

འཇམ་ཐང་།

Dzamthang

Chinese: Rangtang Xian

壤塘县



roll/neg: 87:26

subject: wide angle view of town and environs

location: Dzamthang Dzong འཛམ་ཐང་རྫོང་། in Ngawa ཇོ་མོ་གླང་། Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture
[Ch: Rangtang Xian 壤塘县, Aba 阿坝 T&QAP, Sichuan Prov.]

approx. date: winter/spring 1996

comment: Dzamthang is one of the most remote corners of Ngawa prefecture. It is 600km from Chengdu, a long two days' journey, and Ngawa TAP's most sparsely populated county (officially 30,000 in 1994; 84% Tibetan). Almost nothing about the town suggests Tibet; all is new, Chinese construction. Tibetans may hold only a slight majority in town but dominate everything except forestry in the countryside. Dzamthang's neighbors include Serthar, Draggo, Dawu, Chuchen, Pema, Ngawa and Barkham Counties.
(Viewed from the north/northeast.)

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d. **Dzamthang Dzong [Ch: Rangtang Xian]**

i. **Brief description and impressions**

Dzamthang is a rather mysterious county, locked between the eastern edge of Kham, the heartland Ngawa counties, and the southern tip of Golog. Passing from Barkham through the northern corner of Chuchen and into Dzamthang is to make the transition from Kham to Amdo. In the past, Dzamthang lay on an important Amdo-Kham trade and communications route between Pema in the Golog territories and Draggo and Kartse in Kham, along which many pilgrims, religious teachers, traders and caravaneers travelled over the centuries. A rugged, richly forested mountain region carved by the deep upper Dadu watershed, Dzamthang was remote and alien to the Chinese when they invaded Kham and Amdo in 1950. It was not made a county until 1958, a measure of the Chinese occupiers' difficulty in deciding how to deal with such an unknown quantity.

The county of Dzamthang འཛོམས་ཐང་རྫོང་། (Ch. Rangtang Xian 壤塘县) covers an area of 6,606 square kilometers, most of it lying at an elevation well over 3,500 meters. The total county population is the lowest in Ngawa T&QAP. Population density is 4.8 persons/square kilometer, the prefecture's second lowest after Kakhog. Everything about it seems Tibetan, except for the county seat. Here the Chinese have built a small, unprepossessing town, which they call Rangkezhen 壤柯镇. It lies at an elevation of 3,320 meters in a beautiful valley of cultivated river flats and hills on a sharp loop in the Duke River (Ch. Dukehe 杜柯河), the surrounding mountains forested with dark pines [see photo 87:26, p. 1132]. The compact town area consists of a main east-west street, with no major side streets but short alleys leading to compounds. When the Chinese first arrived they built on the south side of the main street closer to the river, where a few remnant grey revolutionary buildings with their gabled roofs and verandahs still stand in ramshackle condition.

After 1960, when the seat of Dzamthang County was moved to this site, the County Government and Forestry compounds were added in similar but grander style, and the town's nucleus moved to the higher strip along the north edge of town. Today most of the town belongs entirely to the 1980's, but to the decade's earlier, still grey and functional period [see photo 87:24, p. 1146]. No flashy post-1992 construction has yet appeared, surprising considering the substantial amount of money flowing out of the county in the form of lumber. Nothing in or around the town suggests that it is the site of a former Tibetan settlement, except perhaps a minor village. No

attempt has been made at adding “Tibetan characteristics” to the Chinese-built town. Even the multiple residential blocks that compose much of the town could have been implanted straight from inland China. Only on the outskirts of town do some wooden farmhouses, and a small lhakhang at the end of the main street, hint that this is a Tibetan place.

Dzamthang’s county town lies at the terminus of a motorable road, a branch route from the highway running from Barkham through the southern tip of Serthar and out to Draggo. From Chengdu the trip takes a long two or three days and 600 kilometers, after Barkham following a beautiful river gorge all the way to Dzamthang. Fine traditional Tibetan houses dot the landscape, and pine forests often run down to the river’s edge. The main road is principally a logging route. Heavily-laden lumber trucks heading towards Chengdu are virtually the only traffic [see photo 89:11a, p. 1156]. The river, too, has been turned over to lumber exploitation, jammed in many places with great piles of stranded logs [see photo 89:6a, p. 1158].

For Chinese immigrants, Dzamthang offers opportunities only in the logging industry or minor commercial activity in the county’s townships and county seat. Its remoteness and inaccessibility might be expected to deter them. Yet public buses to and from Ngawa Prefecture destinations, including Dzamthang, are full of Chinese, not Tibetan passengers. As individual workers join the logging industry as post-1992 reform and opening up policies allow, the unofficial Chinese population in Dzamthang will rise, and the county’s virgin forests be under intensified pressure. At present the atmosphere in the county town is relaxed, uneventful, lacking in observable ethnic tension. But Dzamthang is tightly closed to foreigners, and political unrest occurs frequently in Dzamthang’s neighbor, Ngawa. As contemporary Chinese-style development reaches even into this remote corner of Ngawa Prefecture, the issues of control, exploitation and assimilation will deepen.

ii. **Historical background**

Dzamthang has been a Tibetan region since the Tibetan Empire period, before which it was inhabited by Qiang and Tanguts. While it has come under various Tibetan political and religious influences over the centuries, Chinese control has been non-existent here until the mid-1950's. The Chinese have since exploited the area for its rich lumber resources and administered it as a remote colonial territory. Next to Kakhog, it was the last county to be formally established in Ngawa T&QAP after the Communist occupation.

iii. **Current demography**

Dzamthang's total county population is somewhere around 30,000, but the implausibility of population statistics from Sichuan Province makes a reliable figure hard to state. In the 1990 Census the population was given as 30,072¹, then 30,000 again in 1994². A static population for the county cannot be accepted in view of increased Chinese immigration and the unlikely event of negative Tibetan population growth. Adjusted from 1990 figures, the county population for 1994 should be at least 31,700. Chinese sources for 1990 claimed a Tibetan component of 85%, Chinese 15%, and other ethnic minorities 1%³. Most of the Chinese registered in Dzamthang would be those transferred during the early Communist occupation era, and subsequent transferees in the 1970's and 1980's, a number adding up to 4,730 people in 1990⁴. Logging industry workers and entrepreneurs who have come especially since 1992 do not appear in official figures. The number of Chinese now in Dzamthang must therefore be substantially higher. In the countryside Tibetan predominance is unlikely to be threatened. In the townships, the lumber industry and associated commercial growth will draw more and more Chinese immigrants, affecting the overall population balance, impacting the economy and sinicizing Dzamthang's settlements.

Additional demographic details for Dzamthang County can be found in Tables 12 and 16 [see pp. 175 and 376] and Charts 27 and 27a [see pp. 987 and 988]

iv. **Administrative and control apparatus**

Since Dzamthang is a small and compact town, all the administrative and control units lie close to each other, either along the main street or in the government enclave in the upper parallel street under the northern hill slope. The County Government and NPC Standing Committee occupy an older grey gabled roof building fronted by a cement courtyard and flanked on its eastern side by the People's Auditorium, now a cinema. Behind it stands

¹ *China Population Statistics Yearbook 1990*

² *Statistical Yearbook of Sichuan 1995*

³ *Tabulation on China's Nationality: 1990 Census Data*

⁴ *Tabulation on China's Nationality: 1990 Census Data*

a new pink-tiled residential block for government employees, next to which is the Auditing Office and Planning and Economic Commissions, both bodies connected to the State economic sector. The Government Hostel stands next door to the government residential block. The Communist Party headquarters, with the Party, CPPCC and CCP Discipline Inspection Committee, are in a modern four-story block next door (west) to the Government fronting the main street [see photo 87:24, p. 1146].

Control units then follow along the main street. The County PAP with People's Militia Training Base compound stands west of the Party building, then at the end of the street is the County PSB compound. All of the control and government compounds connect by the upper street which runs from the Government Hostel gate behind the Government building and along the rear of the other compounds just listed. The Court building faces onto the path running above the northern edge of town behind the Hostel.

Dzamthang's PSB Detention Center lies on the northwestern edge of town adjacent to the PSB compound [see photo 87:34, p. 1148]. Cell capacity seems high for a sparsely-populated county, and the facility has been updated. Fear of civil crime or political disturbance must be behind construction of a relatively large jail in such an unpopulous district. Political unrest certainly erupts at times in neighboring Ngawa County. Similar incidents may occur in Dzamthang, as the county remains inexplicably closed to foreign visitors.

No PLA presence was seen in the county.

v. **Economy**

Dzamthang had the lowest 1994 GDP (66.8 million Yuan⁵) of any county in Ngawa T&QAP. It lagged far behind Chuchen and Tsenlha, each with over 90 million Yuan. But both of those counties have more than double Dzamthang's population, according to official figures, which places Dzamthang's per capita GDP (2,227 Yuan⁶) on a par with Ngawa and Zungchu counties. Predictably, primary production, which normally includes forestry, was the leading sector with 29.8 million Yuan (1994), followed by only 16 million Yuan for secondary production

⁵ *Statistical Yearbook of Sichuan 1995*

⁶ *Statistical Yearbook of Sichuan 1995*

and 21 million for tertiary. As is the case in many of the remote Tibetan locations, tertiary output is probably composed principally of government-operated educational, medical and administrative activity.

But there is a problem with Dzamthang's economic numbers. It is true that primary output is shown as the largest sector of GDP, and it is true that natural resources extraction, including forestry, is regarded as primary industry. But 29.8 million Yuan could not possibly include the huge volume of timber that daily passes out of Dzamthang. If it is not credited on the county's balance sheet, then it must appear at a higher administrative level. A comparison of county and prefectural statistics rules out the possibility that trees and minerals are part of prefectural primary production. In fact, they should be expected to appear as Chinese national production. All natural resources in China are claimed for the State by China's Constitution.⁷ China does not only deny that unfair appropriation of Tibetan resources is occurring, or that inequitable distribution of the resultant wealth follows. China, per its Constitution, denies there are 'Tibetan' forests: there are only Chinese forests. Even logs stranded in Tibetan rivers belong to China, according to signs posted along the roads, and anyone who attempts to salvage one will be held responsible for stealing from the State. Thus Tibetans, having been stripped of any ownership or control of their natural resources, should not find it surprising they have also been relieved of the benefits of the harvest as well.

Additional economic information pertinent to the county can be found on Tables 13 and 18 [see pp. 184 and 995] and Charts 28 and 29 [see pp. 989 and 990].

(1) **agriculture**

Dzamthang is a primarily pastoral area, but some agriculture is possible along river valleys, where barley and beans are cultivated. At present it is carried out at a mostly self-sufficient level. Few vegetables are available in the county town and even a county-level Grain and Oil Office was not seen. A rising Chinese population will require closer attention to the supply of agricultural produce. Local market gardening with the aid of greenhouses would probably result in the requisition of nearby land currently used by Tibetan cultivators. Where

⁷ *The Constitution of the People's Republic of China*, 4 December, 1982; Chapter 1 Article 9: "Mineral resources, waters, forests, mountains, grassland, unreclaimed land, beaches and other natural resources are owned by the State, that is, by the whole people [...]"

this has occurred in Lhasa, land rented by Chinese market gardeners from Tibetan villagers has in the long-term been lost by the Tibetans.

(2) **pastoralism**

Pastoralism is the principal form of local economy, and appears to have been left to traditional practises in some parts of the county. When the Chinese wish to develop a pastoral products market, they institute fencing and forced settlement of herders. While such policies have been widely implemented in Ngawa T&QAP, Dzamthang appears to have been less subjected to them than Kakhog or Ngawa. No meat processing facilities, a sure sign of Chinese market control, were seen in the county town. However, the Dzamthang County State Pasture lies east of the county seat, a State-run pastoral unit which will have involved the disruption and control of traditional nomads.

(3) **natural resources exploitation**

The Chinese probably did not begin to log the Dzamthang districts until the 1960's, when final administrative decisions regarding the region had been made and the county seat was finally fixed at its present site. The town's Forestry compound certainly appears to date from this period, and stands at the heart of the town incorporating the County Forestry Office, Forestry Labor Union, CCP Forestry Branch and PAP Forestry unit, a measure of the lumber industry's importance to the County administration.

Dzamthang is famous, even in the richly forested Ngawa Prefecture, for its extensive virgin forests. Forestation is conspicuously dense compared to Barkham County, even along the highway. Dzamthang's forests are now under intense pressure, however, as the rapidly-expanding Chinese construction industry demands huge supplies of wood from domestic sources. The main road's major function is to facilitate the extraction and transportation of lumber out of Dzamthang: it carries almost no other traffic. A daily stream of dozens of logging trucks ferries Dzamthang's lumber through Barkham and on to Lunggu (Wenchuan), where they cross the Min River Bridge to head for the lumber yards of the Chengdu district [see photo 89:11a, p. 1156].

Logging in Dzamthang also ties in with transport routes, by road and river, to the neighboring counties of Tenpa, Serthar and Chuchen, where logging is also the principal form of resource exploitation. Riverside settlements

along the main road in Dzamthang have no other visible function but logging activity. Some logging camps are very substantial, now incorporating permanent buildings and manned by large contingents of workers [see photo 89:15a, p. 1150]. Beside the river, huge piles of logs brought from interior locations wait to be loaded for the journey to Chengdu, sometimes by being winched across the river by cable [see photo 88:34, p. 1152]. The various sizes indicate that they are clear-cut from virgin forest [see photo 89:17a, p. 1154]. The river, too, is utilized for transport. Unfortunately this method results in substantial waste as it does in all areas where it is used. Thousands of logs lie stranded in river channels and along banks, wasted before they can even reach a market destination [see photo 89:6a, p. 1158].

The logging of Dzamthang's virgin forests provides one of the most vivid examples of Chinese resource exploitation in Tibetan areas. Because it is remote, Dzamthang escaped the first decade of logging to which the earlier occupied Tibetan areas, particularly in eastern Kham, were subjected. The Chinese are making up for the time loss now with single-mindedness and intensity of activity. Economically, little else is happening in the county except logging. Tibetans benefit insofar as some are truck drivers and forest workers within the industry. Otherwise the benefits all flow to China. Investment from such profitable exploitation has not been channelled into developing the county town.

Dzamthang's forests also provide valuable medicinal plants, and the area has deposits of silver and gold⁸. No information on their exploitation is contained in the report.

(4) **industrial**

Except for the workshops needed to construct the early socialist foundation, Dzamthang has been industrialized only in relation to the lumber industry. Wood processing is the chief industrial activity in all Chinese-developed settlements, from the county town to the crudest logging camps. Agricultural machinery and wine are also said to be produced within the county⁹, although such facilities were not observed in the county town. Any processing or manufacturing output must be relatively insignificant, as secondary industry accounted for only 16 million Yuan of GDP in 1994.

⁸ *Zhongguo diming cidian (Dictionary of Chinese Place Names)*, p. 971

⁹ *Zhongguo diming cidian (Dictionary of Chinese Place Names)*, p. 971

(5) **commercial and retail activity**

Commercial and retail activity is as yet only slightly developed, but growing tentatively. Shops stock a sparse selection of goods, and Chinese run a few small restaurants. Otherwise Dzamthang has yet to experience the influx of Chinese entrepreneurs, commercial goods and construction of emporia now a strong feature of many Tibetan-area county towns.

vi. **Educational and medical facilities**

Dzamthang has a primary school and a middle school in its county town [see photo 87:24, p. 1146, middle school compound has red flag]. Both appear to be functioning well, to judge by the brightness of the school children encountered. With a majority Tibetan population in town it is likely the schools offer a Tibetan-language stream, but supplementary reading and study materials must be scarce, as no Xinhua Bookshop was noticed in the town. Providing a high level of education in such a remote place, with a relatively small population, would be considered difficult in any country.

The town probably has a hospital but its location was not determined.

vii. **Culture**

Dzamthang has been a completely Tibetan region for centuries, where religious and cultural traditions have been unchallenged until the recent occupation by the Chinese. Its remoteness even after that event has helped preserve a strong Tibetan culture in rural areas. Chinese immigration has not reached levels where Tibetans are threatened as the majority population, nor have Chinese-style social and cultural developments really begun to “assimilate” Tibetans as they have in strongly sinicized prefectural capitals like Dartsedo or Chabcha. Despite the fact that Ngawa T&QAP has a higher proportion of Chinese than Kartse TAP, Ngawa Tibetans in the western part of the prefecture seem particularly resistant to Chinese influence. Barkham is less deeply sinicized than Dartsedo once the facade of mirror-glass towers is penetrated. Many of the Chinese cadres and soldiers transferred to Dzamthang in the early occupation period married Tibetan wives, but their families have tended to adopt a

Tibetan identity, a phenomenon noticed in mixed marriages in Tibetan areas in the past¹⁰. Although the county town is a completely Chinese civic environment, most people on the streets are Tibetan, many wearing Amdo-style traditional dress. School children can speak good Chinese but use Tibetan among themselves as a matter of course.

The Chinese have established one specific cultural facility in Dzamthang, the Nationalities Cultural Palace, a large building with a gold-tiled roof - the sole disport of such an embellishment in the town - within the Government Hostel compound [see photo 87:24, p. 1146]. Its activities are unknown.

Tibetans in Dzamthang emphatically identify the place as part of Amdo, especially on the basis of the dialect they speak. The region's substantial, decorative, stone and timber houses link it with Khampa architectural style, but use of these materials is natural in a forested zone like Dzamthang. Outside the county town, nothing is Chinese except the settlements and camps involved in lumber exploitation. The Chinese have simply placed an administrative and control grid over the region of Dzamthang to enable extraction of its valuable natural resource, lumber. The countryside remains thoroughly Tibetan, as the Chinese have no interest in developing it in another direction as yet. As the county town and other settlements grow - a process gathering speed - the problems of cultural and economic assimilation will become more acute.

viii. **Religion**

The only religious site near the county town is a small lhakang at the east end of the main street. A few monks are seen on the town streets, but monastic activity takes place elsewhere in the county, with little to connect it to the artificial Chinese town. An extremely interesting Buddhist site, Sermakhang Gönpa སེར་མ་ཁང་དགོན་པ།,

stands beside the highway about 25 kilometers east of the county town, distinguished by two tall towers and many small, colorful chöten as well as several lhakhangs. Historically, Bön had been the strongest religion in Dzamthang until the first Jonang monastery, Dzamthang Gönpa, was established in 1368 at Middle Dzamthang

¹⁰ See Eric Teichman, *Travels of a Consular Officer in Eastern Tibet*, p. 67, and Major H.R. Davies, *Yunnan*, p. 251

(Ch. Zhong Rantang 中壤塘), thirty kilometers northeast of the county town.¹¹ While the Jonang order vanished in Central Tibet, it flourished in Amdo, particularly in Pema, Darlag and Dzamthang. Dzamthang Gönpa is considered the root monastery for the whole Jonang order in Ngawa Prefecture¹². Nyingma monasteries have been founded in Dzamthang since the 8th Century¹³, but in the 17th Century received renewed impetus from Kham under the support of a powerful Dege prince¹⁴, and a Kargyu gönpa was founded in Dzamthang in 1713¹⁵.

Unless they become involved in activities considered political by the Chinese Government, monasteries in Dzamthang will probably be left essentially to their own devices in their remote locations.

ix. **History**

Chinese historical sources mention Qiang peoples as the inhabitants of the Dzamthang region from the 3rd Century BC, in particular the Tanguts, a confederation of pastoral tribes whose territories centered on the Malho area¹⁶. When the Tibetans invaded across the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau in the 7th Century, reaching as far east as the Chinese stronghold of Songzhou (Zungchu), the Tanguts and other Qiang were absorbed by the conquering armies, frequently used as mercenaries under Tibetan commanders and intermarrying with the Tibetan settlers. Names in Dzamthang today reflect the Tangut ancestry of some families¹⁷. Others are descended directly from the soldiers sent to garrison the frontiers of the Tibetan Empire, or Tibetans who moved in after the Empire fell.

Dzamthang has always been able to maintain autonomy, although it came within the jurisdiction of the Kingdom of Ling at one time, together with Golog to the north. Religious affiliations and trading routes connected it with

¹¹ *Aba tonglan (Overview of Aba)*, p. 159

¹² *Aba tonglan (Overview of Aba)*, p. 417

¹³ *Aba tonglan (Overview of Aba)*, p. 149

¹⁴ *Aba tonglan (Overview of Aba)*, p. 151

¹⁵ *Aba tonglan (Overview of Aba)*, p. 191

¹⁶ *Aba tonglan (Overview of Aba)*, p. 55

¹⁷ *Aba tonglan (Overview of Aba)*, p. 56

Kham, Ngawa and northern Amdo, but both its monasteries and its secular rulers were strongly independent-minded, bound neither to Lhasa nor China politically.

Although it had invaded Kham and Ngawa in 1950, the PLA did not enter remote Dzamthang until 1953. The Chinese forces were opposed by force of arms under the local chieftains as they penetrated the area¹⁸. The Chinese occupiers set up the Rangtang Work Committee, and in 1955 appointed an important local lama as Chairman of the Rangtang Administrative Council in token recognition of the region's Tibetan identity. Administrative divisions in the Ngawa region took shape only slowly. In 1958 a county was formed from various districts in neighboring Ngawa and Serthar with a seat at Nanmuda 南木达 further north. Finally in 1960 the western portion of the new county was returned to Serthar and the county seat moved to its present site¹⁹. Chinese development in Dzamthang has since proceeded slowly but in a steady direction, namely the exploitation of the region's lumber resources.

x. **Summary comment**

Dzamthang is of interest to the Chinese for one primary reason: exploitation of its rich forest resources. This has meant loss of their greatest natural asset for Tibetans, but also lighter levels of exposure to Chinese socialization and cultural patterning. Chinese immigration has been intrusive mainly in the townships the Chinese colonial administration has established, but until recently has not been very heavy. Tibetans in Dzamthang have therefore been better able to preserve their own cultural traditions without the more complex challenges that beset Tibetans in more sinicized areas. As lumber exploitation intensifies in the current Chinese economic boom, so will Chinese immigration and commercial activity. Dzamthang's remote location should shield it from excessive levels of either, but with a population of only 27,000 Tibetans, even a trickle - in Chinese terms - of Chinese immigrants might impact the area like a flood.

¹⁸ *Aba tonglan (Overview of Aba)*, p. 416

¹⁹ *Aba tonglan (Overview of Aba)*, p. 24

Sites tagged on photographic panoramas not accompanying text report

Panorama labels:

Dzamthang/Rangtang

frames 87:9-17, 9pc

Auditing Office
Broadcasting Station
CCP Discipline Inspection Comm.
CCP Forestry Branch
Cinema
County Communist Party
County Court
County CPPCC
County Forestry Office
County Government
County Government Hostel
County Govt. residential
County PAP
County PSB
County PSB Detention Center
Forestry Labour Union
Forestry PAP
lumber facilities*
Middle School
Militia Training Base
Nationalities Cultural Palace
NPC Standing Committee
Planned Economy Committee
Primary School
to Barkham
to Tibetan lhakang



<u>roll/neg:</u>	87:24
<u>subject:</u>	central section of town with government, CCP, PAP, etc.
<u>location:</u>	Dzamtang Dzong འཛམ་གྲང་རྫོང་། in Ngawa རྫོང་། Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture [Ch: Rangtang Xian 壤塘县, Aba 阿坝 T&QAP, Sichuan Prov.]
<u>approx. date:</u>	winter/spring 1996
<u>comment:</u>	A large compound with a yellow-columned gate visible at left center houses County Forestry, a Communist Party Forestry Branch, Forestry Labor Union and Forestry PAP. The cluster of buildings at right center includes the County Communist Party, CPPCC, Government, NPC Standing Committee, County PAP, Militia Training Base and County PSB. The local prison is off-frame to the right. A cinema and the County Court are in the foreground. Orange-trimmed eaves at lower right decorate the Nationalities Cultural Palace. (Viewed from the north/northeast.)
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roll/neg: 87:34

subject: County PSB Detention Center

location: Dzamthang Dzong འཛམ་ཐང་རྫོང་། in Ngawa རྫོང་། Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture
[Ch: Rangtang Xian 壤塘县, Aba 阿坝 T&QAP, Sichuan Prov.]

approx. date: winter/spring 1996

comment: A second cellblock is newer than the original. The two-story buildings appear to have about six cells each per floor. Though Dzamthang is a small town in a sparsely populated county, if the PSB Detention Center has as many as 24 cells, each able to hold several prisoners, capacity would be high even by Tibetan standards. Despite considerable scenic attraction the county is tightly closed to foreigners. Dzamthang's better known next door neighbor, Aba County, has been the site of several political disturbances over past years.
(Viewed from north/northeast.)

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<u>roll/neg:</u>	89:15a
<u>subject:</u>	logging camp and cabling operation near Dzamthang
<u>location:</u>	Dzamthang Dzong འཛམ་ཐང་རྫོང་། in Ngawa རྫོང་། Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture [Ch: Rangtang Xian 壤塘县, Aba 阿坝 T&QAP, Sichuan Prov.]
<u>approx. date:</u>	winter/spring 1996
<u>comment:</u>	The forests of Kham and southeastern Amdo are of great importance to China, now engrossed in a seemingly endless building boom and pressed to supply huge quantities of building materials from domestic sources. Dzamthang's forests are under intense exploitation. This large, semi-permanent camp channels logs from a network of side valleys to the main river. If they are not floated down river, trucks carry the logs down toward Chengdu. Logging trucks are, by far, the most common form of traffic between Dzamthang and Barkham.
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roll/neg: 88:34

subject: logging camp and cabling operation near Dzamthang

location: Dzamthang Dzong འཛོམས་ཐང་རྫོང་། in Ngawa རྫོང་། Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture
 [Ch: Rangtang Xian 壤塘县, Aba 阿坝 T&QAP, Sichuan Prov.]

approx. date: winter/spring 1996

comment: The large logging camp pictured in photo 89:15a is connected to the main Barkham/Dzamthang highway only by a footbridge. While a logging road can be seen winding into the side valley [photo 89:15a], it is not clear how trucks reached the other side of the river. After logs are trucked down to the river, they are cabled across to other trucks waiting just below the main road. Most of the traffic en route to Barkham from this area is made up of logging trucks.

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89:17a

near Dzamthang: logging camp, detail

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roll/neg: 89:17a

subject: detail of logging camp near Dzamthang

location: Dzamthang Dzong འཛམ་གཤང་རྫོང་། in Ngawa རྫོང་། Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture
[Ch: Rangtang Xian 壤塘县, Aba 阿坝 T&QAP, Sichuan Prov.]

approx. date: winter/spring 1996

comment: Forestry workers are dwarfed beside a pile of logs at a logging base between Barkham and Dzamthang [see photo 89:15a]. The wide variety of sizes suggest they are clear-cut from virgin forest. Logs are cabled across the river to waiting trucks which take them through Barkham, down to Wenchuan, and onward toward Chengdu. The ramshackle building is probably a workshop or sawmill. The camp is large, connected by a footbridge to the main road, and has several permanent and semi-permanent buildings. A satellite dish sits atop one.

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89:11a

near Dzamthang: heavily loaded logging truck

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roll/neg: 89:11a

subject: heavily laden logging truck en route south from Dzamthang

location: Dzamthang Dzong འཛོམས་ཐང་རྫོང་། in Ngawa རྫོང་། Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture
[Ch: Rangtang Xian 壤塘县, Aba 阿坝 T&QAP, Sichuan Prov.]

approx. date: winter/spring 1996

comment: The main 'highway' between Dzamthang and Barkham is, by principal function, a logging road. Dozens of trucks daily, with loads like this one, leave the county, transit Barkham, cross the Min River bridge at Wenchuan and move down to lumber yards near Chengdu. Irrespective of regulations, truckers find little profit in safety, tying immense loads onto their vehicles. Traffic can be held up for hours by frequent breakdowns and accidents on the one lane roads. Trucks often end up crumpled at the bottoms of steep gorges. Growth patterns on these logs match sections of the same trees. Most loads are from virgin forest.

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89:6a

near Dzamthang: stranded logs jam river

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<u>roll/neg:</u>	89:6a
<u>subject:</u>	stranded logs jam river
<u>location:</u>	Dzamthang Dzong འཛམ་གནའ་རྫོང་། in Ngawa འགྲུ་བོ་ Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture [Ch: Rangtang Xian 壤塘县, Aba 阿坝 T&QAP, Sichuan Prov.]
<u>approx. date:</u>	winter/spring 1996
<u>comment:</u>	Persons unaccustomed to logging methods in Tibetan areas are often taken aback at the massive waste. The reaction may be ignorant, based on emotion rather than understanding of logging techniques, but it is difficult to accept that so much of the harvest must become waste after forests are devastated. Signs along adjacent roadways warn locals the logs belong to China and that anyone attempting to salvage them will be punished. Logs are floated during late spring and summer when melting snow and rain swell water flow. Winter reveals the waste. After months of elemental damage, the wood's integrity is diminished.
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