



### MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Kuzuzangpola.

We just ended our refreshing two-weeks summer break and our courses and programs for the second half of the year are now on full-swing again.

As always, CTAS has been brimming with curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities throughout the year. To begin with, this year too, we have received an overwhelming 88 applicants against 30 seats for new admission. As most applicants displayed impressive talents and passions for learning traditional arts and crafts skills besides coming from disadvantaged domestic backgrounds, CTAS admitted 41 students comprising of 28 boys and 13 girls. The total number of students at CTAS today stands at 169.

On the other hand, this year, CTAS witnessed 24 students (14 boys and 10 girls) successfully completing their courses and graduating from the school. We are indeed proud of their achievements and wish them all the best in pursuing their career in coming years.

One of the notable renovations that the school carried out was its old basketball court which was in bad shape after its eight years of use by the students. We were deeply moved when we learned that one of our young supporters, Leila Foulon organized a marathon run to raise fund for our basketball court renovation. In addition, Yannick, Claudia and their friends have organized badminton event for the same cause. Their contributions along with additional support from Mr. Franz and Gudrun Nawratil enabled us to complete the renovation of the basketball court. We simply cannot express fully how grateful we are for your gestures.

One of our concerns regarding the safety of our students is the condition of the old two-storied classroom building which showed visible cracks and other damages due to earthquake in 2011. Following a visit by Mr. Alan Bickell to CTAS this year, Alan and his wife Patricia has generously offered to establish a challenge grant to construct a new three storied reinforced concrete classroom building for CTAS. Alan intends to match any donations made towards this construction until 31 December 2018. Therefore, we would like to sincerely request all our supporters to kindly render your supports, wherever possible, towards this crucial infrastructure development. More details about this challenge are mentioned on page 6 of this newsletter.

CTAS is also lucky to receive a safe drinking water filter system through the generous support of Yoshiharu Kazama and his wife Nima Deki Sherpa. This vital support will go a long way to prevent water related illnesses among our students.

Another encouraging trend the school keeps experiencing is the continued support by the school's alumni. This year too, several alumni visited the school and shared their success stories since their graduation, thereby inspiring and encouraging our students to work hard and complete the courses successfully. On a similar note, one of our final year students Manisha Rai who will be our first female graduate from the Thangka painting course this year shares her experience during her seven years of study at CTAS.

With this, may I take the opportunity to thank our main supporters – Mario Fontana & Fontana Foundation, Koenraad & Leila Foulon, Capital Group, Himalayan Youth Foundation, Ustinov Foundation, Alan & Patricia Bickell and all other individual supporters and well wishers for your continued belief and support without which this project would not be a success today!

Please enjoy reading our newsletter and we look forward to your continued support.

Kadichey and Tashi Delek.  
Sonam Choki



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## New Admissions

The admission interviews for the new academic year 2018 were held on the 10th March 2018 at the school campus. There were a total of 88 new applicants for the 30 available seats.

The interview selection process included a written exam, an oral interview and the assessment of the student's family background. This year we admitted 41 students (28 boys and 13 girls) for the painting, wood carving, embroidery and tailoring courses.

We would like to thank Bhutan Broadcasting Service (BBS) for their kind support in enabling the school to broadcast the availability of our seats to the most vulnerable and disadvantaged youths across Bhutan. Its support has immensely benefitted our school and allowed us to reach the most underprivileged students.

With these new students, the school today has 169 students (121 boys and 48 girls) studying at CTAS.



## Freshers' Night

The fresher night to welcome the new students was held on 17th March 2018 at our multiple purposes Hall. The fresher night is one of the most looked forward event for our students and staff.

The new students first introduced themselves which was then followed by a short cultural program prepared by our senior students, consisting of a Bhutanese traditional dance, a modern Bhutanese dance, solo songs and more. It is a way to warmly welcome the new students to the CTAS family and to ensure that they feel at ease and at home.





## Renovation of Basketball Court

Our students only have a few sports facilities they can use. Within the CTAS campus, we only have an outdoor basketball court that was constructed in 2009 with the financial support of Mrs. Johnna, Betterplace, Germany. The court was built to encourage the students' participation in extracurricular activities such as basketball and also to improve their overall physical wellbeing.

However, over the years of frequent use and exposure to weather it is badly deteriorated, the condition of the basketball court was in need of urgent repairs and a facelift to make it fully usable again. The students had requested the school management to repair the basketball court, however, due to budget constraints we were not able to carry out the restoration work.

The basketball renovation project initially was estimated at USD 4100 (Nu. 259,900/-). The project was mainly to repair the existing facility at a minimum cost. However, as work progressed, it became clear that the foundation of the basketball court had become weak causing the court to sink and crack. This led to more than 200% increase in costs due to additional repairs that were unforeseen and necessary.

Now that the basketball renovation is completed, our students are fully utilizing and enjoying it. This restoration work was made possible with financial support from Ms. Leila Foulon who did a marathon run to raise money for us. Additional thanks and appreciation goes to Yannick, Claudia and their friends for the badminton event held to raise funds for the construction work. We are all very touched and proud of our very young supporters who went through the whole fundraising process at such a young age to support us. We would also like to thank Mr. Franz and Gudrun Nawratil for their kind support which enabled us to complete this project on time.



## Kids to Kids International Visits

Kids to Kids is a worldwide humanitarian service founded by international peace leader Sri Chinmoy, a humanitarian and visionary who believes that together, we can all create a world of peace through our actions.

The team promoted the International Day of Happiness in schools. In June 2017 a project called Happiness Art project was formed and many drawings were received on the theme of happiness from children in many countries. One of the Professors of the Happiness Art project visited CTAS on 2nd March and met with our captains and teachers for an hour to share some of the drawings and messages on the theme of happiness. It was a wonderful opportunity for our students and teachers to interact and get some insight knowledge on the happiness art done by other children around the world.





## Parents - Teachers Meeting

The parent-Teacher meeting was held on 17th March 2018 at CTAS Multi Purpose Hall. It is fundamentally important to hold such meetings at least twice a year in order to bridge the gap between the school and the parents. It has helped both parents and the school to understand each other's position and to discuss in general the continued improvement of the school system.

During the meeting the principal shared and discuss the mission, vision and objectives of the school and explained the schools policies, issues and challenges as well as plans to further strengthen the school. The principal also emphasized the importance of quality in education and that each individual student must work hard to be successful in the job market.

In the meeting, some of the parents also shared their concerns and problems their children had with the school authority. Mr. Karma Wangchuk, one of the painting teachers, suggested that parents or guardians and teachers should establish a wee chat group which will help to make the communication much easier, efficient and effective. All parents and the staff welcomed the idea.

In conclusion, the parents thanked the school and all the supporters within and outside the country for their continuous support and love given to their children and to their families and for providing their child this art education.



## Cottage & Small Industry Fair

From 23rd till 25th March 2018, an exhibition and sale of local, handmade products was held at the Changlimithang parking ground in Thimphu. The Department of Cottage and Small Industry (DCSI), MoEA conducted the fair in an effort to help Bhutanese entrepreneurs. Stalls for the three daysexhibition were provided for free. The Hon'ble Tengye Lyonpo graced the opening of the exhibition.

The fair aims to build a platform to market authentic and unique handmade local products by entrepreneurs from all 20 Dzongkhags, with no involvement by middlemen. Its primary goal is to promote and enable the culture of entrepreneurship, encourage the building of a network, exchange business related information, strengthen the cooperation and initiate common development activities for Cottage and Small Industries. Our Sales Manager and Ms. Cheychey from CTAS participated in this three-days fair.





## School Guides' Training

For students to excel not only in the art education, the school continues to work hard to provide additional programs for our students. To help our school guides to further develop their confidence and communication skills, Mr. Tandin Tshawang from Boonserm tours was invited to our school on March 26, 2018, to give a short training of 2.5 hours to our 10 volunteer school guides and captains.

During the brief training Mr. Tandin shared his professional experience and knowledge as a guide with our students. He also shared his own experience speaking English and some tips on being a successful guide. And he was available to answer any questions the students had. The training helped our school guides and captains to better understand the overall idea and be better at their work as school guides. We would like to Thank Mr. Tandin Tshawang for his volunteer service and for the interesting training.



## Alan Bickell's Visit to CTAS

Mr. Alan Bickell and Ms. Angela visited CTAS on 29th March 2018. Mr. Alan Bickell is one of our oldest supporters and well wisher of our school. This is his 4th visit to Bhutan since his first visit in October 2008.

It is a privilege for all the students and teachers to welcome Mr. Alan Bickell at CTAS. All the students and staff were very happy to see him again. As an expression of our gratitude for his continuous support, the students performed a brief cultural program. The principal thanked Mr. Alan Bickell for sparing his valuable time to visit CTAS and for his continuous support. The principal also shared a brief update on new developments at the school. Mr. Alan Bickell and Ms. Angela also visited the classrooms and met with the students.





## New Classroom Building Fund Raising Campaign

Choki traditional Art School (CTAS) located at Kabesa, Thimphu was established in 1999 commemorating the 25th year of His Majesty the 4th Druk Gyelpo's silver jubilee reign. The school offers free art and crafts education to the financially disadvantaged youth coming from all 20 districts. Currently we have 169 (121 boys & 48 girls) students studying at the school.

We are fortunate to have received unstinted support from our well-wishers, without which the operation of the school would not have been possible. It is amazing how much we have accomplished over the years. So far a total of 137 students (100 boys & 37 girls) have successfully graduated and many students left the school half way through after receiving basic training for self-employment. All these students are 100% employed or self-employed. These young students now work all across 20 districts of the country upholding the preservation and promoting of these important art works. To achieve positive change in the lives of these children and their families, while safeguarding the preservation and promotion of our country's unique art and culture is not possible without the support of our well-wishers.

Currently, the school is faced with one big challenge. The classrooms are not adequate anymore to provide quality art training. With the larger number of students, the rooms are increasingly becoming congested and inconvenient and hinder students to carry out their art lessons effectively. Furthermore, the two storied painting building, which was built in 2002 from mud bricks, was damaged by the Earthquake in September 2011. There are cracks in the walls and living in the building had become risky and unsafe for teachers and students.

Therefore, we would like to dismantle the old mud brick house and build a concrete three-storied building in its place, using the traditional design. This will provide safety to our students, help us overcome the space shortage and enable future growth. Furthermore, it will also provide the much-needed space to enhance the overall quality of the arts and crafts education by having a proper meeting room, extracurricular activities, a new library and a space to conduct creativity exchange programs etc.

In March this year, Alan and Patricia Bickell, who are our current supporters of the school, agreed to establish a challenge grant for the construction of a three-storied reinforced concrete classroom building. They are prepared to match all gifts made by other donors received before December 31st 2018. Alan would be very happy to discuss this project and the challenge grant directly with any potential donors wishing to contact him.

The construction cost of the proposed building is estimated to be US\$ 350,000 and we intend to start the construction works by January 2019. Mr. Peter Schmid, a Swiss architect and a long-term resident of Bhutan made the technical drawings and site plan. He has extensive experience in designing Bhutanese educational facilities and government offices. The school is counting on the well-wishers and past donors to contribute generously to this challenge and thus allow the school to make this wonderful new academic building a reality.

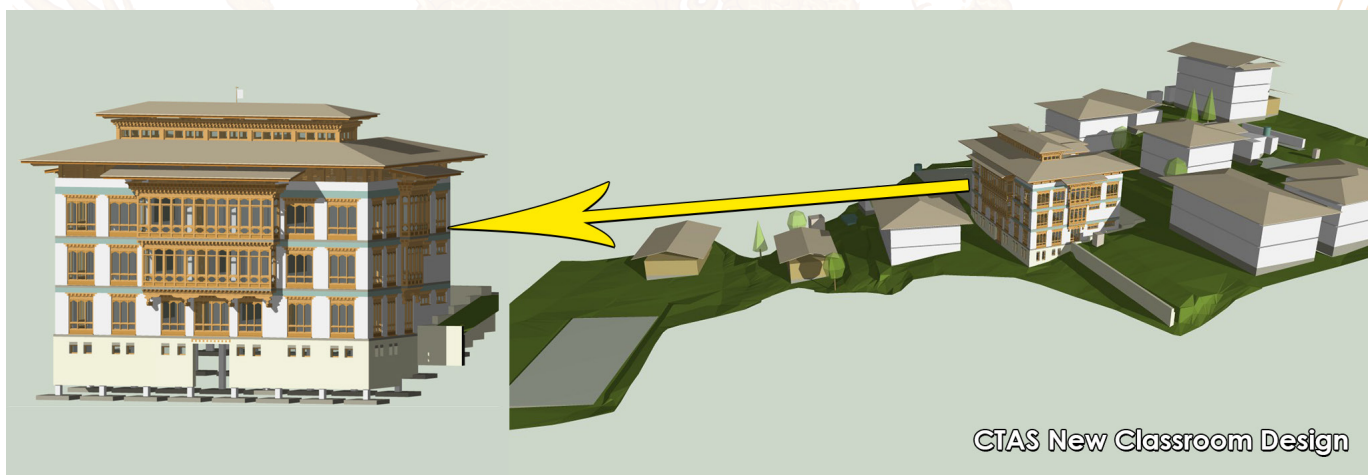
Again without our friends and well-wishers, we cannot achieve this crucial project. We are counting on your generous support to accomplish this huge challenge together, so that we can provide adequate and safe classrooms for our students for all times to come.

We are establishing the following categories of funding support for your kind consideration as we provide monthly updates of the progress of the project:

Categories	Donate Amount
Benefactors:	USD 50,000 or more
Patrons:	USD 10,000 - USD 49,999
Champions:	USD 1,000 – USD 9,999
Supporter:	Any amount up to USD 999

Now with the generous support of our well-wisher and other donors, this dream project can come true!

For more information, please contact  
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## School Rimdo (Annual Ritual)

The annual school rimdo or puja of CTAS was held on the 9th April 2018 at multi-purpose hall. This year the ritual was presided over by the Lama Dawa Gyeltsen from Punakha Dzong. For 4 years in a row this special blessing ritual ceremony was held.

This special ritual is being normally performed for the well being of all the students, staff, donors, well wishers and the supporters within and outside the country and for the benefit of all the sentient beings. All the students and staff joined the Rimdo, which went very well to everyone's satisfactory.



## Awareness Program on Health and Hygiene

"Health is Wealth", on this note, an awareness program on health and hygiene was held on 27th April 2018 at CTAS with the support from Mr. Kencho Wangdi, Country Representative, SNV Netherland office.

Mr. Tashi Dorji, Advisor, SNV, Thimphu Office gave a 1-day workshop to 25 participants consisting of school captains, counsellors, wardens, matron and kitchen staff. Mr. Tashi gave talk on the importance of sanitation and hygiene in order to stay healthy and clean. The program wanted to create awareness of the diseases that are spread easily through the unhygienic practices. Mr. Tashi in his presentation shared some short videos and exercises on the implication of unhygienic practices. Mr. Tashi also emphasized the importance of team work to achieve better results and success.

The workshop helped our students and staff to understand the importance of better sanitation and hygiene. It also helped our students and staff to see some of the practices missing at our school.

Our students and staff will be able to share this knowledge and experience with other students, staff, their family members and the community. The school would like to thank Mr. Kencho, Mr. Tashi and SNV for their kind support extended in organising this important awareness health and hygiene program for our school.





## Teachers' Day Celebration

In Bhutan we celebrate Teachers Day each year on May 2nd, coinciding with the birthday of the third Druk Gyalpo the late king Jigme Dorji Wangchuck, Father of modern Bhutan.

At CTAS, as always, our students surprised the teachers and staff with their own songs and programs.

All the students came together to thank the teachers, staff and our supporters for being their role model and for guiding them in their life. The school captains and counsellors prepared some butter lamp sessions to pray and also to thank all those who are away by including them as well in this special occasion.

After the short prayers and school gratitude song, the students then performed some cultural songs and dances. This year the students surprised the teachers and staff by making them perform on stage.



## CTAS Receives Safe Drinking Water Filters

CTAS received a set of water filter systems as a gift from Mr. Yoshiharu Kazama and Aum Nima. Our students can now enjoy clean and safe drinking water as much as they want throughout the year. This simple water filter provides 40 litres of safe drinking water every hour. Especially in summer, it is very difficult to provide clean drinking water but from henceforth this problem will be solved. This Water Filter Systems was installed by Mawongpa water solutions and inaugurated on 7th May 2018. We would like to thank Mr. Kazama and Aum Nima for this wonderful gift.





## Alumni Meets CTAS Students

To continuously build good relations and cooperation between past and present students, the school invites some of our alumni to come back to the school to share their experience, and knowledge with the students. This time Mr. Thukten Tshering, currently working in the Department of National Property, the Royal Government of Bhutan, Mr. Tsheten and Mr. Sangay Tenzin working at Lingkana Palace, Thimphu, Ms. Dechen Tshomo and Ms. Sangay Lhamo, vice chairman of CTAS 2018, visited the school on 11th May 2018.

The alumni met and interacted with students in their classrooms and later met with all of them to share their success stories and to provide guidance. One of their key experience in the world of work was the importance of completing the entire course to have better opportunities later in life.

After the general session, the alumni had a separate brief meeting with the painting students and teachers. This special talk was held for the first time. Depending on the background and education of the alumni such talks will be held in the future to focus on that department and help understand the level of their learning, interact with students and get a better sense of the value of the subject.

The students and teachers welcome the new initiative of the school. It allows them to share their common interest with the alumni and feedback shows that both benefited from each other.



## School Foundation Day

On 19th May 2018, CTAS celebrated its 19th anniversary. On this very important day, all the students past and present, the teachers, staff and family join together to thank all our supporters, well-wishers and friends both in Bhutan and abroad for their continuous support and love and the faith they have in the progress and success of the school.

To celebrate this joyous occasion, we had Dasho Sonam Wangdi, Director, Department of Labour, Ministry of Labour and Human Resources, Royal Government of Bhutan as our chief guest and other guests from Kabesa local administration center, various institutions, handicrafts, parents, guardian of graduating students and alumni.

In our chief guest's address, Dasho shared the situation of the current youth and the unemployment situation. Since all our country's development policies are guided by the principle of Gross National Happiness, Dasho emphasized the importance the preservation and promotion of our culture has. The students studying in Zorig chusum (13th arts and crafts) have lot of opportunities as well as huge responsibilities to keep this aspiration of our Majesties. Dasho also stated that all the students must work hard to fulfil this aspiration and to excel in delivering high quality work which will not only make the Bhutanese proud but also help in the preservation and promotion of our unique culture.

After his address, the honourable chief guest awarded the certificates to all our 2017 graduates

There were two categories:

1. Diploma certificate: These students have undergone art education for the duration of 5 to 7 years. 14 students (8 boys & 6 girls) received this diploma; and
2. Certificate level: Since 2016, the school also been awarding certificates to those students successfully completing a 3 year program, but who were unable to complete the full course due to family and personal reasons after. This year 10 students (6 boys & 4 girls) received this certificate.



In total 24 students graduated ( 14 boys & 10 girls) in 2017.

Dasho also awarded certificates of appreciation to our outgoing alumni chairperson, best teachers and students of the year 2017.

The day concluded with a cultural program and with Tashi Labay dance and song.



## World No Tobacco Day Awareness Program

CTAS celebrated this year "World no tobacco day" On the 31st May 2018 together with the medical team from Thimphu Dzongkhag Health Official and Health Assistant from Kushuchen, Kawang gowog at CTAS MP Hall. This health program was sponsored and organized by Dzongkhag Administration office.

The goals of the program were:

1. To create awareness of the impact of tobacco chewing and smoking on our health and diseases related to the consumption of tobacco;
2. To advocate effective policies to reduce tobacco consumption;
3. To share some important health tips; and
4. To do a general health checkup with the measurement of blood pressure, eye tests, ear and throat examinations for all students and staff.

The program has helped our students and staff to be more caution with risks associated with tobacco use and in understanding the preventative measure to keep oneself healthy all the time.





## 'You Turn' Talk

His Majesty the King has a lot of concern for our youth and in many of His Majesty's speeches, His Majesty stated that a nation's future is mirrored in the quality of her youth and our youths shoulder great responsibilities in upholding the nation's security, peace and prosperity. At CTAS we make it our priority to work toward His Majesty's goal and support our students in their development. We try to educate them by providing many lessons, sharing stories and experiences and organizing talks to improve our student's overall personal development toward courage, honesty, integrity, modesty, commitment, compassion and a sense of humour.

"The struggle you're in today is developing the strength you need for tomorrow" on this note, this year we had a opportunity to have a team from Youth Centre Division, Department of Youth and Sport, Ministry of Education, Royal Government of Bhutan give a talk to the students and staff on the 4th June 2018. The theme of the talk was: "You turn to change, you turn to be inspired"

The 2-hours talk given by Mr. Amith Subba focused on the changes we need to make within ourselves. He told the story of his difficult life and how he managed to succeed despite the loss of his eyesight. He said to every problem there are different solutions. The more effort you put into correcting your mistake you made, the more chances you have to be a better man or woman. At the end of the talk, everyone was inspired by Mr. Amith Subba's story and it made everybody realize the importance of positive thinking and how in its own small ways it can bring happiness in one's life.

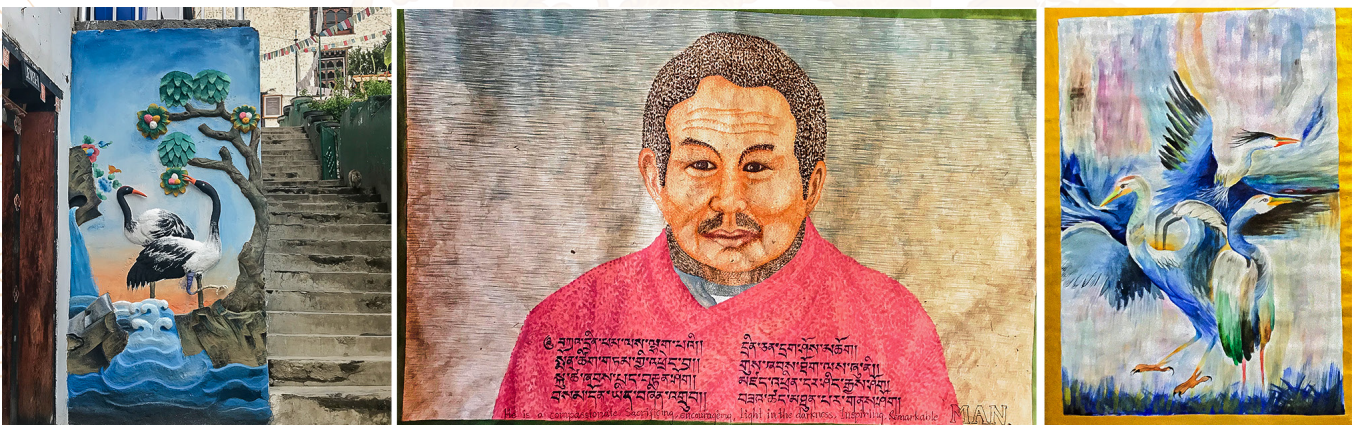


## Creativity Art Competition

The school's innovation and creativity contemporary art competition was held from 17th to 20th April 2018. CTAS believes that in today's rapidly changing society, it is crucial to not only preserve the traditional arts and crafts but also promote their core values and blend them with modern developments. It is with this belief that CTAS started to provide students the opportunity to explore new ideas and become more innovative in their works.

Every year, we organize a creativity art competition amongst our students, each with a different theme. This year we decided to re-use a previous theme: **"What does happiness mean to you?"**. The intention was to learn and understand if there are notable changes and improvements in the overall perception and advancement towards the same theme in students over the years.

The students were given complete freedom to use their own imaginations, stories, colours and materials to create their own arts. The program is very popular and students look forward to develop their own interpretations, experiences and their creativity and skills.





## Manisha Rai Shares her Story

My name is Manisha Rai. Currently I am in my final year (7th year) of the painting course. I will be graduating this November. I joined CTAS in 2012 and I was very eager to learn traditional painting. I studied up till class eight in Phuntsholing but did not qualify for the next grade. Since I am the oldest child, it was difficult for my parents to support my education. We are 6 children in the family. I am very interested in art and have seen men doing the traditional painting everywhere, so I too decided to become one of them.

In the beginning I was not feeling comfortable because I had never seen women doing the painting work in Bhutan. I asked my parents about my interest to study thanka painting and they supported me.

I heard about CTAS in BBS and also from our neighbours, so I decided to study thanka painting at CTAS. I feel very fortunate to have the opportunity to study this art of my choice and interest.



Looking back, I feel very happy that I made the decision to study thanka painting. Today I feel extremely happy to graduate as the first female thanka painter from our school. I have learned a lot beside the painting and hope to contribute and share all I know with all the people I come across in my life. The school has helped me realized my dream. Without CTAS I would never have made it. I would like to thank all the supporters, teachers, madam Principal and everyone for being part of this success story of mine.

My deepest respect, gratitude and thanks to Ms. Leila and Mr. Koenraad Foulon for the opportunities for a better life you created for our girls here at CTAS. We are all very grateful for your support and love.

As I said being the first lady to graduate as Thangka painter from our school, I have an additional responsibility for our future girls especially for those who are reluctant to take this course even if they have the ability and passion for this art. I promise to work hard and make everyone proud and to keep up to the expectation.

Thank you & Tashi Delek!

### TO SUPPORT US, PLEASE CONTACT US AT ANY OF THE FOLLOWING ADDRESSES:

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