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Agnieszka Helman-Ważny, Charles Ramble

► **To cite this version:**

Agnieszka Helman-Ważny, Charles Ramble. Tibetan documents in the archives of the tantric lamas of Tshognam in Mustang, Nepal: An interdisciplinary case study. *Revue d'études tibétaines* 39, 266–341.. *Revue d'Etudes Tibétaines*, 2017, pp.266-341. hal-03112109

**HAL Id: hal-03112109**

**<https://hal.science/hal-03112109v1>**

Submitted on 2 Feb 2021

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# Tibetan documents in the archives of the Tantric Lamas of Tshognam in Mustang, Nepal: An interdisciplinary case study

Agnieszka Helman-Ważny  
(University of Hamburg)

Charles Ramble  
(EPHE/CRCAO, Paris)

## *Introduction*

Besides being an important source of information for the reconstruction of Mustang's social history, the archives of the district's villages are an extremely valuable source of knowledge about local paper- and book-production. It is not only their content but their material that can provide information essential to tracing a past history, clarifying, among other things, the economic factors shaping the production. The documents preserved in the family archives of the Tantric Lamas of Tshognam, which are the main subject of this paper, were for the most part locally produced and cover a century and a half, from 1816 to 1964.<sup>1</sup>

Tshognam is the name of an area in the Shöyul enclave of Baragaon, in the southern part of Nepal's Mustang District. The communities of Te and Tshug, on whose territory Tshognam stands, form part of a constellation of five villages known collectively as the Shöyul, literally the "Low-lying communities". Since none of the settlements in question is below 3000 metres above sea level, the name must have been bestowed by the inhabitants of the more northerly area of Mustang, which is at a higher altitude and closer to the former centre of political power. (Fig. 1)

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<sup>1</sup> The full collection of documents in the archive has been published in facsimile form, with edited transliterations and translations, in *Tibetan Sources 2*, and may also be consulted on the website [www.tibetanhistory.net](http://www.tibetanhistory.net). For other studies of archival collections in Mustang, see for example Schuh 1994, 1995, 2016, and *Tibetan Sources 1*.



Fig. 1. Map showing the location of the archives and places visited in the course of two expeditions to Lower and Upper Mustang, in 2015 and 2016.

The religious overtones of the name (Tib. *tshogs rnam*s), which means “Accumulations [of virtue and merit]”, are appropriate to the fact that the settlement is inhabited, and may even have been founded and named, by a family of hereditary Buddhist priests of the Nyingmapa school. The Nyingmapas are family-based village tantric lamas and have a close relationship to the communities. Like village lamas throughout the Himalayan region, the priests of Tshognam not only had a religious function but acted as physicians, astrologers and scribes for the communities—Te and Tshug—on whose territories their residences stood. Although other communities in the five Shöyul also had priestly families, those of Tshognam seem to have had parishes that extended beyond their immediate communities to embrace neighbouring villages.

Tshognam consists of three small clusters of building, with stupas on the path that connects them. Between the upper and the lower two houses there is an invisible line that can be traced between certain boulders across the valley floor. These boulders mark the territorial boundary between two large villages: Te, upstream to the east, and Tshug, downstream to the west. (Fig. 2) Tshognam, then, in spite of its small size, straddles the territorial boundary of two major settlements, and the two halves are conventionally divided into two parts, “Lower” and “Upper” Tshognam. “Middle” Tshognam, represented by a single house on the Tshug side of the border, seems never to

have been occupied by a priestly family. Lower and Upper Tshognam each contain an archive, comprising respectively 31 and 47 documents, and the provenance is indicated in the name of each. (Fig. 3) These archives are preserved in wooden or metal boxes or bamboo baskets as a loose assemblage of folded sheets of paper. To get access to the documents we needed to ask for permission from the owners of the respective houses.



*Fig. 2. The village of Te (centre), with Tshognam's fields and trees visible to the left.*



*Fig. 3. Binod Gurung, the heir of the abandoned Lower Tshognam estate, removing the documents from the container in which they are kept.*

Most of documents from Mustang were photographed in black and white in the framework of the Nepal-German Project on High Mountain Archaeology (NGPHMA, 1992–1996) headed by Dieter Schuh. (Fig. 4) Documents are named in such a way as to provide information about the project, the provenance, and the language, followed by an individual number within that collection. Thus in the case of HMA/UTshognam/Tib/01, HMA is an abbreviated form of the NGHMA mentioned above; UTshognam denotes the Upper Tshognam archive; Tib. the fact that it is in Tibetan, rather than Nepali, and 01 that it is the first in chronological order. Numbers were assigned to them at the time when they were catalogued by Charles Ramble and Nyima Drandul. Usually, this is the number under which a document is catalogued within an archive and is the designation by which the document is known. The documents referred to in this paper were edited, translated and published within the framework of the ANR/DFG project “The Social History of Tibetan Societies, 17th to 20th centuries” (henceforth SHTS) directed by Charles Ramble and Peter Schwieger. In April 2015, and again in 2016 Agnieszka Helman-Ważny photographed and examined fifty-eight documents from Upper Tshognam and Lower Tshognam within the project funded by DFG (2015–2017) and entitled: “The Mustang Archives: Analysis of Handwritten Documents via the Ethnographic Study of Papermaking Traditions in Nepal.” (Fig. 5)



*Fig. 4. Photographing the folded documents in the community archives of Te, Southern Mustang, in 1993.*



*Fig. 5. The documents of Upper Tshognam being examined by Nyima Drandul and his nephew, Namgyal – the heir of the estate – in April 2015. Then documents were photographed, described for codicological features and sampled for paper study.*

*Material and Methods*

Within our sample we examined twenty from Lower Tshognam and forty-four documents from Upper Tshognam. This forms our experimental group ordered according to category of text: its function and the parties involved; type of script and scribal hands; ownership marks; format and layout; and paper type (see Table 1).

The documents in the two archives of Tshognam range in date from 1875 to 1914 and 1832 to 1927. (A document that carries an even earlier date of 1816 appears to be a later copy). The Tibetan diplomatic tradition recognises a large number of categories of documents. One of the main differences between archives from Central Tibet under the Ganden Phodrang—the government of the Dalai Lamas, which ran from 1642 to 1959—on the one hand, and those from Mustang on the other, is that the former include relatively few documents concerning dealings between villagers; the overwhelming majority of them consist of different categories of communication from institutions or individuals in positions of authority to lower-ranking members of the population, such as the peasantry. In archives from Mustang the opposite is true. In the case of the Tshognam archives, with the exception of a few letters from the King of Lo, local dignitaries and monasteries in Tibet, much the greater part of them concern dealings *inter pares*. (As members of the priestly stratum the lamas of Tshognam occupied a higher social rank than the commoners on whose territory they lived, but this did not place them in a legally superior position of authority.)

Documents such as contracts and letters were usually written on single sheets and folded into thin, rectangular packages. Found among Dunhuang manuscripts and constantly used in Tibet, this popular format resembles a flattened scroll or—more rarely, a concertina—folded first from bottom to top in one direction, then horizontally into a short rectangle. In the Dunhuang documents this format was reserved especially for governmental use, but here we find it widely used for various administrative purposes throughout Mustang's villages. The format and layout of Tibetan documents has probably not changed significantly over the centuries; however some features of format and layout were more common than others, and some developed in particular areas and periods of time. Features such as size, the procedure for folding, the number of text lines per page, and the presence or absence of margins are helpful for developing typologies and for identifying particular categories of document. They may offer clues about the appearance of other copies, as well as the original location and date of a document.

Over recent years scholars have made some attempts at analysing

handwriting styles in Tibetan manuscripts. From a range of auxiliary tools available they have turned to palaeography in order to define styles of Tibetan writing. Such attempts, together with analyses of other physical features, can help to link documents in meaningful ways or determine the age of the manuscripts or documents that are currently undated. Sam van Schaik has described several imperial-period writing styles found in Dunhuang manuscripts that are particular to certain genres based on palaeographic features (van Schaik 2014). Together with Jacob Dalton and Tom Davis, van Schaik has also applied the techniques of forensic handwriting analysis in order to identify individual scribal hands (Dalton et al. 2007). This has made it possible to see particular manuscripts in the context of their genre, origin (scriptorium, location) and scribal habits.

The application of these techniques to Tibetan writing, however, is still in its early stages, and we must be cautious in maintaining the distinction between the standardised features of a particular script (imposed from the stylistic norms of different scripts) and the idiosyncracies of a particular scribe. Handwriting, understood as the extension of the scribe's personality defined by very detailed individual features, can help us to attribute manuscripts to specific scribes and consequently group them in ways that otherwise would not have been justifiable or even imaginable. At the same time these detailed studies have a direct impact on our understanding of local written traditions. The comparison and evaluation of these individual features or habits enable forensic analysts of documents to identify the same scribal hands. The average person may recognise the handwriting of an individual and differentiate between individuals to some degree; however, only the gross features of the handwriting, such as letter formation, size, or slope of the handwriting are observed in such cases (on methods for analysing handwriting, see: Morris 2000). Such an approach fails to consider the subtleties in the writing that may differentiate it from other very similar hands.

As will be seen from the examples analysed below, scribal identity cannot be established through the confirmation of a single individual feature in the writing. Rather, it is established through a combination of the significant features shared by examples of writing, with no significant differences. Moreover, the writing of a single scribe will vary depending on a range of factors, such as the material support, writing tool, the script style (e.g., headed or headless, the size and slope of the writing), the perceived importance of the work, pen pressure, pen lifts, the spacing between words and letters, the position of the writing on the real or imaginary baseline, height relationships, beginning and ending strokes, and any number of other factors not to mention personal handwriting character change over time. Defining



these features for Tibetan texts entails a letter-by-letter comparison of the same type of writing, and this must be carried out before we can even consider the possibility of identifying scribal hands.

The Tshognam archives afford a rare opportunity to test the extent to which we can or cannot identify the same scribal hands. It should be noted that most of these documents were produced by a small community of local scribes using a very narrow selection of materials and tools and not subjected to restricted script standards. Thus in our sample we deal with personal handwriting rather than any standardised script. By examining documents written by the same scribe we tested how, if at all, writing materials influence the final result, as well as the degree to which an individual's handwriting might vary over time and according to the casualness or formality of the document. Our main aim is to develop a methodology by producing the reference material, and point to features which cannot be ignored, rather than to identify the same scribal hands from among anonymous documents.

The documents bear a variety of marks that are intended to certify ownership or validate the document. These are seals, fingerprints and other signatures, such as written names or crosses. We recorded the occurrence of these marks, and propose to use them together with other observed features as criteria in the future development of a typology of documents.

Characterisation of paper recorded in the last eight columns of our table includes identification of fibre composition and description of technological features. (Table 1) Fibre analysis informs us what things are made of, since the primary feature of paper is the type of raw material used for its production. This is why fibre analysis, if applicable, can be helpful for locating regional origin and sometimes for dating, when using a method that entails overlapping typologies. When comparing the results of fibre analyses of paper with the distribution of the same plant, we can obtain information about the possible region of a document's origin. The area suggested by plant distribution can be critically evaluated by other sources of information, such as other features recorded in our table. In this way, we can know whether all features originate from the same area (understood as a cultural context, country, or region) or not. These results should help in answering some questions about the history of paper in the region, as well as the trade and import of paper and other writing materials in the Himalayas and Central Asia, even though much more research needs to be done to achieve higher precision for regional attribution (Helman-Ważny and van Schaik 2013; Helman-Ważny 2016).

Additionally, the fibres in some samples exhibited a relatively



high degree of fibrillation, suggesting that these documents may have been made from recycled components. The word “fibrillation” denotes both a process and the result of that process. Refining can be defined as the passage of a slurry of papermaking fibres between plates in relative motion to each other that have raised bars on their surfaces. The fibres are subjected to shearing and compression forces. One of the things that happens during refining of fibres is fibrillation, the partial delamination of the cell wall, resulting in a microscopically hairy appearance of the wetted fibre surfaces. The “hairs” are also referred to as fibrillation. Fibrillation tends to increase the relative bonded area between fibres after the paper has been dried.<sup>2</sup>

The further aim of the procedure is fibre identification in collected specimens of paper, using an Olympus BX51 Transmitted-Reflected light microscope with polarised light with camera attached for photographic documentation.<sup>3</sup> Olympus Stream Software is used for image analysis during identification. A varying magnification from 50× up to 400× with both plain and polarised light is applied. For study, the sample is placed in a small beaker, immersed in distilled water, and boiled for about 20 minutes. The water is then decanted and the sample is drained, de-fibred into a fine suspension of individual fibres, and placed on the slide. Fibres will be observed and then treated with Herzberg stain. Attention will be paid to stain colouring, morphology of fibres, and other cells and elements of pulp. Both the width and length of fibres will be measured to support identification in particular cases.

The technological features of paper in Mustang archival documents were documented via examination of paper sheets against light to identify the type of papermaking sieve used from its print. The print of a textile sieve differs clearly from one made of bamboo (laid, regular), reed, or other grasses (laid, irregular). When sealed in the paper structure, this allows us to distinguish handmade woven paper and handmade laid paper by the number of laid lines within a space of 3cm. Also, from the even or uneven distribution of the fibres, one can determine whether the fibres were poured into the floating mould and spread by hand, or scooped by the mould from a vat, and how quickly drainage of the pulp took place. The presence of uneven pulp thicknesses distributed and visible within a sheet of paper, sometimes along the chain and laid lines, sometimes evenly

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<sup>2</sup> Encyclopedia of Papermaking Wet-End Chemistry accessed on 26 May 2016 <http://www4.ncsu.edu/~hubbe/Defnitns/Fibrilzn.htm>

<sup>3</sup> The laboratory fibre analyses were conducted by AHW at the University of Hamburg.

along one edge, also helps with the identification of the type of raw material used and methods by which it was pulped. This feature is reflected in the thickness of paper which is usually lower in better quality papers with even fibre distribution, rather than in case of rough papers with uneven fibre distribution where raw material was not well beaten during pulping.

*Grouping: document categories  
according to function and codicological features*

Most documents in the Mustang archive belong to the category known as *gan rgya*, a term that may be translated as “contract”, “covenant” or “written obligation” according to the context. The validation of *gan rgya* usually requires the participation of at least two parties, either individuals or groups, but generally more: most *gan rgya* involve a witness and, in the case of dispute-resolution, one or more mediators. This means that a single document is likely to contain a much greater number and variety of endorsements than, for example, royal orders and letters. In view of the wide-ranging application of the *gan rgya* genre, it may be more useful here to group the Tshognam documents into *ad hoc* categories based on their actual function and the identities of the parties involved. For the sake of convenience, we will begin with documents that deal with external affairs, before turning to those that have a direct bearing on the priestly family itself.

Although the word *gan rgya* itself does not appear frequently in these documents, the two earliest items in the collection identify themselves by the closely-related term *chod tshig*, signifying a written agreement. In other collections we encounter terms such as *chod yig* and *chod gan*, which may respectively be contractions of *chod tshig yi ge* and *chod tshig gan rgya*, both of which are also attested. One of the documents to be discussed below (LT/08) contains the term *chod rgya*, which we may also understand as an abbreviation of the latter.

### 3.1. *Records of three plenary gatherings*

The first two documents (LT/01, LT/02), written sixteen years apart (in 1816 and 1832) are similar insofar as each is a record of a plenary gathering of the five communities, and the overriding concerns they share are the integrity of their alliance and the need for secrecy and vigilance in their dealings with the outside world. (Figs 6 and 7) It is possible that they are the minutes of meetings that were held at regu-

lar intervals (probably less than sixteen years). In any event, the explicit statement in one of them that the document “should be offered to the lamas of Tshognam” suggests that the priestly family at the time were the trusted repository of the secret proceedings of meetings among the Shöyul. In view of the fact that they are significantly earlier than the other documents in the archives, it is possible that they date from a period preceding the arrival of the priestly family to which most of the documents belong: the Drenjong Gyalpö Gyüpa (Tib. ‘Bras ljongs rgyal po’i rgyud pa), the “Clan of the Kings of Sikkim.” The third document (LT/26) dates from 1862.<sup>4</sup> It records a meeting of the five communities of the Shöyul that was held in Tshognam with the aim of appointing from each of the communities a category of official known as *centsug* (variously spelt). Two *centsug* were appointed from each of the two largest settlements, Te and Tshug, and one from each of the other three. The purpose of this appointment is not stated. Both documents have a similar size; however LT/01 is slightly larger (43.5 × 41.5 cm) than LT/02 (41 × 37 cm). LT/01 is produced more neatly, with 15 text lines written evenly and composed centrally with an upper margin with a width of a double fold, and a bottom margin with a single fold width. (Fig. 6a) LT/02 is prepared in a rather sloppy way: its 23 lines are not straight, and the text is not centred. (Fig. 7a) Both documents, however, are written on the very similar type of good-quality paper made of *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. fibres. (Figs 6b, c and 7b, c) While the paper of LT/01 contains a certain amount of associated cells and fibrillation, the fibres in the paper of LT/02 are very clean. The paper of LT/01 is thinner (0.09–0.16 mm) and better processed (beaten during the papermaking process) than that of LT/02 (0.12–0.25 mm), which contains clots of fibre bundles—visible when backlit—which makes the fibre distribution uneven. (Fig. 7b) However, the raw material used is the same in both documents, which suggests that in both cases paper was traded from the valleys where these plants grow (the Beni and Baglung area south of Mustang District) rather than being produced locally.

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<sup>4</sup> LT/26 has not been tested for fibre composition.



Figs. 6 a, b, c. Document LT/01 from Lower Tshognam written on paper made of *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. fibres (document dated 1816 but probably a later copy): a. Recto side of the document; b. Paper transparency observed against light; c. Fibres of *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. observed in 100× magnification.



Figs. 7 a, b, c. Document LT/02 from Lower Tshognam, written on paper made of *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. fibres in 1832, with the record of a plenary gathering. a. Recto side of the document; b. Paper transparency observed against light; c. Fibres of *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. observed in 100× magnification.

### 3.2. Taxes and fiscal documents

The Shöyul were a part of the larger enclave of Baragaon, and it is probably in its capacity as the representative of the Shöyul that Tshognam received a communication, written in 1886, concerning the successful prosecution of the aristocratic coterie that administered the enclave on behalf of the government for levying double taxes on the villages in their charge (UT/13). The document, composed of 21 text lines, is identified by the Nepali term *ra' zhigs pha rag* (Nep. *rāji-patra*), a “voluntary letter” declaring the acceptance, by the commoners of Baragaon, of the formal apology issued by the guilty parties; it is validated with eighteen crosses and one seal. (Fig. 8a) This document is written on a woven type of paper made from mixed fibres of *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. with a small addition of *Stellera* sp. and individual

textile fibres. (Fig. 8b, c) The presence of the *Stellera* fibres suggests that this paper could have been produced at an altitude of over 2600 m above sea level, where *Stellera* sp. grows, and can be used for making paper. However, the fact that the fibres are slightly fibrillated and that individual cotton and hemp fibres are found in the paper suggest that this paper could have been made from recycled materials. Recycled raw material is usually used when there is a shortage of material in the area. An even distribution of fibres within a paper sheet indicates that the raw material was cooked and beaten well to produce good quality paper.



Figs. 8 a, b, c. Document UT/13 from Upper Tshognam written on paper made of *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. fibres mixed with *Stellera* and individual fibres of recycled cotton. a. Recto side of the document; b. Paper transparency observed against light; c. Fibres of *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. with addition of *Stellera* and recycled fibres observed in 100× magnification.

The fiscal status of the lamas of Tshognam is the subject of two other documents. One of these (LT/10), containing 8 lines of text, is a letter from the King of Lo to Lama Tshewang Bumpa. (Fig. 9a) The lama apparently claimed that he and his brother Doyön were not liable for the payment of trade tariffs when travelling through Lo on the grounds that they, and not the king, were the owners of their priestly estate. However, the king rejected the latter claim but acquiesced to the Tshognam lamas' exemption from tariffs, not on the basis of their ownership of the estate but on the grounds of their priestly status and activities. The document, authenticated with a red-ink seal (red ink was reserved for the king) is made of a woven type of paper made from mixed fibres of *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. and *Stellera* sp. in approximately equal proportions. (Figs 9b, c) The paper is exceptionally thin (0.05–0.11 mm), but with slightly uneven (or relatively even) fibre distribution. (Fig. 9b) For several decades towards the end of the nineteenth century, one of the dependent buildings of Lower Tshognam was inhabited by a woman named Phurba Angmo and her two illegitimate sons, Nyagdo (apparently a nickname) and Ösal Dorje. Nyagdo died young, but Ösal Dorje went on to become



a tantric lama of some standing. Phurba Angmo apparently had the use of a number of fields in Tshug, because in 1884 she was taken to task for several years worth of unpaid taxes to the community that she was obliged to make good (UT/44). This document measures  $18.5 \times 23$  cm and comprises nine lines of text on paper made of purely *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. fibres. (Fig. 10) A later document, undated but probably from around 1912, gives a short list of fields in Tshug for which the main priestly estate in Lower Tshognam had fiscal responsibility (LT/27).



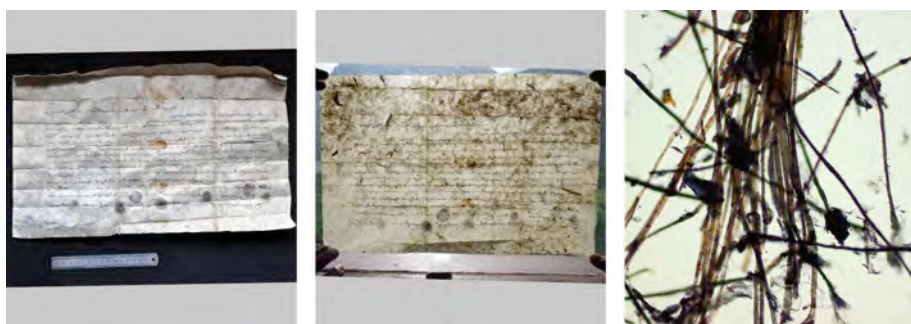
Figs. 9 a, b, c. Document LT/10 from Lower Tshognam written on paper made of *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. fibres mixed with *Stellera* sp. a. Recto side of the document; b. Paper transparency observed against light; c. Fibres of *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. mixed with *Stellera* observed in  $200\times$  magnification.



Figs. 10 a, b, c. Document UT/44 from Upper Tshognam written on paper of *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. a. Recto side of the document; b. Paper transparency observed against light; c. Fibres of *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. observed in  $50\times$  magnification.

In 1910—by which time Lama Ösal Dorje had moved to Upper Tshognam on Te's territory—the community of Tshug seems to have called into question the exemption of the remaining priestly family

from certain taxes. The lama—probably Tshewang Bumpa—made a convincing case for tax exemption, invoking a precedent in which a local duke had once excused the family from corvée duty on the grounds of its priestly status, and Tshug agreed to perpetuate these and other privileges (LT/17). (Fig. 11a) For this claim he selected paper made purely from *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. fibres possibly made in lower areas where these plants grow. (Figs 11b, c) The paper of this document is of a similar thinness (0.06–0.2 mm) to that of the previous item, although the unevenness of the fibre distribution is even clearer. The document is signed by Subba Bhagat Bahadur with the word *sāhī* in Devanāgarī, the seal of the community of Tshug, and the fingerprints of 5 other parties.



Figs. 11 a, b, c. Document LT/17 from Lower Tshognam written on paper made of pure *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. fibres. a. Recto side of the document; b. Paper transparency observed against light; c. Fibres of *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. observed in 100× magnification.

We should not be surprised that, in spite of the fact that these archives belong to a priestly family, religious affairs do not feature prominently. After all, documents of this sort deal mainly with legal and administrative issues, not spiritual concerns. There are, however, a few items of relevance to religious matters, although they are almost all concerned with managerial aspects. *Na rag* is an important ceremony in many Nyingmapa Buddhist communities, and in 1887 it was either established or augmented in Tshognam. Shortly before her death an elderly woman initiated a fund for the regular performance of the ceremony. The list of other donors begins with two lamas from Tshognam and one from the now-abandoned temple of Tshaldang, which is located in a gorge to the west of Tshug. The sums of money collected, and the various duties of the patrons and their families, are recorded in a document (LT/09). The text is in the form of a small booklet, consisting of 4 bi-folios (to make 8 sheets) of paper folded along a horizontal axis and stitched along the fold to create a form that is relatively common for longer documents with numerous en-



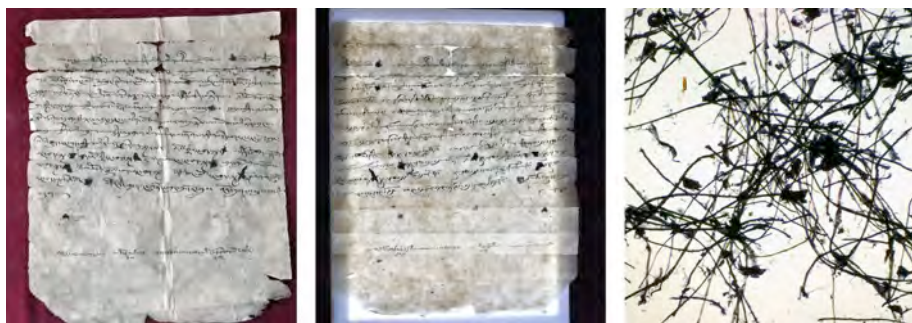
tries, such as local law books and endowment registers. (Fig. 12a) The book measures  $6.5 \times 17$  cm and is made in a similar way to LT/10, of *Stellera* and *Daphne* sp. fibres with the addition of individual recycled fibres of hemp and cotton. (Figs 12b, c) It is exactly the same type of paper used for document UT/13.



Figs. 12 a, b, c. Document LT/09 from Lower Tshognam written on paper made of *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. fibres mixed with recycled singular fibres of *Stellera*, cotton and hemp. a. Document in a booklet form; b. Paper transparency observed against light; c. Fibres of *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. with addition of *Stellera*, cotton and hemp observed in 200 $\times$  magnification.

On the west bank of the Kali Gandaki, directly opposite Tshug, stands the now-abandoned nunnery of Kunzang Chöling, popularly known as Gompa Gang, “the convent ridge”. Gompa Gang originally served all five of the Shöyul, but over time the communities ceased to send their daughters here. The first to withdraw its membership may have been Taye. Tensions subsequently arose between the nuns from Te and those from Tsele, Gyaga and Tshug at the beginning of the twentieth century. It seems that the lamas of Tshognam were trying to bring the Tewa faction under their control. In 1906 the Te nuns were expelled from the convent, and signed a document in which they agreed to be under the tutelage of the lamas of Tshognam (UT/23). This document, measuring  $33 \times 27$  cm, was written on paper made of *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. (Fig. 13) There are only three other documents in the Tshognam archives concerning nuns. In 1915 the nuns of Tshug (who may have been the only ones left in the convent by that time) agreed that they would take collective responsibility for a theft that had occurred (UT/35). This declaration was made on *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. paper measuring  $19 \times 33$  cm and 0.07–0.12 mm thick; the same type of paper as in the case of the previous document. The following year, the community of Te agreed to offer the second of any three daughters born in a family to be a nun under the authority of the Lama of Tshognam (UT/36). This document was written on paper made of *Stellera* sp. fibres with only a small addition of *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp., suggesting that the paper was made local-

ly or brought from the northern areas (possibly the Tibetan plateau). (Fig. 14) The last document, probably from 1927, records an attempt by the declining body of nuns in Tshognam—there were only three at this stage—to preserve their ceremonial activities by redistributing the financial responsibility (UT/38).<sup>5</sup>



Figs. 13 a, b, c. Document UT/23 from Upper Tshognam written on paper made of pure *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. fibres. a. Recto side of the document; b. Paper transparency observed against light; c. Fibres of *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. observed in 50× magnification.



Figs. 14 a, b, c. Document UT/36 from Upper Tshognam written on paper made of *Stellera* sp. fibres with small addition of *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. fibres. a. Recto side of the document; b. Paper transparency observed against light; c. Fibres observed in 50× magnification.

There are three other documents that are concerned with specifically religious matters. The first (LT/15) is a short account of the sacred imagery in Traduntse (Pra dun rtse), a famous temple located in Tibet to the north of Mustang and believed to have been built in the time of Songtsen Gampo (seventh century). This document, measuring 31 × 34 cm, was produced in 1898 on paper (thickness 0.09–0.11 mm) made of *Stellera* sp. fibres with a small addition of *Daph-*

<sup>5</sup> UT/38 was missing from the collection when the documents from Upper Tshognam were photographed again in 2015.

*ne/Edgeworthia* sp.; the raw material, growing above 2600 m above sea level and used for making paper in Tibet, corresponds well with the location of Traduntse monastery, suggesting that the paper was produced locally. The document may be the only existing description of the temple to have been written before it was destroyed during the Cultural Revolution. Lamas frequently keep records of the teachings and initiations they have received from their various teachers. These texts are known as *thob yig*, "documents of what has been received", or *gsan yig*, "documents of what has been heard". The archive of Lower Tshognam contains one such record (UT/40) of teachings received by Lama Tenpai Gyaltzen, the son of Ösal Dorje. LT/29 is an undated supplement (*kha bskong*) to a religious ceremony written on purely *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. paper; UT/42, which is made of mixed paper, consists of notes for the performance of a ritual, and UT/46, made of unidentified grass, is part of a manual for an unspecified religious event. UT/47, in a sewn book format on purely *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. paper, is an incomplete, undated copy of the famous Songs of the Sixth Dalai Lama. LT/30 (not tested for fibre composition) is an agreement, drawn up in 1885, by the groups of patrons for two ceremonies that were held a few days apart in the autumn; the parties agree to combine their resources of food and beer in order to create a joint social event around the two ceremonies.

### 3.3. Contracts between individuals

Tshognam was clearly regarded as a neutral point of articulation for contracts drawn up between individuals from different communities, notably Te and Tshug. Where contracts are concluded between individuals of the same community, it is considered sufficient for each of the two parties to have a copy of the document. (In the case of loan contracts, only the creditor need have a copy bearing the signature, or some other endorsement, of the debtor.) With dealings between members of these two different villages, however, it was apparently considered necessary to involve a third party. Three documents in the collection record the sale of fields by Tshugpas to Tepas (UT/02, 03, 07) and are written on the same type of woven paper made of *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. fibres, with a small addition of *Stellera* sp. (Figs 15, 16, 17); two concern loans by Tepas to borrowers from Tshug, one of these being notice of the forfeit of a field that had been put up as security (UT/10, UT/24; Figs 18, 19). The paper of UT/10 is based on *Stellera* sp. with only a small addition of *Daphne*; and UT/24 contains purely *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. fibres. In one case (LT/18) a Tepas and a Tshugpa agree to exchange two designated fields for

a period of ten years, probably because of their relative proximity to the houses of the respective parties. (Fig. 20) In a few cases we cannot be sure whether both parties to a contract are members of the priestly family of Tshognam or not. As mentioned earlier, certain individuals who evidently do belong to the family make a single appearance in the archives, but the documents in question give us insufficient information to be able to situate them in the genealogy. This is the case with a loan contract from 1904 (UT/22), in which a nun agrees to let a pair of brothers take her turn to collect a rotating fund. The interest is not specified, but a number of fields and a poplar tree are listed as security. The two borrowers are from the priestly village of Chongkhor, but we do not know whether the lender was a nun from Tshognam or another community. The document UT/22 had been lost by 2015 and thus it was not possible to examine its material features.



*Figs. 15 a, b, c. Document UT/02 from Upper Tshognam written on paper made of Daphne/Edgeworthia sp. fibres with small addition of Stellera sp. fibres. a. Recto side of the document; b. Paper transparency observed against light; c. Fibres observed in 50× magnification.*



*Figs. 16 a, b, c. Document UT/03 from Upper Tshognam written on paper made of Daphne/Edgeworthia sp. fibres with small addition of Stellera sp. fibres. a. Recto side of the document; b. Paper transparency observed against light; c. Fibres observed in 50× magnification.*

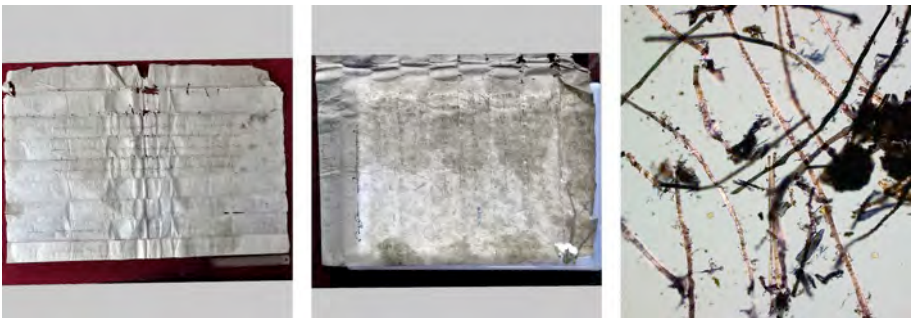




Figs. 17 a, b, c. Document UT/07 from Upper Tshognam written on paper made of *Daphne*/*Edgeworthia* sp. fibres with small addition of *Stellera* sp. fibres. a. Recto side of the document; b. Paper transparency observed against light; c. Fibres observed in 50× magnification.



Figs. 18 a, b, c. Document UT/10 from Upper Tshognam written on paper made of *Stellera* sp. fibres with small addition of *Daphne*/*Edgeworthia* sp. fibres. a. Recto side of the document; b. Paper transparency observed against light; c. Fibres observed in 100× magnification.



Figs. 19 a, b, c. Document UT/24 from Upper Tshognam written on paper made of pure *Daphne*/*Edgeworthia* sp. fibres. a. Recto side of the document; b. Paper transparency observed against light; c. Fibres of *Daphne*/*Edgeworthia* sp. observed in 100× magnification.

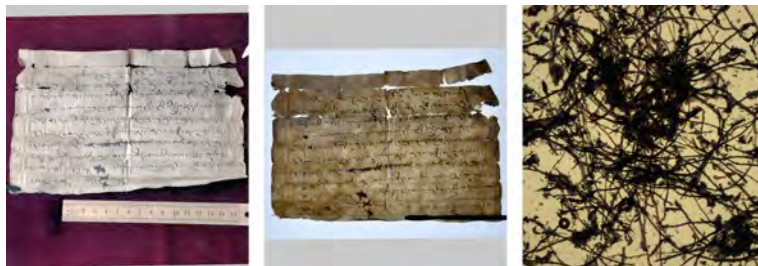


Figs. 20 a, b, c. Document LT/18 from Lower Tshognam written on paper made of *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. fibres with small addition of *Stellera* sp. fibres. a. Recto side of the document; b. Paper transparency observed against light; c. Fibres observed in 50× magnification.

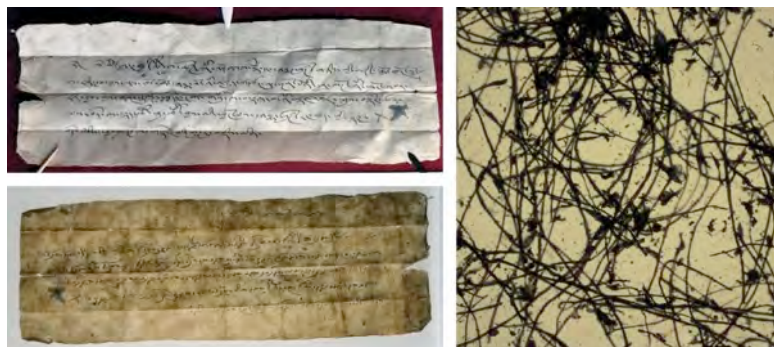
### 3.4. The acquisition of land in the village of Tshug

In the case of most of the documents in the archives, the Tshognam lamas are not just mediators but are directly involved, either with outsiders or with other members of the family. Sixteen documents are related to the acquisition of land in the village of Tshug. It is interesting to note that, without exception, these acquisitions were made by Lama Ösal Dorje. As the natural son of Phurba Angmo, the sister of Lamas Rigden and Rangdrol, Ösal Dorje received no inheritance, and clearly felt it necessary to have an agrarian economic base to supplement the income he received from performing rituals and from lending money and grain. There are nine contracts for the outright purchase of fields, the first in exchange for grain (UT/04) and all the others for cash (UT/06, UT/08, UT/09, UT/12, UT/19, UT/21, UT/28, UT/34; Figs 21–24). But the lama may also have acquired a certain amount of land by claiming the security on loans from defaulting debtors. There are five loan receipts (UT/16, UT/18, UT/20; LT/11, LT/12), one of which (UT/20) includes a confirmation that the borrower is also ceding a field to the lama in lieu of the repayment of 10 rupees. Most of these documents are relatively small (9.5–15.8 × 21–34.5 cm) and are written on a single-layer woven type of paper characterised by similar thickness (excepting LT/11 which is clearly thinner) and uneven fibre distribution. The majority of these documents are written on *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. paper with a small addition of other fibres. The paper of UT/19 and UT/21 is composed of pure *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. fibres; UT/04, UT/08, UT/16, UT/28, UT/34, LT/11 and LT/12 are written on paper made of *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. fibres with a small addition of *Stellera* sp. (Figs 25–

31) UT/06 is composed of *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. fibres with an addition of unidentified grass fibres. UT/34 and LT/12 has an addition of recycled textile fibres; and LT/11 has an addition of individual synthetic fibres.



Figs. 21 a, b, c. Document UT/04 from Upper Tshognam written on paper made of *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. fibres with small addition of *Stellera* sp. fibres. a. Recto side of the document; b. Paper transparency observed against light; c. Fibres observed in 50× magnification.



Figs. 22 a, b, c. Document UT/06 from Upper Tshognam written on paper made of pure *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. fibres. a. Recto side of the document; b. Paper transparency observed against light; c. Fibres of *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. observed in 50× magnification.



Figs. 23 a, b, c. Document UT/08 from Upper Tshognam written on paper made of *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. fibres with small addition of *Stellera* sp. fibres. a. Recto side of the document; b. Paper transparency observed against light; c. Fibres observed in 100× magnification.





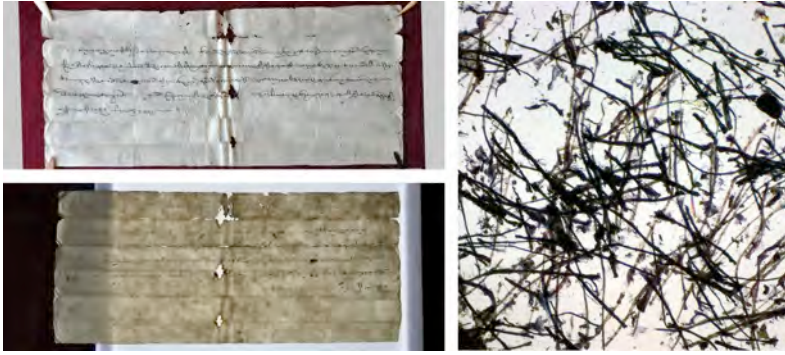
Figs. 24 a, b, c. Document UT/09 from Upper Tshognam written on paper made of *Stellera* sp. fibres with small addition of *Daphne*/*Edgeworthia* sp. fibres. a. Recto side of the document; b. Paper transparency observed against light; c. Fibres observed in 200× magnification.



Figs. 25 a, b, c. Document UT/19 from Upper Tshognam written on paper made of pure *Daphne*/*Edgeworthia* sp. fibres. a. Recto side of the document; b. Paper transparency observed against light; c. Fibres of *Daphne*/*Edgeworthia* sp. observed in 100× magnification.



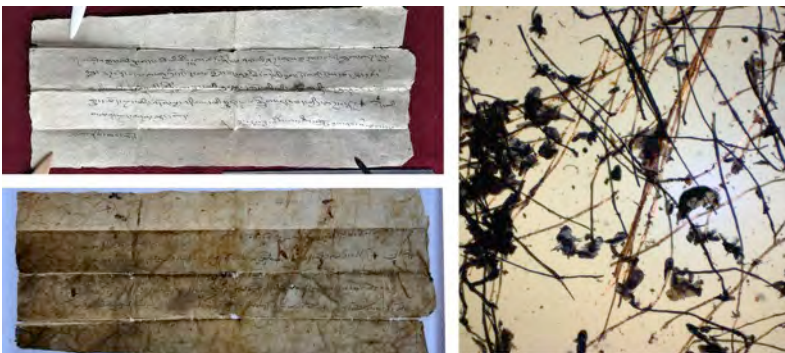
Figs. 26 a, b, c. Document UT/21 from Upper Tshognam written on paper made of pure *Daphne*/*Edgeworthia* sp. fibres. a. Recto side of the document; b. Paper transparency observed against light; c. Fibres of *Daphne*/*Edgeworthia* sp. observed in 50× magnification.



Figs. 27 a, b, c. Document UT/28 from Upper Tshognam written on paper made of mixed *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. and *Stellera* sp. fibres. a. Recto side of the document; b. Paper transparency observed against light; c. Fibres observed in 50× magnification.



Figs. 28 a, b, c. Document UT/34 from Upper Tshognam written on paper made of mixed fibres of *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp., *Stellera* sp. and other recycled fibres. a. Recto side of the document; b. Paper transparency observed against light; c. Fibres observed in 100× magnification.

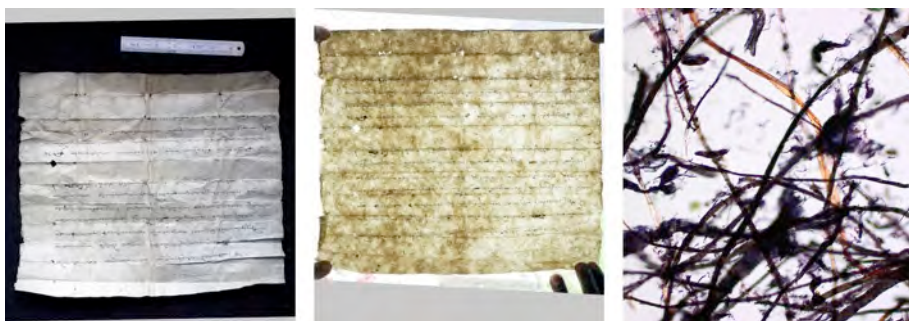


Figs. 29 a, b, c. Document UT/16 from Upper Tshognam written on paper made of *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. fibres with small addition of *Stellera* sp. fibres. a. Recto side of the document; b. Paper transparency observed against light; c. Fibres observed in 50× magnification.





Figs. 30 a, b, c. Document LT/11 from Lower Tshognam written on paper made of mixed fibres of *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp., *Stellera* sp. and individual synthetic fibres. a. Recto side of the document; b. Paper transparency observed against light; c. Fibres observed in 50× magnification.



Figs. 31 a, b, c. Document LT/12 from Lower Tshognam written on paper made of mixed fibres of *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp., *Stellera* sp. and other recycled fibres. a. Recto side of the document; b. Paper transparency observed against light; c. Fibres observed in 100× magnification.

### 3.5. Inheritance

The primary cause of tension with the family in every generation was the question of inheritance. The documents that deal with this matter are of various sorts, and it is worth examining them briefly to consider the terminology used. What may be one of the earliest items in the collection (LT/23, possibly from 1854 or 1842) concerns the inheritance by Yeshe Angmo,<sup>6</sup> the wife of the first lama in the lineage, of a house in her natal village of Tshug, in the face of opposition from rival claimants. (Fig. 32) This document is referred to simply as '*chod*

<sup>6</sup> Since the document is dated simply as Bird year, without an element or a weekday, it cannot be dated, and the possibility that it concerns a different Yeshe Angmo from a later period cannot be overlooked.

*'tshig* (< *chod tshig*). Disputes over the priestly estate in Tshognam itself arose in the following generation, between Yeshe Angmo's two sons and, subsequently, between her younger son and her daughter. This document, measuring 18 × 37.5 cm, is written on a woven type of paper made of *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. fibres with uneven fibre distribution (thickness 0.11–0.17 mm), with many fibre bundles visible in pulp. This means that the raw material was not properly boiled and beaten, which did not make it possible to achieve a sufficiently good quality. In or around 1860 the two brothers, Lamas Rigden and Rangdrol, came to terms over the matter of who should inherit the estate in the generation below them, and recorded their agreement in a document described as a *'dum khra*, a "dispute resolution" (LT/04; Fig. 33). The agreement was recorded on the same type of woven paper made of *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. fibres with uneven fibre distribution (thickness 0.1–0.23 mm). In 1871 there was a disagreement over the ownership of a house by two people in Tshognam whose relationship to the main family is unclear. The matter was investigated by the Duke of Baragaon, who declared that he was "giving the mark of his seal" (*phyags* [*phyag*] *rtags gnang*) to the party in whose favour he had found. In this case it seems that they term *phyag rtags*—"seal mark"—is being used as a metonym for the certificate itself.



Figs. 32 a, b, c. Document LT/23 from Lower Tshognam written on paper made of *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. fibres. a. Recto side of the document; b. Paper transparency observed against light; c. Fibres observed in 50× magnification.



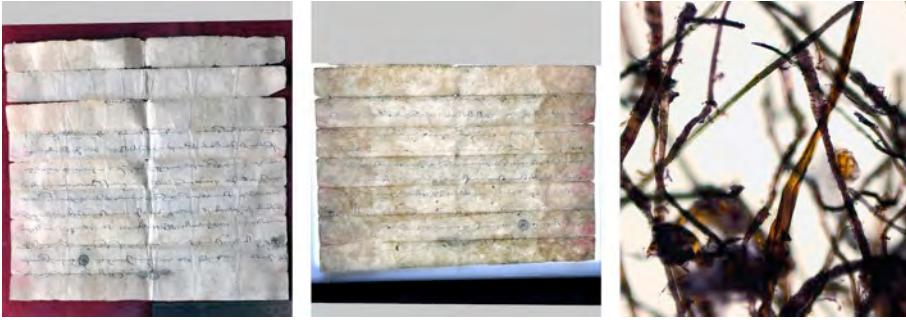
Figs. 33 a, b, c. Document LT/04 from Lower Tshognam written on paper made of *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. fibres. a. Recto side of the document; b. Paper transparency observed against light; c. Fibres observed in 50× magnification.

LT/08 is a valuable document for our understanding of the tensions in the family since it contains copies of two earlier documents, from 1876 and from 1866 (in that order), of which the originals have been lost. (Fig. 34) Both sections are agreements, the first part concerning the terms of Ösal Dorje's usufruct of a field given to him by his uncle, and the second detailing the terms of his mother's occupancy of a house on the estate. The first part refers to itself as a *cham yi ge*—a document of accord or resolution—and the second section as a *chod rgya*, a term mentioned above as a probable abbreviation of *chod tshig gan rgya*. This document is written on exceptionally thin paper (thickness 0.06–0.09 mm) with relatively even fibre distribution, but nevertheless characterised by visible fibre bundles in the structure. This paper is made of mixed fibres of *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp., and *Stellera* sp. with possible addition of unidentified fibres. UT/05, another confirmation of Ösal Dorje's usufruct of the same field, opens with the declaration that it is “a document that accomplishes a reconciliation” (*cham 'thun bsgrubs gyis yi ge*) between two previously antagonistic parties. (Fig. 35) This document is produced on a similar type of paper with possible addition of recycled textile fibres.



Figs. 34 a, b, c. Document LT/08 from Lower Tshognam written on paper made of mixed fibres of *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp., *Stellera* sp. and other recycled fibres. a. Recto side of the document; b. Paper transparency observed against light; c. Fibres observed in 200× magnification.





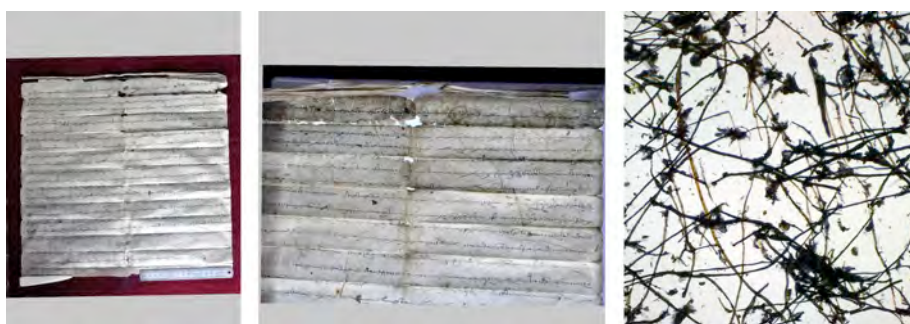
Figs. 35 a, b, c. Document UT/05 from Upper Tshognam written on paper made of mixed fibres of *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp., *Stellera* sp. and other recycled fibres. a. Recto side of the document; b. Paper transparency observed against light; c. Fibres observed in 200× magnification.

As we have seen earlier, in 1890 the elderly Phurba Angmo transferred the ownership of her house to her son, Lama Ösal Dorje. Interestingly, the declaration of the transfer does not use the term *kha chems*, the usual term for a will, perhaps in tacit acknowledgement of the fact that legal ownership lay with the main estate to which it was meant to revert following her death (although this was later disputed by her grandson). The term that is used is the vaguer *phog sprod*, which may be glossed as “transfer” or “bestowal”. In contrast to this “transfer”, the archive contains the will of a nun, who may or may not be a member of the priestly family. This document does use the term *kha chem* (< *kha chems*), but in fact it is only the moveable goods of two households of which she is the sole heir that are at issue. The heirs to the estates themselves are not specified, and it is therefore probable that they were simply to be inherited by her closest relatives.

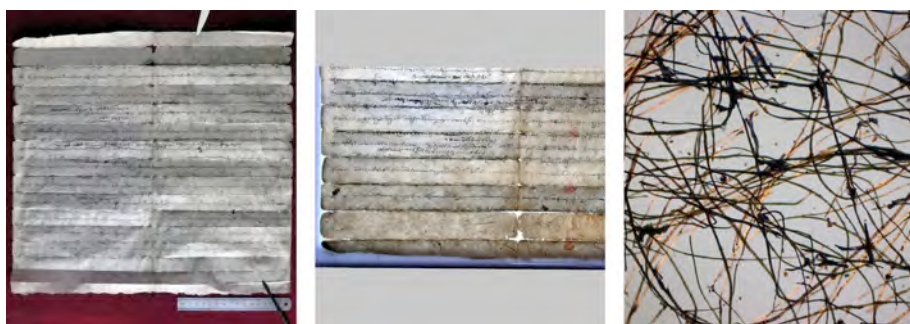
When the ownership of Phurba Angmo’s house in Lower Tshognam was contested by the two main branches of the family in the next generation, Ösal Dorje’s son, Tenpa Gyaltsen, submitted a legal petition to the government court (UT/31) written in *’khyug ma tshugs* (*kmt*) script on medium-thick *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. paper. (Fig. 36) The document, measuring 38 × 38 cm, is characterised by uneven fibre distribution written in 24 text lines with barely any margins. As one might expect, Nepali legal terms become increasingly frequent as time passes, and this document, which dates from around 1912, is introduced as a *ba ti i sar* (Nep. *bādi ijhar*), denoting a legal petition. Similarly, a reaction to a petition in what may be the same case (LT/19; since the dates of these documents are uncertain, we do not know if this is a direct riposte to UT/32) is identified as a *phirād patra*, a formal rejoinder. UT/32, measuring 38.6 × 41 cm is made of *Daph-*

*ne/Edgeworthia* sp. with the addition of *Stellera* sp. fibres. (Fig. 37)

The adoption of Nepali terms is by no means ubiquitous, and a legal petition submitted at the same time and in the same case by someone who is either the plaintiff's brother or the plaintiff himself under a different name, contains no generic designation in either Tibetan or Nepali (UT/33; Fig. 38). UT/33 is composed of *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. with a small addition of *Stellera* sp. and singular recycled textile fibres. Regarding components and technological features such as fibre distribution, UT/32 and UT/33 are made of the same type of paper.



Figs. 36 a, b, c. Document UT/31 from Upper Tshognam written on paper made of *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. fibres. a. Recto side of the document; b. Paper transparency observed against light; c. Fibres observed in 50× magnification.



Figs. 37 a, b, c. Document UT/32 from Upper Tshognam written on paper made of *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. fibres with small addition of *Stellera* sp. fibres. a. Recto side of the document; b. Paper transparency observed against light; c. Fibres observed in 50× magnification.





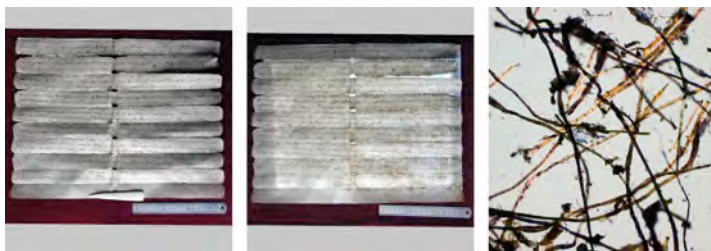
Figs. 38 a, b, c. Document UT/33 from Upper Tshognam written on paper made of mixed fibres of *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp., *Stellera* sp. and other recycled fibres. a. Recto side of the document; b. Paper transparency observed against light; c. Fibres observed in 200× magnification.

One of the documents related to this dispute (UT/32) is particularly difficult to read because of the many deletions and interlineal insertions, but it is a valuable piece since it tells us something about how the author, Tshewang Angyal, constructed his argument. The rough draft—which is what we suppose this to be—shows that his claims for ownership initially included numerous daring assertions that he omitted in the version that was later submitted to the court, presumably because he felt that these would not stand up under questioning.

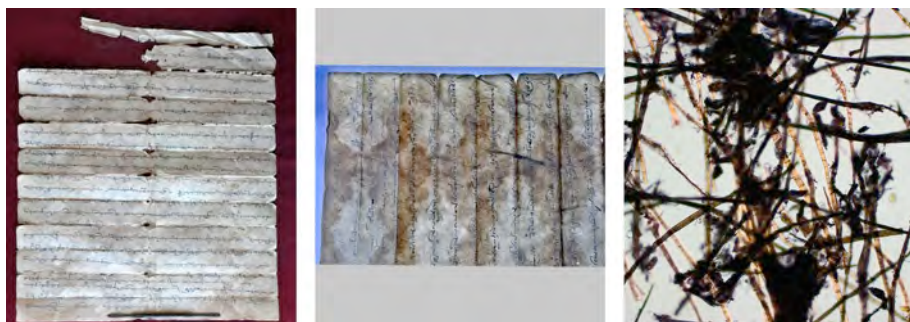
### 3.6. Dealings with outsiders

While conflicts within the family were mainly about inheritance, disputes with outsiders were more varied in character. Lama Ösal Dorje was the defendant in an interesting case that was brought against him in 1907, when a man called Trogyal from Dzar accused him and several others of beating him up, robbing him and threatening to kill him and destroy his household by means of black magic (UT/25; Fig. 39). UT/25, measuring 30 × 39.5 cm, is written on paper composed of *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. fibres with the addition of singular fibres stained yellow/orange with Herzberg (the fibres may have been recycled). In a formal response (UT/26–27) the lama vigorously defended himself against the charges, and made a counter-accusation against Trogyal and others for making an unprovoked attack on him and his son. The case was examined at the government court in Lower Lo—probably in Kag—but since neither of the documents is signed, it is likely that the versions used in court were in Nepali; both are likely to be copies of the Tibetan originals that were submitted for translation for official use. (Fig. 40) The outcome of the case is not recorded. This response was written on thicker paper made with

*Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. fibres and characterised by uneven fibre distribution.



Figs. 39 a, b, c. Document UT/25 from Upper Tshognam written on paper made of *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. fibres. a. Recto side of the document; b. Paper transparency observed against light; c. Fibres observed in 100× magnification.



Figs. 40 a, b, c. Document UT/26-27 from Upper Tshognam written on paper made of *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. fibres. a. Recto side of the document; b. Paper transparency observed against light; c. Fibres observed in 100× magnification.

UT/31, which dates from 1910, is ostensibly a declaration by a blacksmith that he will cease to pester the Lama Ösal Dorje and his son Tenpa Gyaltzen for the return of property he had deposited with them. However, the *narratio* section of the document reveals the background to this undertaking. The blacksmith, named Kuka Hrithar, had borrowed 10 rupees from Ösal Dorje, for which his father left seventeen coral beads and a rosary of black crystal as security. It is not clear whether the blacksmith repaid the loan or defaulted, but whatever happened the lamas denied having received the valuables, and Kukar Dorje brought a case—*bha sti* for Nep. *bādī*—to the effect that the security had been worth ten times the sum that had been borrowed. Lama Tenpa Gyaltzen reciprocated with a formal response (*spar sti*, for Nep. *prati*) categorically denying that the stones were in his house. The possibility that the case went to a government court is supported by the use of the Nepali legal terms, and also the assertion that a formal legal investigation was undertaken (*ka khrim dar zhin*

*mdzad* < *bka' khrims brdar shan mdzad*). However, it appears that the parties subsequently decided to come to an out-of-court settlement after seeking the mediation of a prominent or respected local figure (*bha bla ha rdi mi* [Nep. *bhalādmī*] *nang grigs* [< 'grigs] *zhus nas*), and thereby came to a resolution (*bar dum*). There is evidence in other documents from Mustang that government courts were sometimes used strategically to initiate legal cases, perhaps because of the initial unresponsiveness of the accused to the demands of the accuser, whereas the disputes themselves were then settled informally with the mediation of a third party. By the time the blacksmith brought this case against him, Ösal Dorje had already had the salutary experience of pursuing a case through the court to its conclusion. In the 1880s he initiated proceedings against the community of Tshug to contest a claim that he owed them sixteen years' worth of unpaid taxes. He kept a meticulous account of all the costs he incurred throughout the duration of the case (UT/14) itemising his expenditure for the nine months the case was in court over a period of three years, either beginning or ending in 1888. (Fig. 41) The expenditure amounted to 91 rupees—a very substantial sum at that time—in addition to which he lost the case and had to pay the taxes demanded by the village. The document is an excellent example of why, whenever possible, people preferred to resolve their differences through mediation rather than by formal legal action. UT/14 is written on slightly worse quality paper (than others) composed of mixed fibres of *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. and *Stellera* sp. and characterised by uneven fibre distribution and bundles of woody fibres in the paper structure.



Figs. 41 a, b, c. Document UT/14 from Upper Tshognam written on paper made of mixed *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. and *Stellera* sp. fibres. a. Recto side of the document; b. Paper transparency observed against light; c. Fibres observed in 50× magnification.

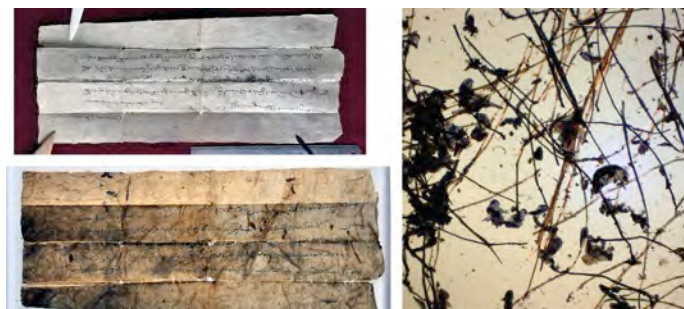
### 3.7. *The Shari Pöngyuta lama lineage*

In 1893 a certain Amchi Tshewang, a member of a different family of Nyingma lamas and doctors (Tib. *am chi*) was invited by the Tepas to take up residence in a free-standing house to the east of the village in an area called Baza. The favourable terms on which he and his family were allowed to occupy the property are set out in a contract (UT/37) written on paper measuring 21.5 × 28.3 cm made of *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. fibres. (Fig. 42) In 1895 Amchi Tshewang acquired land from a defaulting debtor, and lent more money to a third party (UT/20). Tshewang's son and heir was Namgyal, also a lama and a doctor, who married a woman from Lower Tshognam. She bore one son before dying at an early age, reputedly of smallpox. Her natal family sold her private inheritance—a field, some jewelry and some clothes—but in 1916 Namgyal was able to recover them from the purchasers, insisting that they be held in trust until his young son was old enough to inherit them (UT/16; Fig. 43). This document is written on paper made of *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. with small addition of *Stellera* sp. fibres. The last of the four documents relating to the family is a short letter, apparently written in some haste on paper made of *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. fibres, addressed to “the learned doctor Namgyal”. The undated letter (UT/39) was sent by someone whose elder daughter was in the advanced stages of smallpox, and who was trying to take measures to save his younger daughter from the same fate. (Fig. 44)

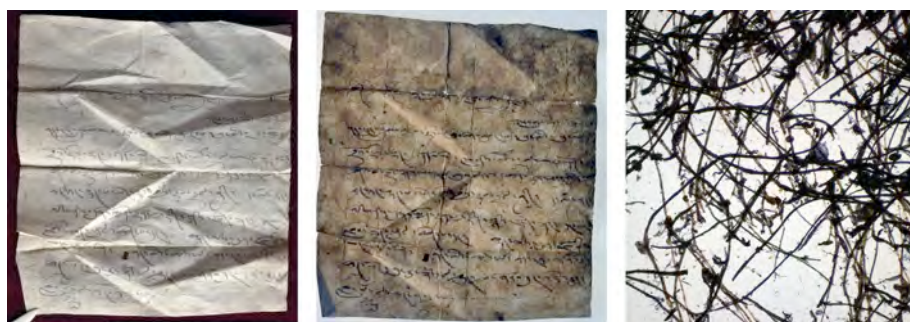


Figs. 42 a, b, c. Document UT/37 from Upper Tshognam written on paper made of *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. fibres. a. Recto side of the document; b. Paper transparency observed against light; c. Fibres observed in 50× magnification.





Figs. 43 a, b, c. Document UT/16 from Upper Tshognam written on paper made of *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. fibres. a. Recto side of the document; b. Paper transparency observed against light; c. Fibres observed in 50× magnification.



Figs. 44 a, b, c. Document UT/39 from Upper Tshognam written on paper made of *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. fibres. a. Recto side of the document; b. Paper transparency observed against light; c. Fibres observed in 50× magnification.

### *Summary of codicological features*

#### *4.1. Format and layout*

Various formats and sizes were registered in our sample depending on content and function of particular documents. While the majority of documents comprise a single rectangular sheet with either a “portrait” or a “landscape” orientation folded in little packages, we also registered two documents in approximately square format and three documents in a sewn book format. (Figs 45 and 46)

The majority of documents in a smaller single-sheet format contain the text of contracts between individuals or the record of the acquisition of land in the village of Tshug. These documents usually measure from 10–15 × 21–34 cm and most of them are folded four times (UT/06, UT/08, UT/16, UT/19, UT/34, UT/45). The majority of such documents contain 5, 6 or 7 lines of text aligned with the left

margin, with the exception of two documents which have 11 lines of text.

By contrast, the documents recording plenary gatherings were larger, written on vertical rectangular sheets measuring about 43.5 × 41.5 cm (LT/01) and 41 × 37 cm (LT/02). LT/01 has 15 text lines organized in three paragraphs, written evenly and composed centrally with an upper margin with a width of a double fold, and a bottom margin with a single fold width. LT/02 is prepared in a rather sloppy way: its 23 lines, organised in two paragraphs, are not straight, and the text is not centred.

The largest document in our sample, with a nearly square format, folded 15 times, measures 63.5 × 58 cm (UT/24). It is private contract between external parties, containing 6 lines of text on the recto and one line on the verso side.

Other roughly square documents are: UT/13 (29.8 × 31.8 cm), UT/31 (38 × 38 cm), UT/32 (38.6 × 41 cm), LT/01 (43.5 × 41.5 cm). All, except LT/01, have over 20 lines on the page, and although they lack side margins they have an upper margin that is clearly marked.

The booklet format is seen in UT/46, UT/47 and LT/09. UT/46 is a ritual manual, a 20-page book of 9.5 × 44 cm, sewn at the left side (6-8 text lines per page). UT/47 (Songs of the Sixth Dalai Lama) is a book measuring 8.5 × 19 cm containing 14 bi-folios (16 × 19 cm) and sewn at the top.



Fig. 45. Document UT/25 comprise a single rectangular sheet folded into a little package.

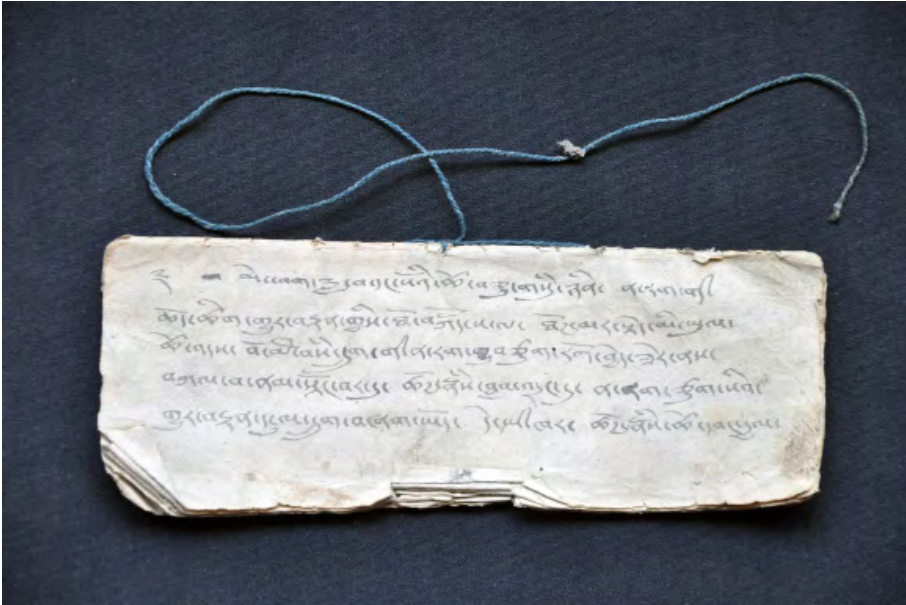


Fig. 46. Document LT/09, representing the typical format of a stitched Tibetan book (*deb ther*).

#### 4.2. Script and scribal hands

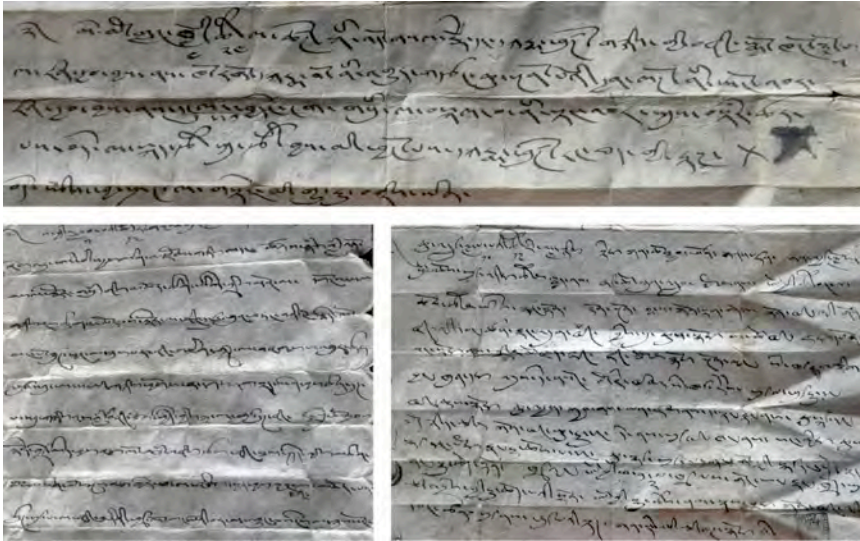
It was sometimes said, only partly in jest, that the sole requirement for recruitment as a *rtse drung*, a member of the government secretarial corps of the Ganden Phodrang Government, was neat handwriting (Goldstein 1991: 27). While this observation is of course an exaggeration, it does at least reflect an insistence on conformity in handwriting, in much the same way that Roundhand was enjoined on the scribes of English legal documents from the eighteenth century on until typewritten texts came to be regarded as acceptable. Most Tibetan scripts fall into one of two main categories: “headed” (*dbu can*) and “headless” (*dbu med*). The headless category subsumes a wide variety of styles, ranging from clearly formed, unconnected letters to a fluid hand that can properly be described as cursive.

Tibetan has names to describe numerous sub-categories of headless script, depending on features such as the length of the descenders, the form of the vowels and so forth. The great majority of official documents were written in the cursive script, known as *khyug*. This script was a requirement for private documents in Central Tibet, though a slightly more formal version, known as *gshar ma*, was sometimes used until the end of the nineteenth century (Schneider 2002: 417). Documents from South Mustang, including the archives of



Tshognam, exhibit a wider variety of hands than is generally to be found in Central Tibetan collections. The variety is likely to be the result of the setting in which scribes were trained. Many scribes appear to have been tantric lamas who would have been taught to write not in a school or monastery but at home, by their fathers, or else by another village lama to whom their basic education had been entrusted. This situation would favour a greater degree of idiography (that is, scribal idiosyncrasy) than an environment in which the transmission of stylistic norms was more regulated. Predictably, the Tshognam documents displaying the most standard form of *'khyug* are communications from Tibet, from the King of Lo and from local dignitaries, who are likely to have had scribes who were educated in Tibet.

An obstacle facing any attempt to classify scripts in the Tshognam archives is that the formal Tibetan scriptural categories denote ideal types, whereas in reality—and certainly in South Mustang—there are numerous intermediate forms that do not correspond precisely to one category or another. Whereas some documents are written in *'khyug*, and in others the script is closer to the more rounded, larger-lettered *tshugs*, most fall into the category called *'khyug ma tshugs (kmt)*: that is, a script that exhibits features of both. LT/09, a record of endowments for a ceremony, is written in *tshugs*, but a tendency to increasing fluidity is notable after the first page (see Figs 12, 46 above). Many documents are written in *'khyug*, but even a superficial comparison reveals that this is not the type of *'khyug* that characterises documents from Central Tibet or Northern Mustang. Fig. 47, which features a selection of excerpts from documents written in *'khyug*, illustrates the range of individual variants. The intermediate *kmt* form is itself subject to variation. In some documents, such as LT/11 and LT/15 (Figs 48 and 49, below) the *kmt* script is very close to a true *tshugs*; by contrast, UT/32, is also in *kmt*, but one that is verging on the fluidity of *'khyug*.



Figs. 47 a, b, c. Examples of 'khyug script in the selection of fragments from the documents.

Some documents feature more than one kind of script. While this is true of documents to which additions are made over the course of time, it is also a diplomatic feature known as *ingrossare*, in which a larger or more formal script is used for certain parts of a document (Schneider 2002: 417). Numerous instances of this practice are to be found in documents from South Mustang. In the Tshognam documents, the mixture of styles is most apparent in the case of scribes who use forms of letters belonging to two different scripts within the same document, probably for no reason other than that an initial intention to write in a slower, more formal style is periodically superseded by a desire for greater speed. Examples of such documents will be given presently.

The archives of Tshognam offer a rich repository for the study of Tibetan handwriting, for two main reasons: first, as stated above, the documents exhibit a relatively wide range of writing styles; and secondly, because the scribes often identify themselves by name. In spite of this variety, certain documents do bear a strong resemblance to each other, and it can be tempting to conclude that they were written by the same person. A case in point is the pair of documents LT/11 and LT/15. The former is a contract for the sale of a field, and the latter an account of the sacred imagery contained in temple in Tibet not far from the Nepalese border. The scribe of the former identifies himself as the meditator (*sgrub pa*) Tshering Dorje. On the subject of LT/15, one of the authors of the present article has elsewhere stated that:

The author of the document does not give his name. However, the distinctive handwriting is unmistakably the same as that in HMA/LTshognam/Tib/11, where the scribe identifies himself as *sgrub pa* Tshering Dorje (Tshe ring rdo rje)... Ösal Dorje and Tshering Dorje were probably close acquaintances, and the document may well have been a gift from the latter to his friend in Tshognam following a pilgrimage to Tradum. (Ramble 2015: 379–80)

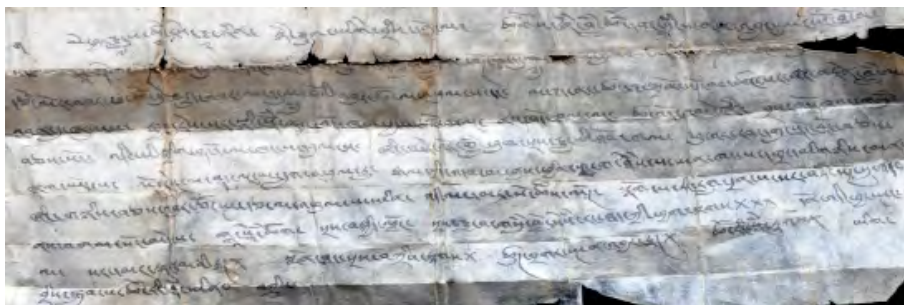


Fig. 48. Fragment of the handwriting of Tshering Dorje in document LT/11 from Lower Tshognam, a contract for the sale of a field.

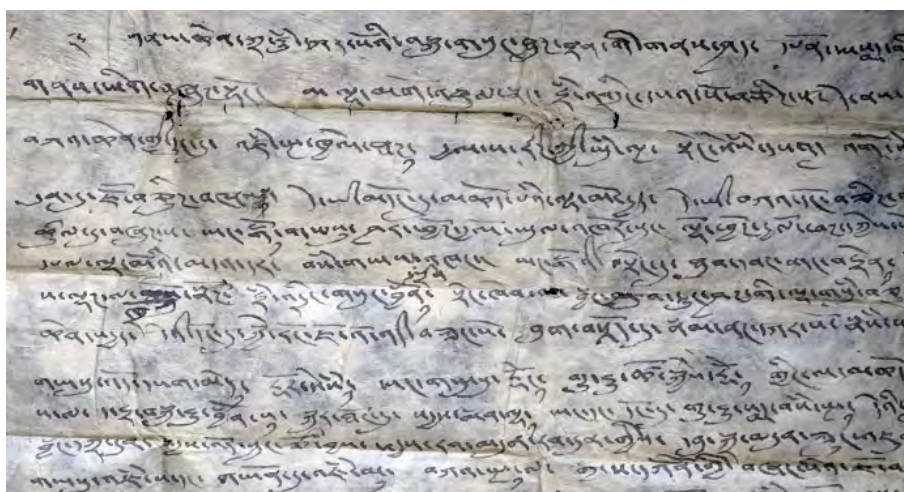


Fig. 49. Fragment of handwriting from the document LT/15 from Lower Tshognam, an account of the sacred imagery contained in temple in Tibet not far from the Nepalese border.

Unfortunately, this claim is not supported by a close examination of certain scribal details, notably the form of the letters *za*, *ka* and *cha/tsha*. In LT/11, the *z* is always written in a fluid 'khyug style, in a single movement, to produce a graph resembling the Tibetan numeral 3. (Fig. 50a) In LT/15 the same letter is written in three move-

ments: one to form the topmost horizontal and the vertical line, and two more for the middle and lowest horizontal strokes. (Fig. 50b)



*Figs. 50 a, b. Details of the grapheme z from LT/11 and LT/15; LT/15 favours a "headed" form of the letter, but even the two "headless" examples at the end differ from the form of the z in LT/11.*

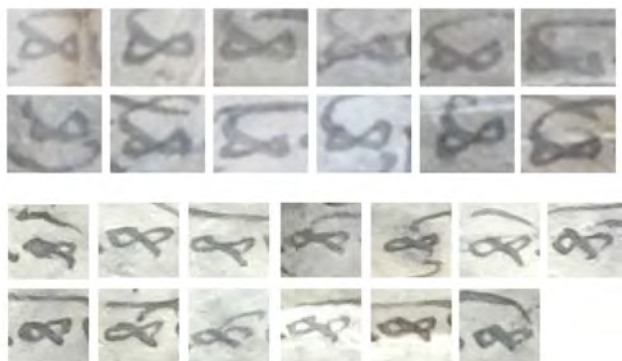
Caution should be exercised here: it is common for scribes to employ a diversity of forms for a single letter. As we shall see presently, the scribe of UT/40 uses both of these forms for the letter z. In the present case, then, we should not take this feature alone as being diagnostic of different scribal hands, and must extend our analysis to other letters. First, the consonant k: in LT/11 the first downstroke is a straight, right-to-left diagonal line that ends slightly before the left limit of the horizontal stroke. (Fig. 51a) In LT/15, by contrast, the first downstroke is slightly curved to produce a shallow "u", and extends beyond the cross-stroke.



*Figs. 51 a, b. Details of the grapheme k from LT/11 and LT/15: in LT/11, the first downward stroke is relatively straight and does not extend to the left of the horizontal line; in LT/15, the stroke is curved and usually extends well to the left.*

In LT/11, the *ch* is written in a single movement, ending above the double loop. The *tsh* is formed either by continuing this single stroke upward and over towards the right, or by adding a separate horizontal stroke. (Fig. 52a) In LT/15, the *cha* is written in two strokes: first, the two loops, formed like a recumbent letter S or incomplete numeral 8, followed by a second stroke diagonally downwards from left to right. The beginning of this stroke does not protrude above the loops

but it is often extended below them. For the *tsh*, the additional component is always written as a separate stroke. (Fig. 52b)



Figs. 52 a, b. Details of the graphemes *ch* and *tsh* from LT/11 and LT/15; the former produces the grapheme in a single stroke, while in LT/15 all examples feature a separate descending left-to-right stroke that extends beyond the lower limit of the main body of the grapheme.

On the evidence of the form of these letters, it may be concluded that the two documents were almost certainly *not* written by the same scribe. LT/11 is written on paper made of mixed fibres of *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp., *Stellera* sp. and individual synthetic fibres, and LT/15 is written on paper made of *Stellera* sp. fibres with small addition of *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp.

Determining whether or not a given document was written by a particular individual is not always such a straightforward matter, as the next example will show. The example will be presented as an exercise to identify the scribe of a contract written in 1890, based on a comparison with six other documents in the archive.

The document in question is UT/19, a contract for the purchase of a field by Lama Ösel Dorje from someone in Tshug (Fig. 25a) It is written on one-layered paper of uneven fibre distribution made purely of *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. fibres. The scribe identifies himself in the closing phrase: *yig bris bu/nga yin*; “the scribe of this document was *bu/nga*”. It appears that *bu* has been overwritten with *nga*, or *vice versa*. The phrase might therefore mean either “The letter-writer was myself (*nga*)” or “The letter-writer was the son (*bu*)”; or perhaps the scribe did not intend that one syllable should overwrite the other, but wished to include both: “The letter-writer was me, the son (*bu nga*)”. Since the document in question concerns an acquisition by Ösal Dorje, it would not be unreasonable to surmise that “myself” in this case referred to the lama himself, and the *bu* would be the lama’s son,



Tenpai Gyaltsen.<sup>7</sup>

Let us examine the first hypothesis, that the scribe was Ösal Dorje. For the sake of simplicity we will take three graphemes for comparison: the *yig mgo mdun ma* (the opening flourish that begins the first line), and the consonants *z* and *l*. As samples of Ösal Dorje's handwriting we may take UT/10 and UT/11, two of several documents where the lama identifies himself by name as the scribe. In both UT/10 and UT/11 the *yig mgo* consists of a graph resembling the Tibetan numeral 2 and surmounted by a roughly symmetrical dome. (Figs 53a, b) (In UT/11 the right descender of the dome is slightly longer than the left.) In UT/19 the *yig mgo* has the same basic structure, but differs in that the right descender of the dome continues well below the "2" before flattening out at the end. (Fig. 53c) Since the right descender of the dome in the *yig mgo* appearing in other documents by Ösal Dorje is sometimes relatively lengthened—though never with such exuberance as we see in UT/19—we cannot take this feature alone as being indicative of a different hand.



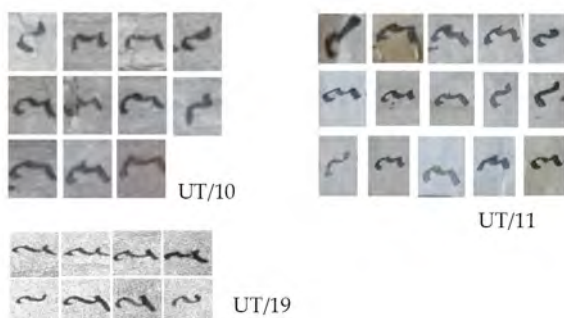
Figs. 53 a, b, c. The *yig mgo mdun ma* (the opening flourish that begins the first line) from the documents UT/10 and UT/11 and UT/19.

The letter *l* of Ösal Dorje's hand has two relatively distinct forms. The commoner of the two consists of a c-shaped downstroke, followed by a second which begins at the top of the "c", dips down and rises again in a shallow "u" before continuing downwards and slightly outwards to end at roughly the same horizontal level as the lower end of the first stroke. The other variant consists of a single stroke, beginning at the base of the initial "c", continuing roughly horizontally, and concluding upwards, rather than downwards, to produce the final vertical element. (Figs 54 a, b) The scribe of UT/19 also has two forms of the letter *l*. (Fig. 54 c) In one of the variants, the first component is identical to his 'a': a single stroke rising from the baseline in an arch before descending and flattening slightly at the end;

<sup>7</sup> It is not clear from the documents how many sons Ösal Dorje had. The names Tenpai Gyaltsen, Namkha and Namkha Gyaltsen appear in different documents to identify a son; however, no document mentions more than one son, and it is therefore likely that the different names refer to a single individual.

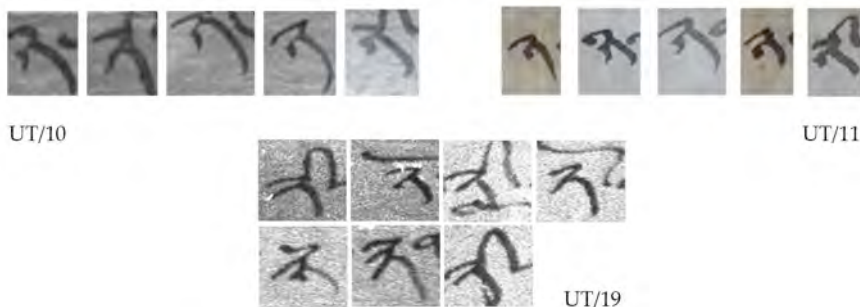


the *l* is completed by a downstroke that either inclines to the left or has the form of a shallow “c”. The other version of the *l* is a single stroke that arcs upwards, descends to the horizontal level of the departure point and then rises again to a height no greater than the apex of the arch. In short, both forms of the *l* are significantly different in the two documents.



Figs. 54 a, b, c. Examples of the grapheme *l*, showing the occurrence of both cursive and *tshugs* forms in the same documents.

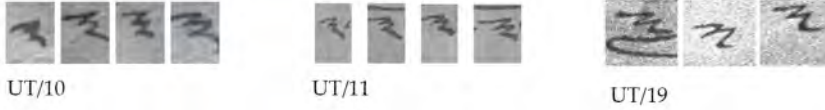
In the five occurrences of the consonant *ny* in Ösal Dorje’s UT/11, the first component is sickle-shaped, with a short downward stroke at the lower end of the arc. In the case of UT/19 this stroke is absent in all occurrences but one (in the syllable *snyad* in line 3; Fig. 55).



Figs. 55 a, b, c: Forms of the grapheme *ny* by Ösal Dorje (UT/10, UT/11); and c. by a different scribe (UT/19)

Ösel Dorje’s *z* resembles a Tibetan numeral 3, and the second right-to-left downstroke is followed by a relatively long left-to-right stroke that departs from it at a sharp angle. In all occurrences of the letter *z* in UT/19, by contrast, the end of the stroke is relatively short and horizontal and it departs from the letter after a gentle curve, nev-

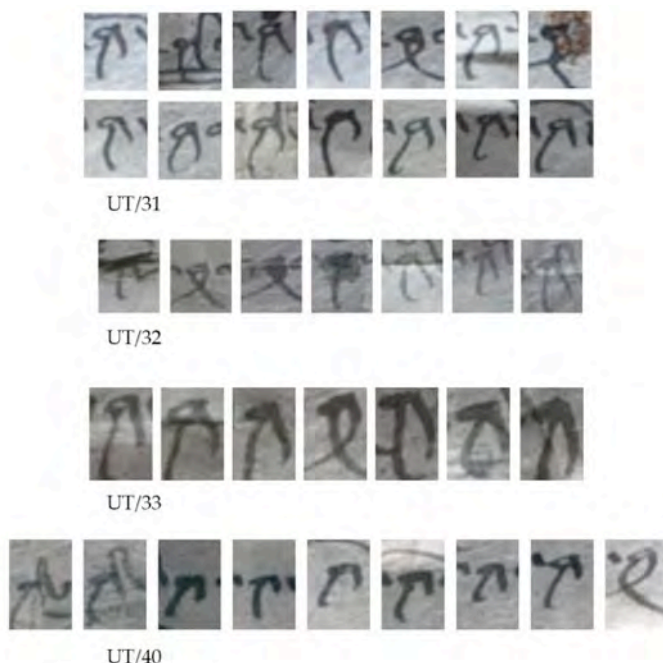
er after an angle. (Fig. 56) On the strength of these two letters alone it may be concluded that UT/19 was probably not written by Ösal Dorje.



Figs. 56 a, b, c: Forms of the consonant *z* by Ösal Dorje (UT/10, UT/11) and c. by a different scribe (UT/19)

As mentioned earlier LT/11 is written on paper made of mixed fibres of *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp., *Stellera* sp. and individual synthetic fibres, and LT/19 purely of *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. fibres. Thus these are two different types of paper.

Might the document have been written by his son, Tenpai Gyaltsen? There are no documents in which Tenpai Gyaltsen explicitly identifies himself as the scribe. However, there are four in which he features as the protagonist: UT/31–33 all relate to a legal case in which he claims to be the rightful owner of a disputed property, while the fourth, UT/40, is a *thob yig*, a list of spiritual teachings and initiations he received. Before pursuing a comparison with UT/19, it must first be determined whether he is actually the scribe of these four documents. There are certain differences in the handwriting of these documents, but they all share one graphic feature that occurs in no other document in the archive. This is the form of the consonant *sh*, which is characterised by the following traits: the left descender departs from the middle or left of the lower edge of the circular element of the *sh* and diverges only slightly from the vertical axis. (Fig. 57) In all other documents, this left descender departs either from the right descender, or from the point at which the latter departs from the circle (if it is attached to the rest of the letter at all), and usually diverges widely from the vertical axis.



Figs. 57 a, b, c, d. The distinctive form of the consonant *sh* in UT/31, UT/32, UT/33 and UT/40

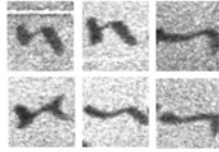
Unfortunately, we cannot use the grapheme *sh* to determine whether Tenpai Gyaltsen was the scribe of UT/19, since it does not appear in the document. The comparison must therefore be based on other features. But this requirement raises an interesting problem: the form of other letters differs significantly from one document to another. If we consider the consonant *sh* to be indicative of a single scribal hand, then we must accept that the form of certain other letters cannot be similarly diagnostic because of the inconsistencies in their form. An examination of these differences is instructive, since it highlights the importance of taking into account factors other than graphic form alone in any attempt to establish scribal identity. For reasons of space, our comparison will be confined to brief remarks on the *yig mgo* and the consonants *s* and *l*.

UT/32 is apparently a rough draft of UT/31. They are by the same scribe, but the *yig mgo* in each case is significantly different. (Fig. 58)



Figs. 58 a, b. The *yig mgo* in documents UT/31 and UT/32.

In UT/31 most occurrences of the letter *s* are distinguished by two notable features: the vertical strokes curve inwards to produce an hour-glass shape, and the horizontal stroke extends from the foot of the first vertical stroke to the middle of the second. In UT/32, by contrast, in most cases the vertical lines are straight rather than incurved, and the connecting stroke rises from the base of the left vertical stroke to the top—*not* the middle—of the right one. The casualness and fluency of the *s* is even more notable in UT/40. (Fig. 59)

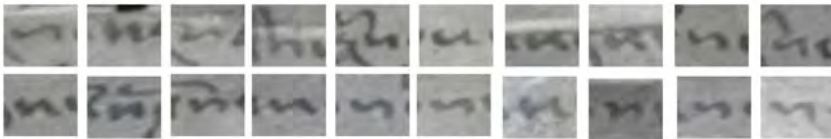


UT/19

*Figs. 59 a, b, c, d, e: Cursive and tshugs forms of the grapheme s in UT/19 and UT/31, UT/32, UT/33 and UT/40.*



UT/31



UT/32



UT/33





UT/40

Figs. 59 a, b, c, d, e: Cursive and tshugs forms of the grapheme s in UT/19 and UT/31, UT/32, UT/33 and UT/40.

In UT/31 the majority of instances of the consonant *l* are written as two strokes, whereas in UT/32 and 33 there is a higher incidence of *l* written in a single stroke. (Figs 60 and 61)



UT/31



UT/32

Figs. 60 a, b. Occurrences of the tshugs form of the grapheme l in UT/31 and UT/32



UT/31

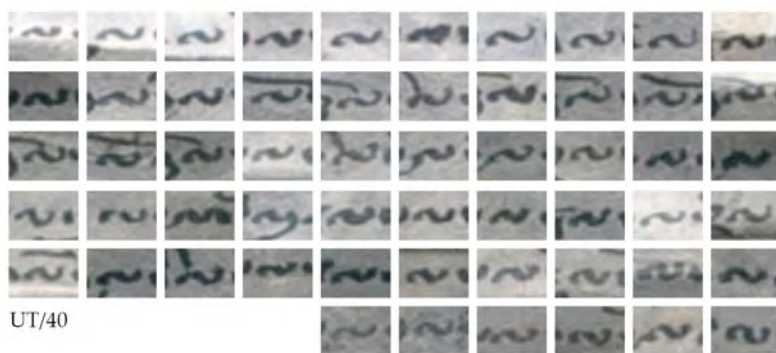


UT/32

Figs. 61 a, b, c, d. Occurrences of the cursive ('khyug') form of the grapheme l in UT/31, UT/32, UT/33 and UT/40



UT/33



UT/40

Figs. 61 a, b, c, d. Occurrences of the cursive ('khyug) form of the grapheme l in UT/31, UT/32, UT/33 and UT/40

Examples such as these could be multiplied, but the conclusion to be drawn from this cursory comparison is clear: the designation *'khyug ma tshugs* is not a precise definition, but indicates a spectrum between the relatively rigid *tshugs* and the more fluid and cursive *'khyug*. The four documents under consideration here all fall on this continuum, but at different points along it, UT/31 being the most *tshugs*-like, and UT/40 the nearest to *'khyug*.

To return to the question posed above: might UT/19 have been written by Tenpai Gyaltsen, the son of Ösal Dorje? First, the *yig mgo* of UT/19 is different from those in UT/31, 33 and 40, but almost identical to that which appears in UT/32. Secondly, the form of the z described above for UT/19 is also the usual form of the letter in all the other four documents. In UT/40 alone there are a few occurrences of another form of z that is more characteristic of *dbu can*. The form of the z that features here—distinguished by a curved hook at the lower

end—is not unique to these documents; it appears in a few others by different scribes, but it is certainly unusual. Third, the two forms of the letter *l* both appear in all four documents; however, as in the case of the consonant *s*, the more fluid form, consisting of a single stroke, appears rarely in UT/31, and much more frequently in UT/32 and UT/33, whereas in UT/40 the more “formal”, two-stroke version does not appear at all. (Fig. 62)



UT/32



UT/33



UT/40

Figs. 62 a, b, c. Forms of the grapheme *z* in UT/32, UT/33 and UT/40

Documents UT/31 and UT/40 are written on *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. paper, and UT/32 and UT/33 are made of of *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. with the addition of *Stellera* sp. fibres (UT/33 also has an addition of individual recycled textile fibres).

All these observations lead us to the following tentative conclusion: that while UT/19 was almost certainly not written by Ösal Dorje, it may *possibly* have been written by his son Tenpai Gyaltsen. Finally, it may be observed that the *general* appearance of the handwriting in UT/19 is different from that in UT/31-33 and UT/40, insofar as the letters are horizontally more protracted and more widely spaced; however, as we have seen from the comparison of LT/11 and LT/15, general appearance is not a reliable indicator. In the present case, allowance should also be made of the possibility of a different stylus, ink or paper as well as the likelihood of change in an individual's hand over time: UT/19 and the group of four documents with which we are comparing it were probably written at an interval of some twenty years.

Except in extreme cases the writing tools and materials such as pen, ink, and paper, usually will not make writing identifiable. A writer using legitimate writing tools and materials, together with a smooth writing surface, should be able to write in a normal and natural manner. On those rare occasions when one or a combination of these factors is unsatisfactory, or various tools or materials undergo a change during writing by the same hand, the act of writing can be affected. How much depends upon the type of modification encountered, and how the writer compensates for it. Thus, the general appearance of handwriting can be influenced by the type of writing tools up to a point. Especially, the size of letters or spaces in between letters and words depend on the size of pen end, and how it is cut. A further important factor is absorbency of paper and thickness of ink. The paper suitable for handwriting should usually have processed and sized surfaces to allow ink to be spread by a pointed tool. Thus the main two features which should be adjusted to each other for best writing results are paper absorbency and thickness of ink (Banik et al. 2011: 492).<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, the quality of any writing has always depended on the type of paper support, the quality of the inks and the skill of the scribe. A very fine quality of writing usually comes from the perfect match of ink thickness (viscosity), type of paper and smoothness of its surface.<sup>9</sup> This conscious selection of materials provides a refined appearance that is the result of sharp, fine lines with little blurring. This refinement also applies to the appearance of the verso side of the leaf; when ink does not bleed through, the paper was properly sized. Thus highly absorbent (improperly sized) paper will cause blurring, and can make the letters larger and more irregular. In such cases the final effect is more difficult to control. Also, the surface of more absorbent paper is usually more rough and creates more surface tension when writing.

Our research shows that the Tshognam documents were not sized before use, so that absorbency comes mainly from the type of raw material. In our case it shows that *Daphne* and *Edgeworthia* sp. paper creates a better and smoother surface for writing compared to *Stellera* sp. paper, which is significantly more absorbent with a surface that is more difficult for writing.

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<sup>8</sup> Absorbency is the ability of a material to take in other substances with which it is in contact, either in liquid or gaseous form; the process of absorption is associated with changes in its physical or chemical properties.

<sup>9</sup> The viscosity of a fluid is a measure of its resistance to gradual deformation by shear stress or tensile stress. For liquids, it corresponds to the informal notion of "thickness".



### 4.3. *Validation marks*

The validation of documents from Mustang involves the application of several possible signs: seals, fingerprints, thumbprints, crosses, signatures, and the Nepali word (of Arabic derivation) *sāhī* written in either Tibetan or Devanāgarī script. The use of these devices is not random, but depends on two main factors: the status of the signatory, and the period when the document was written. Signatures are a recent device, whether in Nepal, Tibetan or Roman script, and do not appear in documents earlier than the 1980s. Thumbprints seem not to have been used before the 1880s. Although thumbprints were used in China, Central Asia, India and Tibet, in some cases even in ancient times, to validate agreements, their widespread usage in documents in Nepal seems to have been promulgated by the Rana government, following the official adoption of the practice in British India after 1877. Some marks of validation prior to this date seem to have been made with the tip of a finger rather than the pad of the thumb, and are therefore likely to represent an affirmatory procedure independent of Nepalese official practice. There is evidence to suggest that among co-signatories who would normally have used seals, some other object may have been used as a substitute in the event that one of the parties may not have had his seal to hand. In such a case it may be that a fingertip was acceptable.<sup>10</sup>

Before the use of thumbprints became widespread, documents were commonly validated by means of crosses. In certain cases, signatories would pass the document from hand to hand as a gesture of endorsement, and the scribe would place an "X" to indicate that it had been approved. If there were several signatories, the scribe might add a single cross to represent the approval of the whole group, or, more often, one cross for each member of the group. The use of seals was largely confined to certain social categories: the King of Lo, aristocrats, *subbas*, and hereditary lamas, although, as we shall see below, commoners also sometimes used seals, suggesting that there may have been no regulation prohibiting the use of seals by commoners, only that most commoners simply did not possess them. The King of Lo alone used a red seal, as seen in the detail from LT/10 below; the motif on the seal is a pair of crossed vajras. (Fig. 63)

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<sup>10</sup> Emil Schlagintweit recounts an episode in which his brother Robert, negotiating with a Chinese official in Western Tibet for permission to cross the Sutlej, was obliged to pay 5 *srang* and to endorse a document to which the official had applied his seal. Lacking a seal of his own, he instead used the handle of his riding whip, a solution that was deemed acceptable (Schlagintweit 1863: 278, fn. 2). We are grateful to Christoph Cüppers for drawing our attention to this passage.



Fig. 63. LT/10, seal of the King of Lo

In addition to individuals, certain groups also had seals, notably monasteries and settlements. Document LT/02 is a good illustration of the use of seals by groups and individuals. Dated 1832, it is one of the oldest documents in the archives, and consists of two parts. The first part is an agreement among the five communities comprising the Shöyul concerning procedures for coordination in the event of a crisis. Each of the communities has endorsed the document with its own seal, but in the case of Gyaga, Te and Tshug the same seal is placed twice in each case: from a later document we know that Te and Tshug, as the largest of the five, each had two officials called *centsug* (*spyān btsug* etc.), whereas the others had only one each (LT/26). However, the latter document names only one *centsug* for Gyaga. In the second part of LT/02, the scribe has simply placed five crosses representing the five communities that have given their approval to an agreement concerning trade regulations. In the first part of the document, Figs 64–68 show respectively the seals of the communities of: 64. Taye, 65. Tshug 66. Gyaga 67. Tsele and 68. Te. The motifs in Figs 64 and 65 are illegible. Fig. 65 contains Devanāgarī letters, possibly featuring the words *śri siva*; Fig. 67 seems to contain the words *śri bhūpāla*, and the word *gaṇeṣ* may also appear in Fig. 68.



Fig. 64. LT/02; seal of Taye



Fig. 65a, b. LT/02, seal of Tshug (inverted on document)



Fig. 66a, b. LT/02; the seal of Gyaga



Fig. 67. LT/02, seal of Tsele

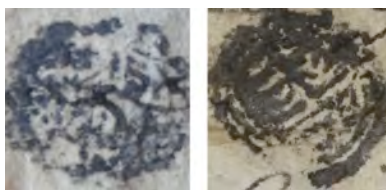


Fig. 68a, b. LT/02, seal of Te

The last seal (Fig. 69) in the first part of the document is an endorsement not by one of the communities but by the witness, in this case a lama by the name of Jamyang Wangdü. The letters in the first are unfortunately too indistinct to decipher but appear to be Tibetan.



Fig. 69. LT/02, seal of Lama Jamyang Wangdü, acting as witness

We cannot be sure that the seals representing the five settlements were indeed community seals, or seals belonging to individuals that were used *pro tem* for the occasion. Whatever the case, in 1910 we find Tshug using a seal that is unequivocally its own. The document, LT/17, is an agreement by the whole community to grant a newly-

arrived lama tenancy of an abandoned estate. The seal, which is placed twice, bears the inscription *tshug yul spyi=* (the last letter being illegible), meaning “the community of Tshug in general.” (Fig. 70)



Figs. 70a, b: LT/17, seal of Tshug from 1910

Fig. 71 (UT/45, also LT/06) also shows the seal of a private individual, in this case a lord of Baragaon from Dzar who has intervened in a dispute over the ownership of a house. This figure, who appears in several documents, used the Nepali name Candra Bir; the inscription on the seal, which is in Devanāgarī, reads *śrī pṛthvī*.



Fig. 71: UT/45, seal of Candra Bir, a noble from Dzar

A seal purporting to be his also appears in a document, dated 1870, from Te, but that seal is square and bears Tibetan script (see *Tibetan Sources 1*: HMA/Te/Tib/65).

There are a few instances in which private individuals with the social rank of commoners, not priests or aristocrats, have used seals. An example of this is to be seen in LT/18, a document from 1910 in which a man from Te and another from Tshug agree to exchange fields for a period of ten years. The seal of the former, Tshering Trashi, contains three lines of script: 1. *pad*; 2. *ma* 3. *kha'gro*, and therefore probably representing the words *padma mkha' 'gro*, a personal name. (Fig. 72)



Fig. 72. LT/18; seal of Tshering Trashi of Te



The smaller seal of the co-signatory, Ogyan Samdrub of Tshug (Fig. 73) contains the letters *p*, *u* and *l*, but it is not clear if these are meant to represent the syllable *pul*, and whether the other marks are letters or other signs.



Fig. 73. LT/18, seal of Ogyan Samdrub of Tshug

A similarly-designed seal is to be seen in UT/42, an undated excerpt from a religious work possibly (to judge from the handwriting) written by Tenpai Gyaltsen. (Fig. 74) The upper line contains the consonants *p* and *z*, and the lower line the letter *ng*. Also present are two other marks: a superscript curve that may stand for the letter *e*, and a concluding half-circle—two features that also appear in Fig. 73. If these are not alphabetical signs, the letters may stand for the name *[d]pa[l b]zang*.



Fig 74. UT/42, seal probably belonging to Lama Tenpai Gyaltsen

UT/02, a document from 1869, offers another example of a commoner with a seal. A mother and her two sons are selling a field, and all the parties concerned sign with a cross except one of the sons, Phurba Dorje, who applies a seal. Apart from an abstract spiral motif that may represent a conch, it is not clear if the seal also contains lettering. (Fig. 75)



Fig. 75. UT/02, seal of Phurba Dorje, a commoner, apparently with conch motif

The conch, together with swastikas one of the commonest motifs in anepigraphic Tibetan seals (Bertsch 2005), is also present in the seal representing the community of Te that appears in UT/37 (Fig. 76), an agreement reached in 1893 by the members of the community to allow a lama to occupy an abandoned estate.



Fig. 76. UT/37, seal of Te from 1893

UT/05 (from 1876) concerns the resolution of a dispute over the ownership and use of a field, and bears five seals. The first (Fig. 77) is that of Lama Tshewang Bumpa, who is conceding lifelong usufruct of the field to his cousin, Ösal Dorje (the second seal, Fig. 78).



Fig. 77. UT/05, seal of Lama Tshewang Bumpa



Fig. 78. UT/05, seal of Ösal Dorje

There are three witnesses to the agreement of whom one is the scribe. They are represented by three seal impressions, partially superimposed, and the seal may possibly be the same in each case. (Fig. 79) All the impressions are elliptical and bear Devanāgarī script, possibly reading *śrī gagāta*.



Figs. 79a, b, c. UT/05, seals (possibly the same) representing three witnesses, of whom one is also the scribe

#### 4.4. Paper

All documents found in Tshognam Archives are written on single layer of the woven type of paper. This means that the traditional method typical of the Himalayan region was employed, using a textile sieve attached to a wooden frame. The distribution of fibres shows some variety, mostly related to the preparation of the papermaking pulp, which produces a range of qualities.

The majority of samples examined were composed of plants from the Thymelaeaceae family, but involving a variety of species. Paper plants belonging to the Thymelaeaceae family are well known by Tibetans in rural areas of the Himalayas, where they go by local names (Boesi 2005: 33–48). In Tibetan, the papermaking plants are generally named *shog gu me tog* ('paper flower'), *shog shing* ('paper tree'), and *shog ldum* ('paper plant') (Boesi 2014: 96).

In Nepali, the usual name for *Daphne* species (*D. bholua*, *D. cannabina*, and *D. involucrata*) is *lokta*, but in certain localities it may also be designated by the name *kagate* (Trier 1972: 50–59; Holmberg & March 1999: 47).

The species of *Edgeworthia* used for papermaking in the Himalayas is especially well known in Nepal. *E. gardneri* also grows in moist places in the forests of Tibetan cultural areas (E Xizang, NW Yunnan), Bhutan, India, North Myanmar, and Nepal at an elevation of 1000–2500(/3500) m.

*Stellera chamaejasme* thrives at high altitudes, and in some regions of Tibet it has been used as the main raw material for papermaking. *Stellera* is a small genus of fewer than 10 species found growing in comparatively dry conditions in areas such as Central Asia, and parts of China, Tibet, Bhutan, Mongolia, Nepal, and Russia.<sup>11</sup> It is widely

<sup>11</sup> Gansu, Hebei, Heilongjiang, Henan, Jilin, Liaoning, Nei Mongol, Ningxia, Qinghai, Shaanxi, Shanxi, Sichuan, Xinjiang, Xizang, Yunnan. See: <http://flora.huh.harvard.edu/china/mss/volume13/Thymelaeaceae.pdf> retrieved on July 1, 2015.

distributed along the Himalayan range where it is found on sunny, dry slopes and sandy places at altitudes of 2600 to 4500 m. The name of *Stellera* in Mustang is *Gumbu rejagpa* or *Sibri mentok*.

Regarding fibre components, there are three main types of papers in our sample.

Fifty-seven (57) documents include various amounts of *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. fibres as a component. Twenty-eight (28) papers are made of pure *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. fibres.<sup>12</sup> *Daphne* sp. has strong lignified fibres which give stability to paper. Additionally, a high content of starch and other naturally-occurring sizing components are released during pulping and produce an even surface suitable for writing.

The next type of paper found in twenty-seven (27) documents is composed of *Stellera* sp. fibres mixed with *Daphne* sp. (in only 5 samples was *Stellera* sp. dominant).<sup>13</sup> It is interesting that none of the paper samples was made of pure *Stellera* sp. fibres. *Stellera* fibres are soft and flabby with a wide lumen and narrow irregular fibre walls, which is why, when used alone, *Stellera* produces a soft and absorbent paper with properties resembling those of tissue paper; it is not stable enough for the large formats of archival documents since it can easily bend or break, especially if it is only single-layered. Even increasing the thickness of the *Stellera* paper by gluing it in layers was not enough to achieve the stability necessary for a large format, which is obvious in *Daphne/Edgeworthia* based papers. This is probably why *Daphne/Edgeworthia* alone, or with additions of *Stellera*, was preferred as a support for documents.

Besides the components described above there were two papers made of fibres from a type of grass which has not yet been identified.

### Conclusions

As described above, we applied a two-level approach to our material. First, we grouped our documents according to their function and the parties involved in order to interpret our results of material analyses within smaller collections. At the same time, we grouped all the Tshognam documents according to particular features (preliminary typology), and tested what was specific to the Upper and Lower

<sup>12</sup> These are: UT/02, UT/03, UT/04, UT/07, UT/08, UT/16, UT/17, UT/19, UT/21, UT/23, UT/24, UT/29, UT/31, UT/37, UT/39, UT/40, UT/41, UT/44, UT/45, UT/47, UT/unknown.

<sup>13</sup> These are: UT/01, UT/09, UT/10, UT/11, UT/13, UT/14, UT/15, UT/28, UT/36.

Tshognam documents.

When studying Tshognam documents within smaller groups, we noticed a connection between features such as format and size and the function of documents. The horizontal or vertical way of folding the documents seems to be rather secondary (arbitrary) and not determined by the type of document. However, most documents tend to be folded horizontally. The number of folds usually follows the size of document.

The documents examined here constitute a fertile arena for the study of Tibetan handwriting. This is thanks to a number of factors, the most important of which are, first, that the identity of the scribes of several of the documents is known and, secondly, that the same scribes display different hands. The following general observations could be profitably applied to other manuscript collections. First, the general appearance of a hand is not a reliable indicator of the scribe's identity; close attention must be paid to the construction of individual letters. While it is the case that certain letters are diagnostic of a particular scribe insofar as they retain idiographic features in different scripts and over the course of time, other letters are subject to variation. Most documents are written in either *'khyug* or *'khyug ma tshugs*, but it is important to note that there are numerous intermediate forms between the truly cursive *'khyug* and the more rigid *tshugs*, and a single document may contain several of these forms.

Various devices are used for the authentication of documents, and here we have given particular attention to the use of seals. Although there is a growing body of published research on the subject of Tibetan seals (see Bertsch 2005 for references), their use in borderland areas such as Mustang would reward closer attention. The brief examination of a selection of seals appearing in the Tshognam archives has identified certain areas that deserve further investigation, and we hope in the future to undertake a more extensive survey based on a larger sample from several archives. Such an enquiry would aim to shed light on features such as the shape of the seals, the choice of the language (Tibetan or Nepali) and script, the incidence and relevance of certain motifs, and the extent to which the content of the seal is implicated in the identity of the owner, or whether the motifs and text are, at least in certain cases, as impersonal as the butt of Schlagintweit's riding whip.

Despite observing some similarities in the case of paper type within our groups of documents, we have not been able to observe a clear pattern in the relationship between a particular form or type of paper and the function of the document. The type of paper used may well have been dependent on what was available, and which papermaking workshops were active at that time.



In spite of the fact that the selection of raw material and technology of papermaking does not show a great variety, it does enable us to understand the processes of making archival documents, transfer of technological knowledge, trade of materials and the social historical background concerned (from the textual content of documents). The key feature is the raw material used for making paper. From this perspective there are four types of paper to be distinguished within our sample. The woven sieve print is recorded in all Tshognam documents, suggesting that during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries the same technique was used locally in the Tshognam area and also in other places from which this paper could have been obtained. This technology involves a floating papermaking mould with a textile sieve attached to the wooden frame, the method that is still used in Western Nepal and Tibet.

Thus we have documents written on paper made from: 1) pure *Daphne* and *Edgeworthia* sp. fibres; 2) *Daphne* and *Edgeworthia* sp. mixed with *Stellera* sp. fibres; 3) paper based on previous compositions with an addition of cotton or hemp recycled fibres; and 4) documents on paper made of a variety of grass.

The question that arises from this list of raw materials concerns the provenance of particular types of paper: what type of paper was locally produced in Tshognam, and what kinds were traded from longer distances. We should take into consideration the fact that Tshognam is located in the heart of the Kali Gandaki valley corridor, which was a highway for travellers, traders and monks, and an obvious route for the dissemination of new ideas and technologies between Central Asia and India. Thus we have two “natural” directions from which paper could be traded—North and South.

Furthermore, Tshognam and neighbouring villages are all located above 3000 m above sea level, which represents the upper range of *Daphne* sp. plants. This suggests that paper made of *Daphne* and *Edgeworthia* spp. used for the largest group of manuscripts was probably brought to Tshognam from more low-lying valleys (the Beni/Baglung area).

Research carried out on the living tradition of papermaking in Nepal indicates that this area is currently the location of many small paper manufactories, and the region is known for paper production. *Daphne* and *Edgeworthia* plants are still the main material for this purpose in the region. Information collected from craftsmen interviewed suggests that these manufactories do not usually exist for more than a couple of years: unlike European paper mills these workshops do not have a long continuous history. However, it was found that whenever one factory closed, another soon started to operate in the vicinity. The production seems to be conditioned by local

availability of plants, tools, and skills. The fact that the region is known for the production of good quality paper may also have contributed to the ease with which new workshops can be established and the sale of products assured. Tools, facilities and skilled papermakers were present in this particular area.

The *Stellera* sp. plants present in a group of samples as an addition possibly originated in areas neighbouring Tshognam, or else were imported from the Tibetan plateau, where the plant was often used. However, it is difficult to identify the location of papermaking workshops. From the interview with Sonam Dondup we learned that one located was in Tiri, on the border between Upper and Lower Mustang. He remembered that raw material was collected locally there from above the forest (clearly from trees, not plant roots). Nyima Dandrul also reported that his grandfather produced paper in Tshognam. He learned his skills in Drakar Taso, near Kyirong in Tibet, and may have used *Stellera* roots for making his paper. However, our sample of paper produced by Nyima's grandfather is made of grass, not *Stellera*. In fact none of the interviewed papermakers mentioned the use of grass as an ingredient in Mustang. However, grass was mentioned by Jampa Tsundru who is a papermaker from Lhasa (Tsundru 2010).

This suggests that some of the samples from the material examined could have been produced in Tibet. However, we cannot yet identify the location more precisely.

Interestingly, besides Nyima Dandrul's recollections about his grandfather, nobody mentioned *Stellera* as a material used for papermaking in Nepal. However, it does seem to be a component commonly used in Central and Western Tibet. Taking into account a natural occurrence of *Stellera*, it might also have been used in Mustang, and especially in and around the Muktinath Valley. However, there is no evidence of this at the present. It seems that it may have been easier to trade paper made of *Stellera* from Tibet or *Daphne* paper from the lowland valleys (Beni/Baglung area) than to produce it locally in Upper Mustang.

Another question emerging from the samples examined is the usage of recycled materials, which were found in a few cases such as UT/05, UT/13, UT/25, UT/33, UT/34, LT/09, LT/11 and LT/12. However, the content and provenance of the documents mentioned above are varied: they do not form a coherent group in terms of subject-matter, and were issued in different communities of Mustang. More samples should be checked, but on the basis of the existing evidence, the use of recycled fibres cannot be taken as a diagnostic feature regarding the origin or category of documents.

On the basis of studies conducted on the paper used in the Tshog-

nam documents, as well as on interviews with papermakers, our results suggest that paper was often traded along the Kali Gandaki corridor in both directions. Thus we have numerous documents made of *Daphne* and/or *Edgeworthia* produced in the middle hills to the south of Mustang, as well as from *Stellera* manufactured locally or else imported from the north.

The preliminary typology of paper that has been developed on the basis of the Tshognam documents should be supported with analysis of documents from other archives in Mustang. However, the analysis of the documents presented here does at least help with the identification of local material resources, as well as with the likely places of origin of the paper used.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This article is a product of the project “The Mustang Archives: Analysis of Handwritten Documents via the Ethnographic Study of Papermaking Traditions in Nepal” (2015–2017) funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG no. HE 7116/2-1), and directed by Agnieszka Helman-Ważny at the University of Hamburg. This task was combined with research carried out within the ANR/DFG programme “The Social History of Tibetan Societies 17th to 20th centuries” (SHTS) directed by Charles Ramble and Peter Schwieger, from 2012 to 2016, and now continuing in the framework of a follow-on project, “Social Status in Tibetan Societies” (TIBSTAT, 2016–2020).

The authors would like to thank and acknowledge the work and help of our field assistants Nyima Drandul and Kemi Gurung, and also the support of the Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures (CSMC) at the University of Hamburg. Ramhari Timalsina of the University of Heidelberg provided invaluable help in identifying the Devanāgarī inscriptions of the seals described above. We would also like to thank Dorota Dominiak of Eikon Studio in Poland for her technical support and for preparing the layout of this article. Copyrights for all images used in this work belong to the authors.

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| HMA<br>Collection/<br>Acc.<br>No. | Archive<br>Location/<br>village | Date<br>base<br>don<br>text | Category of<br>text<br>Title  | Format and<br>layout                         |                           | Writing                 |                       | Authentic<br>ation<br>marks | Paper   |   |                |       |             |      |               |   |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|--|---------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|---|---|----------------|-------|-------------|------|---------------|---|
|                                   |                                 |                             |   | Size (h<br>x w)<br>cm<br>No of<br>folds      | No<br>of<br>text<br>lines | Type<br>of<br>script    | Scriba<br>hands       |                             | Seals<br>,<br>Cross<br>es,<br>and<br>finge<br>rprints | Fibre composition                             |                |       | Sieve print |      | Thick<br>ness | Fibre<br>distrib<br>ution                     |
|                                   |                                 |                             |   |  |                           |                         |                       |                             |   | Daphne/<br>Edgewor<br>thia/<br>Wikstro<br>mia | Stelle<br>rasp | Other | Woven       | Laid |               |   |
| UT/0<br>1                         | Upper<br>Tsho<br>gnam           | 186<br>6                    | Draft of a<br>petition<br>prepared by<br>Lama<br>Rangrol in an<br>inheritance<br>dispute with<br>his brother<br>Rigden. | Single<br>sheet<br>31.5 ×<br>38<br>9 folds   | 15                        | kmt                     |                       | 2<br>seals                  | ++  |   | ++             |       | +           |      | 1<br>Thick    | Uneven<br>with<br>visible<br>fibre<br>bundles |
| UT/0<br>2                         | Upper<br>Tsho<br>gnam           | 186<br>9                    | Contract for<br>sale of a field.  | Single<br>sheet<br>13 ×<br>34.5<br>5 folds   | 6                         | kmt/<br>tshugs<br>thung | Jamyang<br>Wang<br>dü | 1 seal<br>2<br>cross<br>es  | +++   | +   |                | +     |             | +    | 1             | Even  |
| UT/0<br>3                         | Upper<br>Tsho<br>gnam           | 187<br>3                    | Contract for<br>sale of a field.  | Single<br>sheet<br>15.5 ×<br>29.5<br>6 folds | 6                         | kmt                     |                       | 1<br>cross                  | +++   | +   |                | +     |             | +    | 1             | Even  |
| UT/0<br>4                         | Upper<br>Tsho<br>gnam           | 187<br>5                    | Contract for<br>sale of four<br>fields.   | Single<br>sheet<br>14.5 ×<br>21              | 10                        | kmt                     |                       | 3<br>cross<br>es            | +++   | +   |                | +     |             | +    | 1             | Even  |

|           |                          |          |  |   |    |                 |                            |   |     |     |  |   |   |  |
|-----------|--------------------------|----------|--|---|----|-----------------|----------------------------|---|-----|-----|--|---|---|--|
| UT/0<br>5 | Upe<br>r<br>Tsho<br>gnam | 187<br>6 | Resolution of<br>dispute over<br>ownership and<br>use of a field.                                      | 7 folds<br>Single<br>sheet<br>28.7 ×<br>31<br>9 folds | 10 | 'khyu<br>g      | Lama<br>Thuto<br>b         | 6<br>seals<br>2<br>cross<br>es (in<br>the<br>seals) | ++  | ?   | +<br>Singula<br>r<br>recycle<br>d fibres | + | 1 | Even   |
| UT/0<br>6 | Upe<br>r<br>Tsho<br>gnam | 187<br>7 | Contract for<br>sale of a field.   | Single<br>sheet<br>10.5 ×<br>29.5<br>4 folds          | 6  | kmt             |                            | 2<br>cross<br>es                                    | +++ |     | +<br>epiderm<br>al cells                 | + | 1 | Even<br>with<br>slight<br>irregu<br>laritie<br>s |
| UT/0<br>7 | Upe<br>r<br>Tsho<br>gnam | 187<br>7 | Contract for<br>sale of a field.   | Single<br>sheet<br>11.5 ×<br>33<br>12<br>folds        | 7  | tshugs<br>thung | Lama<br>of<br>Tshog<br>nam | 1 or<br>2<br>cross<br>es                            | +++ | +   |  | + | 1 | Even   |
| UT/0<br>8 | Upe<br>r<br>Tsho<br>gnam | 187<br>9 | Contract for<br>sale of a field.   | Single<br>sheet<br>9.5 ×<br>26.3<br>4 folds           | 5  | kmt             |                            | 1 seal  | +++ | +?  |  | + | 1 | Even   |
| UT/0<br>9 | Upe<br>r<br>Tsho<br>gnam | 188<br>0 | Contract for<br>sale of a field.   | Single<br>sheet<br>15.7 ×<br>21<br>6 folds            | 5  | kmt             |                            | 1<br>cross  | +   | +++ |  | + | 1 | Unev<br>en                                       |
| UT/1<br>0 | Upe<br>r<br>Tsho<br>gnam | 188<br>1 | Confirmation<br>by a defaulting<br>debtor that he<br>will forfeit a<br>field pledged<br>as security on | Single<br>sheet<br>22 ×<br>31.5<br>8 folds            | 11 | kmt             | Lama<br>Ösal<br>Dorje      | 3<br>cross<br>es                                    | +   | +++ |  | + | 1 | Even<br>with<br>some<br>irregu<br>laritie<br>s   |

|           |                           |          |   |  |  |  |  |                             |                              |     |   |   |  |
|-----------|---------------------------|----------|---|--|--|--|--|-----------------------------|------------------------------|-----|---|---|--|
| UT/1<br>1 | Uppe<br>r<br>Tsho<br>gnam | 188<br>1 | an loan.<br>Copy of<br>UT/10.   | Single<br>sheet<br>26 ×<br>31<br>8 folds         | 14   | kmt  | Lama<br>Ösal<br>Dorje                                      | 3<br>cross<br>es            | ++                           | ++  | + | 1 | Even<br>with<br>some<br>irregu<br>laritie<br>s |
| UT/1<br>2 | Uppe<br>r<br>Tsho<br>gnam | 188<br>2 | Contract for<br>sale of a field<br>to Lama Ösal<br>Dorje.   | Single<br>sheet                                  | 7  | 'khyu<br>g   |  | 2<br>cross<br>es            |                              |     |   |   |  |
| UT/1<br>3 | Uppe<br>r<br>Tsho<br>gnam | 188<br>6 | Public<br>declaration by<br>Baragaon of<br>acceptance of<br>apology from<br>fraudulent<br>leaders.      | Single<br>sheet<br>29.8 ×<br>31.8<br>10<br>folds | 21   | kmt  |  | 1 seal<br>18<br>cross<br>es | ++<br>Fibrillate<br>d fibres | +   | + | 1 | Even   |
| UT/1<br>4 | Uppe<br>r<br>Tsho<br>gnam | 188<br>8 | List of expenses<br>incurred by<br>Ösal Dorje in<br>legal dispute<br>over taxes to<br>the<br>community. | Single<br>sheet<br>66.5 ×<br>19.5<br>27<br>folds | 49<br>(3<br>text<br>lines<br>differ<br>in<br>red<br>ink<br>) | tshugs<br>thung<br>(same<br>hand,<br>2<br>differ<br>ent<br>styli?) |  | -                           | ++                           | ++  | + | 1 | Unev<br>en                                     |
| UT/1<br>5 | Uppe<br>r<br>Tsho<br>gnam | 188<br>8 | Agreement on<br>action to be<br>taken over<br>recurring theft<br>of crops from<br>a field.              | Single<br>sheet<br>58 ×<br>19.5<br>23<br>folds   | 28   | 'khyu<br>g   | Ancho<br>rite<br>Sangy<br>e<br>Tshec<br>u of<br>Puran<br>g | 1 seal<br>2 sth<br>???      | +                            | +++ | + | 1 | Even<br>with<br>some<br>irregu<br>laritie<br>s |

|                          |                          |          |  |  |    |                        |  |                                |      |     |   |    |   |   |          |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------|--|--|----|------------------------|--|--------------------------------|------|-----|---|----|---|---|----------|--|
| UT/1<br>6                | Upe<br>r<br>Tsho<br>gnam | 188<br>9 | Contract for<br>loan of grain.   | Single<br>sheet<br>13.2 ×<br>30<br>4 folds   | 7  | kmt                    |  |                                |      | +++ | + |    | + | 1 |          | Unev<br>en                                     |
| UT/1<br>7                | Upe<br>r<br>Tsho<br>gnam | 189<br>0 | Transfer of<br>responsibility<br>for a house to<br>Ósal Dorje<br>from his<br>mother. | Single<br>sheet<br>25.7 ×<br>32.5<br>8 folds | 11 | tshugs<br>thung        | Ópo<br>Tshult<br>rim of<br>Te                          | -                              | ++++ |     | + |    |   | 1 |          | Unev<br>en                                     |
| UT/1<br>9                | Upe<br>r<br>Tsho<br>gnam | 189<br>0 | Receipt for<br>loan of<br>foodstuffs.  | Single<br>sheet<br>11.5 ×<br>31.5<br>4 folds | 5  | missi<br>ng -<br>check | Lama<br>Ósal<br>Dorje<br>(signe<br>d 'I<br>myself<br>) | 1<br>cross                     | ++++ |     | + |    |   | 1 |          | Unev<br>en                                     |
| UT/2<br>1                | Upe<br>r<br>Tsho<br>gnam | 189<br>8 | Contract for<br>sale of a field.   | Single<br>sheet<br>15.8 ×<br>34.5<br>6 folds | 8  | tshugs<br>thung        | Lama<br>Ósal<br>Dorje<br>(signe<br>d 'I<br>myself<br>) | 2<br>seals<br>5<br>cross<br>es | ++++ |     | + |    |   | 1 |          | Even<br>with<br>some<br>irregu<br>laritie<br>s |
| UT/2<br>2<br>missi<br>ng | Upe<br>r<br>Tsho<br>gnam | 190<br>4 | Contract for<br>loan of cash.  | Single<br>sheet                              | 11 | tshugs<br>thung        | Sonam<br>Wang<br>dü                                    | 3<br>finge<br>rprint<br>s      |      |     |   |    |   |   |          |  |
| UT/2<br>3                | Upe<br>r<br>Tsho<br>gnam | 190<br>6 | Contract for<br>loan of cash.  | Single<br>sheet<br>33 ×<br>27<br>12<br>folds | 13 | kmt                    |  | 10<br>cross<br>es              | ++++ |     | + | +? |   | 1 | Thi<br>n | Unev<br>en                                     |
| UT/2                     | Upe                      | 190      | Contract for   | Single                                       | 7  | kmt                    |  | -                              | ++++ |     | + |    |   | 1 |          | Unev   |



|                  |                          |          |  |  |    |                    |  |   |      |  |    |  |   |   |   |                 |  |    |
|------------------|--------------------------|----------|--|--|----|--------------------|--|---|------|--|----|--|---|---|---|-----------------|--|----|
| 4                | r<br>Tsho<br>gnam        | 6?       | loan of grain.   | sheet<br>63.5 ×<br>58<br>15<br>folds             |    |                    |  |   |      |  |    |  |   |   |   |                 |  | en |
| UT/2<br>5        | Upe<br>r<br>Tsho<br>gnam | 190<br>7 | Legal petition<br>against Ósal<br>Dorje <i>et al.</i> for<br>various<br>charges.                             | Single<br>sheet<br>30 ×<br>39.5<br>10<br>folds   | 25 | kmt                |  | - | ++++ |  |    |  | Singula<br>r fibres<br>stained<br>yellow/<br>orange | + | 1 |                 | Unev<br>en                                     |    |
| UT<br>/26–<br>27 | Upe<br>r<br>Tsho<br>gnam | 190<br>7 | Formal<br>response by<br>Ósal Dorje <i>et<br/>al.</i> to petition<br>in UT/25.                               | Single<br>sheet<br>41.5 ×<br>36.5<br>12<br>folds | 24 | kmt                |  | - | ++++ |  |    |  |   | + | 1 | Thi<br>cke<br>r | Unev<br>en                                     |    |
| UT/2<br>8        | Upe<br>r<br>Tsho<br>gnam | 190<br>7 | Contract for<br>sale of a field.   | Single<br>sheet<br>16.5 ×<br>38<br>6 folds       | 5  | 'khyu<br>g/<br>kmt |  |   | ++   |  | ++ |  |   | + | 1 |                 | Unev<br>en ?                                   |    |
| UT/2<br>9        | Upe<br>r<br>Tsho<br>gnam | 190<br>9 | Confirmation<br>of previous<br>sale of a field<br>and assurance<br>of lifelong<br>maintenance<br>for vendor. | Single<br>sheet<br>17.5 ×<br>38<br>6 folds       | 6  | kmt                |  |   | ++++ |  |    |  |   | + | 1 |                 | Even<br>with<br>some<br>irregu<br>laritie<br>s |    |
| UT/3<br>0        | Upe<br>r<br>Tsho<br>gnam | 191<br>0 | Settlement of<br>a dispute<br>between<br>Tenpai<br>Gyaltzen and a  | Single<br>sheet<br>16 ×<br>22.5<br>8 folds       | 9  | kmt                |  |   | +++? |  |    |  | +++?  | + | 1 |                 | Even   |    |

|  |                          |                 |  |  |    |            |  |                       |                          |     |                        |   |                     |         |   |  |   |  |  |
|--|--------------------------|-----------------|--|--|----|------------|--|-----------------------|--------------------------|-----|------------------------|---|---------------------|---------|---|--|---|--|--|
| UT/3<br>1  | Upe<br>r<br>Tsho<br>gnam | 191<br>2?       | blacksmith.<br>Legal petition<br>in a dispute<br>over property.                                  | Single<br>sheet<br>38 ×<br>38<br>13<br>folds     | 24 | kmt        |  | -                     | ++++<br>Fibrillati<br>on |     |                        |   |                     |         | + |  | 1 | me<br>diu<br>m                                 | Unev<br>en                                     |
| UT/3<br>2  | Upe<br>r<br>Tsho<br>gnam | 191<br>2        | Draft of<br>UT/31  | Single<br>sheet<br>38.6 ×<br>41<br>16<br>folds   | 23 | kmt        |  | -                     | +++                      | +   | Singu<br>lar<br>fibres |   |                     |         | + |  | 1 | Even   | Even   |
| UT/3<br>3  | Upe<br>r<br>Tsho<br>gnam | ca.<br>191<br>2 | Petition in a<br>property<br>dispute.  | Single<br>sheet<br>44.5 ×<br>28.6<br>16<br>folds | 35 | kmt        |  | -                     | ++<br>Fibrillati<br>on   | +   |                        | + | Recycle<br>d fibres |         | + |  | 1 | Even<br>with<br>some<br>irregu<br>laritie<br>s | Even<br>with<br>some<br>irregu<br>laritie<br>s |
| UT/3<br>4  | Upe<br>r<br>Tsho<br>gnam | 191<br>4        | Contract for<br>sale of a field.   | Single<br>sheet<br>13.5 ×<br>34.7<br>10<br>folds | 4  | 'khyu<br>g |  | 1<br>cross            | ++                       | +   |                        | + | +                   | cotton? |   |  | 1 | Even<br>with<br>some<br>irregu<br>laritie<br>s | Even<br>with<br>some<br>irregu<br>laritie<br>s |
| UT/3<br>5<br>(foun<br>ded in<br>Lowe<br>r<br>Tshog<br>nam) | Upe<br>r<br>Tsho<br>gnam | 191<br>5        | Agreement by<br>nuns to take<br>collective<br>responsibility<br>for theft from<br>their convent. | Single<br>sheet<br>19 ×<br>33                    | 8  | kmt        |  |                       | ++++                     |     |                        |   |                     |         | + |  | 1 | 0.0<br>7-<br>0.1<br>2                          |  |
| UT/3<br>6  | Upe<br>r<br>Tsho         | 191<br>6        | Agreement by<br>community of<br>Te to affiliate  | Single<br>sheet<br>31 ×                          | 12 | 'khyu<br>g |  | 1 seal<br>13<br>cross | +                        | +++ |                        |   |                     |         | + |  | 1 |  |  |

|           |                                   |                  |  |   |    |                    |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |      |  |  |   |  |  |  |  |  |
|-----------|-----------------------------------|------------------|--|---|----|--------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|------|--|--|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| UT/3<br>7 | gnam<br>Uppe<br>r<br>Tsho<br>gnam | 191<br>7         | their nuns to<br>Tshognam.<br>Agreement<br>by community<br>of Te to terms<br>of a lama's<br>tenancy of an<br>estate. | 32<br>8 folds<br>Single<br>sheet<br>21.5 ×<br>28.3<br>8 folds | 12 | 'khyu<br>g/<br>kmt |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |      |  |  | 1 |  |  |  |  |  |
| UT/3<br>9 | Uppe<br>r<br>Tsho<br>gnam         | ca.<br>192<br>0s | Letter to the<br>lama of Te for<br>advice on<br>smallpox.  | Single<br>sheet<br>20.5 ×<br>19.5<br>4 folds                  | 11 | kmt                |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | ++++ |  |  |   |  |  |  |  |  |
| UT/4<br>0 | Uppe<br>r<br>Tsho<br>gnam         | non<br>e         | List of<br>religious<br>teachings<br>received by a<br>lama.  | Single<br>sheet<br>38.5 ×<br>32.5<br>11<br>folds              | 35 | kmt                |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | ++++ |  |  |   |  |  |  |  |  |
| UT/4<br>1 | Uppe<br>r<br>Tsho<br>gnam         |                  | Nepali<br>document   | Single<br>sheet<br>22.5 ×<br>26.7<br>9 folds                  | 9  |                    |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | ++++ |  |  |   |  |  |  |  |  |
| UT/4<br>2 | Uppe<br>r<br>Tsho<br>gnam         | non<br>e         | Notes for<br>ritual<br>performance.  | Single<br>sheet<br>25 ×<br>40.8<br>7 folds                    | 25 |                    |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | ++   |  |  |   |  |  |  |  |  |
| UT/4<br>3 | Uppe<br>r<br>Tsho<br>gnam         | illeg<br>ible    | Illegible  | Single<br>sheet<br>23 ×<br>28.5<br>7 folds                    | 11 |                    |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | ++   |  |  |   |  |  |  |  |  |
| UT/4<br>4 | Uppe<br>r                         | 188<br>4         | Specification<br>land taxes to   | Single<br>sheet   | 9  |                    |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | ++++ |  |  |   |  |  |  |  |  |

|                    |                           |          |  |  |                        |     |  |  |        |      |      |  |   |  |  |  |  |  |   |  |                       |      |
|--------------------|---------------------------|----------|--|--|------------------------|-----|--|--|--------|------|------|--|---|--|--|--|--|--|---|--|-----------------------|------|
|                    |                           |          |  |  |                        |     |  |  |        |      |      |  |   |  |  |  |  |  |   |  |                       |      |
| UT/4<br>5          | Tsho<br>gnam              | 187<br>1 | be paid by a<br>priestly house<br>in Tshognam.   | 18.5 ×<br>23<br>7 folds<br>Single<br>sheet<br>13.5 ×<br>31.5<br>4 folds        | 7                      |     |  |  | 1 seal | ++++ |      |  |   |  |  |  |  |  | 1 |  |                       |      |
| UT/4<br>6          | Uppe<br>r<br>Tsho<br>gnam | non<br>e | Notes for<br>ritual<br>performance.              | Book<br>sewn<br>at left<br>side<br>20<br>pages<br>9.5 ×<br>44                  | 6-8<br>per<br>pa<br>ge |     |  |  | -      |      | ++++ |  | ++++<br>epiderm<br>al cells,<br>vessels,<br>parench<br>yma,<br>fibres |  |  |  |  |  | 1 |  |                       |      |
| UT/4<br>7          | Uppe<br>r<br>Tsho<br>gnam |          | Text of songs<br>of the Sixth<br>Dalai Lama      | Book<br>sewn<br>at the<br>top<br>8.5 ×<br>19<br>14 bi-<br>folios<br>16 ×<br>19 | 5-6<br>per<br>pa<br>ge |     |  |  | -      | ++++ |      |  |   |  |  |  |  |  | 1 |  |                       |      |
| UT/<br>unkno<br>wn | Uppe<br>r<br>Tsho<br>gnam |          |  | Single<br>sheet<br>27.5 ×<br>47.5<br>10<br>folds                               | 28                     |     |  |  | -      | ++++ |      |  |   |  |  |  |  |  | 1 |  |                       |      |
| LT/01              | Low<br>er<br>Tsho<br>gnam | 181<br>6 | Copy of<br>covenant<br>among the five<br>Shöyul. | Single<br>sheet<br>43.5 ×<br>41.5  | 15                     | kmt |  |  | -      | ++++ |      |  |   |  |  |  |  |  | 1 |  | 0.0<br>9-<br>0.1<br>6 | Even |

|               |                 |                       |   |                                      |    |               |                               |                    |                               |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |   |                       |                                     |
|---------------|-----------------|-----------------------|---|--------------------------------------|----|---------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|---|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| LT/02         | Lower Tsho gnam | 183<br>2              | Covenant among the five Shöyul.   | 10 folds<br>Single sheet<br>41 × 37  | 23 | 2 hands, kmt  |                               |                    |                               |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | 1 | 0.1<br>2–<br>0.2<br>5 | Even (fibre bundles)                |
| LT/04         | Lower Tsho gnam | 186<br>0              | Resolution of an inheritance dispute between two lama brothers.           | Single sheet<br>26 × 34.5<br>8 folds | 12 |               | Kusho g<br>Trash              | 2 seals<br>crosses | ++++<br>many associated cells |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | 1 | 0.1<br>–<br>0.2<br>3  | Uneven                              |
| LT/05         | Lower Tsho gnam | 187<br>1              | Settlement of dispute over a debt.  | Single sheet<br>19.5 × 24.5          | 10 | kmt           |                               | 2 crosses          | ++++                          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | 1 | 0.1<br>1–<br>0.2<br>5 | Even with rare fibre bundles        |
| LT/06 missing | Lower Tsho gnam | 187<br>1              | Confirmation of ownership of a house.                                     | Single sheet                         | 7  | <i>khyu</i> g |                               | 1 seal             |                               |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |   |                       |                                     |
| LT/07         | Lower Tsho gnam | 187<br>5              | Will of a nun regarding inheritance of movable property from two estates. | Single sheet<br>20 × 29.5            | 14 |               |                               | -                  | ++++                          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | 1 | 0.1<br>3–<br>0.1<br>7 | Uneven                              |
| LT/08         | Lower Tsho gnam | 187<br>6,<br>186<br>6 | Copy (from 1876) of two settlements in dispute over field and house.      | Single sheet<br>46 × 33.5            | 21 | kmt           | Nyilda Gyalpo and Thutob Lama | -                  | ++                            |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | 1 | 0.0<br>6–<br>0.0<br>9 | Even with some fibre bundles spread |



|               |                |      |   |                             |    |        |                       |                   |      |     |  |    |  |                    |  |   |           |        |
|---------------|----------------|------|---|-----------------------------|----|--------|-----------------------|-------------------|------|-----|--|----|--|--------------------|--|---|-----------|--------|
| LT/09         | Lower Tshognam | 1887 | List of endowments and interest for an annual ritual.   | Booklet (8 leaves) 6.5 x 17 | 5  | kmt    |                       |                   | -    | +   |  | ++ |  | + Cotton Hemp      |  | 1 | 0.1-0.13  | Uneven |
| LT/10         | Lower Tshognam | 1892 | Letter from King of Lo two two lamas about trade tariffs.                                     | Single sheet 30 x 53        | 8  | 'khyug |                       | 1 seal in red ink | ++   | ++  |  | ++ |  |                    |  | 1 | 0.05-0.11 | Uneven |
| LT/11         | Lower Tshognam | 1897 | Contract for loan of comestibles.   | Single sheet 17 x 44        | 10 |        | Drubpa Tshering Dorje | -                 | +++  | ++? |  |    |  | + Synthetic fibers |  | 1 | 0.05-0.13 | Uneven |
| LT/12         | Lower Tshognam | 1897 | Supplement to LT/11   | Single sheet 30.5 x 36.5    | 11 |        |                       | -                 | ++   | +   |  |    |  | + Cotton Hemp      |  | 1 | 0.14-0.25 | Uneven |
| LT/15         | Lower Tshognam | 1898 | Description of a monastery in Tibet.  | Single sheet 31 x 34        | 23 | 'khyug |                       | -                 | +    | +++ |  |    |  |                    |  | 1 | 0.09-0.11 | Uneven |
| LT/16 missing | Lower Tshognam | 1904 | Agreement between a Tshognam lama and nomads for resumption of butter payments by the latter. | Single sheet                | 6  | 'khyug |                       |                   |      |     |  |    |  |                    |  |   |           |        |
| LT/17         | Lower          | 1910 | Confirmations of rights and   | Single sheet                | 13 | 'khyug | Subba Bhaga           | 2 seals           | ++++ |     |  |    |  |                    |  | 1 | 0.06-     | Uneven |

|               |                |      |   |                                   |    |        |                             |                              |      |   |   |  |  |                       |        |
|---------------|----------------|------|---|-----------------------------------|----|--------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|------|---|---|--|--|-----------------------|--------|
| LT/18         | Lower Tshognam | 1910 | privileges of the lamas of Tshognam   | 29 × 49                           | 7  | ʼkhyug | Lama Ogyan Rangdol Tshognam | 5 finge rprints              | +++  | + |   |  |  | 0.2                   | Uneven |
| LT/19 missing | Lower Tshognam | 1910 | Formal response by Lama Ogyan Rangdol to legal claim of property by his cousin. | Single sheet                      | 13 | ʼkhyug |                             |                              |      |   |   |  |  |                       |        |
| LT/20         | Lower Tshognam | 1917 | Contract for loan of cash.  | Single sheet 19.5 × 30<br>8 folds | 12 |        | Gagyal                      | Finger prints; cross es, etc | ++++ |   |   |  |  | 0.1<br>1-<br>0.1<br>7 | Uneven |
| LT/21         | Lower Tshognam | 1915 | Agreement to provide lifelong maintenance to a divorced woman.                  | Single sheet 27.5 × 34.5          | 11 |        | Bahadur of Marpha           | -                            | +++  |   | + |  |  | 0.0<br>3-<br>0.0<br>6 | Even   |
| LT/22 missing | Lower Tshognam | 1937 | List of gifts presented at a lama's retirement ceremony.                        | Single sheet                      | 21 |        |                             |                              |      |   |   |  |  |                       |        |
| LT/23         | Low            | non  | Settlement of   | Single                            | 9  |        |                             | 1 seal                       | ++++ |   |   |  |  | 0.1                   | Uneven |

