

Chubjakha Dzong Ruin – The historical construction research in 2014

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Chubjakha Dzong Ruin
Hungrel Gewog
Paro Dzongkhag

Map No. Bhutan 1: 50'000 Nr. 78E-7

Site Coordinates: 194457.730E/3034809.540N (Drukref03)

Altitude: 2878.00m above sea level

Age determination: medieval period

1. Initial situation

The investigation of the Dzong ruin in Chubjakha above Paro in Western Bhutan began in 2013 (Fig. 1). After purchasing a Leica TS06 total station in spring for the *Division for Conservation of Heritage Sites (DCHS)*, a survey practical training with the new equipment led by the author took place from July 15 until 29¹. The objective was to survey the ruin and draw a layout plan in order to become more familiar with the site and its structures as well as to obtain the basics to plan further work.

During the project in autumn, a small exploratory excavation was carried out to clarify the site development. At the same time, we started with the documentation of the existing substance and also carried out construction research. A team of twelve people consisting of employees of the DCHS and COs (cultural officers) of different districts (Dzongkhags) inventoried parts of the inner bailey of the Chubjakha Dzong from October 22 until November 8, 2013². In 2014, the work was then continued or rather temporarily completed.

¹ Cf.: Annual Report SLSA 2013, 41–58.

² see note 1.

Fig. 1 Chubjakha Dzong.
View of the ruins from the south.



2. The construction research in 2014 – procedural method

Given that our fieldwork practicals are an ongoing training and further education of our Bhutanese colleagues, the team largely consisted of the same participants as in previous years:

- Karma Tenzin, architect. Head of Section of Archaeology, DCHS
- Sangay Kinga. Senior technician, DCHS
- Tenzin Wangchuk. Technician, DCHS
- Tshering. Cultural officer, Gasa District
- Tashi Dawa. Cultural officer, Lhuentse District
- Sangay Tashi. Cultural officer, Samdrupjongkar District
- Sonam Tenzin. Cultural officer, Tashiyantse District
- Pema Wangda. Cultural officer, Sarpang District
- Ugyen Norbu. Technician, Drapham Dzong

Due to the experience obtained during the previous year, we divided the different structural elements of the Dzong into various sectors. For example, the main tower of the Dzong, the so-called *Utse*, received the designation «sector 1», and the four corner towers were given the sector numbers «3–6». Further findings within the sector – for example inner walls, window or door openings or tiers of beams from the floors – were given consecutive position numbers, whereby the numbering of the positions in each sector started at «one». The respective sector number was added in front of the position numbers. Accordingly, pos. 1.15 indicates finding no. 15 in sector 1. With the assistance of this nomenclature, the status quo of the Chubjakha ruin was able to be characterised as a general description of the individual structural elements/sectors as well as a detailed description under consideration of the different findings/positions (Fig. 2). By means of structural chronological observations, we were able to carve out different phases of the use of the Dzong. In-depth studies of the findings led to the definition of different purposes of use of the various building sections and areas of the Dzong.

The whole team was divided into three groups of three people in order to carry out the documentation work. The groups worked on sector by sector, and, at the end of each working day, a meeting would take place in order for the groups to present to their colleagues the sector they had investigated. The work carried out was explained and new insights reported (Fig. 3).

Fig. 2 Chubjakha Dzong.

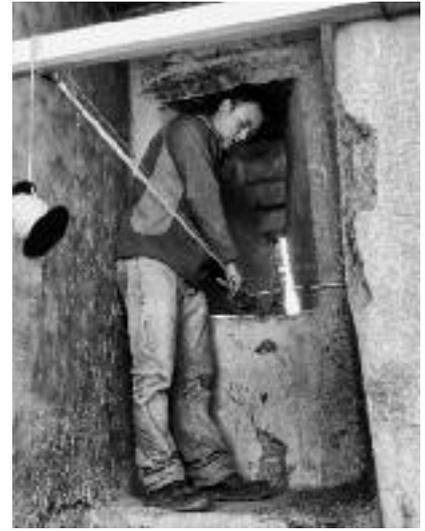
Field office: Pema Wangda describing the features in detail.





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Fig. 3 Chubjakha Dzong.
The team talking about the structures.



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Fig. 4 Chubjakha Dzong.
Ugyen Norbu during installation work
for the design of a section.

Fig. 5 Chubjakha Dzong.
Tashi Dawa using the drawing grid for
the design of a water outlet.

Besides the description of the existing structures, the groups also had to compile a comprehensive photo documentation of the investigated findings. For this purpose, a Nikon reflex camera was made available. It was the same camera that was used during the excavation in the Sarpang district in 2011. It now belongs to the DCHS³. Surveys and detail images were photographed, whereby each individual setting was recorded in a photo journal – once again using the documented position numbers.

Especially in cases where a photograph was inadequate to be shown, several findings were illustrated by means of true to scale drawings (Fig. 4). The door and window openings are especially worth mentioning – it was necessary to use cross-section drawings in order to document the finding in a complete manner. For example, views of characteristic wall sections were also made. We often used a drawing grid featuring a ten centimetre division made of twofold rubber bands (Fig. 5). In turn, the drawings were collected in a drawing journal.

Due to the work carried out in 2014, the field documentation of the Chubjakha Dzong ruin was brought to a successful conclusion. In 2015 we intend to present the ruins of the Chubjakha Dzong in the form of a monographic report as well as explain the history of the construction and its use, and, last but not least, submit the collected documentation material.



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³ Cf.: Annual Report SLSA 2011, 187–209.