**Q. How did you come up with the Loden Foundation? What drove you to establish such an organization?**

My upbringing and education must have played a part in it. *Zhenphen* or altruism features high in the list of virtues taught in Buddhist education. So, as a young man, I used to often daydream about making big differences. Loden is a modest real effort. Also, I wanted to pay back society for the educational opportunities I have enjoyed. I believe in the power of education in realizing personal aspirations and social liberty and welfare.

Loden was triggered by a friendship I enjoyed with Robert Miles, a college porter at Oxford. Rob did not finish school due to financial circumstances and wanted to sponsor a child who may suffer a similar fate. I found a bright girl from a poor family for him to support. Subsequently, other friends showed interest to support poor children. My teacher and writer Ashi [Kunzang Choden](http://www.servinghistory.com/topics/Kunzang_Choden) who was living in central Bhutan, joined me to identify children in need and distribute funds. This is how Loden began in 1999. Our first beneficiary became a teacher in 2014. With the support of many friends and after over 15 years of putting my heart and some hard work, Loden has grown to its current state. I was also fortunate to have very flexible and well-paid jobs in western universities, which allowed me to work *pro bono* for Loden when needed.

**Q. Many entrepreneurs have established themselves through the Loden Foundation. As a founder, how do you feel when you hear their success stories?**

Deeply pleased. It is important to rejoice and take pleasure in the positive stories of others and it is all the more fulfilling when one has played a small part in it. Loden has now trained over 1500 young people and supported 77 businesses. This year, we aim to take this further to 100 businesses and at least 14 student projects and also increase our scholarships. The social impact of these activities is indeed far reaching.

Similar to ancient Buddhist theories of happiness, positive psychologist Martin Seligman says we can have three degrees of happy life: pleasant life, good life and meaningful life. Helping others fall under meaningful life and the inner joy and happiness one can derive from it is immense.

**Q. What does the Loden Foundation have in store for those looking forward to the Global Entrepreneurship Week?**

We hope to take our festival of social enterprise to new heights each year. Bhutan needs occasions to promote and stimulate mind power, innovation, creative energy and enterprise. GEW is a great platform for Bhutan to join the rest of the world in celebrating the human entrepreneurial spirit and developing a culture of *Tshongrig* or intelligent business. With a precarious economic situation in our country, this is the need of the hour.

In addition to the interesting training, workshops, awards and discussions by experts, this year we hope to leverage edutainment as a way of social learning and stimulation. We would like to invite and request the Bhutanese public, authorities, youth and our partner organisations to join us in making the week a vibrant and fruitful one.

**Q. You have published a number of works including eight books, translations, book reviews and over a hundred articles on Buddhism, Bhutan and Tibetan Studies. At present, are you working on any book? What is it about?**

As a part of my effort to document and study Bhutan’s culture, I am working on a Bhutanese cultural encyclopedia of a sort. A lot of the cultural objects, events and practices from Bhutan’s past will be lost in the near future and future generations may not even know what they were if we don’t document them now. My current work as an academic with Shejun Agency for Bhutan’s Cultural Documentation and Research focuses on this. I have also a travelogue which awaits publishing and a few other writings on Buddhism, Bhutan, books and business in the pipeline.

**Q. Do you feel the country is on the verge of losing its ‘unique national identity’ with the modern practices heavily sidelining cultural values? Do you think our culture needs to evolve or change with time?**

A culture will inevitably evolve and change. What we must consider seriously is to steer the change in the right direction, sustain what is good and resist popular and easy options which may be temporarily attractive and fashionable but harmful in the long run. Culturally, Bhutan is going through a boiling frog scenario. We must wake up before it is too late. It will be heartbreaking, if we lose, in our time of peace and prosperity, what makes Bhutan special for us and let it become like any other place on earth. The choice is between being a change maker or a victim of change.

**Q. Bhutan is supposed to have a variety of vernaculars but many have disappeared and some are on their way to extinction with only one or two older generation citizens speaking the tongue. What do you think should be in practice to avoid these ominous events?**

Languages are dying all over the world. It is tragic but it is not viable to save all dying languages. The best we can do is to encourage and support the native speakers of the languages to carry it on as long as they can. The easiest thing we can do for the really endangered local vernaculars is to document and preserve them for future references.

**Q. The national language Dzongkha is been losing out to its English counterpart for so long as it has existed. What is your opinion on that, how do you think respective authorities could do more to change this situation?**

If our authorities wish it as much as they talk about it, the situation can be effectively changed by adopting Dzongkha as the dominant medium of instruction in schools and communication in the government. It is essentially a matter of political will. Resources, capabilities and facilities will follow if there is will.

**Q. What is your next plan?**

Finish a book review and project report by this weekend. In general, I am fortunate to have my life roughly go as per my plans so far. I dedicated over three decades to educational development and then over a dozen years to work as an academic. The next few years will see me teaching, writing and doing some voluntary work before moving onto a quieter contemplative life.

We plan to secure and expand Loden’s educational activities and there is also a lot more to be done for Shejun in the realm of culture. When I was young, I wanted to be medical doctor but the dream did not happen. Now, I am personally committed to producing at least 10 doctors through scholarships. We already have two undergoing training in Sri Lanka. So, I will undoubtedly be working on these and, in the process, I hope to continue being an active spiritual and social thinker, speaker and worker. The future, however, is something we can only envisage, not ascertain.