Dear Readers,

I am pleased to share with you my personal thoughts about The Voice, Jhamtse Gatsal’s first newspaper. Above all, I think that The Voice must be the voice of compassion, especially because our children are actively involved in the creation of the newspaper. Thus, it becomes necessary for our children to learn the values of right speech.

Personally, I stopped reading newspapers or watching television because so much in media today is very negative, divisive, abusive, false information, gossip and meaningless speech—all of which contradict right speech. It is said that media is the fourth pillar of democracy. It is supposed to bring transparency and tell the truth about democracy within our country and the world to the people. It is not like that any more; rather it is the opposite in today’s world. As a society, the stress is on right to speech, freedom of press and nobody really talks about right speech, right media or right press. That is a big gap between the two.

We, as a community, and The Voice, as the first newspaper of Jhamtse Gatsal Children’s Community, must take a leadership role and show our present and future generations the right direction in how press should be, how a newspaper should be or how media should be. That requires us to first practice right speech and teach our children about right speech by example. Like I have said many times before: “Right Speech is more important than Right to Speech.” For example, if all of us practice right speech, then we don’t have to fight for our right. It is about teaching responsibility. In America, they have the Statue of Liberty. If we ever decided to build a statue at Jhamtse Gatsal, our first statue would be the Statue of Responsibility. Right speech is about responsibility. The practice of right speech must fulfill the following four elements.

1. False speech
2. Malicious or divisive speech
3. Harsh or abusive speech

Thus, for our speech to be free of these four characteristics or attributes, it must pass through the following four filters:

Is what is said true? Does the speech bring harmony, peace and unity? Is it kind? Is it useful and necessary?

So, just meeting one of the criteria is not enough. For example, even if what we have to say is true, we must check if it would bring harmony, peace and unity as well as if it would be kind and useful to my group, my country or the world before expressing it.

To close with my original thought, The Voice must be the voice of compassion and must set the right direction for our children, not only for the purpose of The Voice, but also in day-to-day conversations. These are the skills that we need to teach our children and as adults, practice them and show them.

Our way of communication must be guided by Right Speech, not Right to Speech. If we can do this through The Voice, it will set the right direction for our present and future generations to take on an authentic and responsible leadership role in the media world.

If The Voice is guided by these principles, I will be your loyal reader forever!
He wants to come back to the Mon region after five years because he feels that the “people in this place are not business-minded. They have enough land to grow and supply vegetables to Tezpur market, but they grow millets, rice, and vegetables for themselves and make alcohol with it. They don’t earn a lot of money and are content with whatever they have.”

“Genla is the most important person in my life because he gave us thirsty kids water to make a bright future. I love the way Genla thinks. He doesn’t just give kids an education, he encourages kids to do what they want to do and what they are good at,” he says as he expresses his feelings towards Gen Lobsang Phuntsok la.

“I want to be an adventure sports person,” says a tired voice. He works throughout the day under the hot sun, contributing in small ways to Jhamtse Gatsal. Dorjee Norbu has a fear of public speaking, so he does not interact much. Rather, his work speaks for him. He is an extremely hardworking person. In his free time he loves to play football and volleyball. Cristiano Ronaldo inspires Dorjee.

“Chasing your destiny to become something in life is not easy. Life is competitive. You have to compete with a million other people who are as hardworking and self-motivated as you are,” says Dorjee Norbu.

When asked about his family, he responds with a pale-faced silence. “I have seven members in my family—four younger brothers, Aku, Ama and me. I am the oldest among my siblings.” His mother is proud that he is a part of the Jhamtse family. This place has given him the chance to study and have a bright future. Also, his education is free, which means that his family has to financially worry about only his siblings, who are in different schools.

“Whoever I am, it is because of my Jhamtse family. Jhamtse sponsors and supporters. I am grateful to the Jhamtse family because they gave me a new life. Whether I am happy or facing difficulties, they are always by my side, encouraging me to move ahead even when I feel like giving up,” says an emotional Dorjee Norbu.

**Journey of my life:**

**Tselha Wangmo**

Tenzin Lhamo

Tselha Wangmo, from Orissa, has recently joined as the traditional music and dance teacher at Jhamtse Gatsal Children’s Community.

Her family includes her mother, two brothers and two sisters. Her mother works as an Ama-la (House mother) for Grade 10 students in a TCV School. Her younger sister is a make-up artist. Her interest in music began when she was a young girl. She has always enjoyed singing and dancing as a hobby. Her ambition, however, was to become a nurse. After passing Grade 12, she tried to attend an interview for the position of a nurse, but she realized that she was too late and that she had to wait for another year.

On an impulse, she applied to TIPA (Tibetan Institute for Performing Arts) and got through it. After this, Tselha taught traditional music for a year. This is where her career as a traditional music and dance teacher took shape. “Instead of fulfilling my ambition, I fulfilled my hobby and my hobby has now become my goal,” says Tselha Wangmo.

When asked if she is happy with her choice, she says that she loves to teach children traditional music because it also fulfills her desire to preserve the traditional Tibetan culture.

**The woman behind the smile:**

**Prerna Kodur**

Lobsang Wangchu

This year, Jhamtse Gatsal hired a new teacher for teaching History and Economics to the 11th and 12th Grades, Prerna Kodur. Belonging to Karnataka, Prerna is an ardent reader who also loves painting, playing, singing and learning new languages as her hobbies. Her favorite cuisine is Thai. She comes from a family of five members. Prerna loves teaching.

When asked how she feels about Jhamtse Gatsal, she said, “I love the Community and the people of the Community. I was bored living in the city, and I’ve never seen a community like this before and have never interacted this much with people. This Community feels like home.”

**I fulfilled my hobby and my hobby has now become my goal**

**Tseri Wangmo**

Tseri Wangmo in the traditional Tibetan attire, Chupa.
Simple living, High thinking: Minoti Singha

Minoti Singha has been teaching primary school in Jhamtse Gatsal ever since this Community started.

When asked what sort of a person she is, she says that she is a “self-sufficient” woman. She loves the Community very much. One of the biggest challenges she faces is to balance the relationships she has with her students. She also says that it takes her a long time to build relationships with adults. One of the things on her bucket list is to adopt a girl within the next two years. She also wants to travel more often.

Before teaching at Jhamtse Gatsal, she taught at Monyul School for 6 months till she heard of another opportunity from a colleague, Nima. However, Minoti hesitated to apply for the position because she did not have a teaching degree. Jhamtse Gatsal was still an idea, taking baby steps towards growth. She changed her mind later, and with her mother’s approval, applied for a position at Jhamtse Gatsal Children’s Community. She was only 21 years old when she got here, full of energy and ideas.

Straight from the heart: CHEF MOTU BRO

Tenzin Drolma B

Ngodup Tsering is a young, healthy man from Buri village. Buri, on the border of Bhutan, is located at the foothills of the Himalayas. He is presently working as a cook in Jhamtse Gatsal.

He worked at Dharamsala in a coffee shop for six months. Following this, he pursued a culinary course in Dehradun for eight months. He worked for six months in Ladakh after which he volunteered for a month at Jhamtse Gatsal. While working at a coffee stall, one of his teachers encouraged him to become a chef. He had volunteered at Jhamtse previously in 2017 for a month. He had to leave back then due to unforeseeable circumstances. He says that the kitchen has undergone many developments since then.

It has been expanded to allow students and staff to eat together. Ngodup loves organic vegetables harvested from our gardens. He keeps thinking of innovative ways of cooking. Ngodup feels that organic vegetables are better and healthier for the community members.

He says that he loves working in the kitchen. When he had visited Jhamtse Gatsal the previous year, the kitchen staff had asked him to stay back and he had happily agreed. He feels happy to make and serve not only food, but also smiles and love.

When asked if the working hours are hard, he says that he “doesn’t have a problem working and waking up early in the morning.” The Jhamtse kitchen staff works from 4:00 AM in the morning to as late as 8:00 PM at night. All the work, from rolling the dough for rotis, chopping vegetables, boiling water, brewing chai, to keeping the kitchen and dining area spic and span, is distributed among the six members. Ngodup sometimes stays back in the kitchen longer than the working hours to help out and clean up.

When are you most happy? When I am with people

What is your motto in life? Being happy

Which word do you like best? Betu (child)

Which word do you like worst? Betu, don’t (child)

One of the most difficult moments in your life? When I lost my grandparents. I was very close to them. They were like my friends.

How is life abroad different from your life here at Jhamtse? Abroad, I had more access to resources. I used to be busy all the time with absolutely no time for myself. Jhamtse is peaceful. I have more time for reflection and for processing my thoughts. I feel like I’ve found my purpose here.

How were you as a teenager? As a teenager, I was very tough. I used to fight with my mom often because of her traditional mindset. My mom would tell me not to wear short clothes. She would say, “People will comment on you.” I never liked that. When I was in Spain, my parents visited me. We travelled to a lot of beaches. I would wear a swimsuit with a shirt and shorts. She didn’t say anything. When I asked her why she wasn’t saying anything against it now, she said that it was okay here, as people would accept it. That day, I understood.

AN INTERVIEW WITH JHATMSE’S AGONY AUNT: VASUDHA WANCHOO

The Voice interviewed the Managing Director of Jhamtse Gatsal, Vasudha Wanchoo—a lovable, caring and warm-hearted woman who listens to our agonies without complaining.

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Simple living, High thinking: Minoti Singha

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Worms Worms Everywhere, and all the crops did grow

Sangey Ngudup

This year, Rinchen Tsering, a graduated student of Jhamtse Gatsal is taking up the project of vermicomposting at the Community. Rinchen Tsering is an ex-Grade 12 student of Jhamtse Gatsal. As an alternative career path, he has taken up the vermicomposting initiative of Jhamtse Gatsal. He has a flair for business and wants to develop his entrepreneurship skills. Previously, the vermicomposting pit was located near the cob house, but now, it is being expanded, and shifted to the greenhouse area near the guesthouse. Pasang, Lham Dorjee and Ngawang, construction staff of Jhamtse Gatsal, are helping Rinchen in the construction of the vermicomposting pit. Vermicompost is a natural fertilizer produced by worms. Worms are put in the soil along with waste material like cardboard, banana leaf, cow dung and left over food, which gets eaten by the worms. The excreta remains of the worms mix with the soil and make it very fertile. This compost is mixed with the soil in the gardens and it acts as a natural fertilizer.

The new vermicomposting pit is 16 ft long and 4 ft wide. The concrete structure is divided into 8 smaller pits to be filled with the waste matter to be converted into compost. The construction began a month back. The walls and the base have been completed. Now, the process of making the roof has begun. The working hours are from 9 AM to 4 PM. Rinchen Tsering says wiping the sweat off his brow, “I think I’ve learned a lot from this experience, from materials to budgeting.”

PROJECT EARTH: EN ROUTE TO BECOMING A ZERO WASTE COMMUNITY

With the advent of Lakpar and dynamic leadership, JGCC says no to plastic

Lobsang Tenzin

When Lobsang Tenzin stood for the post of Captain, one of the main points on his agenda was to keep Jhamtse Gatsal clean. In accordance with this, he has brought together a team and started an initiative called Project Earth. Every last Saturday of the month, the whole Community comes together to deep clean the surroundings. There are 20 members working as part of Project Earth, ranging from Grades 6 to 12. Middle school Maths and Science teacher, Uday Nair, supports Lobsang Tenzin in leading the project. During the surrounding cleaning, all of the members of the Community are divided into groups and assigned different areas on campus to be cleaned. Each group has at least one member from the Project Earth core team. Their job is to tally the garbage collected, segregate it and click photos of the same. These photos contain details of the location of the garbage as well as time and date of when the photo was taken. The pictures are later uploaded to a Google map of the campus.

After the first deep cleaning, the statistics of the garbage collected in various locations were analyzed and presented to the Community in the form of a Powerpoint presentation. The kitchen staff was particularly happy to note that the least amount of garbage was found in their area.

Another video featured the system in place at his house where most of the resources are reused. His house is a “model of a sustainable household” and contains a biogas system, natural fertilizer machines and an organic garden, to name a few. The waste produced is utilized efficiently. Mr. Ramesh Kikkeri is aiding in the installation of a DEWAT system in our new family houses. 16 tanks have been installed behind the new houses where the grey and black water from the bathrooms is anaerobically treated. After this, the water passes through a planted gravel filter (PGF) which re-oxigenates the water, which is ready for reuse.

Be water-wise

Dr. Ramesh Kikkeri talks about DEWATS in his talk at JGCC

Dorjee Wangchuk, Tenzin Lhadron A

On 13th October, Mr. Ramesh Kikkeri from Mysore conducted a workshop in Jhamtse Gatsal on reusing water. He said, “Water that we think is unfit for drinking can be used to water the flowers in our gardens.” In order to reuse water, it has to be organically treated, which can be used for washing clothes and cleaning. One such treatment system is called DEWATS (Decentralized Wastewater Treatment System). “After washing clothes, don’t waste the water that is left. Use it to clean the toilets,” he said.

In his presentation, Mr. Kikkeri demonstrated with a video how DEWATS systems can be created. He explained how a limited amount of water could be used for a variety of purposes. He gave a lot of tips on how to use water mindfully. The children of Jhamtse Gatsal said that “the video was very inspiring and interesting. It made us think about using our resources more mindfully.” Our Science teacher, Humaira Farheen said, “It got me inspired and gave me ideas about how to reuse what we have.”

Mr. Kikkeri giving a presentation to the students of Jhamtse Gatsal
The Two-Faced Dog makes his appearance

This article is written by the Grade 12 Science students

Two veterinarians, a nurse and a doctor visited Jhamtse Gatsal at the end of September. Dr. Frank James, from the US, visits Jhamtse Gatsal often and is also a founding member of Jhamtse International. Dr. Frank usually brings his students to Jhamtse Gatsal for internships and trainings. Yab Mate and Jessica Clark are veterinarians who assisted him in his visit to Jhamtse Gatsal this year. Jessica is a practicing veterinarian from the US and Yab from Itanagar has a private veterinary practice. Nancy Best, Jessica’s mother, is a nurse in the US. She has been working with Dr. Frank for a long time.

Some people joke that Jhamtse Gatsal Children’s Community should be renamed as Jhamtse Gatsal Children and Dogs’ Community. The population of dogs has exponentially increased in the past year.

To control the population of dogs and to ensure their good health, Dr. Frank and Gen Many of the children were extremely curious to conduct operations on the dogs, and two of the children, Nima Wangchu and Sonam Tenzin, proved to be useful as ‘professional’ dog-catchers. In just a span of two days, they helped catch all of the dogs in the Community and care for the sick ones as well.

On the third day of the pursuit, the science students of Grade 12, Tenzin Yudron, Raju Kumar, Dorjee Choizom and Dawa Dorjee, were in for a surprise. Their normal classes were substituted by something extraordinary. The four students assisted the veterinarians in injecting anesthesia, checking rectal temperature, giving vaccines and feeding Pedigree food to the dogs. Most of the operations were successful. However, one of the dogs did not make it through. While operating on one of the female dogs, Rukmani, the students found an unborn foetus in her uterus. “It was inside the fallopian tube,” says Dorjee Choizom of Grade XII. “They were really cute. Their shape was really beautiful. They resembled rat babies,” says Dawa Dorjee of Class XII. The heroes of the story, however, turned out not to be the veterinarians or the children. It was Groucho, a.k.a Two Face, a.k.a Jambey, a.k.a Alpha. Sources say that the day the doctors arrived, Groucho was nowhere to be found in the Community. Some of the children say that “he knew what was going to happen, and he ran away. He’s a smart dog.” Three days went by in search of the black and white dog with the scary jaw. But all attempts were in vain. On the fourth day, Gen Ngawang found Groucho outside his quarters. Gen Ngawang quickly brought out an egg for the macho dog and injected a drug in it before feeding it to him. Groucho, unsuspecting of the kind gesture, ate the egg and fell into the clutches of the veterinarians. Everyone was earnestly waiting to see how Groucho’s testes would look like. When the surgery finally came to an end, many of the community members were waiting to take selfies with Groucho’s testes. His organs were taken to the biology lab to be preserved as a specimen and as a memory of the alpha-dog.

JG starts dog club

Jessica introduced the idea of forming a group that takes responsibility for the dogs and help the vets deal with problems and monitor health and well-being of the dogs in the Community. Each person takes responsibility to take care of a dog and monitor him or her.

Some students and staff volunteered to be a part of the ‘Dog Club’ and took responsibility of dogs in the Community that needed attention. The members of the Dog Club ensure that the dogs are well fed, dewormed, bathed and sprayed with permethrin regularly.

“He knew what was going to happen, and he ran away. He’s a smart dog.”

The Grouchy alpha dog, not so macho on the operating table
**Message from the captain**

School representative, Lobsang Tenzin shares his experience as a Captain so far

It has been four months since I have taken up the captaincy role. All things seemed to be going well, but crisis struck. It was about the library. The library was shut down because of the negligence by students in taking care of books and the library space. At the time, the library was shut and our computer classes also came to a halt. Vice captain, Dorjee Wangchhu, and I had many conversations with the children on how to better take care of our spaces.

In the teacher’s meeting, we discussed the solutions to this problem and came up with many rules to aid the smooth functioning of the library. The library was shut for close to a month. With the help of the rules, I am hoping that the library functions smoothly from now on.

One of the points on my agenda was to keep our surrounding clean. So, once a month, the Community comes together to clean the surroundings. We have undertaken three deep-cleaning activities so far.

One of the many reasons I stood for the position of Captain was to become more confident. I feel that I have gained confidence in the course of this responsibility.

So far, it has been a rollercoaster ride with many ups and downs. It has been hectic for me, battling between classes, duties and meetings. But, I am learning a lot from this experience. In the next term, I will work harder than I am presently doing and bring change to our Community. I will work towards Jhamtse Gatsal becoming a zero-waste community.

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**A PROMISE TO GANDHI**

A proposal for a technology-free month to aid deeper relationships

Mani Wangmo, Dorjee Wangchuk

On the morning of 2nd October, all of the members of Jhamtse Gatsal Children’s Community gathered in the sitting room for a talk by Gen Lobsang Phuntsok la. The ceremony began with Gen-la offering a white cloth (Khadsa) to Dr. Frank and his group of veterinary doctors, who were visiting Jhamtse Gatsal at the time. He also offered Khadsa to the staff who aided the graduated students in the admission process, such as providing accommodation in the city for them, registering the students in college, accompanying them to their place of stay and helping them settle in. Gen-la also spoke about the effort of the staff that play the role of a parent in the children’s lives. Following this, Gen-la heightened the suspense of the group by saying, “This time, when we had gone for the Admin retreat, I gave a proposal. It may not affect the students much, but it may be difficult for the adults.” He suggested that “This is not a compulsion, but just a proposal.”

Gen-la concluded the talk by saying that “this is not a compulsion, but just a proposal” and that “further discussions are necessary.” Jhamtse Gatsal is on the way to becoming a zero-waste community. Maybe one day, Jhamtse Gatsal will become a place where technology does not hinder deep relationships.

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**WHITE - HOUSE**

New Khemsangs nearing completion

Lobsang Wangchu

Construction of a new house (Khemsang) is under way. “It feels like we are building a huge monastery for monks, the design is that special,” says a student of Grade 12. The students seem very pleased about being shifted to the new building soon. The balconies and terrace have been fitted with a railing to ensure safety of our younger kids,” says Gen Lobsang Phuntsok la. There is also a wastewater management system behind the new building, which can be used to recycle water and better manage our water needs.

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**LAKPAR - WITNESSING A STORY UNFOLD**

Ananya Agarwal, Arts teacher, talks about her experience with Lakpar

“When there’s a light when we close our eyes, the light of what we want to do more than anything else in the world. Trust that light. Follow wherever it leads.” — Richard Bach.

When I had filled the application for the Lakpar fellowship, I had a few ideas in mind regarding how things might look like. I still do not know a lot about the Monpa tradition besides what I’ve understood from my conversations with Gen Lobsang Phuntsok la and a few of the older children. However, these past few months have helped me construct my own meaning of Lakpar. Lakpar, to me, is a culture of relationship and exchange. The past few months have been replete with constant exchange of stories and learning, and helped me grow as an individual. Learning to work with constraints, getting to know many children of different age groups and interests, all the hugs and gifts, are all memories for safekeeping. This place has given me a space for exploration and freedom to experiment without fear, which makes me feel more than glad to be here. However, the responsibility that accompanies this opportunity is enormous, and it scares me. I often ask myself if any of this makes sense, or if I’ve been able to give back this place even half of what it has given me. But, I don’t know the right answers to these questions. I remember not to think and let the story happen...
On 17th September, Jhamtse Gatsal Children’s Community celebrated Staff Day. The students of Grade 12 organized the performances. The students started their day at 3 AM to prepare breakfast for everyone in the Community. They made sandwhiches and coffee. The kitchen’s arrangement was modified to look more like a restaurant. Vishwakarma Pogla (Prayer to the God of Architecture) was celebrated on the same day. The morning began with a prayer ceremony, distribution of prasad (religious offering) and a sumptuous breakfast. The inauguration ceremony was on 16th September. Volleyball league matches were held on this day. On 17th September, the day started with a blood bath as the relay race ended with a grand staging area. “The whole place was unrecognizable,” says Humai-ra, Grade 9 Science teacher. The decoration team used their knowledge from Lak-por and crafted a swan made out of waste paper. “I thought it was a real peacock!” says Gen Tselha Wangmo.

The children set up the library and sitting room into a grand staging area. “The whole place was unrecognizable,” says Humai-ra, Grade 9 Science teacher. The decoration team used their knowledge from Lak-por and crafted a swan made out of waste paper. “I thought it was a real peacock!” says Gen Tselha Wangmo.

The staff was given dress codes for the night’s performance. Tenzin Drolma C says, “I don’t feel like they’re our staff anymore. They look like models.” When Anita Ma’am heard Tsering Gombo sing, she had tears in her eyes. “I can’t believe they have grown up so much,” she said.

Grade 12 student, Lobsa- ny Wangchu, anchored the performance. The crowd roared with laughter at his witty remarks and clever fillers. “He was very confident. I didn’t know he was so good,” said one of the members of the audience. “You guys were so hot that the room burned up,” middle school Social Science teacher, Ishika Das, said about the fashion show by Grade 12 students. The day ended with the fashion show and a dance party. “I was not able to recognize the students. They looked so good!” said Ama Kesang, Gurkum house’s Ama la. Gen Lobsang Phuntsok la proposed on Gandhi Jayantti that the community go without technology for a month.

You are the owner of your life! Michelle Du Bois conducted a session on Assertiveness for the teachers of Jhamtse Gatsal.

The dog lovers of Jhamtse Gatsal is set to take responsibility of the dogs in the community.

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Mawlynnong: where Cleanliness meets Cordiality

Yeshi Lhamu, Sonam Chodron

Mawlynnong was named the ‘Cleanest Village in Asia’ in the year 2003. One can find people sweeping the streets, bamboo baskets strapped to their backs, collecting garbage from their surroundings and ensuring that it stays clean first thing in the morning. It is hard for one to find bottles, plastic and paper waste in Mawlynnong.

ADMINISTRATION:
The head of the village stays in power for five years, after which, based on his performance, his tenure is extended for another five years. The current head of the village is Mr. Livingstone Sangma. When asked about how hard the work is to get everyone on board to keeping the village clean, Mr. Livingstone says, “We must work hard, so that we can be better in the future. There will be troubles, but we must face them.”

AGRICULTURE:
Agriculture is not done on a commercial scale in Mawlynnong. The people of the village mostly grow fruit trees like pineapple and jackfruit, betel nut and the broom plant.

FOOD:
The Khasis who live here prepare traditional food such as Jadob, made with rice and pig blood, Tongrymbai, made with ladyfingers, Dohklin, made with onion and meat, and Dohjem, a spicy dish made with chillies. Earlier, they used to hunt for food. Now, they don’t hunt anymore, as all food is available in the market, sourced from cities like Shillong.

RELIGION:
Most of the Khasis are Christians. In the 18th century, missionaries from Wales entered Mawlynnong when they had come to preach the gospel in Dhaka. This marked the advent of Christianity in Mawlynnong.

FESTIVALS:
The Khasis celebrate Christmas, New Year, Satshuk, Myusiem (Joyful dance) and Nongkrem.

LITERATURE:
One of the pioneers of the movement, Thomas Jones attempted to translate the Bible into Khasi by using the Latin script. The Khasis, like the Monpas, did not have a script earlier. The Khasi language is written in Latin and Assamese. Due to the efforts of Thomas Jones, texts now exist in the Khasi language. Some sentences in the Khasi language:

How are you? - Kumno phi long?
What is your name? - Phi Khrteng Lei?
Thank You - Khublei.
The Road Not Taken

Tenzin Lhadron A

Day 1:
We were 18 children and 3 adults, including our English teacher, Meena, our housemother, Yangzom, and a school teacher from Duddungbar, Rabgal. We left from our school, Jhamtse Gatsal, at 5:00 AM to Tezpur by the school bus. On the way, we were stuck at a landslide at Senge for almost an hour. Landslides are common on this stretch of the highway and even more so, during the monsoons.

The day was unbearably hot. We started from Tezpur at noon by a tempo that we had arranged especially for us. We left for Shillong where we stayed at Isabella Hostel. The Tempo traveller cost us Rs. 7,800 per day, exclusive of parking and drivers’ food charges. We reached Isabella Hostel, Shillong, around 6:30 PM. We had chicken curry for dinner. We also met a lone traveller named Annida, who, like us, was on a Northeast trip. Isabella Hostel cost us Rs. 7,500 per day, exclusive of park

Day 2:
The day was unbearably hot. We started from Tezpur to Dawki by a tempo that we had arranged especially for us. We left for Shillong where we stayed at Isabella Hostel. The Tempo traveller cost us Rs. 7,800 per day, exclusive of parking and drivers’ food charges. We reached Isabella Hostel, Shillong, around 6:30 PM. We had chicken curry for dinner. We also met a lone traveller named Annida, who, like us, was on a Northeast trip. Isabella Hostel cost us Rs. 7,500 per day, exclusive of park

Day 3:
We started our journey from Isabella Hostel to Dawki River. On the way to Dawki, our tempo’s brake failed and we had to wait a while to get it fixed. When we reached Dawki, we took a boat ride to an island and went swimming. The water was so clear that we could see the pebbles at the bottom of the river. From Dawki, we made our way to the cleanest village in Asia, Mawlynnong. Before we could check-in to our hotel, we visited the living root bridge. The specialty of this bridge is that it is a product of bio-engineering the roots of the rubber (Hevea Brasiliensis) tree. We also walked to the sky-view from where we could see the plains of Bangladesh. We met the person who built the sky-view. “I try and try for six years to finally get people to come here,” he said to us. There was also an echo point from where we could scream and hear our echo. It was a breathtaking sight. We checked in to our accommodation, Streamside Guest House. A gentleman named Swallam manages it. The cost of each cabin was Rs. 2,500. We rented six cabins for all of us.

Day 4:
We had to wake up at 5:30 AM for a group meeting. We planned for the day and divided ourselves into three groups. One group went to the school to interview the teachers and students; another went to meet with the village elders; and the third group talked to the people in the village. We talked to many people, heard many stories from them and came back to the guesthouse for lunch. Mawlynnong is a small village, and it was easy to go around. After lunch, we had a quick nap and went to the main market for shopping. We bought souvenirs for our friends and family. After shopping, we went for our first church service. The priest welcomed us and prayed for us. The service was in Khasi so we didn’t understand much of it, but it was beautiful with songs and prayers. We had traditional Khasi food for dinner at a restaurant, and later we returned to the guesthouse to spend our last night there.

Day 5:
The next day, we left very early for Cherrapunji. We had breakfast at a highway restaurant. We had sumptuous aloo (potato) parathas and coffee. We checked in at our resort, Sa-i-mika Park, where the Tempo traveller had yet another break down. With nothing else to do, we sat down on the roadside and chatted. We started our journey after a while to the double-decker bridge in Nongriat Village. It was quite an arduous trek, spanning over 3,000 steps. The way down to the village was easy. On the way to the double-decker bridge we got separated into two teams, tense moments ensued between us till we finally reached our destination. There was a natural swimming pool beneath the bridge and we couldn’t wait to get into the water. Going down had been easy, but walking up the 3,000 steps drained all the energy we had in us.

Day 6:
We were to leave early to Shillong. But we were so tired that we couldn’t get ourselves to wake up early. We had a meeting before breakfast, in which we discussed our reflections and learning from the trip. We had a filling breakfast, after which we started our journey to Shillong. We reached the Indian Council of Agriculture and Research by noon, by which time the organic farms were closed. We decided to stay another day in Shillong and visit the organic farm. We visited the Entomology department and the Plant Pathology department. We had a session with Dr. Islam who taught us the techniques of mushroom cultivation. We left in the evening, had a late lunch and went back to Isabella Hostel for the night.

Day 7:
We left early for ICAR, where a session on Organic Farming was in store for us at 9:00 AM. We also saw the vermicomposting pit and the bee-keeping farm. We talked to Dr. Islam again, who was kind enough to sell us mushroom spawns that we could try cultivating in our school. We left after lunch for Tezpur, where we would halt for the night. After a brief stay in Tezpur and some “much-needed” shopping, we headed back to Jhamtse.
The Mighty Dawki River
Rinchen Nima

Our journey to Dawki from Shillong began early in the morning at 5:00 AM. We had hired a Tempo traveller from Tezpur to take us there. We had tea and sandwiches at a small roadside shop en route to Dawki. With a heavy stomach, we left for the falls and got mentally ready to continue sleeping in the confortable tempo, when it suddenly came to a halt. We thought we had reached Dawki, but it turned out that our brake oil had gotten over. We were in the middle of the valley and it started raining quite heavily. We stayed there for almost half an hour. When we saw that there would be no hope for help at this place, the driver said, “If we stay like this, we’re never going to reach Dawki. It’s not very far. Let’s try going slow”, and slowly we went. Finally, we reached the Dawki River, marking the boundary between India and Bangladesh. Meena, our English teacher, and Aruna Vanchith, told us that we were going boating in the river. We were excited and surprised. Some of us went boating with Meena and Arunika, a backpacker we met in Shillong. When we went boating initially we were scared of the water. The water was very forceful, but our boatmen were skilled and rowed carefully. The boatmen took us to an island on the far side of the river; where the water was so clear you could see the pebbles at the bottom of the lagoon. Then, it became even more fun as we jumped into the water and swam. Everyone was excited and very happy.

ORGANIC FARMING
Sonam Lhamu

We went to Mawlynnong village, the cleanest village in Asia. It was extremely clean and green. All the houses in Mawlynnong were made out of natural materials, like bamboo and straw. Every morning, the people of the village take part in morning cleaning. They clean not only their houses but also the surrounding areas as well. We met a lady named Cordiality. She was a thin, short and hard-working woman. Her house had 4 rooms and it was made of bamboo. There were many Areca nut trees growing around her house. She has a large family that includes 6 children and her husband, a teacher. When we asked her about the type of clothes the Khasis wear, she showed us the formal and the informal attire. She was kind-hearted and a respectful person. Aptly suited to her name, Cordiality told us that when the traditional cloth is pinned on one side, it is called a Samsa. A man we met in the village said that it was compulsory to have a compost pit in each house. He said that Mawlynnong was not so clean, initially. Due to a cholera outbreak, the villagers came together and vowed to keep it clean.

MUSHROOM CULTIVATION
Dr. Islam of the Plant Pathology Department took us on a tour of the mushroom cultivation unit at ICAR, Shillong. He said the main requirements for mushroom cultivation are polythene bags, mushroom spawn (seeds), paddy straw, bamboo sticks, a machine to cut the straw and a big vessel. First, the paddy straw is cut into small pieces 3-4 inches long. The next step is to sterilize the straw. The straw is then covered with polythene bags interspersed with the spawn in between. Holes are made in the bags with the cotton growth hung in a moist, warm place. Mushrooms can be seen growing on the straw in a couple of weeks.

ENTOMOLOGY
The students of Jhamtse Gatsal Children’s Community Dr. Firke from the Department of Entomology at the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, Shillong. There was a huge collection of insects in his lab. The insects are collected from different parts of the country and are then sent to the Delhi Museum. Dr. Firke instructed the students on starting collecting dead insects. First, the insects are spread out and then placed in a box with naphthalene balls. The insects are then pinned to the board. Different types of insects are pinned in different ways based on their body structure. When asked what he was currently working on, he said that his department was working on a new way of managing pests by introducing enemies to the plant. He shared a lot of information about insects with us. For example, Attacus, a large moth, is the world’s largest moth, which is found majorly in the Northeast part of India. We told him that we had seen a lot of atlas moths at Jhamtse Gatsal. He also shared with us that people in China manufacture milk and chocolates from cockroaches. Our interest was piqued when he asked us if we knew about the World Cup insect. The Gouda makes its appearance every four years in accordance with the World Cup.

BEE-KEEPING
On our trip, we also visited the bee-keeping department at ICAR, Shillong. Before we could go and see the bees, Dr. Firke warned us. He told our teacher and housemother, “It’s your responsibility to take care of the bees, you may not make it back to your school.” We were scared, but also equally excited to see the bees. An artificial bee-keeping setup consists of a box, a house, the queen bee. The box is covered with a lid that contains holes big enough for the worker bees to pass through, but not the queen. This chamber is called the brood chamber. The brood frame covers the box. Above the brood chamber is the super chamber. The super chamber has a frame where the honey is made. Later, the frame is removed and honey is collected from it.

INDIAN COUNCIL OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH (ICAR)

Sikkim Adventures
Kalsang Tseten

The author of this article, Kalsang Tseten teaches high school political science. This travelogue was written in the winter of 2015.

No other time could have been more perfect. I packed my jackets, my multi-layered clothes and resumed my fitness regimen in anticipation of the rigour of mountain travel. This winter took me to one of the most beautiful temples in Sikkim; Gangtok.

I booked the overnight Northeast superfast train from New Delhi to New Jalpaiguri station, the railhead gateway to the Northeast, bordering the town of Siliguri. Sikkim can only be reached by road from Siliguri. The four-hour journey was one of the most picturesque mountainous road journeys I have ever taken. The beauty of the Teesta River, with its ever-present, yet subtle, but not helpful, mountain peaks, was piqued when he asked us if we knew about the World Cup insect. The Gouda makes its appearance every four years in accordance with the World Cup.
EDUCATION : Still a long way to go

Rabgyal

The author of this article teaches at Duddunghar School.

I, along with my group members Rinohm, Gom Choton, Rinchen Dargay and Dorjee Wangchu, visited the primary and middle schools at Mawlynnong. C.N.I. SSA UP School is situated in Mawlynnong in the East Khasi Hills district of the state of Meghalaya. When we reached, the teachers and headmasters of the schools welcomed us warmly. We inquired if Hindi was taught as a subject, we were told that students do not learn Hindi because of the unavailability of teachers. Mawlynnong is known for being Asia’s cleanest village. The village is also known for its 100% literacy rate. However, the village does not have a high school. Students who wish to pursue higher studies travel to the cities nearby. One of the school teachers told us that the reason why the school and the surrounding areas were maintained so neatly was the social service that they conducted at the end of each week. We faced a hard time communicating with the teachers and students in the school, for they couldn’t speak English or Hindi. They only spoke Khasi, which is a language primarily spoken in Meghalaya by the Khasi people. One of the teachers told us that a sizable population in Assam and Bangladesh also spoke it.

The present system of education in Mawlynnong started way back in the nineteenth century largely due to the efforts of Christian missionaries who came as traders. However, after independence, a more uniform education system was followed in all schools across the country. We met a teacher at the government school who was appointed by Christian missionaries.

Mawlynnong is rich in ethnic cultural heritage and linguistic diversity. Despite this, the region lacks infrastructure and facilities in educational institutions. There is a need to improve the quality of education that is imparted to the children. The Indian Government’s decision to make education a basic right for each child has been wholeheartedly welcomed by the people of the Northeast. Majority of the schools in Meghalaya suffer from insufficiency of teachers, poor infrastructure, poor financial base and absence of basic facilities and amenities. Stronger emphasis needs to be placed on strategic planning and proper implementation of government policies.

STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN

Is trekking to the double decker bridge on your bucket list?

Do you long to see the beauty of nature?

The key to this is to visit the double decker bridge.

Dorjee Wangchu

The double decker bridge is located at Cherrapunji, in the state of Meghalaya.

The locals call Cherrapunji, ‘soltzi’. The double decker bridge is a product of bio-engineering. There are many single living root bridges all over Meghalaya, but only one double decker bridge exists.

To reach the one has to get to Tyrna village first. The double decker bridge is in Nongriat village. To reach it, one has to walk 3,000 steps, cross two scary metal bridges and wade through two rivers. Once you reach, you feel like you’ve reached heaven because of the cleanliness and greenness of the place. You may feel hot and sweaty after the arduous trek. There is a refreshing, cool swimming pool as a prize at the end of the trek.

To enjoy the double decker bridge, one has to pay Rs. 20 per person. The living root bridge may look unstable but you will be proved wrong.

On our way to the double decker bridge, we got split into two groups. One group contained Amaia Yangsom, Gombu Tsering, Tashi Phuntsok and me, while the other, which included Dorjee Wangchu, Rest of the group went along a different path. Fearing that we had lost our way, we asked many tourists and villagers for the route, and finally reached the double decker bridge. We waited for the rest of the team and entered the gates of the double decker bridge. The first thing we did was to take a picture.

There was a swimming pool beneath the bridge. We entered the pool. The water was refreshingly cool. Some of us who didn’t know how to swim were learning. All of the students enjoyed a lot. However, when we had to walk up to Tyrna village, our feet were aching and begging us to stop. By the time we reached the village, we were thoroughly exhausted. It was a tiring day but equally amazing.

One day, while we were having lunch, we saw a man sitting in the middle of the road. We asked him what he was doing. “Oh, I just like sitting on the road and observing the people who walk by. Also, the roads are so clean!” said Nelson, a music teacher.

Our drivers who provided endless laughter and entertainment. They even bought a dog from Shillong that came with us too.
The thoughts reflected in this article are of the students of Grade 12. It is their reflection of the recent events, and are not meant to hurt the sentiments of any individual. It aims to inspire thoughtfulness, growth and development in all.

In recent times, it has been observed that the children of Jhamtse Gatsal are taking things for granted. Jhamtse Gatsal Children’s Community lies at the foothills of the Himalayas on the border of Bhutan, in a remote corner of the world. One would think that resources are not easily available in a location such as this. However, one would be proved wrong when one sees the resources that this Community has been gifted with. Donors from all around the world shower Jhamtse Gatsal with gifts of love and compassion. Jhamtse Gatsal has a library that houses more than 5,000 books donated by people from various countries. It has a full-fledged computer lab with more than 20 laptops that were recently donated by Dell. Children have access to the Internet to research subject-related matter. There is fully-stocked stationery, which caters to the students’ every need. Even the best Xerox shop in the neighboring town of Manpat would fail at the sight of the Kyocera printer that is available for the Community’s printing needs. Every classroom and house is powered by solar energy, giving light even in the darkest of nights. Recently, Jhamtse Gatsal received a grant to set up state-of-the-art science labs. The students of Jhamtse Gatsal eat three sumptuous meals a day.

We do not value the gifts that we are showered with. The library is sometimes left uncared for. We do not take the initiative to read the multitude of books that lie in wait on the shelves, untouched. We do not understand the value of the books that we have.

We make many mistakes, but we are not brave enough to accept our mistakes. Sometimes we lie; we steal; we hide behind our mistakes in silence. We leave our notebooks to take a shower in the rain. We don’t understand the reason behind the consequences our teachers give us and we repeat those mistakes over and over again. We do not respect the things that we have. We do not feel guilt or regret for our wrongdoing. We have these problems. Everything is available so easily that we don’t realize what they are worth. If I lose a pencil, I can get another. This very thought is our downfall. We have too much and we feel too little. Consequences are not followed through, which makes the children make the same mistake again. Don’t get us wrong; there are many rules, but only as empty words. Sometimes we feel that we forget where we are coming from. It is important to know our roots and be rooted in the past to build new beliefs about ourselves.

Where did we go wrong?
How did we lose our values?

We are aware now. We know. It is hard to change the habit of not caring, but we try. We remind ourselves how amazing we are. We remind ourselves of our roots. We remind ourselves where we came from, where we are and how grateful we are towards Jhamtse Gatsal. We are not perfect. But then, nobody is! But we are thinking, growing, evolving, changing, learning, developing, maturing, turning over a new leaf every single day.

“Exams are future makers. It is not just about having marks, but they should test knowledge and individual talent.”

Tashi Lhamu A

“Exams are our future. We are dependent on it.”

Sonam Lhamu

“...It requires us to dream and have an open mind. It is a screen for the future.”

Rinchen Dorjee

“Exams are nervous, competitive, but a way to success.”

Tenzin Lhadron A
TROJAN HORSE: INTERNET SAFETY

The author of this article, P.S. Balasubramaniam is currently doing his masters in Network Security in Ontario, Canada.

The Greek wanted to capture the prosperous city of Troy. They waited ten years with no luck. Troy was known for its impenetrable walls. So, the Greeks fashioned a wooden horse and left it waiting outside the enemy’s gates. The army of Troy, renowned for winning battles and capturing enemies, were used to receiving gifts from other territories. They dragged the horse inside and reckoned it to be a gift. That was just wishful thinking. The soldiers of Greece, patiently waiting inside the dummy horse overnight, opened the gates and flooded Troy with their army and took over the kingdom. The notoriously famous malicious software – Trojan horse gets its name from this story.

A Trojan is a file that can enter our computers via email attachments or data transferred through a pen drive. The Trojan file by itself does not have the capability to inflict damage to a system. However it contains malicious data inside. When a user clicks on a file, mostly an executable file (.exe), it may cause the programs to slow down the computer’s performance or gather user data and send it to their servers. How do I prevent this from happening?

1. HTTP and HTTPS: Whenever we open a web page from our browser, it displays content using these two ports. The S after HTTP simply means secure. Try opening a bank’s website and notice the S in the URL. HTTPS websites are safe to browse and hard for attackers to encrypt Trojans.

2. Free Antivirus software is not sufficient – if you are a high Internet user, it is recommended to have a paid version of Antivirus software. Reason being, they update every week or month and compare newly-found malware with your PC and remove them on a daily basis.

3. When you’re browsing, you may sometimes get a pop-up ad saying ‘Select the Samsung phone and win $10,000 cash!’ These ads contain a link that follow through a process of collecting personal information, such as credit card numbers, phone number, etc. Avoid clicking on such ads, tempting as they may look!

The path that made all the difference

Dorjee Yangki

The time came to build and test our confidence, but there was a fear that stopped us from being confident. The whole day, we thought about the path that would make all the difference. But later, our soul kept asking us to take the great leap. We made our decision at last and joined the team. It was a hard decision to make for us because we had to communicate with strangers and working with them as a team was harder. Also, it was our first time taking part in a science exhibition.

The topic our team decided to work on was building an exo-skeleton to make lifting weight easier. It sounded exciting and interesting. We decided to make a simple machine, which would support our back when lifting heavy objects. We had a hard time designing the gadget. On the other hand, we had our exams going on simultaneously. However, we managed our time and worked hard.

Our project was finally ready for the competition. 15th October was the day to show case our brilliant project. On the day, at 6:00 AM, we left school, picked our other two members from Manpat. En route, we passed beautiful mountains and waterfalls. We practiced our lines over and over again. Sometimes, the words would go missing. We felt like stopping the car then and running away as quickly as possible from it. But, we couldn’t. By the time we had reached the DC Office, we had to present our office in a car and every one was staring at us. It made us feel more nervous and scared. We practiced for a while till the time came for us to present. While the other schools were presenting their projects, we watched others and we felt even more anxious because all of the students were too smart for us. We were also inspired by their public speaking skills. Finally, it was our time to present on the stage. It was a great experience. Our hydraulics stopped working because there was no water, and later we fixed it and presented with confidence. It was a big learning for us.

The Science Exhibition was conducted on 15th October in the DC (Deputy Commissioner)’s Office, Tawang. Two students from Jhamtse Gatsal and two students from Lumla Govt. Higher Sec. School participated in the exhibition. The author of this article, Dorjee Yangki, Grade 9, was one of the participants from Jhamtse Gatsal.

Hydraulic-powered exo-skeleton project, we saw a lot of unknown students gathered through the windows of the car. We arrived at the office and every one was staring at us. It made us feel more nervous and scared. We practiced for a while till the time came for us to present. While the other schools were presenting their projects, we watched others and we felt even more anxious because all of the students were too smart for us. We were also inspired by their public speaking skills. Finally, it was our time to present on the stage. It was a great experience. Our hydraulics stopped working because there was no water, and later we fixed it and presented with confidence. It was a big learning for us.

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The IAS Dream

How is the exam conducted?

The IAS is just one of the 24 All-India/Central civil services which are entrusted with government administration. There are 3 All-India Services: IAS, IFS and IFS (Indian Forest Service). Rest come under Central Civil Services. Eg: IRS, IFS (Indian Foreign Service), IRTS, etc. Together they are known as Civil Services or bureaucracy.

A civil servant should be an able administrator who has developed few essential qualities including (but not confined to):

- Perseverance
- Knowledge
- Integrity
- Empathy towards weaker sections of society
- Emotional Intelligence

Indian Administrative Service (IAS) is arguably the most coveted government profession many an aspiring youth desire for. There could be various reasons for that: some may have witnessed an IAS officer at work from close quarters; others may have seen what’s shown in movies and got attracted to the wide-ranging power, respect and authority that an IAS officer commands. Others might consider the IAS as a solid platform through which they can render service to society and contribute to the nation’s development. Whatever may be the reason, the IAS remains an attractive option for ambitious and aspiring future leaders of the country.

What does Civil Service entail?

The syllabus of the examination is wide-ranging. UPSC expects candidates to be knowledgeable, and more importantly, to develop a keen interest and insightful understanding of issues and events developing in our society. An interest in current affairs is tested too. The best source to stay acquainted with current events of national and international importance is the newspaper.

The IAS is a 3-stage examination cycle spanning almost a year:

I. Preliminary Examination (June)
II. Main Examination (September - October)
III. Personality Test (January - March)

Declaration of Final Selection List (April - May)

Preliminary Test

- Paper 1 is on General Studies. It covers Indian History; Geography (Indian, and World); Indian Polity and Governance; Economic and Social Development; Environment and Ecology; and General Science. From CBSE syllabus Grades 9 to 12.
- Particular emphasis is on current events of national and international importance - best covered by regularly reading a newspaper.
- Paper 2 is mostly on mental aptitude. It covers comprehension, logical reasoning, analytical ability, general mental ability and basic numeracy of Grade 10 level.
- Both Paper 1 (100 questions) and Paper 2 (80 questions) are of 200 marks each for 2 hours.

Paper 2 is the qualifying paper. Only the marks scored in Paper 1 of those who have qualified in Paper 2 will be considered for selecting the candidates for the Main Examination. The top scorers of Paper 1 have the best chance of selection.

Main Examination

- This is a marathon examination with 9 Papers in total.
- Each Paper is of 250 marks and 3 hours.
- Total maximum marks in Main Examination = 7 Papers X 250 marks = 1750 marks
- Personality Test

Also known as Personal Interview, it is conducted through a natural conversation by a Board of observers.

The total maximum marks of the overall examination would be

= 1750 (Main Examination) + 275 marks (PT) = 2025 marks

Eligibility

One can only appear for the UPSC exam after completion of a bachelor’s degree in any stream or track.

What should a school-going aspirant do?

Civil Services can be a challenging yet fulfilling career opportunity. However, one should not be under the false impression that it is the only best profession out there. Each and every professional pursuit, be it Teacher, Doctor, Sports person, Scientist, Journalist, Entrepreneur, Writer, Lawyer, Artist, Technologist, etc., have unique significance in its contribution towards the nation’s developmental journey. With passion, perseverance and aptitude, one can reach the pinnacle of success in one’s chosen field. It is the right time to realise "I am the architect of my destiny.”

How is the exam conducted?

Vishwas V Patel

The author of this article, Vishwas V Patel is a 2016 Teach For India fellow. He lives in Mysore, and is currently preparing for the CSE 2019.

The IAS Dream

Vishwas V Patel

The author of this article, Vishwas V Patel is a 2016 Teach For India fellow. He lives in Mysore, and is currently preparing for the CSE 2019.
BHOTI CORNER

The new generation’s perspective

Though we have many facilities, we use many chemicals; We use it very extravagantly. All the effort we put is for the sake of competition and selfish desires. As the days pass by, the karmic bond between our friends, loved ones and relatives, the trust and the bond we share decreases.

In earlier times, we lived as communities. All the talents of the people are now made obsolete by machines. We were more connected when there was no technology. Our world is dominated by gadgets; the bad days of the world is come.

Though we gather, there is no communication. Though we live together, we don’t inquire about each other’s well-being. We don’t bother about our neighbours’ well-being. What’s the point of knowing what’s going on in the world outside?

We don’t care about what’s happening in front of us. If somebody is suffering greatly, we choose to walk away. Sad news from far away make us feel sympathy, but not really mean it. This is the 21st century.

No wealth, no suffering. Less wealth, no suffering. If you don’t want suffering in this life, Follow Buddha’s teachings.

The food that I love is a combination of many nutrients. This is everybody’s favourite. My love, Momos.

Those who are educated have promised to change the world. Those who have a good heart will change themselves first.

All the above articles have been translated into from Bhoti to English by high school Geography teacher, Tenzin Donbuls.
What is life for me?

Mani Sangmo

Friendship is the best relationship among them all. There is no one without a friend. For some, friendship is better than falling in love. I think our life will be boring without friends. Friends are very important to us. Without their support, our life will be nothing. If we are facing a difficult situation, there will only be one person ready to help us; that’s our friend. If we are headed in the wrong direction, friends support us and show us the right path. My best friend always cares for me, helps me and supports me. She’s Sangey Fema. When a bond of friendship is broken, it doesn’t make a sound but it hurts a lot. Hurting our friends is as easy as throwing paper in the ocean. No one can tell the amount of pain we feel inside our hearts because we don’t know what real friendship is. A real friend is someone who helps us in times of difficulty. If we are unhappy, they care for us. Those whose bond is as deep as the ocean will always be those for each other.

Tashi Lhamo

Everyone says life is a game. I agree, life is similar to playing and controlling a car. We should have the strength to know how to control ourselves, we should drive our lives, like an engine, in good condition, on good roads. We should not let other people drive our lives. Life is like a thorny stem of a rose. We will have lot of problems, challenges and obstacles in our way. But, the thorny stem grows to give us beautiful flowers after a while. We should learn to solve our problems and become great people, who can inspire other people and help them, just like the fragrance from the rose. You will get the chance to meet a lot of unknown people. Some will give you the gift of knowledge and love, but some may give discomfort, which can harm you and change you. You should know how to receive the gifts and fight the discomfort. Life is a choice. You should know what is good and not good for you. People can influence you in negative ways. You should be active and alert and not let people affect you in those ways. Sometimes, you will feel like crying and breaking down. Sometimes, you will be so happy that you want to fly, and other times, you will want to sacrifice yourself for others. But, you should know how to control all of this, just like the engine. That’s the best life you will ever have, so enjoy your life but keep evolving as you grow.

A NGER

Ritchin Dogjee

I opened my bag, took the album from it and flipped a page. There are two boys standing—one with a big smile, red cheeks and a wrinkle on his forehead—he was just 13 years old. He is wearing a green t-shirt, and he’s standing next to another boy with a fake smile, wearing a red t-shirt. They have their hands around each other’s shoulders. They seemed so friendly that someone who didn’t know them would’ve assumed they were gay. I am the guy in the red t-shirt. Somewhat I tore right down the middle. I placed one on the last page of the album. I opened my bag, took the album from it and flipped a page. There are two boys standing—one with a big smile, red cheeks and a wrinkle on his forehead—he was just 13 years old. He is wearing a green t-shirt, and he’s standing next to another boy with a fake smile, wearing a red t-shirt. They have their hands around each other’s shoulders. They seemed so friendly that someone who didn’t know them would’ve assumed they were gay. I am the guy in the red t-shirt. Somewhat I tore right down the middle. I placed one on the last page of the album and one in the front. The part I placed in the front was of course my picture. My eyes were red, and I was burning hot. We had had an argument. My eyes were red, and I was burning hot. We had had an argument. My eyes were red, and I was burning hot. We had had an argument. My eyes were red, and I was burning hot. We had had an argument.

For my pets.

For my family,

For my nature,

For my home.

For my pets.