Zanskar - sTongde Fonds

The Zanskar Foundation

Newsletter August 2015



1. Stanzin Angmo (care taker from half 2014 till April 2015).
2. Dechen (Oshin Oshlma) (care taker from half 2014 till May 2015).
3. Stanzin **Gyatsok** (with SZSF from 1998 till 2011), mountain guide, climbing instructor (Manali Institute for Mountaineering and Allied Sports). Earns his own living. Passed his Jammu and Kashmir State Board 12th Exam in 2012. Studies in Jammu, Bachelor of Arts.
4. Lobzang **Norboo** (with SZSF from 2001 till February 2012). Obtained his Tourism and Hospitality Management Diploma in 2011 at the Polytechnic in Leh. Earns his own living as a guide and teacher. Passed his Jammu and Kashmir State Board 12th Exam in 2012. Studies in Jammu, to obtain his Bachelor of Arts Diploma.
5. Lobzang **Wangtak** (with SZSF from 1998 till 2011.) Earns his own living. Studies Psychology at the University of Delhi.
6. Isha Kumar, (Dolkar's coach, from 2013 till June 2015).
7. Stanzin **Dolkar**, (with SZSF from 2004 till now), will start doing (September 2015) the General Nursing and Midwifery Course, at the Rattan College of Nursing in Mohali, Chandigarh.
8. **Jimmi** (Jigmet Tsetan), (with SZSF from 2003 on), started class 12 at Saint Soldier International School in Chandigarh, Sector 28.
9. **Disket** Chodon, (with SZSF from 2003 on), started studying at the College for Girls, Sector 42 (University of Punjab) Chandigarh.
10. Stanzin **Galden**, (with SZSF from 1998 on), passed his Masters in Public Administration at the University of Punjab, Chandigarh in 2014. Now studies at the University of Jammu to obtain his Bachelor of Education Diploma.
11. Dinah, (with SZSF since 16-5-2011).
12. **Lobzang** Stanzin, (with SZSF since 2012), is preparing for his class 12 diploma at Shivalik Public School, in Sector 41, Chandigarh.
13. Tsering **Angmo**, (with SZSF from 2003 till 2013), passed class 10 successfully. Is married, has a baby of nine months old. Lives in Choglamsar, Ladakh.
14. **Rigzin** Norboo, (with SZSF since 2007), studies at the Post Graduate Government College, Sector 46, (University of Punjab), to obtain his Bachelor of Arts Philosophy.
15. Simon Schagen, founder of SZSF. Committee member from 1998 till 15 May 2011). Volunteer since 15 May 2011 till present.



16. Zeera, (with SZSF since 4-2-2013).

17. Saskia Kunst, founder of SZSF. Committee member from 1998 till 15 May 2011). Volunteer since 15 May 2011 till present.

Committee members since 15 May 2011.

18. Hans-Georg van Liempd, Chairman. (Managing Director - Tilburg School of Social and Behavioral Sciences)

19. Marijke Koggel, Secretary. (Project Manager Capability and Implementation at Stichting Amsterdamse Gezondheidscentra.)

20. Myra de Rooy, member. (Writer.)

21. Gerda Kunst, member since 1998. (Founder. Treasurer till 15 May 2011.) (Artist, lecturer.)

22. Rolanda van der Kooij, treasurer. (HBO nursing + Master in Public Health.)

Dear friends of Stichting Zanskar,

For this year's newsletter I have asked the children to write one or two stories about whatever item they choose, illustrated with some pictures.

Disket, Jimmy, Rigzin and Lobzang have done so yet. Galden and Dolkar came back from Zanskar just recently. Their stories will be added later, in a separate edition.

Yours kindly,

Simon Schagen

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Disket

A Visit to my Family

Like every year I went to spend my summer vacation with my family in Ladakh. It lasted for a month. Usually I spend most of my time with my parents in my native village, but this year I stayed half of it at my grandfather's place. When I just reached his place and saw him, a question rose to my mind: will I be seeing him again: he was really sick and looked very weak.

The funny thing about him is that he only wants to eat meat: he wants us to feed him meat momo's and soup with meat every day.

He can be quite stubborn about it. He will always first refuse to eat what we offer him, and ask us to provide things that are not available during that period.

We have to kind of force him to eat vegetables and fruits.

Still I enjoy staying with him. He's special, his stubbornness goes with humor, and he is very kind.

After my stay at my grandfather's place I visited my mother and father in Markha valley.

I helped them with the household and also did some small works in the fields. The weather in Markha Valley was colder than the previous year.



My uncle, cousins & me.



*The picture of my valley,
Markha Valley.
My village is called Doltokling.*

Counselling for B.Com Admission

Counselling is the process by which students get enrolled in the colleges affiliated to the Punjab University.

The number of students opting for the commerce stream has grown to such an extent that it is difficult to get admission.

I was quite lucky that I got admitted in one of them, nevertheless it was not the one where I wanted to go.

There were also plenty of students, who did not get admission.

This counselling is held at the university itself at the Law Department.

The staff will allot a student a seat at a college according to the marks obtained by the student.

I had to fill in a form online, a month before the counselling.

On the basis of that application a student gets ranked.

On the day of the counselling students had to stay in a row and were sent from one counter to another to finish up the process.

At first I got admitted in DEV Samaj College for Girls.

Just after a week I came to know that there were seats left in the college where I wanted to go.

I was told that I can change till the seats are filled.

I tried twice and at the second chance got admitted in a college, which was my second preference.

It is nearer to the place where we stay. So, I am happy for that.



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JIMMY

Dear sponsors and friends of the Zanskar Foundation, Julley.

It's been another great year for me. I passed my 11th class with good results.

It was a strange experience in the beginning to live on my own. But then I was fine as I got used to it. I was sharing a room with a Ladakhi guy. He was in 12th and he too loves soccer. Life is good in sector 27, it's very near to my school. There are quite a few Ladakhi youngsters living in sector 27.

Soccer

has played an important role in my life. It always has and will have, no doubt about that. It's one of the basic needs of my life. I always loved playing soccer and always will.

I love watching soccer matches of Champions League, LA LIGA, FIFA World Cup etc.

My favourite Club is Real Madrid and my most liked player is obviously Cristiano Ronaldo! He is my real Hero.

I repeatedly dream of and believe in soccer and I am positive about it, it can make my future.

I play in my school team as a mid-fielder. I participate in every tournament that comes my way, whether it is small or big.

During my summer vacation I also played a soccer tournament in Ladakh. It was a great experience to play with my Ladakhi brothers. Soccer for me is not playing a match on the ground, it is beyond that for me. It helped me improving my inner strength, it helped in the development of my communication skills. I became more open to the world. It resulted in a positive effect on my personality. Soccer is beyond a game!

One great player said that "Soccer is Life, one needs Goals"!

SUMMER HOLIDAY IN LADAKH

Going back home after a year is always a great feeling and happy moment for me. I had a very wonderful, adventurous and enjoyable vacation in Ladakh. It was my happiest month of the year. I met my parents, old friends, relatives and so on. The Giant mountains (Great Himalaya Range) always fascinate me and I am so pleased to see them again. One thing I always miss about Ladakh is its nature and its peaceful, great surroundings

Most of the time I was in Leh. I visited some monasteries and the big Stupa (Shanti Stupa) with my friends. We organised a small party in Shey. Shey is the name of a village. In Shey there are a few popular party and picnic spots. I also played a soccer tournament in Leh, we lost in the quarter finals. But we enjoyed it thoroughly.

I went to Pang after some days, Pang is an extremely cold place. It is situated on the highway between Leh and Manali. My mother runs a restaurant in Pang for a few months a year together with my aunty. There are around fifteen restaurants in Pang and they all are made up of tents. So it is too cold to live there. This place stays covered with snow most of the time. Life in Pang is very hard. I'm amazed how my mother resists that freezing cold.

After Pang I went to Hanle (my village). It's around 250 kilometres from Leh. It is very near to Chinese border. I stayed in Hanle for a week. It was one of the most enjoyable weeks of my life. I was there in Hanle during the celebration of the Dalai Lama's Birthday. In Hanle the Dalai Lama's birthday is not celebrated for only one day. The celebration lasts for a week. There are a lot of Tibetan refugees in Hanle.



Taglang La, elevation 5,328 metres, is a high mountain pass in Ladakh region of the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir.



Pang is an useful halt on Manali Leh highway. Basic tented accommodation and food available in the many tea houses on the river bed. This facility is available during the "season" (June to October). Sarchu and Pang are the only places where some facility is available between Darcha and Rhumtse. Stretches beyond are dotted with regular settlements.



THIS SUMMER

During this summer vacation, I visited Dharamsala. I had a very good time with my two aunts, (both of them are nuns), brothers and my small sister.

Going to Dharamsala and spending some time with them has been a good experience for me.

I chose to spend my vacation in Dharamsala because since three years I hadn't seen my sister and aunts. Dharamsala is also a good tourist spot. Its natural beauty, like mountain greenery and waterfalls, attracts many tourists from different parts of the country as well as from foreign countries.

This summer I didn't go to Zanskar because I heard from people that one of the Zanskar river tributaries had been blocked, due to an avalanche of rocks and mud, forming a dam and

lake of 15 kilometres long.

As summer approached, snow from the mountains melted and came down, meaning that more and more water was adding to this newly formed lake.

In the month of May the dam burst and the water from the lake washed away fields situated near the river, - on which people of Zanskar used to grow crops for their living. Many small and big bridges were damaged or washed away and land was either flushed away or covered with a thick layer of mud.

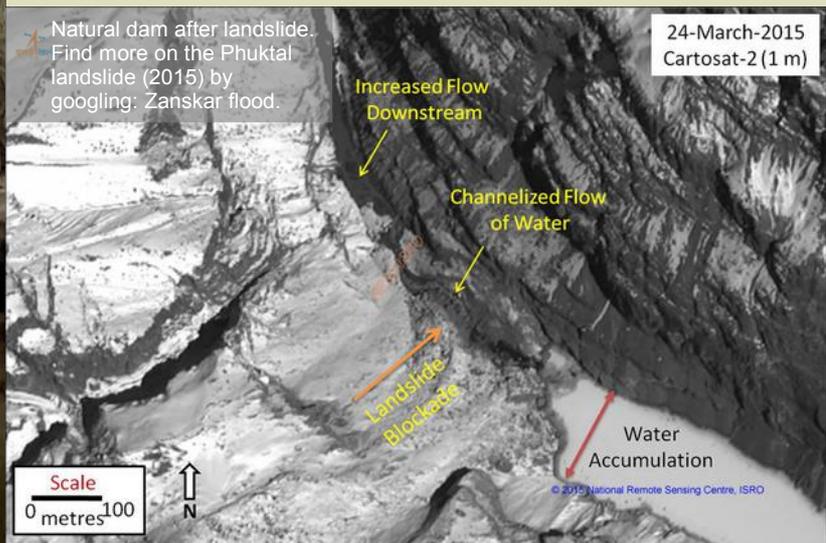
As a result people had to stay in their villages, and couldn't go visit people in other villages.

Our Pishu village bridge is also washed away by this fatal incident. The roads to the village are damaged and people have to walk long distances through the mountains to reach Pishu. So I thought it wouldn't be a smart thing to go there.

There is no loss of life by this natural disaster but there is a huge loss of property which will take a long time to rebuild.

This disaster did not affect the whole of Zanskar though. The areas affected the most are Lungnak and Sham.

I hope that all the damages will soon be restored, but it is also a big problem because of the problematic accessibility of the land and the lacking of funds from the government.





SCHOOLING

I did class 10 in Ladakh. After that, in July 2014, I came to Chandigarh for further studies in class 11 and 12.

I joined Shivalik Public School.

In March 2015, I cleared the last exam of class 11 and started in the 12th class at the same school.

Being a 12th class student, it's my last year of school (before going to college).

It's been such a long journey from the Lower Kindergarten to the 12th.

I am inspired by some good past experiences and learned a good lesson from some negative ones. As we know that time waits for no-one, I can say that my schooling was and still is an incredible journey. During this journey I met different people at different places, some were good, from them I learned good things. I have some good memories that I will never forget.

My first school was in my own village, a school with three classrooms and two teachers. There I have learned the basics of education like playing and working. After that I joined the Marpaling Lamdon School in Stongday. Which is around 20 kilometres from my house. There I spent eight years of my life. After completing class 8, I went to Lamdon Senior School in Leh. There I did class 9 and 10. Presently I am doing 12th class in Chandigarh.

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RIGZIN

Summer in Chandigarh



The months of June, July and August are the hottest months of the year. From early morning on the wind is silent and motionless. The trees and plants are standing stock-still. The leaves are not moving either. The birds and animals are gasping for breath.

The blistering heat is persevering. The sun is getting hotter and hotter every moment. The summer days are becoming intolerable. Even the walls and the floors are burning. Nobody wants to touch them. Everything is excessively hot. At noon the sun is right over our heads, showering us with fire. One drinks water again and again, but still one is awfully dissatisfied. Ice and water are much in demand, but they do not provide the needed comfort to the irritated and sore bodies.

Fans and coolers are of little help, they seem to just circulate the blistering air. A few minutes of walk becomes highly distressful.

The evening gives a little respite from the heat. The temperature of the day comes down a little. People are out in the market and in the parks. They are enjoying the evening and morning very much. It is called Heaven's time.



Summer Vacation in Leh

After I had done the exams of my second year at college I started on my journey to Leh. I took a bus from Chandigarh to Jammu. I directly went to Galden's place in Jammu. I was glad and happy to see him again. As like before he was fit and strong. I had to stay in Jammu for a few days.

It was because of the rain and some landslides on the slopes of the Zoji La. My friend had arranged a seat in a taxi for me. This time the journey went smoothly without any problem. Last year I had a difficult journey. I was happy to see my family.

The atmosphere at our house was different from last year. My father quit drinking alcohol. My mother who is having a mental problem as a result of a truck accident some 15 years ago is taking medicine nowadays. Therefore she is more active and more talkative.

At my parents place I planted a few trees. This is a yearly returning ritual.

I went to see my relatives. I was happy to see them. I stayed at their place for one day.

My friends, of whom some are also studying, were also on holiday in Leh.

On the day of Buddh Purnima (Buddha's

birthday), we went for our yearly trip to Temisgang village, where they celebrate Buddh Purnima at the monastery. On the way back we visited other monasteries, like Alchi, Basgo, etc.

For a few days I went to Colony which is a district of Leh. There they made a new



This picture was taken in 2008 by Simon. I must have been 15.

ground for playing games. At that time the yearly cricket tournament was going on. So I was there watching a few matches, together with friends. I thoroughly enjoyed that.

Then there were only a few days left before I had to go back to Chandigarh. I had to show up around the 15th of June.

Temisgang monastery



Shanti Stupa. It was built in 1991 by Japanese Buddhist Bhikshu, Gyomyo Nakamura and part of the Peace Pagoda mission. The Shanti Stupa holds the relics of the Buddha at its base, enshrined by the 14th Dalai Lama. The stupa has become a tourist attraction not only due to its religious significance but also due to its location which provides panoramic views of the surrounding landscape.

Again I went to visit my relatives. Because they had asked me to come and see them before leaving.

On the last day of my stay in Ladakh I arranged a seat in a taxi for me. These taxi's can take up to nine people and their luggage. It's very crowded and smelly inside these taxis. But we adjust. We have to. The same day in the evening I left for Jammu.

We got stuck at Dras, because of landslides on the flanks of the Zoji la (a high pass that we have to cross. See the picture below). To clear the road it took half a day. We had to stay in the car because it was freezing cold outside. Then I was in Jammu. I went to Golden's place.

Next day I went back to Chandigarh. I was happy to meet with Simon and Saskia.

Dras is the coldest place in India, experiencing an altitude-influenced subarctic climate. Winters are cold with average lows around $-22\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ ($-10\text{ }^{\circ}\text{F}$), and as low as $-45\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ at the height of winter. Summers start in June and go on up till early September, with average temperatures near $15\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ ($60\text{ }^{\circ}\text{F}$) and little precipitation. Annual precipitation is almost entirely concentrated in the months from December to May when Dras gets around 550 millimetres (21.7 in) water equivalent of snowfall.

Impression of the road to the Zoji La (La = pass) (3.528 m)



Descent after the Rothing La (3.978 m)



This is what happens every year on the way between Leh and Chandigarh. Imagine nine people in one of these taxis.



Colofon

Texts on pages 1 - 9:

Disket, Jimmy, Lobzang, Rigzin.

Texts on Cover pages and Colofon:

Simon Schagen.

Photos:

Disket, Jimmy, Lobzang, Rigzin, Simon, Saskia;

Stanzin Angmo & Dechen (Cover page - portraits 1 & 2).

Pictures from Internet:

Cover page - pictures of board members (18 - 22);

page 4 - tented camp Pang;

pages 7, 8 and 9 (except for the pictures of Rigzin (page 7) and of Rigzin and his parents (page 8)).

Lay-out, editing (text and pictures):

Simon Schagen.

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