
Ugyen Choling Trust Fund

Annual update (1.10. 2001-31.12.2002)

This is our second annual update of the activities and plans for Ugyen Choling. We would welcome any comments or suggestions you may have on anything in the update. Although our first update had been timed to coincide with the annual prayers (*kangso*), we have decided to adjust the reporting period to the calendar year. This update, including the financial statement, therefore, covers a period of 15 months (1st October 2001-31. December 2002)

Overall it has been an active and fruitful year for Ugyen Choling, the activities carried out under the trust fund gained considerable momentum and recognition. We could initiate the new activities that had been projected for the reporting period and could complete some of the ongoing works. Major activities that were started or continued during the period were; initiating a scholarship scheme, painting the temple, adding new exhibits in the museum and completing the catalogue for the library.

Purposes of the trust fund:

- To continue the traditional religious rituals
- To create opportunities for selected persons to use the centre for religious studies, research, solitude and prayer
- To revive and enhance traditional skills and provide a market for local handicrafts
- To provide financial support to needy and deserving students from the locality to pursue religious or modern education/training at all levels

The temples

Already in the beginning of the year we started to repaint the temple. The temple was last painted about 45 years ago. The temple caretaker is a skilled painter and he has nearly completed painting the front side of the temple. Only natural earth colors are being used. The general reaction to the painting has been very positive. We hope that the painting will not only preserve the wood work, but also enhance the aesthetics of the structure. In order to protect the wall paintings inside the temples from exposure and damage curtains were provided.

Incidentally the walls of the main temple had curtains as early as 1981. The statues in the Dolma lhakang were offered garments.



Painting of temple in progress

The museum

During the period covered by the report the museum received 300 international and about 400 Bhutanese visitors.



Scouts of the Jakar school being served tea after visiting the museum

Visitors are generally impressed by the museum. Many helpful comments and suggestions from the visitors have been noted. The museum has also been mentioned in the recent editions of the major tourist guide books on Bhutan.

Improvements in all the display rooms have continued. In addition to the existing ten rooms, we have started work on three more rooms. The shortage of skilled carpenters has been a major constraint. But we will continue our policy of employing only local craftsmen. Two rooms on the fourth floor have been prepared for the display of masks, dance costumes and other paraphernalia for mask dances. We are optimistic that both these displays will be ready by the first half of 2003. The masks as well as the costumes are considered by many to be some of the finest specimens in the country. Most of the items are more than 100 years old. The dance tradition was discontinued in Ugyen Choling since about 60 years ago.



Dance costume and mask

One room on the first floor will be used for displaying agriculture and carpentry tools and implements. Nearly all of the tools and implements to be displayed were used for the house hold of Ugyen Choling. Ap Dorji a farmer/carpenter from the village was the first person to voluntarily contribute some old carpentry tools, a hand saw and an axe to the museum's collection. We were touched by this thoughtful gesture.

We have also started to photograph and catalogue all the items on display. Presently all the narratives are in English only. At a later stage we plan to have the narratives translated into Dzongkha, Japanese, German and French.

Library

During October 2001 Professor Samten Karmay continued his work at the Ugyen Choling library. He is presently finalising the catalogue of texts (manuscripts and xylographs). The Austrian Co-ordination office in Bhutan has kindly consented to finance the printing of the catalogue which will be printed through the facilitation of Prof. Ernst Steinkeller. He will oversee the publication of the catalogue at the Osterreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften in Vienna. We are hopeful once the catalogue becomes available to the public, scholars and researchers will be better able to use the library.

Research and Publication

Dr. Francoise Pommaret of CNRS Paris stayed 10 days in Ugyen Choling during November 2002 to pursue research on the Kangso festival. Two papers on Ugyen Choling are under preparation for possible inclusion in the Bhutan panel during the International Association of Tibetan and Himalayan Studies to be held at Oxford in September 2003.

Guest house

The comfort in the guest house has been improved with the installation of a hot water boiler for showers and an independent solar electric system. Work for the construction of an independent two roomed hermitage (*tshamkhang*) is underway with private funds. It should be available at times to visitors who wish to stay for longer periods of time for research, religious practice and solitude.

Some minor works and finishing touches remain to be completed on the guesthouse. Plans for a traditional hot-stone bath have not been completely shelved. Although the facilities continue to be basic and modest we have had positive responses from many who have stayed with us.

Visitors

In October, Ugyen Choling was honored by the visit of Her Majesty the Queen Ashi Dorji Wangmo Wangchuck. Her Majesty's keen interest in the activities for the preservation of Ugyen Choling, and her gracious words of encouragement "This museum serves as a shining example of how a family has kept the rich heritage alive for future generations to appreciate and learn from." did much to boost our morale and energize us further in our endeavors.



Her Majesty giving audience in front of the temple

We also had the privilege of hosting H.E. Mr. K.S. Jasrotia Ambassador of India to Bhutan and Mrs. Gulshan Jasrotia. Dasho Pema Wangchuk, Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs accompanied the Ambassador.

In November, the Foreign Minister, H.E. Lyonpo Jigmi Y. Thinley and Aum Rinzi Dem along with the officers and staff of the Foreign Ministry visited the museum and stayed overnight at the guest house. We were also very pleased to host Dasho Nim

Tshering, Dzongda of Bumthang who accompanied the Foreign Minister.

Other visitors included the scouts from the Wangdicholing Lower Secondary school and the Jakar High School. We also had 70 nuns from the Nunnery in Bebzur, Tang visit the museum. Many Bhutanese pilgrims also saw the museum. We were gratified that as many as 300 "entrance fee paying tourists" visited the museum.. The entrance fees is a welcome source of income for the trust fund.

Scholarship Fund

Under our modest scholarship scheme we were able to offer financial assistance to eight children: five from Misithang Primary school and three from Kharab Primary school. The children were selected by the "Parents Teachers Association" based on each child's family's economic status. We hope to increase the number of children to ten in 2003. We also offered prizes for academic performances in the schools. A total of 36 prizes were provided for the three top positions in all the classes in both the schools. We believe that education is fundamental to the advancement of every child and we are committed to support the schools in whatever ways we can.

Traditional skills/markets

As envisaged in the outlook of the last annual update, a small gift shop was started during the season by a woman from Ugyen Choling village. The shop will only sell locally made handicrafts. Bamboo and wooden crafts were much appreciated by the visitors. Textiles will be added during the forthcoming season.

Environmental awareness

An informal campaign "keep our village clean" was initiated in December. A group of 18 children from Ugyencholing village (9 girls and 9 boys) collected litter and garbage in and around the village. The volunteer team will carry out more campaigns and disseminate information on environmental awareness.

Finance report

The trust fund has received generous contributions from 25 donors. At the same time substantial income was generated through the guest house and the museum. The trust fund, thus, could initiate the scholarship programme and set aside the first modest amount for long term investments. The most significant expenses were: the purchase and installation of a solar electrical system in the guest house and the museum, expansion of the museum, painting of the temple, installation of a hot water system for the guest house, payment/interest of loan and the salary of the temple caretaker.

Financial statement

Income	Nu
Balance 2001	13'608
Donations	371'005
Entrance fee museum	30'000
Guest house	47'870
Total income	462'483
Expenses	Nu
Kangso 2001 and 2002	56'283
Temple	73'564
Guest house	120'048
Museum	81'744
Scholarships, academic prizes	19'543
Investment	30'000
Loan (interest/repayment)	77'000
Balance Oling	4'650
Total expenses	462832
Investments and loans	Nu
Long-term investments	30'000
Loan	250'000

A statement showing details of donor contributions is mailed to all individual donors and is available to others on request.

Personnel

From May 2002 onwards Ugen Rinzin in addition to being the site manager was also appointed as assistant curator of the museum on a part time basis.

Future plans

The major part of the available resources will be used to complete the additional rooms in the museum and to improve on the existing exhibits. Although we constantly remind ourselves not to get too ambitious nor too complacent we hope during 2003 we can also attend to the following:

- The shingle roof on the two storied quadrangle building (*shakor*) and the old part of the guest house need to be replaced. We have decided to use CGI sheets. We may, however, cover the CGI roof with a layer of wooden singles to maintain the traditional look.
- Some of the *chorten*, *mani* walls and the prayer mills need immediate maintenance. We are concerned by a crafty group of "*chorten* robbers" who are operating in the Bumthang area. They have so far managed to escape the police. We have to think of ways of protecting these precious structures.
- A boundary wall near the entrance needs to be constructed. At the same time we will make a new entrance gate to the Ugyen Choling complex.



Women pulling the rope to help raise the flag – The spirit of community in Ugyen Choling comes alive during the flag raising ceremony for the Kangso

Contributions to the trust fund (Oct. 2001-Dec 2002)

Donor	Amount (Nu)
Her Majesty the Queen Ashi Dorji Wangmo Wangchuck	10'000
HE Lyonpo Jigmi Y. Thinley, Foreign Ministry	7'000
HE the Ambassador of India, Mr. K.S. Jasrotia	20'000
Family Derksen (US \$ 300)	14'400
Family Sonam Wangchuk	3'000
Nicole Mir	500
Matthijs de Jongh	4'500
Rudolf Roder-Raez (SFr. 1000)	26'000
Werner Roder-Stuber (SFr. 1000)	26'000
Ursula Pfaffen	1'000
Dieter Zuercher	1'000
Kate Reed	800
Martine	500
Kathleen and Elizabeth (US \$ 75)	3'600
Friends of Bhutan, France (Euro 1000)	44'050 ¹
V. Haldebrand Blackwell	1'300
Mieko Nishemizu (US \$ 300)	14'325
Anni Schluep-Roder (SFr. 3000)	97'500
Jim and Denise Tomecko (US \$ 20)	980
Diana Myers	500
Nada Stone (Euro 750)	35'250
Kunzang Choden	41'000
Kesang and Ugen Rinzin	4'000
Aiala Fernandez and team US \$ 100	4'800
Françoise Pommaret	10'000
Total	Nu 372'005

¹Earmarked for scholarship scheme