



Figure 1: The Main Shrine during lighting test in early July.

Seismic Strengthening and Restoration of Lo Gekhar

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

Project Report, Fourth Year, Third Quarter – April to June 2024

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Kunjon Thakuri, Chairman

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Report Overview

This quarter of the Lo Gekhar project was spent on planning and purchasing the tools and materials. There was a postponement in commencing the field work due to the unavailability of the former carpenters and the electricians who were originally expected in May.

Thomas Schrom, during his visit to Lo Gekhar in May, prepared a lighting plan for the main shrine, assembly hall and the panel rooms and provided samples of spotlights to be used. Accordingly, some of the lights and other electrical components were purchased. With the limited work this year, Sonam visited Lo Gekhar with two carpenters and took measurements of each gap between the stone panels. Individual wooden pieces were then fabricated in the Norbusum office in Jharkot which then will be installed in July.

Purchase of Material

In this quarter, spotlights and other electrical components were purchased as per the recommendation of Thomas Schrom. The inverter and battery purchased last year was not sufficient to power the whole temple and the caretaker's residence. Hence, additional inverter and batteries were purchased in June. The entire electrical and lighting improvement work will be carried by electricians from Pokhara.

Similarly, painting materials were also purchased for the touchups required for the lower walls of the main shrine and assembly hall. Protective plastic sheets were purchased to cover the stone panels, statues and murals during the painting touchup works. Likewise, a generator was also purchased to be used during power cuts, experienced in the previous year's project work leading to a delay in the work.

The curtains for the main entry and other entrances were also prepared in Kathmandu. A set of fabric for the victory banners on the upper roof were also prepared to be used later after the ones replaced last year wear.

Fabrication of Wooden Pieces

The carpenters accompanied by Sonam Dorjee took measurements of the gaps in-between the stone panels during a one-day visit to Lo Gekhar in June and planned the wooden pieces to mask them. These pieces were then fabricated at the Norbusum office in Jharkot. The gaps in the frames will be masked using these wooden pieces glued to the frames constructed

last year. The wooden frames constructed in the previous year provide the necessary support and hold the stone panels in place.




Figure 2: Carpenters applying a coat of shellac polish to the prefabricated wooden pieces in Jharkot office.

Painting

In April this year, Sonam took two local painters to the site to assess the amount of work and the materials required to carry out the painting work.

The painting works in the main shrine and the assembly hall have been pushed for the next quarter since the cracks need to be filled prior to the applying the paints. The local painters contacted earlier do not possess experience in filling the cracks. Hence, an experienced plaster men needed to be sought.

An experienced plaster expert, Tashi Wangyal Gurung, and a painting restorer, Dawa Gurung, from Upper Mustang are engaged in Ghami palace restoration, we thus requested



them to come to Lo Gekar and do this work. The painting works will start after Tashi filled the cracks and applied the plaster to the lower parts of the walls.

Worker's Accommodation

The rental contract of the Marang village community hotel ended in April 2024. The contract has not been renewed owing to the village committee's choice to only extend the contract should the project request to rent the facility for the entire year.

Since, this year's project work will hire limited workers for specific activity for a short period of time, there is no need to rent the community hotel for the entire year. Thus, the workers' accommodation is organized at the caretaker's residence at the temple and in his house in nearby Sakre.

Budget Revision

In June, a budget revision has been worked out to utilize the funds remaining for this year fully. Moreover, the site visits with the carpenters and the painters allowed to actualize the funds for the coming quarter's field work. The remaining funds provided the opportunity to request art historian Christian Luczanits to visit Lo Gekar and help with the labelling of the stone panels and project plague. He will also contribute to the enhancement of the lighting in the main shrine and the assembly hall which will take place during his stay at the project site.

The request for the budget revision has been forwarded to the Embassy in the beginning of July.

Way Forward

The actual works on site will mostly be undertaken in July. Thus, we expect that by the end of the following quarter this project will be completed, except for the planned book publication, the completion of which will likely take another few months.