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ETHNOBOTANICAL NOTES ON THANGMI PLANT NAMES AND THEIR MEDICINAL AND RITUAL USES

Mark Turin

Introduction

Over the past six years, in the course of documenting the grammar of the Thangmi language, I have found the lexicon to be replete with indigenous names for local flora and fauna. Many of these indigenous terms are falling into disuse, or being replaced by Nepali words as fluency in the national language increases. Older Thangmi speakers have encouraged me to document the local botanical terminology, and the medicinal and ritual uses of the plants as a record for younger generations of Thangmi speakers as well as for the international scholarly community. With this goal in mind, the present article offers a list of Thangmi lexical items for flora.

Since I am untrained in ethnobotany and taxonomy, the vernacular English terms and Latin names which I have included may in some cases be incorrect and I am unable to ensure accuracy. However, I have cross-checked each term and its associated ritual or medicinal uses with at least three native speakers of Thangmi, and the Nepali and Latin names for plants, alongside the common vernacular English terms, are always provided when known. The list has been ordered according to a modified Roman alphabetical ordering, with aspirates such as /kh/ and /th/ following the unaspirated series. After each Thangmi term, **(D)** for Dolakhā and/or **(S)** for Sindhupālcok are shown to indicate the Thangmi speech variety in which the word is attested. While many botanical terms are common to both dialects, some terms are noticeably different.

A note on the Thangmi language and its speakers

The Thangmi language is spoken by an ethnic group of the same name, known as *Thāmī* in Nepali, who live primarily in the districts of Dolakhā and Sindhupālcok in eastern Nepal. According to the last population census taken in 2001, Nepal is home to 18,991 mother tongue Thangmi speakers and 22,999 ethnic Thangmi. For a variety of reasons, which I have discussed elsewhere at greater length (Turin 2000), I believe these population statistics

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to be a considerable underestimate. I place the total ethnic Thangmi population closer to 30,000 in Nepal, with another 5,000 or so in Darjeeling and Sikkim in India. While the genetic position of the Thangmi language is not the substance of this article, it may interest readers to know that Thangmi shows a certain affinity with the Kiranti languages spoken in eastern Nepal, particularly with regard to the complex and pronominalised verbal agreement system (see Turin 1998 for further details). Furthermore, there are striking similarities between the lexicons of Thangmi and Classical Newar, and while the status of these lexical isoglosses is not clear, they are discussed in greater length in Turin (in press).

Ethnobotanical research on the Tibeto-Burman languages of Nepal

For over 50 years, scholars have been documenting the flora of Nepal. These writings offer a mine of important information pertaining to the ethnobotanical and indigenous medicinal systems of Nepal's ethnic communities. A number of excellent compilations and books are available in Kathmandu bookshops which offer comparative lexical lists (see Rajbhandari 2001), formatted databases and extensive bibliographies of Himalayan ethnobotany. Many of the earliest, and now seminal, articles on Nepalese ethnobotany, including inventories of botanical terminology in specific Tibeto-Burman languages, have been published in the pages of this journal (see Bhattarai 1989 and 1991, Manandhar 1993 and 1998, and Shrestha 1985 and 1988), along with substantial contributions in *Kailash*, the *Journal of the Natural History Museum* (Nepal), and the *Journal of the Nepal Research Centre*. In keeping with this tradition, it seems fitting to publish this preliminary Thangmi botanical word list in *Contributions to Nepalese Studies* and thereby add to the corpus of knowledge available to scholars both in and of Nepal.

Thangmi plant names and their uses

adhai ~ adai (D) & (S)
Nepali *kãkro*
cucumber, *Cucumis sativus*
The fruit is edible both raw and cooked. The older fruits are traditionally cooked as a vegetable curry or preserved as a pickle. When consumed raw, cucumbers are believed to protect against jaundice and to counteract the negative effects of smoking. Ritual uses are limited to the Hindu festival of *tij*, during which it is auspicious if a cucumber is the first solid food consumed after the conclusion of the fast.

ahel (D) ~ syuŋŋan (S)
Nepali *dabdabe*
garuga, *Garuga pinnata; Lannea coromandelica*
The only use is as fodder for domesticated animals.

akal (D) ~ cyolampi (S)
Nepali *seto kāulo*
a species of tree, *Persea odoratissima*
The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals while the bark is used to flavour *sel roṭī* and as a red dye. The wood of the trunk is burned as firewood, and the better sections are used in house construction and for furniture.

akan (D) & (S)
Nepali *jau*
barley, *Hordeum vulgare*
This hard grain is made into flat breads or a porridge-like substance. The ritual uses of barley include the cleansing of polluted spaces in marriage and death ceremonies, during which the grains are burned in the fire to frighten away evil spirits. Barley stalks are used as thatch on roofs and are also collected as fodder for domesticated animals. If the auspicious day of *sombāre aũsī* falls within the month of *pus,* then balls of barley flour mixed together with water and cow's milk are taken to the nearest river and thrown in. This offering is believed to bring peace to the spirits of the dead.

akyarak (D)
Nepali *bãko*
the bulb of an arum lily, *Arum campanulatum*
The inside of the bulb is eaten as a polenta-like paste in times of hardship, after being peeled, dried, beaten and cooked. The 'eyes' or new sprouts of the bulb are poisonous to humans if consumed, as are the seeds,

akhyak (D)
Nepali *bhus*
barley and wheat inflorescence
The inflorescence is fed as fodder to cows in the months of *cait* and *baiśākh*.

altak (D) ~ paṭareŋ (S)
Nepali *lāligurãs*
the Nepalese rhododendron tree, *Rhododendron arboreum*
In the winter months, the fresh leaves make good fodder, but when the flowers are in bloom, the leaves are poisonous to animals. The wood of the trunk can be burned as firewood or used for furniture and house beams. If the flower is consumed by someone choking on a fish or chicken bone, the petals are believed to remove the obstruction and help the swallowing reflex.

kiji altak (D)
Nepali *kālo gurãs*
the black rhododendron, *Rhododendron grande*
See above under *altak* for uses.

amum (D) ~ amom (S)
Nepali *cyāu*
mushroom

bâgâlya amum (D)
Nepali *chāte cyāu*
This mushroom is cooked and consumed as a vegetable curry. It ripens in the months of *asār* and *bhadau.*

ciripiṭik amum (D)
Nepali *chālā cyāu, paṭpaṭe cyāu*
a species of edible mushroom, *Flammulina velutipes*
This chewy mushroom is cooked and consumed as a vegetable curry or preserved as a chutney. It ripens in the month of *sāun*.

kiji amum (D) ~ kiji amom (S)
Nepali *kālo khāne cyāu*
honey fungus, *Armillariella mellea*
This mushroom is cooked and consumed as a vegetable curry. It ripens in the months of *sāun* and *bhadau.*

kulla amum (D)
Nepali *kān cyāu*
This mushroom is cooked and consumed as a vegetable curry. It ripens in the month of *bhadau.*

niṇis amum (D)
Nepali *kān cyāu*
This mushroom is cooked and consumed as a vegetable curry. It ripens in the months of *asār* and *bhadau.*

nunu amum (D)
Nepali *dudh cyāu*
This mushroom is cooked and consumed as a vegetable curry. It ripens in the month of *bhadau.*

arka (D) & (S)
Nepali *okhar*
walnut, *Juglans regia*
The nut can be eaten raw. The outside shell gives off a black dye when beaten, and this is used to paint house doors. The bark of the tree trunk as well as the leaves are used as a poison to stun fish, for which the preparation is as follows: the bark is stripped off and leaves collected, these are then beaten and little pieces are thrown in the water where fish are known to swim. The substance in the bark temporarily stuns the fish after which they float to the surface and can be collected. The poison does not affect humans and consumption is thus safe. The trunk of the tree is used for timber and household furniture, while smaller pieces are burned as firewood. At *bhāi ṭikā* during the Hindu festival of *tihār*, women place walnuts in the doorways of houses. When cracked, these are believed to kill local demons.

aṇeŋ (D) & (S)
Nepali *harkaulo*
The leaves are collected as fodder for several domesticated animals, and the small red nut is roasted and peeled to be eaten as a snack. The trunk is used in furniture construction on account of its strength.

asip (D) & (S)
Nepali *ghurmiso, ghurbaĩso*
The leaves are collected as fodder for cows and goats. The timber is used for making traditional bee hives, since bees are partial to this wood. The flowers, which blossom in the month of *cait*, secrete a sweet juice and are eaten.

au (D) [ritual language]
Nepali *ãp*
mango, *Mangifera sylvatica; Mangifera indica*
The fruit is consumed, and the wood is used as timber.

awakdu calak (D) & (S)
Nepali *tite gīṭhā*
bitter air yam, *Dioscorea bulbifera*
The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals. The bulb, which grows underground, is boiled in water, peeled and eaten as a snack in the month of *māgh*. The fruit, which ripens in the months of *kārtik* and *mãsir*, can also be boiled and eaten.

bâgale (D) ~ rise (S)
Nepali *bilāunī*
a species of tree, *Maesa chisia; Maesa indica*
The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals.

bârma (D) ~ barma (S)
Nepali *amriso, amliso*
bouquet grass, *Thysanolaena agrestis*
The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals, but are more commonly used to make brooms. During wedding rituals and *pujas* for newly constructed houses, individual stalks of bouquet grass are placed in various locations around the house to create an auspicious environment. The plant also has medicinal uses for women during labour or childbirth: when a baby has been born but the placenta is not forthcoming, then bouquet grass roots are tied together, along with a copper coin, and placed in the woman's navel. This is believed to expedite the expulsion of the placenta. If the leaves are eaten by either animals or humans during pregnancy, then the foetus will likely be aborted. This characteristic is also shared by the *meluŋpaŋ* discussed below.

bagale (D) ~ bagalya (S)
Nepali *āru*
peach, *Prunus persica*
The edible fruit ripens in the month of *bhadau* and is consumed raw. The wood from the trunk is used to make furniture while the chippings are burned as firewood.

bajareŋ (D) ~ awa (S)
Nepali *kã̄copāt, surtī*
locally-grown tobacco, *Nicotiana tabacum*
The old leaves, after being dried in the sun and crumbled, are rolled into *ãgerī* or *sāl (Shorea robusta)* leaves, and smoked as cigarettes. The leaves have a medicinal quality when beaten, mixed with water, and smeared over a goat's body. This concoction is believed to combat infestations of lice or fleas. If insects are consuming or destroying spinach or other leafy greens, then this same mixture of beaten leaves and water can be used as an effective pesticide. The leaves are also used for rituals: when curing a case of possession, Thangmi shamans place hot coals on a large *bajareŋ* leaf. Millet flour is then sprinkled on top of the coals, attracting the spirit and burning it on the coals. The polluted leaf-plate is then taken to a fork in the path and left there, so that the spirit will be unable to find its way back.

baldane (D) ~ bandalek (S)
Nepali *ṭoṭalā*
a species of tree, *Oroxylum indicum*
In every Thangmi ritual and in each house, there must be at least one dried *baldane* fruit. The plant does not grow in the Thangmi-speaking area and must therefore be brought from the Terai. The seeds also have a medicinal use when finely beaten, mixed with water, and strained. This concoction is fed to patients suffering from a high fever or pneumonia, and is believed to help restore health or bring down the fever. The Thangmi ritual word for this species in the Dolakhā dialect is *darjum.*

bân kwai (D) ~ ruŋ kawi (S)
Nepali *ban tarul*
potato yam, *Dioscorea bulbifera*
The bulb is edible after being boiled and peeled, and the creeper has a flower which can be eaten in a similar manner. When eaten raw, the bulb can help reduce throat pain. The leaves are collected as fodder and fed to domesticated animals. On *māghe sãkrānti*, after an early morning ritual at the nearest water source, a *ṭikā* is made from raw *bân kwai* and placed on the forehead of attendees.

bena (D)
Nepali *khasru*
brown oak of the Himalaya, *Quercus semecarpifolia*
The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals, and the tree trunk is used to make furniture, doors and windows. The chippings are

burned in the household fire. The resin from the tree is collected and can be drunk as a medicinal infusion for stomach ache.

bephuŋ (D) & (S)
Nepali *ghurmiso, ghurbaĩso*
The leaves are collected as fodder for cows and goats, and the timber is used for making traditional bee hives. The flowers, which blossom in *cait*, secrete a juice which makes them sweet and edible.

bok (D) ~ boʔ (S)
Nepali *makai-ko phul, dhāncamarā*
top of the maize or rice inflorescence, *Zea mays* and *Oryza sativa*
The blossoms are collected as fodder for cows and goats. The flowers are visited by bees.

bosiŋ (D) ~ busiŋ (S)
Nepali *uttis*
alder, Nepal black cedar, *Alnus nepalensis*
The wood is used for furniture and household construction and also for making beehives. The leaves, while not eaten by animals, are collected and used as fertiliser in small-scale cardamom cultivation.

botle (D)
Nepali *harkaṭo*
a species of fodder
The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals.

brusiŋ (D) ~ bhere (S)
Nepali *paĩyū*
the wild cherry tree, *Prunus puddum*
The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals, and the tree trunk is used to make furniture, doors and windows. The chippings are burned in the household fire. Straight *brusiŋ* branches are used during the Thangmi wedding ritual to support the bamboo canopy or marquee.

buŋ (D) ~ ameʔ (S)
Nepali *dhāncamarāko māthī, parāg*
inflorescence at the top of the maize or rice blossom
Other than for bees, who collect the nectar, the inflorescence has no use.

bhâmbâla (D) ~ cyokre (S)
Nepali *culetro*
The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals.

câŋge (D) ~ câiŋgya (S)
Nepali *laṭṭhe sāg*
pigweed, *Amaranthus viridis*; *Amaranthus albus*
The green leaves are prepared and eaten as a vegetable curry, and are believed to help cure diarrhoea. The seeds of the flower are ground into a powder and mixed with water, and are taken as an infusion to help with general 'gastric' problems. The seeds can also been beaten and fried in clarified butter and fed to pregnant women to lessen pregnancy pains.

calak (D) ~ calaʔ (S)
Nepali *gīṭṭhā*
air potato, *Dioscorea bulbifera*
The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals. The bulb can be consumed when boiled and skinned, but the thicker veins must be removed since they are too chewy to be eaten. The creepers have a blossom which can also be eaten when boiled.

calou (D) & (S)
Nepali *ban sisnu*
Himalayan nettle, *Girardinia diversifolia*
The very top bud is edible when prepared as a vegetable curry. The stems are beaten, dried and boiled to make a thread which is then woven into traditional nettle clothing. The spines of the Himalayan nettle are believed to stimulate milk production. If cows and buffaloes are not lactating, they are believed to be possessed and are then beaten with the nettles to make them lactate. Thangmi shamans also beat humans possessed by evil spirits with these wild nettles in the belief that this will end the possession. The Himalayan nettle should not be touched or eaten by family members of a deceased person on the day of death. If the deceased is one's mother or father, this prohibition remains in place for a whole year. See also *naŋai* for further information.

caltak (D) ~ calda (S)
Nepali *sothar*
male shield fern, *Dryopteris filix-mas*
or edible fern shoot, *Dryopteris cochleata*

This is used as soft padding for livestock pens, and functions as a natural blanket or mattress. When dirty, it is spread on maize fields as fertiliser.

camek (D) ~ cameʔ (S)
Nepali *māliṅgo, coyā*
red Himalayan bamboo, *Thamnocalamus spathiflorus*
or tufted bamboo, *Dendrocalamus hamiltoni*
The primary use is for making bamboo household articles such as baskets and mats, but it is also used in furniture construction. The small bamboo shoots can be eaten as a vegetable curry, and the leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals. It can also be used as a rope to tie or bundle things together. Bamboo has multiple ritual uses in Thangmi culture, for example as the flagpole for a shaman's banner in most rituals, and in the construction of various articles to send the deceased to heaven in the Thangmi death ritual. If bamboo leaves are fed to lactating cows and buffaloes, their milk is believed to dry up very quickly. The fodder is therefore only given to male bovines or old females. See also *liŋliŋ*.

kiji camek (D) ~ kiji cameʔ (S)
Nepali *kālo nigālo*
small mountain bamboo, *Arundinaria intermedia*
See above under *camek* for its uses.

caŋ (D) & (S)
Nepali *sallā*
the chir pine, Himalayan long leaved pine, *Pinus roxburghii*
The wood is excellent for furniture construction, while the kindling or smaller branches are used as flaming torches to light the way at night. Resin is released from the incisions where branches are cut, and this can be tapped and used as fuel. When dried, the cone at the end of the branches can also be turned into a flaming torch since it is very flammable. This cone exudes a sticky substance which is also used as a glue to bind things together. The wood is also burned during exorcism rituals. During various Thangmi rituals, the flaming torches must be made from *caŋ*.

carcare ~ cârcâre (D) & (S)
Nepali *pānī-laharā*
the red-fruited bramble, *Rubus moluccanus*
The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals. The stems are used to make string or rope to bind things together, particularly to attach

livestock to their stakes. The rope is strong enough to be used to pull heavy items, such as in the construction of wooden bridges.

catik (D) ~ (S)
Nepali *śirīṣ*
the parrot tree, East Indian walnut, *Albizia lebbek*
The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals, and the trunk is burned as firewood.

ce (D) ~ ceʔ (S)
Nepali *kaṭus, ḍhālne kaṭus*
the Nepal or Indian chestnut tree, *Castanopsis hystrix; Castanopsis indica*
The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals, and the trunk is used for furniture construction. The smaller chippings are burned as firewood. The nuts are roasted and eaten as snacks, and the smallest leaves are boiled in water to make ink. During the Thangmi death ritual, shamans use branches of the chestnut tree to kill evil spirits. Leafy branches are dipped in boiling water and used to beat the possessed person (who must be naked for the cure to be efficacious) during Thangmi exorcism rituals.

cile (D) & (S)
Nepali *bhyākur*
cush-cush, yam, *Dioscorea deltoidea, Dioscorea trifida*
The bulb and fruit which grow on the creeper are edible when peeled and boiled.

cyala (S)
Nepali *ṭunā ṭunī*
Cedrela tree, Moulmein tree, *Toona ciliata*
The trunk is used as firewood.

cyothrok (D)
Nepali *cutro*
a species of barberry bush, common barberry, *Berberis asiatica*; *Berberis nepalensis*
This bush is primarily used for fencing on account of its sizeable thorns. In the month of *baiśākh*, a small red fruit ripens which can be eaten raw.

cyurkusuna (D)
Nepali name unknown
a species of grass

The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals. The shrub is strung up in the groom's house the night before a wedding to ensure that the couple have a long and prosperous life together.

dolgareŋ (D) ~ dalkhareŋ (S)
Nepali *sunākhari*
epiphytic orchid
This plant is used in Thangmi *bhume pujā* rituals. The flower is placed on top of a wheat flour offering.

dokmaŋ (D) ~ doʔmaŋ (S)
Nepali *ṭimur*
Nepal pepper, prickly ash, *Zanthoxlum armatum*
Nepal pepper is primarily used as a spice in cooking, particularly in vegetable curry. It can also provide a substitute for lentil soup, eaten with millet or maize paste. The seeds are collected, dried and consumed as a medicine to help ease the pain of stomach aches and 'gastric' problems. If a close relative dies, family members are prohibited from eating *dokmaŋ* for six months for ritual reasons. The dried and beaten seeds also function as an effective pesticide against small insects when spread liberally around the base of wheat plants. When made into a liquid paste together with *uireŋ* leaves, *dokmaŋ* seeds are an effective weapon against termites and other insects which eat through wood. This paste is applied to wooden house beams or furniture where the wood is eroded by insects. The concoction is believed to emit an odour which is disliked by insects.

domba (D)
Nepali *rukh*
The general Thangmi word for tree.

dosken (D) ~ phulu (S)
Nepali *niṅro, niguro, niuro*
the fern, *Gleichenia linearis*; or the edible fern shoot, *Dryopteris cochleata*
The fern shoots are edible when cooked as a vegetable curry in the months of *bhadau* and *asoj*. When boiled with salt and eaten, the plant has a powerful medicinal use in combating diarrhoea with blood in the stool.

dhapre (D)
Nepali *ghiukumārī*
Indian aloe, *Aloe vera (Aloe barbadensis)*

The gum which is released when the leaves are broken in half is used as a medicinal ointment applied to burns and scalds. Aloe is known to have strong healing powers.

ḍiŋḍiŋ ileŋ (D)
Nepali *rāto aĩselu*
a type of red raspberry, *Rubus pentagonus*
The fruits ripen in the months of *phāgun* or *cait*, and are delicious when eaten raw. The roots of the shrub are beaten for use in the preparation of local beer. The stalks of the shrub are used to construct fences around vegetable gardens due to their sharp thorns. During the Thangmi death ritual, after the corpse has been burned, the mourners must block the path on their way back home to stop the spirit of the deceased returning to its village. This symbolic blockage takes the form of a fire lit with flint stones and inflammable plant matter known in Nepali as *julo*. The thorny branches of the *ḍiŋḍiŋ ileŋ* are placed atop this fire, and as the mourners back away, they wave their caps over the flaming pile to take leave of the spirit.

ḍoŋḍoŋ (D)
Nepali *bā̃s-ko khapaṭā*
The lower leaves or outer covering of the bamboo plant, which fan out at the base of the stem.

ḍoŋṭhya (D) ~ botton (S)
Nepali *bhālu niṅgro*
a species of thorny bamboo, *Bambusa arundinacea*
The large leaves of this plant are used to cover newly sown or broadcast seeds so that birds and other pests do not eat them.

ḍumla (D)
Nepali *nebhāro*
common fig, *Ficus carica*
The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals, and the wood of the trunk is burned as firewood. The ‘fruit’ ripens between *asār* and *bhadau* and is eaten raw. The large leaves are pinned together to make disposable plates for weddings and other local feasts.

elepe ~ helekpa (D)
Nepali *halhale*
curly dock, common field sorrel, *Rumex crispus; Rumex nepalensis*

The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals, and can also be cooked and made into vegetable curry for human consumption.

goṭhe paŋ (D) ~ raʔaduca paŋ (S)
Nepali *carī amilo*
Indian sorrel, creeping sorrel, *Oxalis corniculata*
The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals, and the wood of the trunk is burned as firewood. The fruit ripens between *mãsir* and *māgh* and is eaten raw. The fresh fruit is also consumed as a medicine to lessen throat pain.

gunjilik (D) ~ gujiliʔ (S)
Nepali *kuro*
a species of sharp-pointed spear-grass, *Triumfetta pilosa*
When green, the leaves are collected as fodder for goats.

kiji gunjilik (D)
Nepali *kālo kuro*
Beggar tick, *Bidens pilosa*
When green, the leaves are collected as fodder for goats.

hâkuṇap ~ kiji ileŋ (D)
Nepali *kālo aiselu-ko boṭ*
the black raspberry, *Rubus foliolosus*
The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals, while the woody older stems are burned as firewood. The fruit ripens between *baiśākh* and *asār* and can be eaten raw as a medicine for diarrhoea. The stem is twisted into rope for securing domesticated livestock to their stakes and for attaching oxen during ploughing. The stem is also used as rope to stretch a goat skin in the construction of drums.

ilame (D)
Nepali *cheruvā jhār*
a species of fodder, *Lindenbergia indicia*
The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals. Thangmi villagers use this plant as a natural clock since it stands up high in the daytime and wilts in the evening.

ileŋ (D) ~ ilyaŋ (S)
Nepali *aiselu*
a species of edible berry, *Rubus lasiocarpus*

The thorny branches are used to make fences along property borders to stop animals entering or exiting. The fruits ripen between *cait* and *jeṭh* and can be eaten raw.

iṇe (S)
Nepali *rāto bākhre ghãs*
a species of weed, *Desmodium elegans*
The leaves are collected as fodder for goats.

jakcho (D) ~ jaʔco (S)
Nepali *gahũ*
wheat, *Triticum sativum; Triticum aestivum*
The leaves and stalks are collected as fodder for domesticated animals. The grain is harvested between *baiśākh* and *jeṭh* and is made into grain paste or baked as a flat bread. The grains can also be roasted whole and made into a porridge for children. The dried stalks are used as thatch for roofs. Wheat breads are prepared during Thangmi rituals, particularly for marriage and death.

jake (D) & (S)
Nepali *cāmal*
uncooked rice, rice in general, *Oryza sativa*
The leaves and stalks are collected as fodder for domesticated animals. The rice grain is harvested between *kārtik* and *mãsir*. The grains can also be roasted whole and made into porridge for children. The dried stalks are used as thatch for roofs. Some form of rice is used in most Thangmi rituals. Rice is a newer import and luxury food, and most Thangmi villagers do not own their own rice fields.

jumu (D) ~ dundup (S)
Nepali *jimbu*
Nepal aromatic leaf garlic, *Allium hypsistum, Allium wallichii*
This is used as a spice to flavour lentil soup.

jhumit (D)
no Nepali name available
a species of tree
The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals, and the trunk is burned as firewood.

kadhrap (D) ~ kyadrap (S) ~ konṭap (S)
Nepali *malāyo*
The leaves and stalks are collected as fodder for domesticated animals in the month of *mãsir*, and the wood of the tree trunk is burned as firewood. The fruit ripens in *mãsir* and is beaten, dried and then made into a chutney. The ripe fruit is useful as a medicine to combat diarrhoea, as an antidote to mushroom poisoning and to lessen the oral irritation caused by eating taro. The plant is also used to make wicker baskets and other goods, and is used by shamans to construct the outer part of their ritual drums. The shape of the branches can be altered using hot water or steam, making them suitable for the construction of items which require elasticity, such as the catapults or slingshots used by children to kill birds.

kamleko ṭhi (D) ~ klicyupui (S)
from Nepali *kāmle*
artillery plant, *Pilea symmeria; Pilea wightii*
The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals in the month of *sāun* and *bhadau,* and the wood of the tree trunk is burned as firewood.

kampe (D)
Nepali *gidro*
soft pith of bamboo
This is used exclusively for weaving bamboo baskets and other goods.

kanṭap (D)
Nepali *kāmro*
a chip of bamboo or splint of wood
These are used to make carrying baskets or cradles, and are secured to the outside of bamboo goods and wicker cots to strengthen them.

kapa (D) ~ kapaʔ (S)
Nepali *bãs*
feathery bamboo, *Bambusa vulgare*
The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals. The small shoots are edible between *asār* and *bhadau,* and are cooked as a vegetable curry or made into chutney. The stronger stalks of bamboo are used as ceiling beams in house construction. Household articles and baskets are commonly made of feathery bamboo. Some roofs, huts and ladders are also made of this species of bamboo on account of its strength. Inside the old bamboo stalks there is a kind of white ‘butter’ which is an excellent ointment for burns. Inside young bamboo is a different kind of watery

substance which is fed to adults and children to stop bedwetting. Feathery bamboo is also used to construct the bier on which the deceased is carried to the cremation ground. This ritual bamboo structure is known as a *maraŋseŋ*. See also *rapa*.

karjek (D) ~ karceʔ (S)
Nepali *ukhu*
sugar cane, *Saccharum officinarum*
The sap is used as sugar to sweeten tea and is also consumed as a medicine against jaundice. During Thangmi wedding rituals, shamans burn small pieces of sugar cane in the fire along with rice.

kosaseŋ (D)
Nepali *kāli-kāṭh*
a species of tree, *Cephalanthus naucleoides*
The leaves are collected as fodder for goats. The wood of the trunk and that of larger branches is used to manufacture handles for domestic tools and is also used for furniture. Chippings are burned as firewood.

kunlareŋ ~ kullareŋ (D) & (S)
from Nepali *karṇaphul*
a species of flower, *Stellaria vestita*
This flower is worn for beauty's sake only, and has no practical uses.

kwai (D) ~ bhoṇyaʔ (S)
Nepali *ālu*
potato, *Solanum tuberosum*
The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals, and the bulb is cooked and consumed as vegetable curry.

kwai ~ kwoi (D) & (S)
Nepali *tarul*
all root vegetables, and specifically *Dioscorea sagittata*
The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals, and the bulb is consumed as a vegetable after being boiled and peeled. A certain red form should be eaten when suffering from diarrhoea, particularly if the stool is white or red with blood. On the Hindu festival of *māghe sākrānti*, after an early morning ritual at the nearest water source, a *ṭikā* is made from raw *kwai* and placed on the forehead of all attendees. It is believed to bring good luck if *kwai* is eaten before anything else on this morning.

khokorsokor (D)
Nepali *sukeko sāgpāt*
The edible dried leaves of any green vegetable.

muikwai (S)
Nepali *pusṭakārī*
The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals, and the bulb is cooked, peeled and eaten.

nem kwai (D) ~ suŋdaŋ (S)
from Nepali *ghar tarul*
white yam, *Dioscorea alata*
See above description for *kwai*.

kyaŋ (D) & (S)
Nepali *cilāune*
needle wood tree, *Schima wallichii*
The wood is used to make ploughs and furniture, and chippings are burned as firewood. The timber is excellent for house construction, however, so little is burned.

khoma (D)
Nepali *kodo-ko bhus*
the feathery inflorescence of the millet plant
This is collected as fodder for domesticated animals.

lakaṇe (D) & (S)
Nepali *mulā*
radish, *Raphanus sativus*
The root is eaten raw as a snack, and is also made into a pickle or chutney. Radish is believed to settle the stomach and to reduce gas when eaten raw. The leaves are eaten as a vegetable curry to help against jaundice. When picked and dried, the leaves have a medicinal function as a cure for headaches and fever during the monsoon months.

laca (D) ~ lasa (S)
Nepali *ãgerī*
Indian rhododendron, *Melastoma melabatricum*; Lyonia, *Lyonia ovalifolia*
The tree trunk can be burned as firewood, and the leaves are used to roll local cigarettes made of *bajareŋ*. When beaten and mixed with cold water, the leaves are rubbed on the skin to reduce inflammations, irritations and

allergies. If the leaves are eaten by goats in the months of *phāgun* and *cait*, they may be poisonous and kill the animal. In such cases, however, the meat of the animal is not poisoned and may still be consumed by humans.

liki ~ likin (D)
Nepali *gahũ-ko khar, chwālī*
wheat stalks
Used to make thatch for house roofs.

liŋliŋ (D) ~ kiji cameʔ (S)
Nepali *(kālo) nigālo, māliṅgo, coyā (bā̃s)*
red Himalayan bamboo, *Thamnocalamus spathiflorus;*
and small mountain bamboo, *Arundinaria intermedia;*
and tufted bamboo, *Dendrocalamus hamiltonii*
See the above description for *camek*.

loŋa (D) ~ jalat (S)
Nepali *lapsi*
Nepalese hog plum, *Choerospondias axillaris*
The leaves are collected as fodder for goats and the fruit is made into chutney. The trunk is used for furniture and burned as firewood. It is believed that if a person with a high fever eats *loŋa*, he or she will likely die.

luŋkuṇiŋ (D)
Nepali *kā̃giyo rukh*
silky oak, *Grevillea robusta*
The leaves are collected as fodder for all domesticated animals, and the trunk is used for furniture and burned as firewood.

lutum (D) & (S)
Nepali *gogan*
a species of tree, *Saurauia napaulensis*
The leaves are collected as fodder for all domesticated animals, and the trunk is burned as firewood. The fruit has a seed which is sucked for its sweet flavour.

marci (D)
Nepali *khorsāni*
red pepper, *Capsicum frutescens*
This spice is used in the preparation of most curries, and is also used to dis-attach leeches from the body and kill them. Thangmi shamans often use

marci in their rituals, both fresh and dried, to exorcise malevolent spirits affecting people or houses. In such rituals, *marci* is burned in the fire to give off an acrid and foul-smelling smoke.

usare maṇai (D) ~ maṇa usyare (S)
Nepali *marcā*
yeast, leaven, *Saccharomyces*
Literally meaning 'medicine bread', yeast is used in the fermentation process for making local beer and distilled spirit. It also plays an important role in Thangmi wedding and death rituals, often as a substitute for beer should none be available.

meluŋ (D) & (S)
Nepali *macheno*
white heather, *Gaultheria fragrantissima*
The leaves are collected as fodder for all domesticated animals, but only in the months between *kārthik* and *phāgun*. The fruit can be eaten raw and has a sweet flavour. The leaves are used as perfume and may help to relieve nasal blockages (as a local substitute for Vicks). Shamans use the leaves of the *meluŋ* in exorcism rituals for humans and cows, during which they are set alight and used to beat the body of the possessed individual.

meluŋpaŋ (D)
Nepali *bimiro*
the large wild lime, citron, *Citrus medica*
The trunk of the tree is burned as firewood, while the edible citrus fruit, which ripens between *bhadau* and *pus*, is eaten raw. The outside skin is sweet, and the inner flesh is sour. The fruit is worshipped during the Hindu festival of *tihār*. During the Thangmi wedding ritual, the very top of the tree is used to make a necklace for the groom, to whom it is presented on the night before the wedding by the attendant shaman. The plant also has a medicinal use during labour and birth: if the child has been born but the placenta is not forthcoming, then roots of this plant are tied together, along with a copper coin, and placed in the navel of the birthing woman. This is believed to expedite the expulsion of the placenta. Finally, if the leaves are eaten by animals or humans during pregnancy, the foetus will likely be aborted. In these uses, *meluŋpaŋ* resembles the *bârma* plant discussed above.

more (D)
Nepali *ban silām*
the shrub, *Perilla frutescens*
When the fresh leaves are rolled between the fingers, a small quantity of juice is released which is very effective in removing leeches from the body. *Chinik* is the name for a chutney made from the seeds. Once the seeds are black and have ripened, they are picked and ground. The chutney is often eaten with cucumber.

moṭe (D) & (S)
Nepali *bhaṭmās*
soya bean, *Glycine max*
The pulse can be eaten fresh or dried, either a roasted snack or in a curried preparation. During the Thangmi death ritual, the dried pulse is used to represent the eyes of the deceased.

mui (D) & (S)
Nepali *kerā*
banana, plantain, *Musa x paradisiaca*
The fruit is eaten raw and is used in many rituals by neighbouring Hindu castes. The leaves are used in a Thangmi ritual which precedes the marriage ceremony. When a patient is very ill, a shaman may slice a banana lengthways to give the person a chance of living a little longer. This ritual can also be used as a prophylactic measure against future or imminent disease. The sap released by the banana tree is believed to be a good remedy against fever and pneumonia, but only when drunk directly from the tree.

mus (D) ~ syaŋḍaŋ (S)
Nepali *makai-ko jũgā*
cornsilk, *Zea mays*
This is collected as fodder for all domesticated animals.

naŋai (D) & (S)
Nepali *allo sisnu*
Himalayan nettle, *Girardinia diversifolia*
The same plant as *calou*, but *naŋai* refers to the practical and ritual purposes and not its use as an edible foodstuff. See *calou* for further description.

nara (D) & (S)
Nepali *jarā*
The root of any plant.

nili (D)
Nepali *nibuvā*
lemon, Otaheite orange, *Citrus limon*
The tree trunk is burned as firewood only once the tree is dead and dried out. The fruit is sour and is eaten raw, or made into chutney and preserved. The fruit has a medicinal function as an antidote to mushroom poisoning and also against oral irritations caused by eating taro. See also *paŋ*.

nunuṭhi (D) ~ nunuseŋ (S)
from Nepali *dudhilo*
the tree, *Ficus neriifolia*
Literally meaning 'milk fodder', this is the favourite fodder for most domesticated animals. The trunk is used as firewood, and only rarely for furniture. The fruit, which ripens in *bhadau*, is edible and has a sweet taste.

nuru (D)
Nepali *kaṭahar*
jackfruit, *Artocarpus heterophyllus;* or pineapple, *Ananas comosus*
An archaic term, rarely used in vernacular Thangmi. The plant does not grow in the Thangmi-speaking area, but the wood of jackfruit is known to be good for furniture.

nuruŋ (D)
Nepali *torī*
mustard seed, Indian rape seed, *Brassica rapa*
The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals, and the young leaves are picked and prepared as vegetable curry for human consumption. The leaves can also be preserved as *gundruk*. The seeds release an oil which is pressed and extracted for cooking or burned as lamp fuel. The oil is also used for head and body massage, particularly for babies and young children. Mustard seeds are used in the Thangmi death ritual to scare away malevolent spirits, and are sprinkled, together with the pressed oil, on corpses to make them burn speedily during cremation. The oil is applied to bleeding wounds in the belief that this will precipitate healing and prevent infection. Before the heavy monsoon field work begins, both humans and oxen are fed large quantities of *nuruŋ* oil, honey and eggs to give them strength for the coming months.

nyakaṇeŋ (D) & (S)
Nepali *sisnu*
stinging nettle, *Urtica dioica*

The leaves are collected as fodder for all domesticated animals, both raw and cooked. When cooked in water and consumed as a soup, the nettle leaves are believed to stimulate lactation in buffaloes and cows. The flowers and leaves are eaten year round by humans as a vegetable curry or soup, and are known to contain many vitamins good for general health. While some Thangmi still make clothing from *nyakaṇeŋ*, the fibre is not as strong as *calou*, so its main use is culinary. See also *calou*.

ŋyaŋcaldak (D) ~ calou (S)
Nepali *hāḍe unyau, sothar*
male shield fern, *Dryopteris filix-max*
When the stalks are burned on millet fields, the ash makes a good fertiliser.

palka (D) & (S)
from Hindi *palak,* Nepali *sāg*
leafy greens, particularly of the Indian mustard plant, *Brassica juncea*
The word *palka* is used for the leaves of all edible green vegetables which can be eaten or preserved as *gundruk*. It is believed that consuming leafy green vegetable matter will lead to good muscular development due to the high level of vitamin content in the leaves.

paŋ (D)
Nepali *amilo*
all sour fruits, such as lemons and limes
The tree trunk of these species can be burned as firewood, but only once the tree is dead and the trunk has dried out. The sour fruits are eaten fresh and raw, or made into chutney and preserved. The fruits also have a medicinal function as an antidote to mushroom poisoning and are believed to relieve the oral irritation caused by eating taro. See also *nili*.

paṭaya (D)
Nepali *soyā*
rice stalks once the paddy has been removed, *Oryza sativa*
The stalks are collected as fodder for all domesticated animals. When dry, the stalks are woven into long mats for sitting and sleeping on, known as *gundri* in Nepali. The dried stalks are further used as roof thatch for traditional houses. Cows may be afflicted by a bad fever in the monsoon months and become weak or be unable to move easily. If *paṭaya* are fed as fodder to these ill animals, they have a better chance of making a full and speedy recovery.

pakpak (D) ~ paʔpaʔ (S)
Nepali *buṅgo*
pod of the plantain
These pods have no medicinal, ritual or nutritional value.

puṭuṭampe (D)
Nepali *kāḍe cāp*
prickly apple, *Catesbaea spinosa*
The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals, and the timber is used for making furniture. The chippings are burned as firewood.

puya (D)
Nepali *bīu, biruvā, ṭusā*
The general Thangmi term for all seeds or plant shoots.

puyapasa (D) ~ puyapesa (S)
Nepali *bīubijan*
The general Thangmi term for seeds and grains.

phaŋgaṇeŋ ~ phaŋŋaṇeŋ (D) ~ yaʔ (S)
Nepali *piṇḍālu*
giant taro, *Alocasia indicum*; co-co yam, *Colocasia esculenta*
The roots are edible if first boiled and peeled. The leaves are eaten as vegetable curry, both fresh and dried. When eaten fresh or cooked in water and made into a soup, the leaves and bulb are believed to stimulate lactation in buffaloes and cows. During the Thangmi death ritual, a *phaŋgaṇeŋ* is used to represent the head of the deceased in the reconstruction of the body. The ritual term is *ya ~ yak*.

phaṭu (D)
Nepali *pharsi*
pumpkin, summer or winter squash, marrow,
Cucurbita maxima; Cucurbita pepo
The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals, but are also eaten by humans as a vegetable curry. The large fruit is also made into vegetable curry when it ripens between the months of *jeṭh* and *asoj*, and the dried seeds are eaten as a peanut-like snack. The fruit is believed to contain agents which help fight jaundice when eaten raw.

racya (D) & (S)
Nepali *dhān*
paddy, rice in the field, harvested but unhusked rice, *Oryza sativa*
The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals, and the grain is the most cherished foodstuff among Thangmi villagers. Thangmi rituals invariably use rice in some form, raw, cooked or as flour, the uses of which are too numerous to list in the present article. See also *jake* and *paṭaya*.

rani ukkar (D) ~ ukkar (S)
Nepali *ban-ko bhyākur*
wild cush-cush, yam, *Dioscorea deltoidea*
The bulb is edible when peeled and boiled, as is the fruit which grows on the creeper.

rapa (D)
Nepali *tāme bā̃s, tāmā bā̃s*
long bamboo, feathery or tufted bamboo, *Bambusa tulda, Bambusa vulgaris*
See *kapa*.

rapacamek (D)
Nepali *coyā bā̃s*
tufted bamboo, *Dendrocalamus hamiltonii*
See *kapa*.

raphai (D)
Nepali *kāphal*
wild strawberry, *Fragaria vesca*
The tree trunk is used for furniture and firewood, and the 'fruit' which ripens between *cait* and *baiśākh* is eaten raw. The tree bark, when peeled off, beaten and mixed with water, has a black colour and is used to paint doors and houses. The ripe 'fruit' has medicinal properties for patients suffering from diarrhoea with blood in the stool. It is also believed to cure general stomach infections.

rence (D) ~ renche (S)
Nepali *dāl, sĩmī*
beans, pulses, *Lablab purpureus (Dolichos lablab)*
The general Thangmi term for beans and pulses of all kinds. The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals, and the dried fruits are cooked as a soup or vegetable curry. Pulses are believed to help stomach cramps when eaten as a soup.

reŋ ~ ryeŋ (D) & (S)
Nepali *phūl*
The general Thangmi word for flower.

reŋ mesek (D) ~ ryeŋ-ko meseʔ (S)
Nepali *phūl-ko ãkhā*
The general Thangmi word for the tepals of a flower, likely a calque from Nepali.

rikhi (D)
Nepali *kābhro*
a species of tree, *Ficus lacor*
The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals and the wood is burned as firewood.

ruipaŋ ~ ragdu paŋ (D)
Nepali *bhakī amilo, bhakīmlo*
Chinese sumac, *Rhus javanica*
The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals and the wood is burned as firewood. The fruit, which ripens around the month of *pus*, can be eaten either raw or as a chutney. The cooked fruit is believed to work as a cure for a distended stomach or serious cramps, for which it is mixed together with water and a raw egg and is drunk down quickly in one go due to its very sour taste.

sabal (D)
Nepali *jhyāu*
corn spurrey, *Spergula arvensis*
There are two forms, one found on trees and one on rocks. The tree variety has no use, while the rock variety is applied to deep cuts or wounds for its healing and antiseptic qualities.

syoksyok (D) ~ syoʔsyoʔ (S)
Nepali *loktā*
Daphne bholua
This is used to make rope or string to secure livestock and the bark is used to make traditional paper. It is only with the advent of development projects and cottage industries that paper production has taken off. The stalks are used to weave sitting or sleeping mats (*gundri* in Nepali). The raw leaves are fed to baby goats suffering from fever or diarrhoea in the belief that these will cure illness.

saŋa ~ sãwã (D) & (S)
Nepali *kodo*
finger millet, *Eleusine coracana*
The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals, and the grain is harvested and eaten by humans as a kind of paste. During the Thangmi death ritual, balls of millet flour, known as *ere* in Thangmi, are cooked and eaten by the officiating shaman and mourners. Pregnant women are fed millet paste in the belief that this will give them the necessary strength to deliver their baby and will produce a strong child.

sempher (D)
Nepali *besār*
turmeric, *Curcuma longa*; or Indian arrowroot, *Curcuma angustifolia*
The leaves are useless but the root is used to flavour curries and soups. The root is also boiled in hot water and drunk as an infusion to help ease throat pains, cold, coughs and fever. Turmeric should not be consumed by people with jaundice as it is believed to make their skin turn even more yellow.

sempir (D) ~ semper (S)
Nepali *aduvā*
ginger, *Zingiber officinale*
The leaves are useless but the root is used to flavour curries and soups. The root is also boiled in hot water and drunk as an infusion to help ease throat pains, cold and coughs.

sijigare (D) ~ sidigare (S)
Nepali *siūḍī*
prickly pear, *Opuntia monocantha*
The thorny bush is very effective as a fence to control animals' movements. The milk extracted from the stem is collected and used to stun (or even kill) fish in small bodies of water. This milk is a powerful poison which has an acidic quality that can burn the skin or even blind if brought into contact with the eyes. When suffering from a splinter which cannot be removed by hand or with tweezers because it has lodged too far under the skin, a small drop of prickly pear milk can make the wound heat up and disgorge the offending splinter. Moreover, a dab of this same milk can be used to dry up painful boils on the body. Thangmi villagers often cut a little piece of the prickly pear bush and place it on their roofs or above their doors to prevent attacks from malevolent spirits. It is also believed to protect humans from suffering from fainting spells. Thangmi shamans feed a very small amount of the milk to individuals who are bewitched because the poison will make

the spirit want to depart from the affected body.

sinlati (D) & (S)
Nepali *bhimsen pāte*
butterfly bush, *Buddleja (Buddleia) asiatica*
The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals, and the trunk is burned as firewood. During Thangmi wedding rituals, the female relatives of the groom wear necklaces made of the white flower.

sisin (D)
Nepali *sāl*
Sal tree, *Shorea robusta*
The trunk is used for furniture and also burned as firewood. The large leaves are pinned together and used as disposable plates during festivals and rituals. The resin is burned as an incense because it releases a pleasant smell.

srai (D)
Nepali *jhiṅānī* (D)
a species of small tree, *Eurya japonica*, also *Eurya symplocina*
The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals, and the trunk is used for furniture and house construction. The chippings are burned as firewood.

sumuhu (D)
Nepali *suntalā*
orange, *Citrus sinensis*; mandarin, tangerine, *Citrus reticulata*
An archaic term, rarely used in vernacular Thangmi. The trunk is burned as firewood when dead and dry, and the fruit is sweet and edible. The peel is eaten as a cure for tonsillitis and fever or headaches, although the fruit is not eaten at such times. The fruit is used by Hindus, but not in Thangmi rituals.

sunamre (D)
Nepali *phalāme kā̃ḍā*
a species of tree with large spines, *Homalium napaulense*
The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals, and the trunk is burned as firewood.

sunamre (D)
Nepali *hāḍe biṇe*
the tree, *Ilex dipyrena*

The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals, and the trunk is burned as firewood. The fruit, when ripe and black, can be eaten raw as a sweet tasting snack.

suru (D)
Nepali *supāri*
betel nut, areca nut, *Areca catechu*
An archaic term, rarely used in vernacular Thangmi.

teŋseŋ (D) ~ teŋsiŋ (S)
Nepali *ban*
The general Thangmi word for a forest, jungle or dense woodland area.

toriŋgya (D) ~ tory (S)
Nepali *ghirāũlā*
serpent or snake gourd, *Trichosanthes cucumerina*
The fruit, which ripens between the months of *bhadau* and *kārtik*, can be cooked and eaten when small. When dried, the fruit acts as an excellent loofah-like scrubbing brush for washing the body or clothes.

ṭampe (D)
Nepali *cãp*
a species of the magnolia tree, *Magnolia campbelli*
The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals, and the trunk is the highest grade, most prized wood for furniture and house construction. It is also the preferred wood for bee hives since bees are attracted to it. The chippings are burned as firewood.

ṭiku paŋ (D) ~ uchu (S)
Nepali *kimbu*
mulberry, *Morus laevigata*
The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals and the wood is burned as firewood. The fruit, which ripens around the month of *pus*, is edible and can be eaten either raw or as chutney. The fruit is also believed to lessen throat infections and swellings when eaten raw.

ṭukusiŋ (D)
Nepali *lãkurī*
a species of ash tree, *Fraxinus floribunda*
The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals and the wood is burned as firewood or sometimes made into furniture. Bees favour the

nectar of these flowers above other nectar, and even humans are known to like its taste.

ṭhare
Nepali *jhar*
The general word for weeds or tufts of grass.

kiji ṭhare (D)
from Nepali *kālī jhār*
crofton weed, *Eupatorium adenophorum*
The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals.

leplep ṭhare (D)
Nepali *khole jhār*
a species of plant, *Lecanthus peduncularis*
The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals. This species grows in and around marshes or bogs.

namdu ṭhare (D) ~ namdu chyare (S)
from Nepali *ganāune jhār*
goat weed, *Ageratum conyzoides*
The strong-smelling leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals.

ragdu ṭhare (D) ~ icidu chyare (S)
Nepali *abijālo*
a species of small annual plant, *Drymaria cordata*
The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals. This species commonly grows as a weed among tea bushes. This plant has a medicinal function when beaten, cooked with water, strained and consumed: it is believed to ease the pain of sore throats, fevers and headaches.

ṭhi
Nepali *ghā̃s*
The general Thangmi word for fodder.

ubhoŋkhaṭi
Nepali *gāītihāre phūl*
The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals. The leaves, when beaten and strained through water, can help cure a fever, although their flavour is very bitter.

uireŋ (D)
Nepali *titepātī*
mugwort, *Artemisia vulgaris*
The leaves are collected and burned fresh as incense. They are also an essential component of Thangmi rituals, particularly used to purify ritual space and the human body. If a Thangmi individual becomes ritually polluted by drinking someone else's beer, then consuming a few fresh leaves of mugwort will help to restore ritual purity. Thangmi shamans may eat mugwort leaves to purify themselves before major rituals. When eaten or rubbed on the body, the leaves are believed to protect against allergic reactions on the skin. The leaves also function as a pesticide when beaten and mixed with water to create an infusion which is then sprinkled on wooden furniture or household structures infested with termites or other wood-eating insects to make them disperse. The same infusion works as a pesticide when poured onto the freshly sown or early sprouting wheat seedlings.

ukkar (D)
Nepali *ban-ko bhyākur*
wild cush-cush, yam, *Dioscorea deltoidea*
The bitter-tasting bulb is edible when peeled and boiled, as is the fruit which grows on the creeper.

umak (D)
Nepali *ambā*
guava, *Psidium guajava*
An archaic term, rarely used in vernacular Thangmi. The fruit, which ripens between the months of *bhadau* and *mãsir*, can be eaten raw. The trunk of the tree is burned for firewood. The tree bark is collected, pounded into dust, added to hot water and then drunk as the best local medicine against dysentery with blood in the stool.

uskol (D) ~ oskol (S)
Nepali *bhalāyo*
marking nut, *Semecarpus anacardium;*
cashew nut, *Semecarpus occidentale*
The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals and the trunk is burned as firewood. Its primary use is in the purification ritual for a new house or settlement, during which the officiating shaman prepares seven stakes of this wood, placing one in each corner of the house, one by the door, one in the courtyard and one at the nearest fork in the road. These

stakes are believed to keep the ghosts and evil spirits at bay. Furthermore, when the milk of cows or buffaloes has turned or is no longer tasty, the milch animals are said to be possessed. The seeds of these two nut species are added to the milk to restore its taste, and to mark the departure of the possessing spirits. Livestock possession can also be counteracted by burning the seeds as incense, since the smoke is believed to chase spirits away. Should the resin of the tree come into contact with the human body, a strong allergic reaction occurs which burns the skin. This swelling and the associated pain can be reduced by applying goat milk.

wacareŋ (D)
from Nepali *ban kerā-ko phūl*
The resin which is released when the fruit is broken in two is sticky and is used as an adhesive to bind things together. The only use for the flower is during the Thangmi *bhume pujā*, at which time it is placed on top of the wheat flour effigy which dominates the ritual.

wala (D)
Nepali *ṭhūlo pāt*
any large leaf

warewasan (S)
Nepali *phalphūl*
all fruit

yurkunsuna (D)
Nepali, Latin and vernacular English terms unknown.
a species of shrub of which the flower is used during Thangmi wedding rituals.

Conclusion

As the above list amply demonstrates, indigenous Thangmi ethnobotanical understanding is extensive and sophisticated. Many of these plants are still used medicinally in preference to Western bio-medicine. The sheer volume of Thangmi lexical terms for plant species outweighs any other discrete class of nouns which I have collected in my Thangmi-Nepali-English glossary. I hope that botanists and scholars of natural science will be able to use this list, together with the countless others that exist for the languages and cultures of Nepal, to develop a comparative and coherent understanding of the ethnobotanical knowledge of Himalayan peoples.

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