



Address: Ogyen Choling Foundation, Ogyen Choling, Tang, Bumthang  
Mobile: 975 -17641464  
e-mail: [kunzangcr@gmail.com](mailto:kunzangcr@gmail.com)  
website: [www.oling.bt](http://www.oling.bt)

## Occasional Newsletter 1/2015

1<sup>st</sup> May, 2015

Dear Friends and well-wishers of Ogyen Choling Foundation,

First of all, we would like to use this opportunity to acknowledge the thoughtful and encouraging feedback which we received from some of you on our 2014 Annual Report. Your feedback helps us identify areas which need our attention and where further improvements may be needed. We thank you for taking the time to share your views and concerns and we trust that you will continue to do so in the future. We would like to extend a special note of appreciation to all those of you who have so generously made donations to the foundation.

All in all, the first four months of 2015 has been a busy and satisfying period for Ogyen Choling Foundation. This year, our usual winter hibernation was cut short by various activities that had to be started in January. Moreover, the museum had a steady trickle of visitors even throughout the winter months. Through this Newsletter we will try to fill you in on some of our activities and new developments at Ogyen Choling.

### **Visitors**

During the period under review we had almost 400 international visitors and about the same number of Bhutanese who came as pilgrims or to visit the museum.

Among the many local visitors, we were very happy to welcome a large group of Class 9 students of Misithang Central School who wanted to use the museum as a resource for a history project.

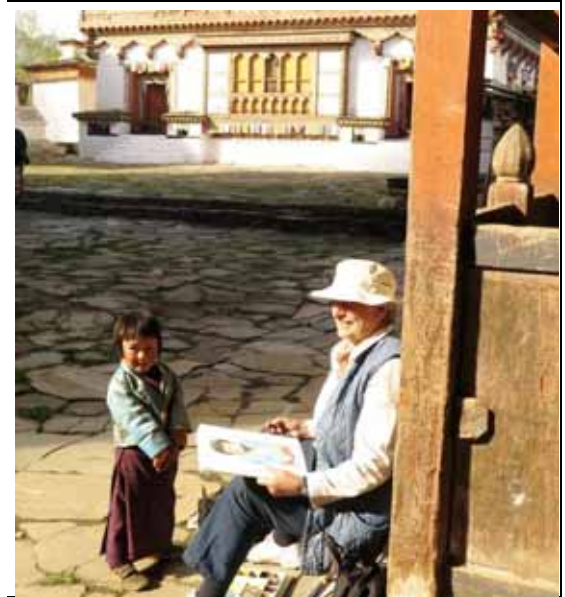
On the 28<sup>th</sup> of April, 26 Third Year students of the Institute of Language and Culture Studies (ILCS) in Trongsa visited the museum and later held a discussion on literature based on my book, "Circle of Karma". We were pleased to provide them lunch and tea and snacks



*Students of Misithang school*

Among the international visitors a group of writers from the US spent three days with us for a writer's workshop. After two days of intensive sessions on creative writing with five teachers from Misithang Central School and Jakar High school, there were unanimous expressions of appreciation by all the participants. A special session entitled "*Dangpo Dingpo*" (Once upon a Time) included story-telling and "*Tsangmo*". Tsangmo is a four line couplet which is sung in a "call-and-reply" style between individuals and groups, often mocking or ridiculing each other. Singers from the village enjoyed this session so much that we finally had to ask them to stop as otherwise they would have gone on and on. The workshop was jointly led by Kim Stafford, Director of the Northwest Writing Institute in Oregon USA, and Wendy Erd, a poet and writer from Alaska

Two separate groups of artists used different aspects of OgyenCholing as the subject for their art. Unlike the digital camera equipped visitors who click away at random, these artists sat quietly with their sketch books and drawing and painting materials, patiently and meditatively focusing on their chosen subjects such as the people, animals, nature, buildings and structures around the complex.



*Writers (left) and artists (right) at work in Ogyen Choling*

Finally we had a visit by a dogged group of international bicyclists who rode their bikes all the way from Choekhor. It was indeed a totally new and unique sight to see 11 bicycles leaning against the 100 plus year old ledge surrounding the Nagtstang!



### ***New Staff member***

Taking advantage of the Government's "Guaranteed Employment Program", the Foundation was able to recruit one additional full time staff member on a cost sharing basis with the Ministry of Labour and Human Resources. We were happy to welcome Mr. Kelzang Namgyel who joined us on 1 April as the Foundation's Development Officer. He comes from Samdrup Jongkher and has a Bachelor's degree in Geography from the University of Punjab in India. He is gradually assuming many of his responsibilities, and assisting the curator of the museum. He is a quick learner and enthusiastic about his job.



*Kelsang being briefed*



*The foundation office being blessed by HH Choning Rangshar Rinpoche*

### ***New office***

Recently one of the old grain store rooms (*Zodh*) which was previously being used as the Dyeing and Weaving display room of the museum was renovated, and now serves as the Foundation's new administrative office.

### ***Arrival of the sanitary fittings from Switzerland***

The long and eagerly awaited consignment of sanitary fittings and fire prevention and mitigation materials from Switzerland finally arrived in Ogyen Choling in early April. The convoy of trucks arriving at our doorstep was quite a remarkable sight. Thanks to the efficient and professional services of Leko Packers, despite the long and arduous road journey, all the materials were received safely and without any damage.





Unfortunately, due to our misinterpretation of the import rules and regulations we may be levied a substantial import duty bill for some of the materials. We are currently in the process of identifying a plumbing and sanitation engineer with the required expertise to lead the sanitary installation works as well as the installation of the fire prevention and mitigation system.

**Roofing the second residential building**

On April 26, the second new residential house could finally be roofed. This house, which will be the residence of family of Ugyen Rinzin and Kesang, is almost ready for occupation and it is expected that they will be able to move in sometime soon. Thereafter, work on the converting the “Shagor”, in which they presently reside, into guest rooms will be taken up.

**First showers installed in the remodeled bathrooms**

Since the beginning of April, a few of the overnight guests in Ogyen Choling had the opportunity to enjoy the newly installed showers in the two rooms in the “Tsamkhang”. By slightly reducing the size of the kitchenette we were able to increase the size of the rooms and the bathrooms to accommodate shower facilities. These are the first rooms in Ogyen Choling with the “luxury” of hot shower amenities and this marks an important milestone in our endeavor to improve the facilities for our guests.



Head carpenter putting flag on the completed roof

Toilet with hot water and shower

We thank you for your interest and we look forward to your continuing encouragement and support.

With best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light blue background. The signature is stylized and appears to read 'Kunzang Choden'.

KunzangChoden  
(Executive Trustee )