

Bhutan-Swiss collaboration to institutionalise archaeology in Bhutan

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1. Introduction

1.1 The setup of the Bhutan-Swiss Archaeology Project

To date, Bhutan has no archaeological institution, neither at the university nor on administration level, and except for a single rescue excavation in the course of a construction project initiated by Helvetas in central Bhutan – the excavation was financed by the Swiss-Liechtenstein Foundation for Archaeological Research Abroad (SLSA) and realised by the Swiss archaeologist Dr. Reto Blumer in 1999–2001¹ – no archaeological excavation was ever conducted in Bhutan until autumn 2008.

However, on March 29, 2005, Bhutan's current Prime Minister, H.E. Jigmi Y. Thinley, expressed in a letter to Werner Külling – secretary-general of the Swiss development organisation Helvetas – his wish «to initiate archaeological projects in Bhutan for the first time in the country's history». In the same letter it is stated that «the site of the ruins of Drapham Dzong in the district of Bumthang has been selected as the first project site». Later on (May 13, 2005), the head of the Division for Conservation of Heritage Sites mentioned in a letter to Helvetas that it is «His Majesty, the King of Bhutan's personal wish to one day initiate archaeological projects in Bhutan», and that to this very first project great importance should be attached, since it would be «a leading example to many such projects that are planned for implementation in the country in the future.» And the request is expressed «to receive possible support for this significant and pioneering project» from Helvetas, i.e. Switzerland.

By invitation of Helvetas, the secretary-general of the Swiss-Liechtenstein Foundation for Archaeological Research Abroad (SLSA), Dr. Eberhard Fischer, conducted first preliminary clarifications on site in November 2006. After his visit to Bhutan's Home Ministry, the Department of Culture, and the site of Drapham Dzong – a completely overgrown fortress ruin in central Bhutan dating to the 16th century according to legends –, Dr. Eberhard Fischer reported that (1), the Government of Bhutan sincerely wishes to institutionalise archaeology, and (2), the ruins of Drapham Dzong are worth an excavation project.²

In 2007, the Bhutan-Swiss Archaeology Project, a cooperation project between the Kingdom of Bhutan, Helvetas, and SLSA, was set up as follows:

- a) Government of Bhutan:
 - the Prime Minister
 - the Minister of Home and Cultural Affairs
 - the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry
 - the Secretary of the Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs
 - the head of the Division for Conservation of Heritage Sites under the Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs

- b) Helvetas Bhutan:
 - the Resident Coordinator, Bhutan
 - the Head of Administration, Bhutan

- c) SLSA:
 - the Secretary-General

¹ Blumer/Braillard 2000; Blumer 2001.

² Fischer 2006.

1.2 The first phase of the Bhutan-Swiss Archaeology Project (2008–2010)

The work conducted during the first phase of the project was in particular aimed to create public awareness of archaeology in Bhutan, which has been achieved by the first large excavation in the country. During this first phase, following relevant works could be realised:

1.2.1 The Archaeological Excavation Project Drapham Dzong 2008–2010:³

Between 2008 and 2010, Prof. Dr. Werner Meyer (University of Basel) was in charge of three excavation campaigns to archaeologically explore the ruins of the Drapham Dzong fortress in Central Bhutan. This first archaeological investigation of a large historic site in Bhutan was considered to be a «training excavation» for Bhutanese engineers and scientists. The local people were also involved in the project from the initial stages. After the last field season in fall 2010, the ruins – situated in the touristically attractive Bumthang valley – should be consolidated and serve to showcase Bhutan's archaeology.

1.2.2 The Drapham Dzong Surveying Project by the ETH Zurich:⁴

During the field season in fall 2009, a team of engineers from the ETH Zurich, led by Prof. em. Dr. Armin Gruen, measured the whole ruin complex in digital 3D by means of aerial photogrammetry using a programmable model helicopter. The implementation of high-end technology may also become a long-term goal of the Bhutan-Swiss Archaeology Project.

1.2.3 Educational visits of Bhutanese project members to Switzerland:

In spring 2009, Aum Nagtsho Dorji (Division for Conservation of Heritage Sites under the Department of Culture) was invited to Switzerland by the SLSA. During her two-week stay, Mrs. Nagtsho Dorji, accompanied by Ms. Kuenga Wangmo, visited several Swiss archaeology departments in order to inform herself about the characters of the institutionalisation of archaeology in Switzerland. During an official meeting at the Department of Prehistoric Archaeology, University of Zurich, Mrs. Nagtsho Dorji, Prof. Dr. Philippe Della Casa, and lic. Phil. Peter Fux expressed their willingness to collaborate. In spring/summer 2010, Mr. Sonam Tashi (Bhutan Home Ministry) was invited by the SLSA to Switzerland for a four month educational internship at the Basel cantonal archaeology departments (Basel-Land and Basel-Stadt), guided by Ms. Anita Springer. This was financed by SLSA with a scholarship by the Vontobel Familienstiftung, Zurich.

1.2.4 The exhibition «Bhutan – Sacred Art from the Himalaya» at the Museum Rietberg Zurich:



³ Dorji/Fischer/Tshering 2008; Meyer 2008, 2009, 2010; Scheuerer et al. 2010.

⁴ Gruen/Fux/Eisenbeiss et al. 2009.

Fig. 1 The presentation of the Bhutan-Swiss Archaeology Project within the Bhutan exhibit at the Museum Rietberg Zurich.

Fig. 2 H. E. Lyonpo Prime Minister Jigmi Y. Thinley (in the middle) with the Bhutan-Swiss Archaeology Project partners Prof. Dr. Philippe Della Casa (left), Dr. Eberhard Fischer, Dr. Andreas Mäder, and lic. phil. Peter Fux during the exhibit inauguration at the Museum Rietberg Zurich, July 3, 2010.

The exhibition was organised by the Honolulu Academy of Arts and the Department of Culture, Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs of the Royal Government of Bhutan, and was shown in Zurich from July 4 to October 17, 2010. 117 of Bhutan's most beautiful artworks, most of them never seen before outside Bhutan, were selected in close collaboration with local monks, scholars and authorities. In the context of this special exhibition, the Museum Rietberg Zurich generously offered a part of the exhibition hall to the SLSA in order to present the Bhutan-Swiss Archaeology Project to the public (Fig. 1, 2).

Due to above-cited activities of the Bhutan-Swiss Archaeology Project, the field has been prepared for further important steps in the institutionalisation of archaeology in the Kingdom of Bhutan.



2

1.3 The second phase of the Bhutan-Swiss Archaeology Project (2011–2013)

In the second phase of the Bhutan-Swiss Archaeology Project the focus is set on education and training – notably in archaeological fieldwork, and on the setup of the legal framework, zoning plans and management workflows. In order to cope with these complex and manifold topics, a professional and long-standing Bhutanese-Swiss cooperation network is a primary goal. Therefore, not only field schools and classroom seminars have already been undertaken and scheduled, but also several inter-institutional contacts have been established and further strengthened in 2011. Thanks to the generous financial support of Share Foundation, archaeological field schools are conducted, and the Division for Conservation of Heritage Sites of Bhutan can be equipped for archaeological fieldwork and management.

2. Report on Activities in 2011

2.1 Educational workshop on archaeology. Thimphu and Jakar, March 28 to April 1

The first educational workshop on archaeology within the Bhutan-Swiss Archaeology Project (Phase II) was held in Thimphu and Jakar in spring 2011. It was organised as a joint initiative of the Division for Conservation of Heritage Sites (Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs, Royal Government of Bhutan), Helvetas Bhutan, and the SLSA.

The three Swiss lecturers and the 42 participants were welcomed by H. E. Lyonpo Minjur Dorji, Minister of Home and Cultural Affairs, in an inaugural ceremony at the City Hall of Thimphu (Fig. 3). Thereafter, the organisers from the Swiss team, Dr. Eberhard Fischer, Secretary General of the SLSA, and Dr. Walter Roder, Resident Coordinator of Helvetas, held key speeches.

The long list of honorable guests of this inaugural ceremony underlines the importance that was attached to this event by the government of Bhutan. No less than 44 high-ranking guests were present. Together with H. E. Lyonpo Minjur Dorji, two fur-

ther ministers participated in the ceremony: H. E. Lyonpo Pema Gyamtsho, Minister of Agriculture and Forest, and H. E. Lyonpo Dorji Wangdi, Minister of Labour and Human Resources.

The following Swiss lecturers were invited to hold the workshop: Prof. Dr. Philippe Della Casa (Department of Prehistoric Archaeology at the University of Zurich), Dr. Andreas Mäder (Underwater Archaeology and Laboratory of Dendrochronology of the City of Zurich), and lic. phil. Peter Fux (Museum Rietberg Zurich.)

42 participants attended the four-day workshop, which consisted of two days of classroom teaching in Thimphu (March 28, 29), one day of field school at the excavation site of Drapham Dzong (March 31), and one day of seminar and discussion in Jakar (April 1). Among the participants were three Dzongdags (district governors from Lhuentse, Paro, Tsirang), 19 cultural officers (CO) from different districts, scholars and lecturers from different university institutes, and representatives from various governmental departments and institutions, in particular from the Department of Cultural Heritage Sites (Fig. 4, 5).

The Swiss delegation was accompanied by Bernard Imhasly, correspondent of the Swiss newspaper «Neue Zürcher Zeitung», who wrote an informative article about the project.⁵



3

⁵ NZZ. June 18, 2011, p. 62.

The workshop modules were:

1. What is Archaeology?
2. What does Archaeology look like?
3. Legal framework
4. Set up of an Archaeological Coordination Office
5. Group Workshops: Application
6. Monitoring: Discovery, supervision, and value contention of archaeological sites
7. Education and public relations



4

Fig. 3 H. E. Lyonpo Minjur Dorji, Minister of Home and Cultural Affairs, Royal Government of Bhutan, during the inauguration speech of educational workshop on archaeology in spring 2011, Thimphu.

Fig. 4 The participants of the educational workshop on archaeology, Thimphu and Jakar.

Fig. 5 Classroom discussion during the educational workshop in Thimphu.

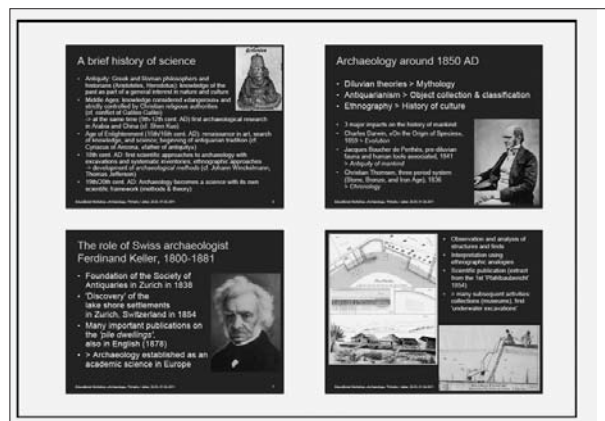
Fig. 6 The front page and an example page of the workshop booklet (86 pages) prepared by the Swiss lecturers.



5

8. Visit to Drapham Dzong (Bumthang)
9. Final Workshops: Legal implementations, management approaches, education & public relations
10. Final Discussion and feedback

From the lecturer's point of view, the workshop was very successful in raising awareness for the topic of archaeology both as a scientific approach and a heritage management issue – a view we felt that was largely shared by the co-organizers and participants as expressed in written and oral feedbacks at the end of the event. A detailed booklet containing all discussed aspects of the workshop was handed over to each participant (Fig. 6).



6

2.1.1 Report, Outcome and Proposals by the Lecturing Team

A report was handed over to the Bhutanese workshop organisers by the lecturing team. It is aimed as a basis for further discussions.

A) *Legal Aspects (by Dr. Andreas Mäder)*

Outcomes:

As construction activities in Bhutan, especially in the regions of Paro, Thimphu and Bumthang, are increasing, it is highly probable that archaeological sites are destroyed; therefore, besides the institutionalisation of an Archaeological Service – be it an Archaeological Coordination Office (ACO – as in the workshop documents) or a Sub-Division of Archaeology (SDA) – with the needed human resources, the creation of a national law and district regulations is urgent.

Generally spoken, some legal coverage of archaeological sites and finds already exists in Bhutan. But it is too broad for application; what is needed is a specific national law, and specific regulations on the district level. Especially when it comes to private land, clear guidelines on a legal basis are lacking.

Nevertheless, there seems to be a system of reporting finds by the Cultural Officers in the districts. In some cases new finds have already been registered and added to an inventory. But as no Archaeological Service exists in the center, this happens by chance and reactively. The protection and excavation of archaeological sites and finds, however, should be proactive in order to deal with the national cultural heritage in a lasting manner.

Communication of the need for a future law to the people is a key factor to success: Adequate measures can be given by means of radio, internet, newspapers, etc., but even more effective is personal contact to the people on a district level (e.g. by the Cultural Officers). Two questions are most important: How can people be sensitised in order to prevent archaeological sites from misuse and destruction? And how can people be made aware of the fact that archaeological sites and objects are part of the national identity?

Proposals:

A Bhutanese workgroup should be constituted as soon as possible to work out legal proposals, the members coming from different departments, institutions and fields at different levels (Dzongda, community, district, Cultural Officers, lawyers, archaeologists, civil engineers, etc.); most important is the participation of the clergy.

The workgroup proposal can be used to implement regulations on the district level (as the development of a national law may need some time), in order to protect existing and presumed archaeological sites right now. At the same time, archaeology has to be implemented in the process of the application of construction planning and permits (see management aspects).

The government of Bhutan enacts a law containing a chapter on archaeology. Measurements to communicate the law to the people have to be discussed and implemented before the law shall be enacted. It seems to be useful to include the following points in the ordinance on district and national levels:

- all archaeological finds belong to the state,
- (supposed) archaeological sites shall be safeguarded from destruction,
- archaeological finds must be reported to the district authority immediately after discovery, and – from them as soon as established – to the ACO or SDA,
- the ACO/SDA is obliged to manage an inventory of (presumed and actual) archaeological sites (zoning plan); construction projects in sensitive areas in terms of the inventory have to be reported to the ACO/SDA.

Fig. 7 The front page and two example pages of the handout (26 pages) prepared by the Swiss lecturers.

B) Management Aspects (by Dr. Andreas Mäder)

Outcomes:

In principle, the aim is to build up a competent archaeology department in Bhutan that manages the nation's archaeological heritage. To reach this goal, different specialists have to be trained in addition to archaeologists; the Cultural Officers play a key role.

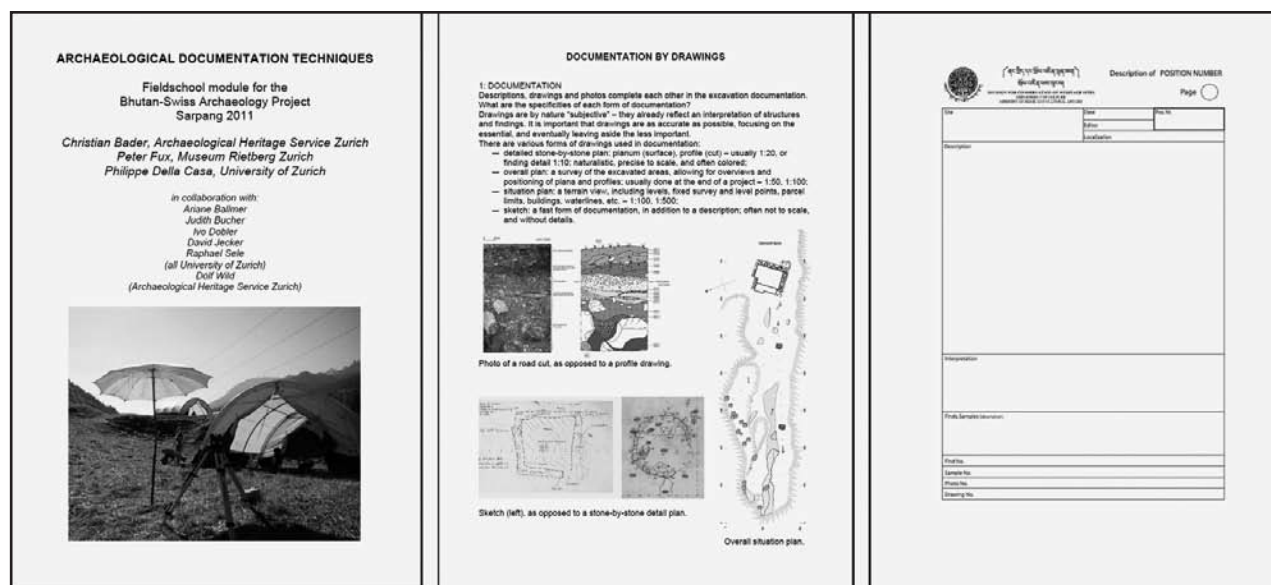
The main question is: «Must the archaeology in Bhutan be centralised or decentralised?» An expert unit in the Ministry will have essential responsibility in strategy and policy and act as an interface on the national level, but the operational management should be handed over to the regional or district level, the responsibility resting with the Cultural Officers or with some yet to be defined officials. The manpower needed for each unit should be based on needs, depending on how many potential sites exist and the intensity of construction activities that take place or are planned in the near future, which means that in a first step districts such as Paro, Thimphu, or Bumthang should receive an archaeological service.

Allocating financial and human resources to archaeology is regarded as a major problem. For this it is necessary to convince people of the usefulness of archaeology. The latter will be a longlasting process based on a sensitising/communication concept still to be developed. In the public opinion there would be other priorities like infrastructure, health, education, etc. The arguments for the importance of archaeology for Bhutan are the unique cultural history. Discovering new facts will strengthen the cultural identity of the Bhutanese people, in order not to lose it in the process of globalisation.

Another necessity is to involve archaeology in the process of construction projects. A closer look at the existing procedure regarding construction projects shows that the application basically starts with a consultation at the community level that can block an inadequate project, e.g. due to religious or ecological restrictions. For archaeology, this means that the community or its representatives are most important; it is on this level that the future archaeological service has to be involved. Archaeologists have to be in contact with local responsible committees and should inform these persons about archaeological restrictions to the intended construction project.

Proposals:

Because of the longer lasting legal process we have to distinguish two management phases that have to be followed by the allocation of human resources and the set up



of an Archaeological Service: A) urgent management needs (immediate steps), before legal and institutional implementation happens. We recommend:

- to start an archaeological inventory and immediately identify and map the endangered archaeological sites in the form of a zoning plan;
- to start a survey project that includes all aspects from evaluating existing maps and documents (written information) to field surveys. The aim should be a) to identify regions with a high possibility of archaeological evidence, b) to compare the results with the zones of proposed and ongoing construction activities in order to identify the endangered sites, and c) to assess the effective archaeological potential of a region by exploratory fieldwork;
- to then immediately start necessary rescue excavations within the developed zones.

And: B) long term management issues, including enlarged human resources and institutionalised archaeology. We recommend:

- to let this initial process be accompanied by foreign experts;
- to set up archaeological units in the most exposed regions (e.g. Bumthang, Paro, Thimphu), including the necessary infrastructure and human resources; to be operational, at least an office room, some storage rooms for finds and equipment, IT infrastructure and 3–4 specialists (archaeologist/historian, IT specialist, field technician, back office/archivist) are required;
- to involve the Cultural Officers, who have established networks and keep them regularly informed about ongoing actions;
- to start a long-term sensitising program on archaeology, in order to convince people of the necessity of archaeology as supporting their cultural identity – and as the means to increase the touristic value of an area.

C) *Educational Programs (by Prof. Dr. Philippe Della Casa)*

Outcomes:

Three major issues were raised concerning educational programs: Archaeology as a topic for primary and secondary schools, possibly as part of history teaching; academic (university) teaching and education of specialists; and specific training of persons with an archaeological interest but a non-academic background.

Though the utility and necessity of including archaeology in school teaching programs is generally recognised as a long-term goal, several obstacles will hamper a direct and rapid implementation: first of all an already burdened school curriculum that has to respond to many demands, and then the lack of teachers with adequate background and teaching materials. It is felt that archaeology would most suitably be part of all History teaching programs, but possibly with a more «practical» approach – site visits to places such as Drapham Dzong along with specific teaching materials would perfectly meet this perspective. The Dzongkha term «nashil taksh vripa» (science of investigating remains) has already been introduced.

It became clear in the discussion that COs – once firmly trained with archaeology issues – would be appropriate contacts for a dialogue with school teachers as there already are established contact channels. Equally, contact needs to be searched for with the clergy and monasteries as archaeology sometimes relates to sensitive religious issues. The concepts of Archaeology and «Culture» are similar, which should allow for cross-linked arguments.

Proposals:

An educational training program taking into consideration the specific needs of Bhutan and involving both heritage management services and scientific institutions should be set up in a very near future. This program is best seen in a modular structure. The author's proposals are presented in chapter 2.4.

One could imagine individual modules of the program to be opened as elements of specialised training to people with a background and professional perspective within the broader context of culture and heritage management (teachers, engineers, architects, etc.). In a certain way, the 1st workshop on Archaeology held in spring 2011 can be seen as such an «open module».

D) Coordination of Public Relations (by lic. phil. Peter Fux)

Outcomes:

Promotion of archaeology in public awareness is essential: Archaeology strengthens cultural self-consciousness, protects common cultural property, and permits participation in international discourses (as outlined in the appendix). These statements can also serve as a guideline for any kind of reporting on archaeological work in Bhutan. The authors are convinced that these arguments can be projected to people with various levels of education and from diverse backgrounds. It is necessary that these arguments are frequently communicated, particularly when archaeology in Bhutan is newly introduced and the first steps are implemented. This task, however, can only be fulfilled by trained personnel.

Proposals:

For the success of a broad acceptance of the new discipline «Archaeology» in Bhutan's society, a uniform and well-coordinated communication strategy is necessary. Consequently, the authors recommend including the important task of public relations in the Archaeological Service right from the beginning. Proper attention must, however, also be paid to public relations and communication on the district and community levels.

As cited in this report, archaeology is a matter of public concern and should therefore be executed and controlled by the government. This includes the government's duty to actively and extensively inform the public of all archaeological concerns on a regular basis. On the basis of the authors' experience in Switzerland, the financial expenditures for public relations are substantial and continuing. The authors recommend subdividing this task into two management phases.

At the beginning, it is important to continuously inform the public about ongoing activities. This information includes the following topics:

- General information about ongoing excavations, workshops, the development of legal acts and creation of cultural values, etc.
- Coordination of responsibilities and tasks between different administration units.
- Development of core messages by the government and political leaders.

On a longer term, a PR concept should be developed, probably in collaboration with the Tourism Council of Bhutan. The Archaeological Service should keep the initiative. The following issues should be considered:

- The Archaeological Service is in charge of contacts to local communities.
- Development of an information network for the local public.
- Development of information booklets, flyers and trips for an international clientele.
- Participation in an international scientific discourse.

E) Tourism and Archaeology (by lic. phil. Peter Fux)

Outcomes:

Bhutan's tourism sector bears high economic potential. Focusing on high-class cultural tourism has several advantages. First, culture and cultural identity clearly become fundamental assets, and this again strengthens people's self-esteem and, probably, also solidarity. Second, not only the capital Thimphu and a few further larger towns can profit from this kind of tourism, but also remote areas with strong and pristine cul-

tural identities. Thus, rural depopulation can possibly be reduced in some areas by means of specific tourism promotion. By all means, a decentralised tourism enables more strata of people to participate in this prosperous business. Third, this kind of tourism can be controlled better and channeled by the authorities than for example individual adventure tourism, and therefore may prove less destructive for culture and nature. In this general framework, archaeology can successfully be implemented and promoted as a further cultural dimension.

Proposals:

The authors recommend including tourism information in the tasks of an Archaeological Service right from the onset. From here, the Tourism Council of Bhutan should constantly be provided with information and recommendations concerning the topics discussed below, which is regarded as a key factor to success.

A) On-site interventions:

Archaeological sites, in particular ruins such as Drapham Dzong or Drukgyel Dzong, are mostly in danger of destruction by careless and uniformed visitors. As a basic principle, archaeological sites have to be prepared for public visits before they are opened to the public. Building structures have to be consolidated, footways defined, and information panels should be fixed on site. Above all, archaeological sites and archaeologically sensitive areas have to be monitored by the archaeological services on a regular basis so that rescue excavations or the closing of endangered areas for the public can be enacted. On the basis of the authors' international experience, it has to be pointed out that as soon as an archaeological site becomes better known to the public, unwanted treasure hunters occur. Therefore, the strict and regular observation of suspected and promoted archaeological sites is crucial.

The involvement of local communities in these tasks is particularly important. Local communities should be obliged to archaeological sites not only by continuously providing them with information but also by offering participation opportunities, as for example by means of guided site visits, recitations of narratives (oral history) about a site, or the sale of information brochures and postcards to visitors. Tourists appreciate getting first hand information, and probably even more if such information is translated by the tourist guide and also contains specific local knowledge.

Furthermore, it should be pointed out that a site's attractiveness is drastically enhanced by ongoing archaeological work. Important and large archaeological sites should therefore be maintained as research and information centers whenever possible.

B) Off-site interventions:

Because tourists are accompanied by official guides in Bhutan, tour operators should be informed about archaeological sites by the Archaeological Services. They have to be actively provided with information regarding accessibility, local guide contact details, conducted and/or planned archaeological work, new historical data and interpretations. This information should be interlinked with relevant museum display so that tours or trekking routes can be enriched and planned accordingly. A regularly maintained website can figure as a communication platform, but tour operators should also be contacted directly on a regular basis.

As most countries, Bhutan follows the plan of a touristic decentralisation, not least in order to absorb the large inrush of tourists. Smaller local museums, e.g. Ugyen Choeling in the Tang valley (Bumthang), are highly attractive for culturally interested tourists, and in such museums, local archaeological sites can be promoted very well, their findings displayed and described. Thereby, accessibility of information about these museums is an important success factor. At the National Museum (Paro) for example, but also in every other museum, or at all Dzongs, for example, information about

Fig. 8 Field school teaching during the rescue excavation at Sarpang, autumn 2011.

smaller local museums or archaeological sites can be actively promoted. Last but not least, information brochures, booklets and monographs about historical sites are highly welcomed goods and should be provided at local sales counters.

The Archaeological Service is thus obliged to actively support and promote regional efforts to showcase local historic sites by means of expert knowledge and funding, to overview and interlink such regional activities.

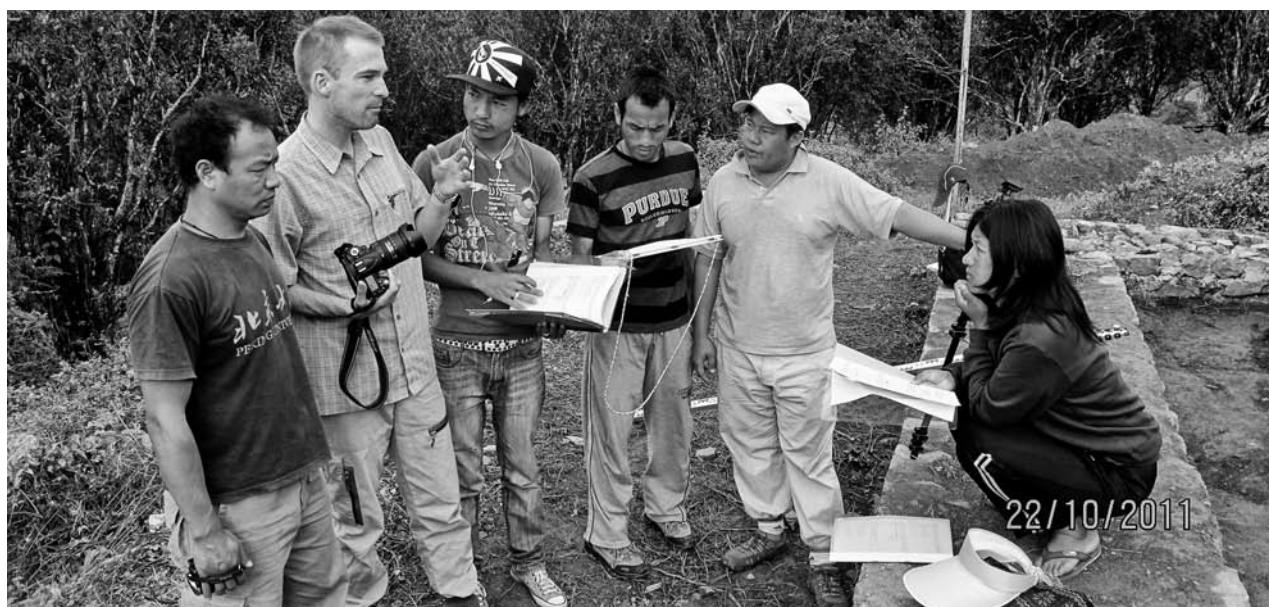
2.2 Educational Rescue Excavation. Gakiling Gewog, Sarpang District, October to December

During the educational workshop in spring (see 2.1), Pema Wangda, the cultural officer from Sarpang, presented his archaeological finds to the public. According to Pema Wangda's explanations, villagers from Sanghka (former Ratepani) began to build a temple on the land of the Pemba Sherpa family in spring 2010. During the first digging works several finds came to light. Consequently, the works were stopped.

Dr. Eberhard Fischer visited the site in spring 2011, together with Namgyel Tshering from Helvetas Bhutan. He documented the finds and photographed the site. Shortly after, an application for professional archaeological support for a rescue excavation was sent to the SLSA by the Department for Conservation of Cultural Heritage Sites, Bhutan. The Swiss team, consisting of Dr. Eberhard Fischer, Prof. Dr. Philippe Della Casa, Dr. Andreas Mäder and lic. Phil. Peter Fux, agreed that an educational rescue excavation is suitable. This excavation took place between October 17 and November 12 and was professionally guided and planned by lic. phil. Christian Bader, a Swiss archaeologist from the archaeological department, canton of Zurich. The excavation was conducted in close collaboration with 14 Bhutanese colleagues. The excavation was supplemented by a three-day teaching module in archaeological documentation methods held by Philippe Della Casa, Christian Bader and Peter Fux (October 21 to 23, Fig. 7, 8). Each participant has been equipped with instruction materials prepared by the Swiss archaeologists.

After finishing field works, the find inventory and documentation finalisation was conducted in Thimphu under the direction of Christian Bader. The detailed report is published in this annual report.

It has to be pointed out that it was for the first time in Bhutan that a building activity was stopped for archaeological clarification. Thanks to the generous support of Share Foundation, the Department for Conservation of Cultural Heritage Sites was equipped with basic documentation equipment for field archaeology.



2.3 Visits of the Minister of Home and Cultural Affairs and the Minister of Agriculture and Forest of Bhutan in Zurich

On May 14 to 16, the Bhutanese Minister of Home and Cultural Affairs, H. E. Lyonpo Minjur Dorji, visited the city of Zurich, invited by the SLSA and the Museum Rietberg Zurich. Lyonpo Minjur Dorji was accompanied by Mrs. Dechen Tshering and Mr. Tashi Penjor from the Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs. The goal of this visit was to introduce H.E. to the management aspects of archaeology in Switzerland, and to discuss further possible partnership collaboration between the city of Zurich and Bhutan. The program included discussions with the Swiss project partners (Prof. Dr. Philippe Della Casa, lic. phil. Peter Fux and Dr. Eberhard Fischer, secretary general of SLSA), sight-seeing to Lucerne and Zurich and a visit to the University of Zurich, a meeting with the museum Rietberg's director Dr. Albert Lutz and a guided tour through the special exhibit on Indian master painters, as well as a visit of the Office for Underwater Archaeology and Dendrochronology of the city of Zurich, together with Dr. Andreas Mäder, Werner Külling (former Helvetas) and Peter Fux, including a boat trip to an archaeological underwater excavation on the lake of Zurich.

On April 29, the Bhutanese Minister of Agriculture and Forest, H. E. Lyonpo Pema Gyamtsho, visited the Museum Rietberg, and again met the Swiss project partners. H. E. was then invited to meet the Zurich city councilor Martin Vollenwyder in his office in order to discuss potential partnership possibilities between the city of Zurich and Bhutan, or the district or town of Bumthang in the field of zone planning, town planning and archaeology.

After an official request for a partnership-collaboration between these two parties, authorities of the city of Zurich are analysing the situation at the moment. On behalf of Zurich, a set-up which includes the following institutions would cope with the specific tasks: The Museum Rietberg is able to provide public awareness and competence in intercultural public relations, the University of Zurich is specialised in teaching and educational aspects, and the Zurich Department of Town Planning would be an ideal competence pool for legal aspects, zone planning and data management. Proposals concerning this issue are in progress. The authors of this report agree that such a partnership-collaboration would be an ideal starting point to successfully institutionalise archaeology in Bhutan.

2.4 Educational cooperation set up by the Royal University of Bhutan (RUB) and the University of Zurich (UZH)

Human resources in form of adequately trained heritage and archaeology specialists will be crucial for the institutionalisation of archaeology in Bhutan. For this, an educational program for archaeology needs to be set up within a reasonable period of time, aiming in particular at persons with a sound academic or practical background such as engineers, cultural officers or heritage specialists, all willing to engage in archaeology in the future. In a second step, a proper university curriculum in archaeology could be set up. It seems, at least in a first step, a lot more economical to bring specialised teaching personnel to Bhutan rather than to send Bhutanese students to universities abroad. Obviously, specific needs of Bhutan could be met more easily.

The Swiss lecturing team proposes to set up an educational program as a joint initiative of the Royal University of Bhutan and the University of Zurich (UZH). For such a purpose, first contacts have been established between the Institute of Language and Culture Studies of the RUB (Prof. Lungtaen Gyatso and Dr. F. Pommaret) and the Dept. of Prehistoric Archaeology of the UZH. Other institutions and/or colleagues of the RUB as well as Swiss partners such as the Archaeological Heritage Services and the Museum Rietberg of the City of Zurich are called upon for cooperation. Supportive and sponsoring partners will equally be needed.

The educational program would combine theoretical, methodical and practical aspects of archaeology and could lead to a CAS (Certificate of Advanced Studies in Archaeology) issued by both the RUB and the UZH. Such a CAS is – at least for the UZH – a regular instrument of academic cooperation and specialised teaching, with great freedom of planning and execution, but still leading to an officially recognised academic certificate. In a first sketch, the following topics can be proposed to be included in the teaching program, in a modular structure, and also including both classroom and field teaching:

Academic classroom teaching:

- Theory & methods of Archaeology
- Cultural history and material culture
- Human ecology & environmental studies
- Heritage management (legal, material, operational)
- Work with databases, GIS, archives

Practice teaching (workshops, field schools):

- Survey and excavation techniques & tools
- Archaeological analysis and evaluation
- Practical skills in heritage management (documentation, databases, publication, etc.)
- Museum work and exhibition planning
- Public relations

3. Outlook

It is planned that the first modular teaching program in field archaeology and documentation will be completed at the end of 2013. This means that the first Bhutanese heritage specialists basically trained in field archaeology, mapping and data management will be ready to be appointed to archaeological tasks within the Department of Conservation of Cultural Heritage Sites under the Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs.

For 2012, further teaching modules are planned. As a classroom teaching module as well as a basis for professional discussion, a seminar on legal aspects is planned for spring 2012. Furthermore, a field school in archaeological survey and mapping is planned, too.

In order to evaluate potential official cooperation strategies, a meeting between representatives from the Government of Bhutan and the City of Zurich is planned for 2012.

The authors would like to especially thank the following persons:

- Dr. Eberhard Fischer (SLSA), project initiator and coordinator
- Aum Nagtsho Dorji, head of the Department for Conservation of Cultural Heritage Sites under the Department of Home and Cultural Affairs, Royal Government of Bhutan
- H.E. Lyonpo Pema Gyamtsho, Minister of Agriculture and Forest, Royal Government of Bhutan
- H.E. Lyonpo Minjur Dorji, Minister of Home and Cultural Affairs, Royal Government of Bhutan
- Dr. Walter Roder, Helvetas Bhutan
- Namgyel Tshering, Helvetas Bhutan
- Mr. Werner Külling, former Helvetas coordinator
- Mrs. Elena Probst, Share Foundation
- Mr. Martin Vollenwyder, city councilor of Zurich
- Dr. Albert Lutz, Museum Rietberg Zurich
- Bernard and Rashna Imhasly

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