



*Figure 1: View from the back of the temple with the caretaker's mansion restored to the roof.*

# Seismic Strengthening and Restoration of Lo Gekhar

U.S. Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation, Award No. SNP40020GR0042

**Project Report, Third Year, Second Quarter – January to March 2023**

Compiled by Sonam Dorjee Gurung and Christian Luczanits

**Norbusum Foundation (NGO)**

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Mustang District, Gandaki Pradesh, Nepal

Kunjon Thakuri,  
Chairman  
April 28, 2023

## Report Overview

This quarter was spent on purchasing material and planning the restoration works for the year 2023. A site visit by Kunjon Thakuri and Sonam Dorjee Gurung was accompanied by a skilled carpenter from Kathmandu and an electrician from Pokhara. Kunjon and Sonam also met the chairperson of the Marang village committee and made the necessary arrangements to rent the community hotel building for the accommodation of the workers and project members for this season. They further visited the Logekar Damodarkunda Rural Municipality office and Ward-1 office in Tsarang to acquire the approval for the restoration work for the year 2023 in compliance with the government of Nepal's norms and policies.



*Figure 2: The flagstone quarry in Chhairo, Marpha.*

## Purchase of Materials

During the visit to the site, Kunjon and Sonam also enquired about required material. For example, they visited a stone quarry in Chhairo to inspect flagstones for paving the

circumambulatory path and the steps at the entrance to the temple. These are supposed to replace the recent addition of cemented steps. Moreover, flagstones of the right thickness and size are required for the parapets and the mani-wall coverings. This local quarry was then chosen to purchase the flagstones.


### Assessment by Carpenter and Electrician

Given the difficulties to find a good local carpenter last year, a carpenter from Kathmandu was chosen last quarter to do the complex new frames for the stone panels. This carpenter visited the site with Kunjon and Sonam to assess the carpentry works needed in 2023. The carpenter took the measurements of the panel rooms and estimated the wood required. In



*Figure 3: The carpenter and the electrician estimating the needed works in the Guru Lhakhang.*

contrast to the previous plan to fabricate most of the wood items for the panel frames in Kathmandu, it was later suggested by the carpenter to only take pre-cut timbers of various sizes to Lo Gekhar due to the varying sizes of the stone panels and prepare at the site only. Likewise, the timber orders were placed in Pokhara, and it was decided to transport them to the site in early April.



At the same time, the electrician also took measurements of both the temple and caretaker's mansion. The estimates of the electrical components required to completely replace the old wiring and lighting in the temple area turned out to be costly and above the proposed budget. The caretaker's mansion requires a completely new wiring for all the rooms and includes a separate electrical wiring for the backup through solar power. As a safety measure, the electrician was asked to estimate and plan to install numerous miniature circuit breaker (MCB) separating each floor and section, so that during a short circuit no fire can develop. This also makes sure that the other rooms are not cut off from power unnecessarily.

## Assessment of Previous Work

During the visit to the monastery, the caretaker showed us areas where there had been minor leakages during the five days of continuous rain in the beginning of October 2022. These areas were marked and noted to be improved in this year's restoration work. Earlier, it was already noted that the waterproof bitumen membranes were a bit short on the corners and had also curled outward making room for water to enter in the gaps and penetrate the rooms underneath. Thus, it is planned to extend the waterproof membranes and to attach them more strongly to the parapets.

## Accommodation

Kunjon and Sonam also met the chairperson of Marang village committee, and the village finally agreed to rent the community hotel building near the monastery to Norbusum Foundation. The building has been constructed on a public land and a letter of recommendation from the Ward-01 office was needed to authorize Marang village to collect rent. For this letter, Kunjon and Sonam met the ward chief and the administrative officer of Logekar Damodarkuda Rural Municipality. A rental contract between the Marang village and Norbusum Foundation was signed so that the payments could be made.

## Painting Conservator

The conservator Sreekumar Menon was contacted for the conservation assessment and emergency work to be done in April. His trip was organised in relation to the visits of Thomas Schrom and Christian Luczanits.



Dawa Gurung will work as painting conservator assistant and continue works on site when necessary.

## Accounting

Following multiple delays in paying the honorarium of John Harrison for a variety of reasons it turned out that the transmission of funds in USD to outside Nepal is not possible. Currently different solutions are thought for this issue, but the implications of these rules make it difficult to employ anyone from outside Nepal for the project.

This issue could be easily avoided if funds to outside experts could be transferred directly from the available and thus nominally do not enter Nepal.

## Social Welfare Council (SWC)

The SWC is the government department that oversees the NGOs in Nepal and for every project, an approval is required from the same. Necessary documents were submitted to SWC and the approvals were acquired to carry out the restoration project. A fee of Rs. 140000 for the year 2022 had to be submitted for the Monitoring and Evaluation program. These costs, also required for 2023, need to be borne from the indirect costs of the project and were not anticipated. During and after the completion of the project, officials from SWC may visit the project site to monitor and evaluate the project, and their travel, food and accommodation expenses of the officers chosen for this task has to be borne by the project. These unforeseen but project related expenses need to be included in the direct cost budget in future projects.

## Evaluation

To avoid a slow start of the on-site work considerably more effort has been made in terms of preparation. We also aligned the visits of outside experts to avoid permit issues. In part this also profits the work at the other project site of Gönpa Gang, as the experts can be consulted on both projects.



## Going Forward

This year will be spent on completing the works started in the year 2022 and also the list of works submitted in the previous quarterly report. Measures taken to fulfil the tasks on the list will be discussed on site with the experts coming in April before finalizing them. From April onwards Sonam will fully focus on running the Lo Gekhar project on site.