
Ogyen Choling Trust Fund

Annual update (1.1 2003-31.12.2003)



Main entrance into Ogyen Choling complex

This is the third annual update of the activities and plans for Ogyen Choling. The year 2003 was an active and satisfying year. Some of the projects begun in the last reporting period could be completed and some new ones initiated. We may have been too ambitious as some of the activities planned for the year could not be realized. Substantial progress, however, was made in the museum.

For the Ogyen Choling community the most exciting and most talked about event was definitely the shooting of the Bhutanese movie "*Ashila*". Ogyen Choling and the surrounding areas were the center stage for the movie. The entire village participated full heartedly in all sorts of capacities and many had the chance to even display their acting skills!

The generous contributions to the trust fund are highly appreciated. The patronage of and the favorable comments by distinguished visitors and especially the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, were most encouraging.

Purposes of the trust fund

- To preserve and maintain Ogyen Choling as a religious and cultural centre
- 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

The painting of the front facade of the temple could be completed in time for the annual prayers (Kangso), in early November. We may not continue painting the remaining part of the temple for some time. A team of five people from the National Cultural Commission spent nearly a week doing the physical verification of all the statues and all the religious objects in the temples. The inventory was made about twenty years ago. A tedious process but thankfully all the items listed were intact.

The rituals dedicated to Goenpo (Mahakhala) and Penden Lhamo (Kali) have been revived to be carried out every month. Similarly, it is planned to revive the monthly *tsechu* rituals.

The museum

We have spend most of our resources on the further development of the museum. Activities included:

- New displays and rooms were added in the *utse* bringing the total to fifteen thematic display rooms. The new rooms are: 1) dance costumes and ritual objects, 2) masks and musical instruments for religious rituals, 3) store room for bamboo and rattan ware and 4) tools/implements for agriculture, carpentry, wood working, tailoring and leather works.
- The initial decision to rely entirely on the natural light in all the rooms had to be revoked. Some rooms and passages were too dark for viewing the displays. Solar lighting has been provided for these rooms and passages.
- The access to the rooms in the *utse* has been rearranged. All rooms on the same floor have been linked and can now be visited going in a circle. The visitors can move from one room to another in natural progression, avoiding the interruption of exiting one room to go to the other.
- Continuous improvements in the substance and presentation of the narratives and labels were made.
- Photographs were added to complement some of the displays and narratives.
- Preparation for roofing the *shagkor* (acquisition of roofing material, sawing timber).



Temple horns and drums

The Institute of Language and Culture, Simthoka, has verbally agreed to help with the translation of the labels and narratives into Dzongkhag.

During the period covered by the report the museum received 310 international visitors. This number indicates an increase compared to the previous year (In the previous update we reported 300 international visitors for the period 1.10.2001-31.12.2002).



Carpenter Jurmin making display cases for the museum

Library

The catalogue is ready for distribution. The contributions by Professor Samten Karmay in compiling the catalogue, Professor Ernst Steinkellner for overseeing the publication and the Austrian Corporation Office in Bhutan for financing the publication are greatly appreciated. In the introduction of the catalogue Professor Samten Karmay highlights the important significance of the collection. In Bhutan the catalogue will be made available to interested parties through the trust fund.

Research and Publication

Three different papers on Ogyen Choling were presented in the Bhutan panel during the 10th conference of the International Association of Tibetan Studies in September 2003 in Oxford. They were: 1) A Rare *dGe lugs pa* work kept in *O rgyan chos gling*, by Professor Samten Karmay, 2) Estate and ritual in central Bhutan, the example of *O rgyan chos gling*, by Dr. Francoise Pommaret and 3) *Lo gsar* celebration: the significance of food in the noble and religious family of *O rgyan chos gling*, by Kunzang Choden.

Guest house

Although there was a trickle of visitors, we would like to see better use of the guest house. The construction of the independent two roomed hermitage (*tshamkhang*) is almost completed.

Visitors

Some of the dignitaries who visited Ogyen Choling during the year 2003 were:

- Her Excellency Adriene Clarkson, the Governor General of Canada with her husband John Ralston Saul, and officials from the Ministry of Foreign affairs.
- Mr. Gian Reto Plattner, President of the Staenderat (Senate of Switzerland) and his entourage spent a night in the guest house in August.
- Dasho Dorji Gyalsten, Gyalpoi Zimpon accompanied by the Bumthang dzongda Dasho Nim Tshering
- Professor Martin Menzi, representative of Helvetas and SDC (Switzerland)
- Scouts from the Bumthang schools

Scholarship Fund

The scholarship fund was expanded to include 11 children: five from Misithang Primary school

and six from Kharab Primary school. The children were selected by the “Parents Teachers Association” based on each child’s family’s economic status. Again, the trust provided prizes for the students in the three top positions in all the classes in these two schools.



Her Excellency Adriene Clarkson, Mr. John Ralston Saul and party arrive in Ogyen Choling

Traditional skills/markets

Visitors coming to Ogyen Choling because of the museum, contribute towards achieving the objective of enhancing traditional skills by providing an outlet for the local handicrafts. The weavers of Ogyen Choling who supplied fabrics to the handicraft shop realized that there is a good market potential for textiles made from local wool using only natural dyes. This has encouraged them to use these materials rather than using imported wool. Four craftsmen making bamboo products have become regular suppliers to the gift shop. One of them is a young man who is paralyzed from the waist down after he was crushed by a falling tree.



Local bamboo handicrafts

Financial report

The trust fund has received generous contributions from 15 donors. Compared to the previous year the income generated through the guest house and the museum increased.

The most significant expenses were: the purchase of roofing material, expansion of the museum, the salary of the assistant curator of the museum and the temple caretaker and the scholarship program. Because of the high investments for roofing materials for the *shagkor* and the guest house the year ended with a cash deficit of Nu 70'000. Considering the expected volume of investments in the coming year it may become necessary to borrow additional funds or to sell some artifacts belonging to the trust.

Financial statement

Income	Nu
Balance 2002	4650
Donations	305225
Entrance fee museum	37430
Guest house	55295
Total income	402600
Expenses	
Kangso	32823
Temple	45062
Museum ¹	286661
Guest house ²	63344
Scholarships, academic prizes	24516
Loan (interest)	20000
Total expenses	472406
Investments and loans	
Long-term investments	30000
Loan	250000

¹Including Nu 162'534 for roofing materials for the *shagkor*

²Including Nu 47650 for roofing materials

Future plans

We hope to keep up the momentum. Like in the previous year we expect that the museum will absorb most of our attention and our resources, with activities such as: roofing of the *shagkor*, adding exhibits, improving of the labeling, translating texts into Dzongkag and cataloguing of exhibits. It is planned to compile the narratives and additional information on selected exhibits into a book. For this project sources for funding are being explored.

In order to improve the living conditions for the resident family it has become necessary to improve the kitchen and bathroom facilities.

The existing facilities are very basic. This will be a major new project for the coming year. Another important project will be the installation of fire extinguishers.

In keeping up with the technological advances available we have decided that a web page for Ogyen Choling is essential. Work has begun and hopefully we can send you the next update through our website.

Contributions to the trust (1.1.-31.12. 2003)

Donor	Amount (Nu)
Frank and Lisina Hoch (Fr. 5000)	167750
Kunzang Choden	50000
Matthijs and Mirieda deJongh (\$ 500)	24000
Pelvision	17000
Family Derksen (Euro 250)	14400
Peter and Michele Horne (US \$ 200)	9400
Heijo Scharff (Euro 100)	5500
Ugen Rinzin and Kesang Wangmo	5000
Reto Plattner (US \$ 100)	4465
Markus and Lydia Wespi (Sewing machine)	4000
Michelle & Francine	2000
Erwin and Sangeeta Koenig (Window glass)	750
Jim Rogers	560
Verena Roder	200
Anonymous visitor	200
Total	Nu 305'225



Mask of Choeki Gyalpo, lord of religion