

Ogyen Choling
FOUNDATION

CSO REGISTRATION NUMBER: CSOA/PBO-30

Ogyen Choling Foundation

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End of the Year Report

JULY- DECEMBER 2019



Elders from the village with the offerings in the temple on Losar

As we look back on the year of the Pig we are filled with gratitude and a sense of satisfaction for we were able to achieve most of what we hoped to do. As should have been expected, the Pig repeatedly reminded us of its presence by constant intrusions into the compound of the foundation and the crop fields of the farmers in the valley.

Besides the planned activities we were also able to carry out some unanticipated activities like the rebuilding and renovation of the chorten in the village compound that collapsed suddenly.

This report will mainly concentrate on the second half of the year, July-December 2019. Only brief mention of some of the activities during the first half of the year will be made, (for more details on the first half of the year see Mid Year Report 2019).



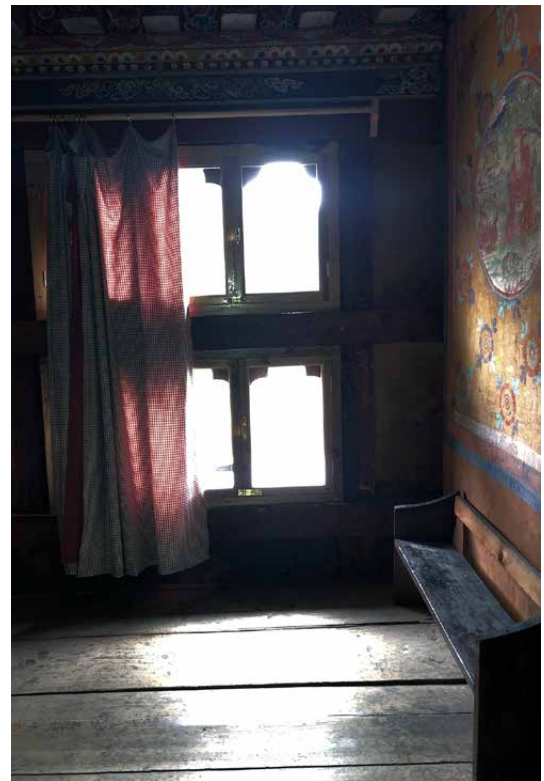
In the time honored tradition the soldiers in medieval costumes prepare for the sword dance

same dates as the Kangsoe. That, however, proved not to be a problem, all the usual attendees and even more people came for the flag hoisting ceremony and prayers. Unfortunately, as all of the school children (the future generation) from the village were engaged in the prayers, they could not participate in the procession. Their participation is important for the continuity of the Kangsoe procession. Even as we endeavour to uphold the old customs and traditions, we have to accept changes that are beyond our control.

Museum

The museum received a substantial facelift with the window frames completed in all the rooms. Additionally, all the windows now have curtains to protect the artefacts from direct sunlight. The rooms also feel warmer, so this was definitely a very beneficial addition.

Two rooms on the ground floor were cleaned out and made ready to display the textile and clothing materials presently displayed on the third floor. All exhibits relating to cloth and cloth production will be displayed in the ground floor. On the same floor the room where there is a structure of the Lu (Naga) has been cleaned. The Benevolent Lu, giver of wealth and protector of health and the wellbeing of the nagtshang family and the community was likely placed in the room from the time when the house was rebuilt in 1898. It is revered by the family and the community even today. It is planned that we will prepare narratives relating to the Lu associated with Ogyen Choling nagtshang.



New window frame with curtains in the museum

Prayers and Rituals

The year began with a sense of religious fervour and more than the usual rituals and prayers were performed in the temples. There was a feeling of communal harmony as individuals and groups came together for religious observances. The rituals and prayers culminated with the performance of the annual prayers of Kangsoe. We had some initial concerns that there would not be enough people to attend the prayers because the newly initiated Baza guru dung drub (chanting of the prayer to Guru Padmasambhava) in Tang Rimochen temple fell on the

In the period under report there were 2,531 international guests and 429 entrance paying Bhutanese visitors. Pilgrims and religious persons do not pay entrance fees so we do not have accurate information on their numbers, we believe there was an increase in their numbers. We estimate that the students, the guide trainees and other non-entry fee paying visitors will add up to more than one thousand.

Heritage House

Receiving the official 3 stars ranking (Tourism Council of Bhutan) and conducting a training by a Swiss professional were important milestones reported in the Mid Year Report.

We are indebted to Ms. Annagret Schlumpf who gave hands-on training to the staff during two visits (in March and again in November) and also facilitated a training for Ms. Pema Yangdon, Manager Food Services for a 2 months internship at a hotel in Lucarno, Switzerland. This opportunity not only gave Pema Yangdon a chance for exposure but she could also upgrade her culinary knowledge and skills, which certainly adds to the quality of our kitchen and dining services.

Thanks to the support by BAFRA (Bhutan Agriculture and Food Regulatory Authority), we could have our water analysed by their laboratory. The test results of samples collected directly from the source and samples of water which was boiled and filtered are both negative for E. coli and Faecal coliform counts, proving that the water is fit for consumption. This is very important for the guest house efforts to eliminate or at least reduce the use of plastic bottles.



The guests enjoy dining in the winter garden

the south side has proven to be an extremely successful addition to the guest house. The space which can accommodate up to 12 guests has been used regularly and appreciated by all.

Renovations, improvements and other constructions

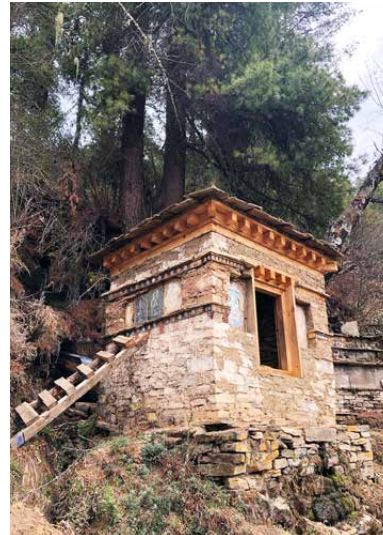
In line with our annual plan more than 70% of the expenditures were incurred for various infrastructure projects, the most important of which include:

Boundary wall and parking: The boundary wall project could be completed. Over the last 3 years we have constructed a total of 170 m of stone wall and about 50 m of walls for the parking area. The wall is a pleasant addition to the approach and entrance areas. The gate is, however, still missing. During 2019, we could also complete most of the parking area and have placed concrete grass pavers for most of the parking area.

Winter garden: The construction of the sheltered and sunny structure under the old veranda and toilet of the shagkor on



Dismantling the damaged wall of the Chukor mani



The repaired Chukor mani



The mani drum repaired and being painted

Chukor mani: The long delayed renovation of the chukor mani (water driven prayer wheel) was completed. The chukor mani which is located at a distance of about two kilometre from the nagtshang had to be dismantled almost completely before the renovation could commence. The Chukor mani was built by the nagtshang family. The repainting has yet to be done and the mani drum, which had to be repaired and repainted, has yet to be placed in the structure. As some of the water for turning the wheel has been diverted for paddy irrigation in the valley we have to improvise ways to get the prayer wheel moving with the remaining water.

Windows in the temples: After completing the window frames in the museum, the carpenter has started making window frames in the temple. The frames for the Drolma Lhakhang have been completed. Removing the wood shutters brings more light to the dark temple and stops the cold draft coming in from the cracks in the shutters. This also made it possible to reinstall the beautiful carved Nam da go sum, the inner wood shutters. These inner wood shutters had been removed to bring in more light into the temple.

Chorten: The major part of the chorten which was built in memory of late Trulku Nuden Dorji and late dasho Ugyen Wangdi in 1988 collapsed some time in early November. As the entire chorten had developed cracks, due to seepage of rain water from the roof, it was decided to take down the walls all the way to the ground level and to rebuild it completely. The work was supported through enthusiastic participation by the community in the form of serving meals and refreshments to the workers and providing voluntary labour. At the completion, nearly every household offered all kinds of religious items: prayer beads, ritual objects, texts and pictures to be placed in the chorten as zung. The consecration ceremony is yet to be done.

Carpentry workshop: Towards the end of the year we could finally build the carpentry shed near the water pump house where it is not so distractingly visible. Thanks to this, the obtrusive temporary shed, constructed in 2014 could finally be dismantled.

Other important activities included installing a CCTV system (details are in the Mid Year Report), expanding the dining room, and constructing the first fire break in the shagkor.



(top left) The badly damaged chorten (top right) The chorten dismantled to the base (bottom left) The old shokshing from the chorten (bottom middle) new shokshing redressed with offerings (bottom right) the final touch ups of the chorten

Education and Scholarship

This year, the foundation was in a “comfortable enough” financial situation to raise the prize money for the academic achievers quite substantially for both the schools. As over the past years, the foundation once again offered scholarship money to the Khangrab Primary School.

Early Child Care and Development (ECCD): Our experience with the ECCD was satisfactory and encouraging. Despite the fact that the facilitator only had a short intensive training she was able to carry out her duties fairly well. All of us have learned much through our first year of running such a centre. We now look forward to building on our experiences and go forward improving our services and methods to give the children the best learning and growing environment possible.

We were fortunate to have the professional and experienced input from a Swiss volunteer, Crista Conti. She did not only help the facilitator to improve her methods but also made us aware of the importance of dealing with children with special needs. We had three children with special needs enrolled in the EECD.

The centre closed in November. Five of the children graduated and joined regular school. The Centre conducted a small ceremony for the graduates and the parents hosted a celebratory



The first group of graduates from Ogyen Choling ECCD with facilitator Yeshi Tshomo and a volunteer Crista Conti

lunch for the children in one of the mother's homes. We were also happy to provide some stationary and toys to the other three ECCDs in Tang valley.

General Briefings

This year we experienced serious and repeated intrusions by wildlife; bears, wild boars, and porcupine. While the intrusions and damages into our compound and gardens could be considered as insignificant in comparison to the losses to the villagers' crops in their fields, we had to erect unsightly electric fences all around the compound.

Fire incident: In late October a short circuit on the mainline leading to the meter caused a fire in the meter box. Luckily it happened around 8:30 in the evening. The potentially hazardous fire was extinguished by a tourist guide with a blanket. We were grateful for his presence of mind and his quick action. As a result of the fire mishap, we were left without power for almost four days. The power department investigated the event in detail, but the promised report from the power department is still awaited. Their investigations have shown that our earthing is weak, although this cannot be the cause of the fire. The event was a powerful wake up call to alert us of the ever present dangers of fire.

Report CSOA: A report by the Civil Society Organisation Authority (CSOA) summarizing compliance

of the CSOs with their rules and regulations was circulated among the CSOs. In this report the Ogyen Choling Foundation was among a small group of CSOs who had 100% compliance (including reporting, audit and fee payments).

Temple keeper: Our former long-time temple caretaker Ngawang Jampa has indicated his willingness to come back and again take on the responsibilities of the temple keeper. Ngawang Jamba's willingness to re-join us is fortunate for Ogyen Choling as he has many skills; he can perform most of the required rituals, is very diligent about cleaning the temple and proactive about making small repairs. We envisage the handing over and taking over can take place sometime after Losar.

Verification of inventory: The Department of Culture carried out their routine nation-wide verification of temple artefacts in December. The officer from the Department, spent two days in Ogyen Choling checking all the artefacts. The physical verification is completed and we were happy that there were no problems.

Intern: Phuntsho Tenzin (a third year student in the Kanglung College), completed a one month internship with the foundation. He worked very closely with the Development Officer, carrying tasks and other works relating to the day to day management of the museum and developing concepts for new exhibits.

Zero waste hour: As required the foundation has carried out monthly zero waste hour activities. Reports have been submitted regularly, but no acknowledgement or feedback was received so far. We are making efforts to have activities which are more meaningful than just collecting garbage and equating zero waste hour with cleaning campaigns.

Financial

The budget proposed for 2019 was Nu 3.35 million. Thanks to very generous donations our income for the year was more than 3.6 million. The sources of income included donations (1.9 millions) lease from the guest house (1.2 million) and museum tickets (0.5 million). The most significant expenses included preservation and maintenance of structures and buildings (1.14 million) facilitating and supporting traditional rituals (0.37 million) maintenance and management of the museum (0.35 million) and grants and support for education (0.30 million).

Our expenses were substantially below the budget estimate although we carried out almost all the planned activities. Because of this and the good income, we had for the first time enough resources to make a modest start in repaying some of the foundation's liabilities.

Donations received

Donations up to Nu 5000

Jigme Thinley, Chimi, Katharine P, Family Ludwig, Family Theabalt, Anisa and Will, Kate Maloney, Ross Greenburg, Susan Malamed, Daniel Spitzer, A. Luthi, Herbert Roder, John & Laura Mackay

Donations Nu 5000-20000

Beatrice, Swiss Bicycle Group, Tina Rohner, Sin Young Choi, Werner Kulling, Jane and Michael Quinn, Harry Frank, Urs and Maja Niederhauser, Dr Bandli, Dominique Bastien

Donations Nu 20000-50000

Malcolm J. Kutner, Group Wendy Erd, Hilmar Kaht, Nancy & Roger Hamond, Martin Vernier, Fabienne Grossenbacher, Craig Thomas Smith & Veronica Gossweiler, Vincent Danecker, Amici del Bhutan (Italy), B & M Roder-Mutti

Donations Nu 50000-100000

H. Widmer, R & R Frey

Donations Nu 100000 - 300000

Joerg Nagel, Gerard & Anne Tardy

Donations above Nu 300000

Douglas Hamilton (through Bhutan Foundation), K.P. Albert

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 numbers were increased to four personnel. The community involvement in the ECCD is a testament to the positive synergy between the foundation and the community.

We continue to depend on the encouragement and support from the friends, well wishers and donors. It is your faith in us and your goodwill and support which keeps the foundation growing. Thank you to all!

Tashi Delek

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