

Friends of Taktse *UPDATE*

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Nicha Kamnerdmanee came to Taktse from Thailand three years ago as an 8th grader. At first she spoke very little English, but she made rapid academic progress. Nicha recently scored A, the highest score that a student can achieve, on two of the challenging Cambridge International Exams. Her outstanding scores earned her admission to several top Thai universities, directly from class ten.*



University Bound

by Nicha Kamnerdmanee

I have been admitted to Chulalongkorn University, in a Bachelor of Arts program in language and international culture. This program is especially well-known in this university and I'm elated! It's one of my biggest achievements so far (not counting my Cambridge International Exam results)!

When I was told that I got accepted, I could hear my heart racing. This is going to be my new and challenging beginning! I will have to make new friends. They will be really good in English because they have either studied abroad or studied in an international school in Thailand. I'm nervous but excited!

Words cannot express my feelings right now. It overwhelms me. Without Taktse, I would not have learned English, and I would still be the same angry and shy girl I was when I started at Taktse. I overcame hardships at Taktse, and I believe that I'm now strong enough to handle any challenging tasks at college.

Regards to all my teachers, especially Ms. Suman, Ms. Yolmo, Mr. Namygal, Mr. Rai, Ms. Malisha, Ms. Sudha, Mr. Acharya Pradhan, Mrs. Denjongpa, Mr. Lauenstein, and of course my friends, the eleventh graders! Taktse has made me what I am today. Thank you so much for everything!

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Taktse Student Ranks Nationally

Congratulations to 3rd Grader Siddhant Upadhyay for ranking 58th in India on the 2012 National Science Talent Search Examination, taken by more than 100,000 students. He was awarded a Gold medal, two certificates and a Britannica CD. He was honored for his achievement in the school assembly. Taktse encourages all students to enter competitive examinations as learning experiences and supports them to the fullest.





Tomorrow is the Test

by Ngawang Lachungpa, 7th grade

Tomorrow is the test
I better do my best!
I open my book....
And take a look
What in the world? What are these?
Can anyone help me please?

The words don't fit in my head
Argh! All I wanna do is lie on my bed
"Okay" I have to concentrate
This is like another whole language, "Great"
I just wish this were a song
So I could remember these notes, I mean this is too long
God! Help me my eyes are closing
I think I'll start dozing
I go to splash water on my face
And I spill it on my book instead.

As You Like It

by Mike Dindoffer

Along with Andrew Ganem, I directed Act V, Scene 2 from Shakespeare's "As You Like It." It was a wonderful experience. It was very exciting to see the enthusiastic 11th graders take the performance to amazing heights and depths. Sagun, as Rosalind (pretending to be Ganymede) gave a fantastic performance as she maneuvered the difficult love triangles in which she had become unwittingly involved. Simrin brought great energy and humor to the role of the lovesick Orlando, as did the eternally-pining Kushan as Silvius. Tenchung played the bossy, love-spurning Phoebe to a T, never straying from character. Andrew himself played a wonderful, if short, role as Oliver asking his brother Orlando's forgiveness and blessing to marry Aliena/Celia. My only regret was that we could not direct the entire play.



Taktse's Principal Graduates from Harvard

"I am very grateful for the year I spent getting a Master's in Education at Harvard University. I enjoyed every moment, even the all nighters. I am looking forward to applying concepts I studied when I return to Taktse.

"During my absence from Taktse, the school grew to 162 students, which is an enormous credit to the interim leadership of Ms. Suman, Ms. Thapa, Ms. Jain, Mrs. Denjongpa and the Board of Directors.

"Thank you my colleagues, my friends, and my family for a year that has given me invaluable tools to use when I resume my duties as principal of Taktse."

- Pintso Lauenstein-Denjongpa

Got a Nook or a Kindle you aren't using?

Taktse is looking for donations of Nooks and Kindles so that e-books can be accessed without the cost of shipping books to Sikkim. Please contact Lonnie Friedman at lonnie.friedman@comcast.net.



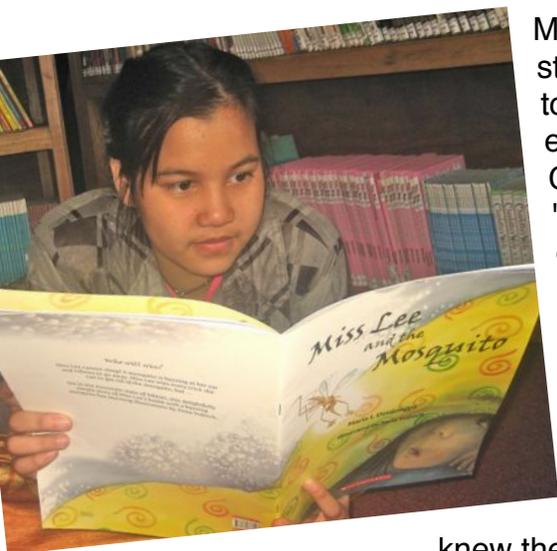
Sagun Limboo, Tenchung Namgyal & Mike Dindoffer



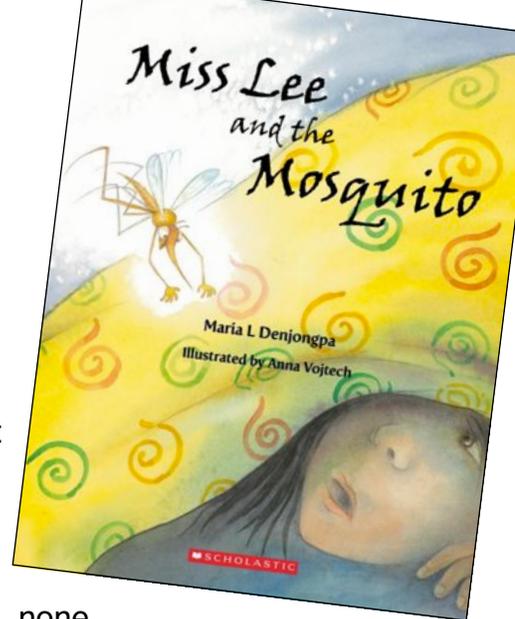
Grade XI actors (L-R) Simrin Tamhane, Sagun Limboo, Tenchung Namgyal, and Kushan Bhattacharya acting in a scene from Shakespeare's As You Like It

Miss Lee and the Mosquito

Taktse acting principal Maria Denjongpa, who also teaches English in the upper grades, recently authored a children's book called Miss Lee and the Mosquito. The book is great for 3 to 9 year olds, but it is fun for anyone who hates mosquitoes buzzing in their ears.



Mrs. Denjongpa was inspired by a funny story that her guest, Miss Kyu Jin Lee, told her about a mosquito buzzing in her ear when she slept in the shrine room at Chanbari. Mrs. Denjongpa said, "Sikkimese children need to see their country portrayed in books. Although Taktse's library has many wonderful children's books from around the world, none are about Sikkim. Our students have the impression that the real world is happening somewhere else. Their faces lit up when they first saw Miss Lee and the Mosquito. They were thrilled to see their own land in a real book, and also to see a book written by one of their teachers. They



knew the illustrator too, since Anna Vojtech had come to Taktse to teach fourth graders how to make a book. Suddenly, the act of writing a book didn't seem like something only other people in far away lands could do.

Mrs. Denjongpa said, "I read my book aloud to various classes and asked the students for feedback. Taktse third and fourth graders are very good critics because they are so honest. Anushka Ravishankar, a renowned Indian author of children's books, also helped a lot. I will do author's talks in the lower grades. Also, we'll have a book signing at Taktse's annual Great Himalayan Book Fest."

Taktse parent Tenzin C. Tashi said, "My boys were rather awed that a story written by their Acting Principal should have come out in print, from the Scholastic stable at that. The book is definitely another feather in Taktse's cap."

Scholastic India will be publishing Mrs. Denjongpa's second book, Sonam's Seasons, later this year. The illustrator, Ros'Ana Reis, is currently working on sketches.

Miss Lee and the Mosquito is only available from Scholastic India at their website <http://www.scholastic.co.in/index.php/new-releases/miss-lee.html?SID=U>. A portion of the proceeds will be donated to Taktse. Hopefully the book will become available in other countries in the near future.

Ingrid's Book Drive for Taktse!

When Ingrid Tomljanovic, a high school student from New Hampshire, heard about Taktse at Marion Institute's [Connecting for Change](#), she organized a book drive.



With help from friends, Ingrid raised \$200 and purchased a variety of books and DVDs for Taktse, including The Childhood of Dalai Lama, You Wouldn't Want to Be an Aristocrat in the French Revolution!, A Faraway Island, Saraswati's Way, The Hunger Games, A Child's Garden of Poetry, Between Shades of Gray, The Year of Goodbyes and The Eragon Trilogy!

Taktse students will be thrilled by the addition of these great titles to their library!



Ariel Rinzing Chingapa is 11 years old. She has been a Taktse student for seven years.

Angels are Black and Gold

by Ariel Rinzing Chingapa

“10, 9, 8, 7...” the countdown in my mind seemed to take forever. When the bus finally halted at my stop, I jumped out. My Dad was there, waiting for me. I held onto my Dad’s hand impatiently as we waited for the line of cars to end. I ran across the road and pulled my Dad towards our car.

”Where’s Rusty?” I asked, admiring the dog’s cage at the back of the car for a moment. Rusty was our long awaited dog from Calcutta. “Rusty? Oh, I gave him to your Grandpa,” my Dad lied, closing the rear door of the car. “You’re lying,” I said disbelievingly. My Dad opened the passenger seat’s door, and there, sitting on the car seat was a beautiful black and gold German-Shepherd pup, his pink tongue flopping out of his mouth. I screamed with delight. Rusty seemed a little gloomy, maybe it was because he was missing his old family. I scratched his neck.

“Here, feed him this”, my Dad handed me a few chips of dog food. I handed it out to Rusty who lapped it all up. I laughed and said, “Abha, let’s go home!”

His first few days were tiring for us. He wasn't potty trained and he didn't know how hard to nibble our hands. He used to bite my feet too. He even gave me scars. Every day, when I came home from school, Rusty came running happily to me. I'd hug him and go do my home work quickly. Then I'd play with him, read to him and train him. I always woke up really early to give Rusty his food and medicine. He was a sickly dog, but I'd walk him and we'd play catch outside and inside. We had lots of fun together.

It was a month after that day, the phone started to ring in the distance. I ran inside to pick it up. Something was very wrong. “Is Rusty better?” I recognized my Dad’s worried voice. I walked over to my dog. His tongue, once bright pink but now pale had slipped out of his open mouth. His eyes stared out to space and he felt stone-cold. I laid my hand on his chest.

Nothing. I desperately put my ear to his chest, tears starting to flow. Nothing. “He’s dead,” I said between sobs. The phone got disconnected. I dropped the receiver. “He’s dead!!!” I screamed. I laid Rusty’s head on my lap and sobbed. I hugged him tight and screamed, “Rusty! Come back! Rusty!” over and over again. My cousins, tearful like me, pulled me away.

Later that day, when my parents and my brother came back home, we buried him in our garden. My Dad dug the ground and wrapped him in a green and white sheet. We put him in the hole and all of us - my mum, brother, cousin and me -put some dirt in. My Dad did the rest. Now, every Sunday we make a bouquet for Rusty and lay it on his grave.

I don’t know where Rusty is now - Bone-world, Dog Heaven, another life, doomed to wander the earth for eternity or just dead, wherever he may be, I hope he’s happy and content. I regret that I couldn’t finish the book I was reading to him before he died. I want him to come and lick away the tears I am shedding.



Elocution Competition

by Karma Sadhwani, Grade VI

In May, a group of Taktse students went to St. Thomas School for an inter-school elocution competition organized by the Inner Wheel Rotary Club of Gangtok.

The juniors read their speeches first. They were about what their mothers meant to them. Anant was the first to go up on stage and say his speech. He was really confident. A few speeches later, Uma, my younger sister, started her speech with: "My Mother. Good afternoon to one and all."

I videotaped her speech. I felt more nervous than she appeared to be. My hands were fidgeting like crazy. As Uma delivered her speech, I saw one of the judges smiling at her, which excited me! She was performing better at the competition than she had practiced at home.



Uma Sadhwani

Later, the seniors performed. Our topic was "My Role Model." My classmate Hritik spoke before me. He did an amazing job. Then it was time for my speech. Earlier I had not felt nervous, but now I was freaking out. My legs felt like they were going to collapse into a

pile of bones. I felt sweat running down my cheek. I feared that I would completely fail, and let my family, friends and school down. I struggled to put my pile of bones back together. I couldn't let myself down after practicing so hard. I ended up mixing my speech around, but somehow I got through it.

Afterward they announced the winners in the junior category. "The consolation prize goes to Aria Pradhan from Taktse International School!" We were all so proud of Aria. She did a great job no doubt. After announcing the third and second winners they announced, "The first place prize goes to Uma Sadhwani from Taktse International School!" I was really proud of my little sister!

Next they announced the senior winners. I felt like I had lost a game I never played.

"Third place prize goes to Karma Sadhwani from Taktse International School!" I was shocked. I laughed and shivered, as I always do when I win something. "Second place prize goes to Tashi Wangdi from Taktse International School!" We jumped with joy! "First place prize goes to Tsharangla from Taktse International School!" I cheered for her. All the senior winners were from Taktse International School!

We were so happy. I felt like we had all done an excellent job.





Saving the King

by Harsh Dalmia, Grade 8

The Inter School Chess Tournament, organized by the Sikkim Chess Association, was held from April 6-8, 2012 in Gangtok. I was one of four students selected to represent Taktse.

When I reached the tournament hall, I couldn't believe my eyes. There were almost fifty schools and a hundred and fifty students participating. I started to get nervous,

but I didn't lose hope. I lost the first game because I made moves that I shouldn't have made. I felt discouraged, but my teacher Mr. Tashi encouraged me. In the second game I managed to check mate my opponent. It was a wonderful moment for me. Unfortunately, I lost the third game, but I didn't feel too disappointed because it was not a knockout match. There were still more matches to be played.

That evening at home I practiced a lot. The next day I improved and won two games out of three. Unfortunately on the last day I only won one match, and that disheartened me. At the end of the tournament I had won only four matches out of eight, and that was not good enough for an award. I would have won a bronze medal if I had won just one more match.

I learned a lot from this opportunity. I learned that one should never underestimate small children because some of them were better than the big guys. Also, I learned to never lose hope.



Reflections on the Chess Competition

by- Abhishek Subba, Grade 9.

At the 2012 inter-school chess competition in Gangtok, students from other schools came up to me and asked many questions about Taktse. They were really interested in Taktse. They were impressed that we speak English even when walking about town. In no time I made a bunch of friends, and the chess tournament seemed less intimidating. We must have left an impression on the other students last time because many recognized us. We were soon engaging in conversation as if we were old friends.



A Shared Vision for a Sustainable Future

Taktse is proud to partner with Sungevity to promote clean solar power for a healthier environment. Sign up for Sungevity's solar energy lease program and they will donate **\$750** to Taktse. Plus, you'll receive a **\$750** American Express gift card and a **free iPad!**

Click [HERE](#) to get a free iQuote!



San Diego Rocks for Taktse

by Zahava Friedman

The Third Annual Taktse Fundraiser in San Diego was a blast! Todo Mundo, an awesome local band, rocked the house. Then Dave Holtze brought the party to a folksy close around a bonfire.

The businesses of Ocean Beach, CA generously donated baskets full of spa packages, yoga memberships, fitness certificates, massages, artwork, pet products, veterinary services, jewelry, fashion, and so much more to our silent auction, which helped us meet our fundraising goal of over \$1,000! Thanks to Danielle Eder, of the [Lazy Hummingbird Coffee and Tea House](#) for hosting the party. Can't wait to do it again next year!



It's How You Play the Game

by Meghna Subba

“Winning doesn’t always mean coming in first; it means giving your best”. I think that is exactly what happened with us. Although we did not come home with victory, we lost with pride and learned a lot from this experience. We also learned about teamwork, co-operation, and understanding each other. The match also made us a lot stronger and experienced. We had a memorable trip and we thank our school for this opportunity. We hope to do better next time.

