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End of Year Report 2018

(July- December)

The Male Dog year allowed us to continue our activities smoothly without any major obstacles. The year ended with unusually heavy snowfall in December showing us that climate change is a reality. For us it was also a test of the strength of the roof gutters which had been installed just weeks before the snowfall.



Heavy snowfall in early December

Temple and rituals

Kangsoi ritual

The most important annual ritual, Kangsoi, had to be postponed because of the parliamentary elections, the election day fell on the main day of the ritual. Fortunately, we could conduct the four days rituals as usual with 19 *gomchens* led by the Venerable Lama from Thowadrak. The parliamentary elections were definitely not influenced by our annual rituals and Bhutan now has a new government which is working hard to fulfill their election pledges.

Change of temple caretaker.

Shortly after the Kangsoi the caretaker (*koenyer*) of the temples resigned and a new caretaker was recruited and appointed. The outgoing *koenyer*, Ngwang Jamba had been in the post since 1998. He carried out his tasks diligently with dedication and loyalty. He is a painter by training and during his tenure he carried out many small and big repair and painting jobs in the temple and the *nagtshang* complex. We were sorry to lose him but we were fortunate that his younger brother, Karma, agreed to replace him. The procedure of handing over and taking over was carried out following the standard norms and all the artifacts in the inventory were physically verified.



The Dzongkhag Culture Officer with Ngawang Jamba and Karma during the handing over process

We were honored by the visit of Dasho Dzongda of Bumthang along with Dasho Dzongrab, the District Court Justice and the Culture Officer who kindly came to Ogyen Choling on a familiarization tour and presided over the handing over process .

The Museum

The work of replacing the temporary glass in the traditional windows with window frames with glass panes continued. This was done not only to make it possible to clean the glass but also to make the drafty rooms a little warmer. Visitors to the museum have repeatedly commented on how cold the museum is. It is hoped that this work will be completed in 2019. At a later stage we will try to close up the gaps and crevices in the walls to stop the cold air flowing in. The addition of the window frames does not alter the overall appearance of the buildings.



Fixing a window frame

Continuous cleaning, minor maintenance and improvements in the display of artifacts in the museum continued over the entire year

We are exploring opportunities for the museum assistant, Kelzang Namgyel to get some museum related experience/training. As an initial step we have approached the Indian Embassy in Thimphu.

We recorded 2375 international visitors to the museum. This is again a 15 % increase compared to 2017. Although we have not kept detailed records, we estimate that nearly the same number of students and monks may have visited the museum and temples during the year. Ticket sales added up to almost 25% of the Foundations income for 2018.



School buses parked in Ogyen Choling village compound

In memory of Leo Caminada: During one of our visits to Switzerland, we spent a night in Leo's home in Greppen, Leo expressed his wish to send his mask collection to our museum. The mask had been made during his tenure in Bumthang in the late 1970s by Yeshe Penjor, the mask maker from Jampel lhakang, The consignment of mask reached the museum in January and were put on display in the museum immediately. The biggest mask, Shingi Choeki Gyalpo, was, sent by his family, with a consignment of Emanuel Fluckiger of Theatre Lighting Company Switzerland and reached Bhutan by end of the year. The mask is the central piece among the 36 masks of the collection.

After Leo's tragic death in an aviation accident, his family kindly decided to donate part of the contributions made in his memory to the Ogyen Choling Foundation (received through the Society Switzerland-Bhutan). The donation of Nu 244107 is being used to install window frames in the museum. With this the memory of Leo lives on in the Ogyen Choling museum

Guest house

Following the recommendations and observations of the Tourism Council of Bhutan (TCB) we have seriously tried to rectify many of the short comings and gaps in the guest house infrastructure and services. We will reapply to TCB in early February in order to get the TCB approval for a three star ranking.

The kitchen staff, four women, have been trained by the BAFRA (Bhutan Agency for Food Regulatory Authority) and will receive their food handlers license shortly. In the meantime, our kitchen has received repeated positive feedback from many who have dined with us, which is a definite encouragement. Throughout the year we have endeavored to, as far as possible, serve vegetables from our own garden. We are at the same time, exploring ways and means to recruit a professionals with housekeeping and culinary expertise to come conduct an on-hands training for our guest house staff.

Education and Scholarship

On the 15th of August the Early Childhood Care and Development centre (ECCD) in Ogyen



Choling was formally opened. The facilitator, Yeshe Tsomo, a class 12 graduate, from the village underwent a short training in the ECCD in Ura through a cordial collaboration with Loden Foundation. The principal from Kharab primary school, the Chiwog Tsogpa, and the Gup joined the opening ceremonies. Ten children between the ages of 3-6 were enrolled. It was a festive event with the traditional *shudrel phunsum tsokpa* for the children and the guests. The parents of the children hosted a lunch. The parents had cleaned around the facility and made a simple but friendly playground. The children enjoy the playground. The school closed in December with a lunch for the children and their parents sponsored by the Foundation.

The ECCD would like to acknowledge the generous donation of toys and educational aids from board member Gyalsten

Dorji. Special mention must be made of the beautiful wooden educational aids from his own company Tsem.



Children enjoying the playground

The Foundation provides financial support for 6 children in the Kharab Primary school . Additionally at the end of the school year we again offered cash prizes for the academic achievers in Tang Central School and the Khangrab Primary School.

The Reading and activity program on weekends continues. The Foundation library now has more than 550 books and we are happy that the children regularly come to borrow books. We are ever grateful to our main donor of books to the library, Mr. Philipose Abraham from Kerala.

Scholarship and Research

The Scholar/ Consultant Ms. Monique Filsnoel was in Ogyen Choling in December. This visit was to verify and check some of the information for the final documentation and compilation of the inventory of the figures in the temple murals. We eagerly await a complete comprehensive documentation of the murals in the temple. We are happy with the progress of Monique's work so far and amazed by her commitment and rigor.

Maintenance of structures and buildings

The maintenance of structures and buildings continued to take most of our resources, with the boundary wall by far the most expensive project. The last major projects carried out in the *shagor* were the installation of a meeting room, a meditation room and facilities for guide and drivers. After completing these projects the renovation of the *shagor* is more or less complete

and we could take up other projects such as repairing a *chorten* (see mid year report), access road to pump house, parking space (see mid year report), adding a patio (see mid year report), fixing roof gutters, restoring the entrance paintings and the latest project was adding a winter garden-cum-bar.

Boundary Wall

During the board meeting it was decided to remove the wall inside the entrance compound and use the stones to continue the boundary wall. We were also lucky to buy an appreciable quantity of stone from the community forestry group. We could therefore, continue the work on this project. We hope that the stones will be sufficient to complete the entire wall soon.



Meeting room and meditation room

The west corner of the *shagor* was remodeled to provide a meeting room, a meditation room (both have attached verandas) and a toilet.

Facilities for guide and drivers

Rooms on ground floor of the *shagor*; previously used as a kitchen were remodeled to provide facilities for guides and drivers. The modest facilities include, include a bedroom with 3 beds, toilet, shower and a television room.

Roof gutters

The first roof gutter was installed in the south section of the *shagor* (inside and outside). Our carpentry team also installed gutters on the roof facing the courtyard creating a dry space protected from the shooting rain water from the *shagor* roof. Some of the drain off water from the roof water is collected into a tank which serves as a reservoir for fire management.

Entrance painting

The last project by Ngawang Jamba was to repair and restore the painting in the entrance. Also a wooden balustrade was built at the lower part of the wall with the hope of better protecting the paintings.



Winter Garden/cum bar.

We decided to make better use of a corner under the veranda (former toilet) on the south side of the *shagor* adjoining the patio by adding a structure with a glass walls. The work will be completed only in 2019. This winter garden will provide additional space for dining and lounging for the guests.

Financial

The budget proposed for 2019 was Nu 3.23 million. We could however, mobilize only about Nu 2 million. Because of this, some of the work had to be postponed. Clearly, our expectations were too optimistic. Yet, we are satisfied with the achievements made. Activities which were planned in 2018 but not implemented include: adding CGI sheets under the shingles of the *tsamkhang*, erecting fire barriers in the *Nagthsang*, translating museum labels into Dzongkha and improving labeling in the museum in general.

The sources of income included: donations Nu 0.8 millions, lease from the guest house Nu 0.6 million and museum tickets Nu 0.5 million. The most important expenses included: preservation and maintenance of structures and buildings Nu 1.0 million, administration and staff Nu 0.7 million, maintaining and managing the museum Nu 0.2 million and grants and support for education Nu 0.1 million.

Donations received

Donations up to Nu 5000

Dienne Brenner, Gea Okuda, Elenor Seling, Serena Lee, Carol & Clyde, S. Vandeput, John Dors, Christoph & Irene Bickel, Cotravel Group, Antonio, Richard and Louise Bennett.

Donations Nu 5000-10000

Francoise Pommaret, Special Tours Group, Marianne Frei & Claudio Zingg, Evelyn Bada.

Donations Nu 10000-20000

Don Messerschmidt, Roger Hammon, anonymous (Blue poppy group), Dechen Dolkar, Martin Menzi, ElanoTr D, Dominique Bastien, Anonymous.

Donations Nu 20000-50000

Monika Kraemer, Urs Aeberhard, Vincent Dannecker (Amis Du Bhutan), Joerg Nagel.

Donations above Nu 50000

Marianne Soderberg, Richard and Rosmary Frey, LH Guan & CL Tong Yng, Family Caminada.

In conclusion, although our achievements are modest, we are satisfied. We are especially happy that we have been able to adhere to our main objectives of cultural preservation and enhancing community vitality. With the employment of the facilitator from the village, for the ECCD our permanent staff number was increased to four personnel. The community involvement in the ECCD is a testament to the positive relationship between the Foundation and the community.

We continue to depend on the encouragement and support from the friends and well wishers and donors. It is your faith in us and your good will which keep us going on with our projects. Thank you to all!

Tashi Delek

Kunzang Choden, Ogyen Choling Foundation