



*Figure 1: View of Gönpa Gang with Chuksang in the background.*

# Architectural Restoration and Seismic Strengthening of Gönpa Gang

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**Project Report, First Year – September to December 2022**

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Kunjon Thakuri

Chairperson

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### Report Overview

This quarter was mainly used to create a restoration plan and organize the beginning of the works due to commence in late March 2023. This included visits to the site by Thomas Schrom, Sonam Dorjee Gurung and Kunzom Thakuri. The site was also visited immediately after the heavy rains in October to assess their impact. During the reporting period, the village also constructed a motorable access road to the Monastery site from the south side along the path visible in Figure 1 which will enable us to transport all necessary material before May 2023.

### Restoration Plan

The conservation architect Thomas Schrom agreed to take the architectural lead for this restoration project. His visit to Gönpa Gang to prepare the restoration plan had to be postponed in September and subsequently took place in late October. There he took measurements, assessed the condition of the site, and advised on the planning and implementation of the immediate interventions reported in the following section. In the meantime, he has prepared a restoration plan for the site which is attached separately (see the pdf-file 2022-12-24 Gonpa Gang report).

Once the plan was finalized discussions were held about its proposals which are still ongoing. Points of discussion were the preservation of painted wooden members within the main hall and the succession of the restoration work.

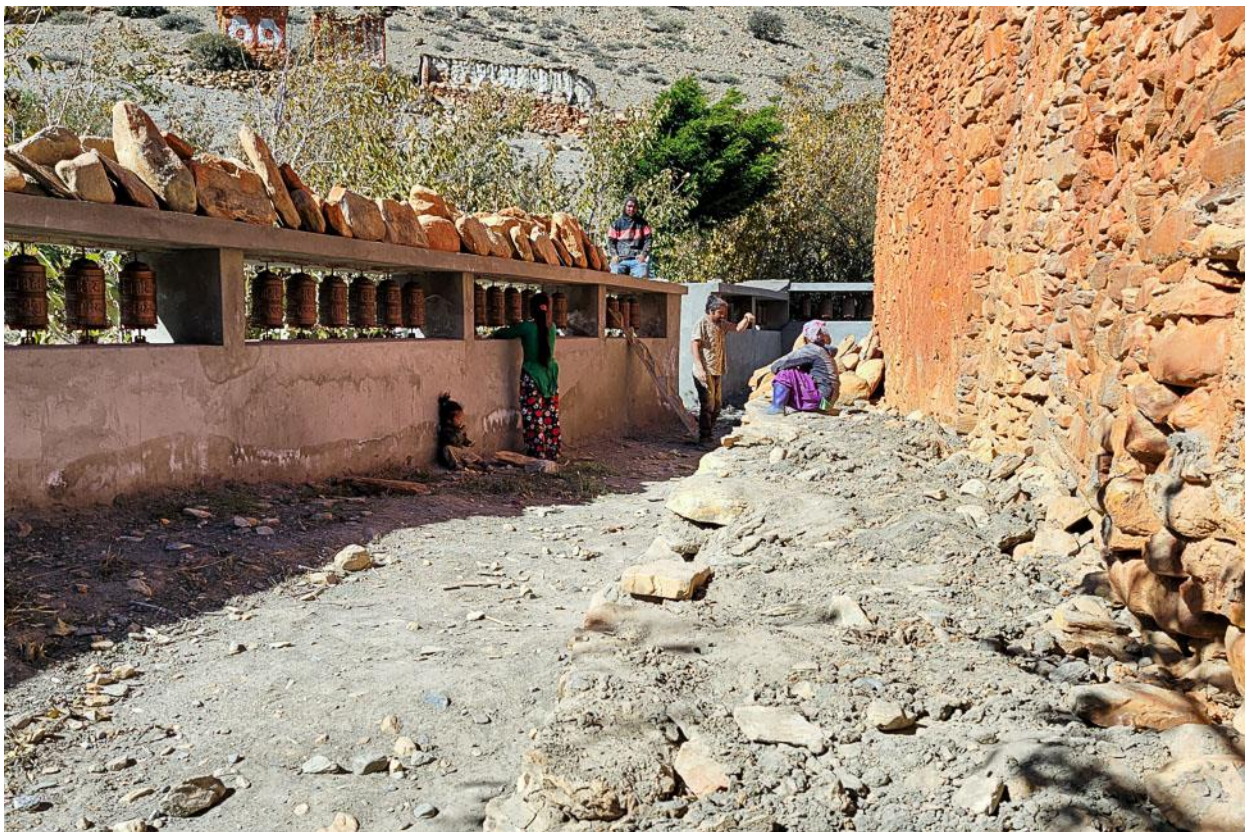
### Immediate Interventions

As reported in repeated application for the restoration, the villagers of Chuksang engaged in several works at the site but lack the architectural expertise to assess the effects of their actions. Accordingly, major problems of the monument, such as the fragile supports on the ground floor, have not been addressed, and the issue of moisture entering the walls of the building from the southwest side has been exacerbated by the addition of concrete mani-walls around the structure. These two issues called for immediate action to avoid damages during the project period.

### Drainage Around the Temple

To reduce dampness inside the walls of the temple, a drainage channel had been planned to be built around the structure. As an immediate intervention, four laborers started to move the mani-stones placed along the wall of the temple and cleared the

site for digging (). But, the work was interrupted due to the Dashain holidays and the subsequent election. Following the interruption, Binod Gurung attempted to find laborers to continue the work, but did not succeed. Accordingly, it had to be decided to postpone the excavation to the main campaign in spring. Moreover, during Thomas' visit in October, he proposed for the mani-wall on the north site to be moved away from the structure, as here it is much closer to the wall than at the other sides. The proposal has to be discussed with the villagers and other concerned authorities to get their approval.



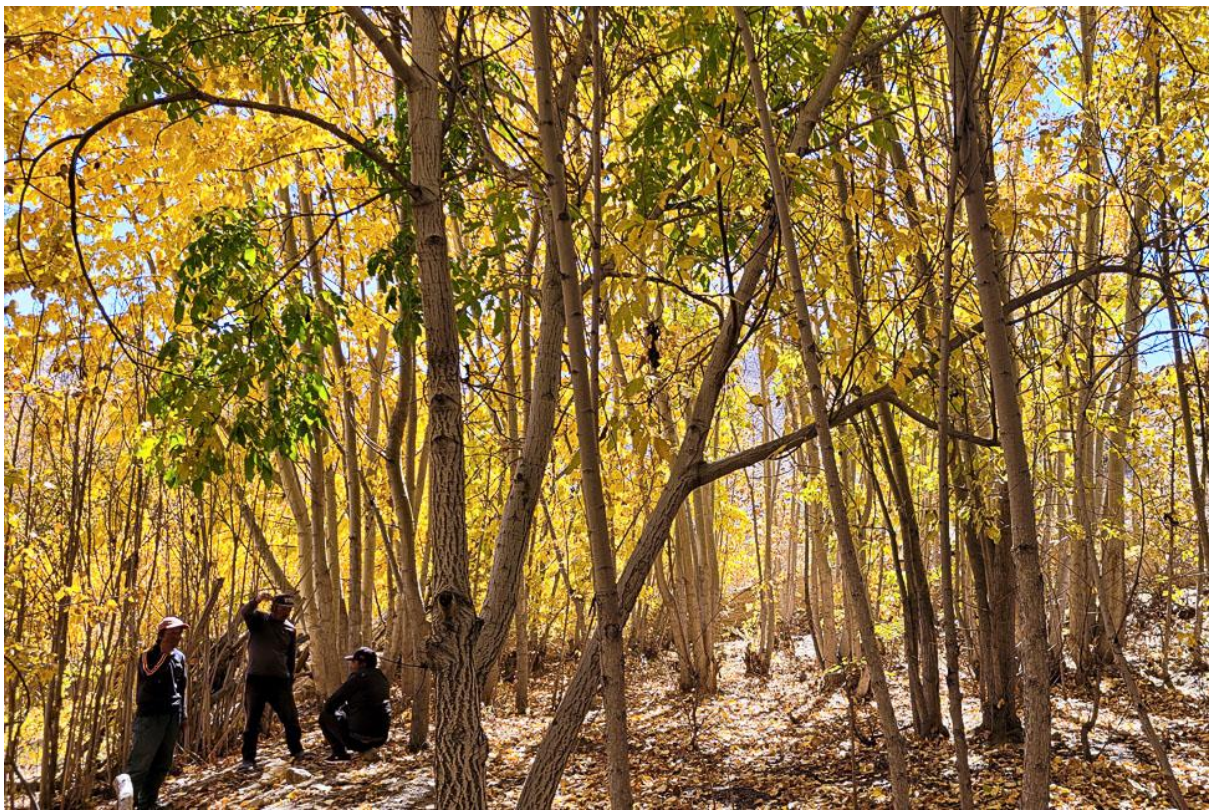
*Figure 2: Laborers during the removal of the mani-stones along the temple walls and the clearing of the pathway.*

### Strengthening Weaknesses

On the ground floor of the southern structure underneath the painted room the caretaker stores fodder for goats. In this room the columns supporting the main beam had tilted precariously and barely supported the beams. The caretaker frequently visits the room above the storage for the daily water offerings but stopped doing once he noticed shaking from walking on that floor. Thus, secondary columns have been installed in the room underneath to strengthen the support of the beam and keep it from failing.

## Purchase of Materials

During the restoration of Lo Gekar, Kunzom and Sonam went to look at the poplar trees for Gonpa Gang in Marang but learned from the locals that the trees from Gyakar and Samar were considered more durable compared to the ones in Marang. Therefore, Binod Gurung and Sonam visited the poplar tree fields at Gyakar to assess their sizes and condition. Finding the trees suitable, it was decided to purchase the round poplar joists from Gyakar, work for which Binod Gurung took the responsibility. As per the plan and estimate prepared by Thomas Schrom, the sizes were handed to the community in Gyakar to fell the trees in January.



*Figure 3: Inspecting a poplar forest at Gyakar to source building material.*

## Construction of Temporary Road

A motorable access to the site was excavated in September for which some funds were requested from the gaunpalika. The gaunpalika though willing to support, had already spent most of its budget meant for infrastructure development and hence no funds were received later.

### **Evaluation**

While the emergency measures were partially hampered by the circumstances, planning the restoration work started later than hoped but proceeded at a good pace. The restoration plan attached forms a good base for further discussion and the base for the purchases of material.

The village supports the project well as can be seen from the construction of an access road to the site financed by it. Further, Binod Gurung is engaged in all aspects of the work and leads it when no other Norbusum member is present.

### **Going Forward**

The winter months will be spent on further planning and the purchase of the materials. Further, by late February we will start to transport the materials to the site to ensure that the main restoration campaign can start in late March or early April.