

Friends of Taktse *UPDATE*

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Alumni Edition
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Alumni success stories!

Taktse opened its doors in 2004 as a K-8 elementary school. In 2009, we began adding one grade per year until we could provide our students with a complete secondary school education. The class of 2013 was our first class to graduate. Since then, 43 students have graduated, going on to various colleges in India, Thailand, Japan, Australia and the United States, and they have embarked on diverse careers in business, education, politics and the arts.

In this issue, some of them share their stories. Many alumni continue to connect with Taktse and contribute through programs such as Taktse Platforms. They all share an appreciation for the education they received at Taktse.

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Thank you Mr. Namgyal, and all who contributed to this issue!

Aanchal Agarwal (studied at Taktse for 5 years)

After Taktse, I went to a culinary school at the International Institute of Culinary Arts in Delhi to widen my horizons in my field of interest, the hospitality industry. During the course of my culinary training I worked at some 5-star hotels, including The Leela Ambiance Hotel. I am currently the owner and pastry chef at Bake Walk, a successful cafe and patisserie in Siliguri. Patiently pursuing the best possible standards for our desserts, we are growing every day. In addition to overseeing the daily operations of Bake Walk, I also train unskilled village youth who come to the town in search of a viable career.

To further my experience in the industry, I am also the public relations manager for YOB Hotel Supplies and Hospitality Solutions, where I oversee client retention and new customer acquisitions. YOB helps hoteliers in Nepal, Bhutan, North Bengal and Sikkim to operate their properties and deliver cost-effective yet premium solutions.

During the year I lived in the hostel at Taktse, I remember a project where I learned origami. The thinking skills required for origami are transferable to those needed to run my business.

Taktse taught me emotional intelligence, leadership and how to be independent. Using these skills on a daily basis, I am able to lead a team and meet the diverse needs a widely varied set of individuals and grow my business organically. All the encouragement and support that my Taktse family provided has been transformative.



Taktse Platforms

At Taktse, learning and growth have always been prioritized. After COVID hit and our school was closed, we were forced to adopt new ways of learning.

In response, some of our alumni created Taktse Platforms in July 2020. Our aim was to offer online learning opportunities to our parents, students, teachers, and others.

A variety of workshops such as mental health, poetry, arts and crafts, etc. were hosted by Taktse alumni and faculty, as well as friends of Taktse from the USA, India and our local community. For example, see [Making a Museum](#).

Taktse Platforms has been well received by our community and we will continue to offer it at least until the pandemic is over.



Anoushka Shrestha Maskey (studied at Taktse for 9 years)

My love for writing started with Taktse. I think that if Taktse had not worked hard to inculcate good reading and writing habits through constant workshops, library classes, and writing activities, I would not have been as versatile a writer as I have become. I have managed to explore everything from journalistic

writing and copywriting in my former line of work, to poetry and songwriting in my life as a musician now.

A moment I remember from my days at Taktse was reading in the Taktse library on a quiet weekday afternoon. Solitude and peace were always in abundance once you plunged into a book in that library. I have always treasured having access to that space for a great many of my school days.

Here are links to recordings of some of my songs. I wrote [Empire of Fear](#) during the lockdown in 2020, and [Eventide](#) from my personal life. [O Sanam](#) is a classic Indian Hindi pop song, and you will probably recognize famous American songs such as [Can't Take my Eyes off of You](#) and [Girl from the North Country](#).



Varun Alley (studied at Taktse for 5 years)

I studied at Taktse from grade 6 through grade 10, I completed high school at North Point in Darjeeling. After completing my studies in Business Administration at Amity University in Kolkata, I came back to intern in my father's land development and construction business. My job mostly consisted of overseeing and measuring the efficiency of the employees, delegating and finding ways to motivate them.

In 2018, I started my own car spa and accessories shop to provide complementary and interdependent services related to two big car showrooms and service centers that opened up recently nearby. I am also now working on opening up a banquet hall where people can book events and other family functions.

Starting small business ventures as part of my business studies project at Taktse helped me learn negotiation and bargaining skills. The most important skill that I learned from Taktse is confidence, which enables me to have meaningful conversations with my business partners and associates.

When I think of Taktse, I remember sitting in the circle on the carpet area, where we would have our classes. We would share and analyze the plots from 'The Book Thief' by Marcus Zusak. I remember the field trips to Sajong where the whole school would go to plant rice. I miss our writing assemblies where we would all be handed notecards to write our reflections, and eagerly raise our hands to share what we had written with the entire school.



Pemma Lhazin (studied at Taktse for 6 years)

I am currently pursuing a Bachelors Degree in International Relations with a minor in English at Endicott College in Beverly, MA.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, I was stranded in Bhutan for 18 months. There I joined the De-Suong (Guardians of Peace) program. I underwent 21 days of training, which included a mix of military training where we were taught to fire shotguns and rifles, basic survival and mapping skills, and other sorts of defense training. After training, I assisted in the De-Suong kitchen and with crowd control during the vaccine rollouts. Through this program I had the opportunity to meet people with diverse backgrounds from all over Bhutan.

My first circle meeting in Taktse was the most memorable because it was my first time at boarding school. The fact that we were in a circle and not rows made a good first impression on me. Later, when each student was asked to lead an activity every night, it became one of the highlights of my day.

Taktse taught me the importance of connections and being the first one to go speak to someone, so I am able to make friends quickly and adapt to new environments. This skill has proved to be very useful in unfamiliar situations, such as applying for internships or moving to a different country.



Kushan Zulca (studied at Taktse for 5 years)

I'm trying to create opportunities in Sikkim by starting sustainable businesses. I'm currently working on a startup that allows professionals to work in the political sector while not necessarily joining a party. Some other enterprises I've recently helped start include a food delivery service called Mitho Delivery, a digital news media organization called Talk Sikkim, and a branding & promotions business called 1707 Studios.

Among the most valuable things I learned at Taktse are the ability to have mature discussions and to be a better listener. Also, I use the art of

brainstorming with my team on a daily basis. Brainstorming has had a significant impact in my professional life and has provided clarity when needed the most. Another skill I attribute to my education at Taktse is my confidence in spoken and written English, which has allowed me to be a better communicator and reach out to a wider and more educated audience.

I will never forget playing basketball with my friends during the lunch and snack breaks at Taktse, and also the wonderful experience of living in the school hostel.



Tsheten Jatsho (studied at Taktse for 10 years)



I attended Taktse International School from grade 3 through grade 12. I am currently in my final year studying international hotel management at Stamford International University in Bangkok, Thailand. My classes are being conducted online due to the pandemic.

During my first internship, I experienced how it feels to work in the hotel sector. Although it is very difficult to get up early enough to get to work on time, I got used to it after a week or so. I faced a lot of challenges, but by the end of my internship I was really enjoying the practical work, and I was confident speaking with the guests and showing hospitality. I learned a lot from my internship and I am still learning.

At Taktse I gained confidence by participating in various workshops, organizing football and basketball tournaments, and helping teachers manage younger students. This helped me learn how to express my thoughts and ask questions during lectures without hesitation. At Taktse I became innovative by coming up with unique summer projects and different ideas for workshops, and bringing resource people to the school to share their ideas.

Whenever I think back on my days at Taktse, one thing that stands out is thrill of participating in the basketball finals against TNA. While studying at Stamford, I earned a spot on the football team. I helped my team win a tournament in which I got the best midfielder award.

The COVID 19 pandemic led me to go back to Bhutan. I took up online classes but also felt the need to work on my football skills. I was selected for Thimphu City Football Club, one of the top teams in Bhutan. It was a big challenge as I had to miss a lot of practices due to my studies. However, school was my priority, so I eventually decided to drop off the team. I am really grateful to have gotten the opportunity to be a part of the top club in Bhutan.



Sonam Ugay (studied at Taktse for 8 years)

Since graduating from Endicott College in Beverly, MA, I have interned at several financial institutions to gain work experience and develop necessary skills for the current job market. On the side, I have also been helping Marion Institute keep track of Taktse's accounts.

My memories from Taktse include performing in soirees, attending math classes with Mr. Gyan, long bike rides with friends, paragliding over mountains on alternate Saturdays, practicing with the basketball team early in the morning, and winning our first basketball tournament.

Learning how to learn has been one of the most valuable skills that Taktse instilled in me. Taktse pushed me to participate in school assemblies; encouraged me to ask questions in the classroom; and required reading as a prerequisite to participate in sports, all of which provided me with the confidence to participate in meetings, be curious, and be okay with not knowing all the answers. This has enabled me to transition from one career opportunity to the next, and adapt to new challenges.



Simrin Tamhane (studied at Taktse for 7 years)

Since 2019 I have been working at an ed-tech firm called Ontum, which is a partner firm with Meghshala, the organization for which I worked previously. I am the Implementation Manager for Sikkim and also parts of Meghalaya in northeast India. My work involves training teachers and monitoring their usage of lessons that are available on our app.

One of the most valuable skills I've taken with me from Taktse is the ability to recognize problems and continue experimenting with different possible solutions until I discover something that works best for the given situation. Through all our critical thinking lessons at Taktse, I am more capable of recognizing when something is just not working and exploring solutions to situations from multiple perspectives. This is a skill I've used repeatedly this past year when there were setbacks at work requiring immediate adaptation.

One feeling I remember while at Taktse was the normalcy of going back to classes after our recesses. It was such a simple, yet powerful aura of walking to class, hugging friends, and getting ready for the next lesson. The learning environment was never based on intimidation or fear. Our classrooms were personal space where learning was cultivated harmoniously.

My favorite memory will always be reading *The Book Thief* aloud in sunlit classrooms with bright yellow walls. My classmates and I would lie down on the carpet with our copies of the book as we soaked in Ms. Yolmo or Mrs. Denjongpa's voice for the next hour. We were all somehow fully immersed in the story.



Sagun Limbu (studied at Taktse for 6 years)

After graduating from Endicott College in Beverly, MA, I worked for three years at an all girls' international school in Jeju Island, South Korea as a Senior Teacher and Residence Don. I provided social/emotional counseling for the students, conducted yearly workshops, and assisted the senior students with college applications and essay writing. Having ended my contract, I am currently back in Sikkim preparing for the Civil Services exam in India.

Apart from academics, my six years at Taktse taught me a lot about life skills, confidence, and taking that one step forward even when I am petrified. This helped me a lot when I left Taktse and Sikkim and went to college in the United States, and subsequently to work in South Korea. I will always be grateful to Taktse for making me have faith in myself. Because of this, I believe I am able to take a lot of steps and have the courage to attempt to leap a little higher. That has been my most valuable lesson from Taktse.

Even the most mundane days at Taktse were memorable. Perhaps this was because we had our own culture, or perhaps because I lived in the hostel on campus. I always loved our field trips - planting rice at Sajong, rappelling down the huge rock at Educorp despite being scared to death, being in the presence of Rinpoche, dancing at Autumn Collage and being with my two best friends, who made me laugh till my belly ached.





Kitsho Wangchuk (studied at Taktse for 6 years)

I am currently a junior at Waseda University, Tokyo, majoring in Liberal Arts. When I am not attending classes, I help run Taktse Platforms, a series of online workshops.

Taktse pushed me out of my comfort zone. It could have been something as small as encouraging me to share my poetry during assembly or something as big as organizing an event and finding donors to support it. Whatever the case, Taktse made taking risks comfortable, and showed me that failing at something wasn't the end of the world. This is perhaps why, today, I feel confident in starting my own projects and experimenting with new ideas.

When I think of Taktse, I remember its simplicity (I was just a kid so perhaps I was oblivious to chaos). At Taktse, it felt like everyone had the same mission: read as many books as you can, become a good writer, and engage in sports if you were inclined to do so. I remember Taktse had traditions where the whole school would "Drop Everything

and Read" or "Drop Everything and Do Math", and I remember enjoying these moments, which were new experiences for me. Some day I would like to start a school like Taktse in Bhutan.

Tenchung Namgyal (studied at Taktse for 8 years)

I earned my undergraduate degree from Mount Carmel College in Bangalore, majoring in Psychology, Journalism and English. After that, I worked as an associate on the Admissions and Outreach team at Atria University in Bangalore. I am currently studying for my masters degree in Public Administration from Indira Gandhi National Open University in New Delhi.

During my free time, I am helping to conduct weekly workshops for Taktse Platforms. I also like to bake and paint flowers on the walls of my rooms.

Typing is a skill I learned at Taktse. Since I was working from home during the pandemic, having a fast typing speed has really helped me. It is something for which I am grateful to Taktse.



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Taktse Times

Check out these links to the Taktse Times, the newsletter for students and prospective students:

Jan - <https://bit.ly/3j4Ofq9>

Feb - <https://bit.ly/3ec1Hbq>

Mar - <https://bit.ly/3rMQiIF>

Apr - <https://bit.ly/33aBHGN>

May - <https://bit.ly/3vJffB4>

Jun - <https://bit.ly/3hv7M2E>

July - <https://bit.ly/3CkKQNP>

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