



# Ogyen Choling Foundation

Quarterly Newsletter

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Bumthang, Bhutan

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## Introduction



*Volunteers with flowers collected from the mountains for the Preuchoed ritual*

As we phased into the second quarter of the year the pace of activities picked up for both the Ogyen Choling Foundation and the Heritage House. We were happy to note that the number of visitors to the museum and guests staying in the guest house during the reporting period exceeded pre-pandemic numbers.

The heavy late frost in early May posed a gloomy forecast for the agriculture season. The Kuensel reported that fields of lush potato of more than 80 households in Tang had been affected. Yet the farmers stoically went forward hoping for the best.

## Events

The Foundation collaborated with UN Resident Coordinator's Office on the 18<sup>th</sup> of May to host an event for the Dialogue on Intergenerational Conversation about Women's Priorities for the future of women in Bhutan. Ten female students from Misethang Central School attended the session which featured a conversation between Ugyen Tshenden, a class seven student from Thimphu and the Executive Director of the Ogyen Choling Foundation. The session was followed by a lively question and answer session with the audience.



*Participants of the Dialogue on Intergenerational Conversation about Women's Priorities*

This event happened on the same day that the community was celebrating *Preuchoed*. This is the commemoration of Guru Rinpoche's birth anniversary. The ritual of *Chod* was conducted in the temple by 15 men and woman ritualists. The temple altars were decorated with high altitudes flowers. The practice had evolved because by mid-May the season for most of the wild flowers at the lower altitudes is over. This year we are happy to see that two class 12 graduates from the village volunteered to collect the flowers from the mountains.

## Visitors

We are gratified that so many visitors are coming to Ogyen Choling to visit the temples, the museum or stay at the guest house. We want to take the opportunity here to highlight a few of these visitors.

Thanks to the Director General of the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), Dr. Pema Gyamtsho, Ogyen Choling was included in the excursion for the Board Members to Bumthang. Despite the unseasonal rain, it was an enjoyable gathering for all.



*Gathering in the courtyard by the ICIMOD visitors*

The Himalayan Writers Workshop once again chose to hold their retreat with us. We were happy to host the international writers retreat for four days. This is the third time the organizers of the workshop, decided to use our facilities.

Dr. Namgyal Qusar and his partner Dr. Kalchoe of the Qusar Tibetan Healing Centre in Dharamasala, India came on a pilgrimage and kindly met with patients for free consultations.

Considering that Tharpaling in Chumey is the most important centre of Longchen Rabjampa, we were honoured by the visit by *khenpo* Tshewang, head of Tharpaling monastery. We are always happy to link with the other Longchen Rabjampa centres.



*Dr. Kalchoe Qusar, conducting acupuncture treatment*



*Participants of the writer's workshop and the community dancing*

## Scholars and scholarship

It was a pleasure to host Dr. Karma Phuntsho, Founding Director of Loden Foundation and Board Member of Ogyen Choling Foundation with *Khenpo* Sonam Bumder from the Central Monastic Body and *Lopon* Dorji Gyalsten from the College of Language and Culture (Trongsa). During their stay, the three experts jointly looked at the *thangkas* belonging to Ogyen Choling and offered additional information on the work Dr. Monique Filsnoel had already done. The experts suggested that although the *thangkas* are in fairly good condition we should find other ways of storing them and not by rolling them up in the traditional way.



*Experts studying and documenting thankas*

## Other news

**CSOA monitoring:** Unfortunately, the Civil Society Organisation Authority's (CSOA) monitoring visit which was tentatively scheduled for early April could not realise because we could not find a mutually convenient time.

**New opportunities:** As guest house operators we are constantly learning new ways to cater to guests. The stay of a vegan group who were brought in by Vegvoyages tour company to stay with us in April provided us an opportunity learn alternative ways of cook without animal products and we successfully learned to make soya products including fairly good tofu.

**Staff training:** Kuenzang Dema, a senior staff member of the Ogyen Choling Heritage House is enrolled in the Ugyen International Language and Culture Institute for a three-month training for a guiding course. We are always on the lookout for training and upskilling opportunities for our staff, but theses opportunities are few. On the completion of the training Kuenzang will continue to work in her present capacity in the guest house, at the same time it will be an important asset for the guest house to have an in-house licensed guide.

**Completion of the Gate:** After some delays due to the unavailability of the required materials, the permanent main gate to the property was completed.



*Chador Tshering painting the newly installed gate*

***New exhibition room:*** In anticipation of a new exhibit on *thanka* a room in the central tower that was used as a storeroom was cleaned up.

***Maintenance of children's playground and chorten:*** After a joint meeting with the villagers, the Foundation has agreed to repair and maintain the playground on the condition that the villagers take more ownership and responsibility for its upkeep. The Foundation will also undertake the repair of the *chortens* in the enclosure of the playground.



Surrounded by morphing monsoon clouds, intermittent rains and sunshine we are sending out greetings from Ogyen Choling.

**With best wishes to all our friends and supporters**  
**The Ogyen Choling Foundation Team**