

# the peoples of the upper ankhu khola valley<sup>1</sup>

*Gérard Toffin*

The Ankhu Khola valley is located about 45 km. west of Kathmandu in the area bounded by the Trisuli valley to the east, the Buri Gandaki to the west, in the north by the great range of the Himalayas which forms Nepal's frontier with China, and in the south by the Mahabharat mountains which dominate the Indo-Gangetic Plain. Springing from the snowy slopes of Ganesh Himal, an impenetrable barrier which dominates the northern end of the valley, the Ankhu Khola flows in a southerly direction 35 km. where it joins the Buri-Gandaki slightly east of Gorkha. Although the valley is quite wide downstream, it becomes progressively narrower as one travels northward to the source. Above the village of Burāng, where the Kintang Khola joins the Ankhu Khola, the river flows between two extremely steep slopes. The northernmost part of the Ankhu Khola region, the area which is most densely inhabited, is formed by a series of small tributaries such as the Bhabil and the Bhaletang Khola each flowing through small valleys. All ecological zones, from tropical to alpine forest are included in its length (figure 2). Within a distance of 30 km. the altitude ranges from 800 to 7500m, a difference of about 6700m. Villages are located between 1400 and 2100m, while cultivation can be found up to 2500m.; above this line, the forest begins and higher still, at around 3700m there are alpine meadows.

One can reach the Ankhu Khola from the east by either of two routes: by climbing up from Jhārlāng and Burāng or by going over the Rupchet Pass (4000m), three days walk to the north-East of Trisuli. The valley route is used in the winter, while the pass is used during monsoon. The Ankhu Khola can be reached from the west as well, that is to say from the Buri Gandaki; first a 320m. pass must be crossed above Khading, followed by a descent into the Ghattya Khola valley towards Burāng.

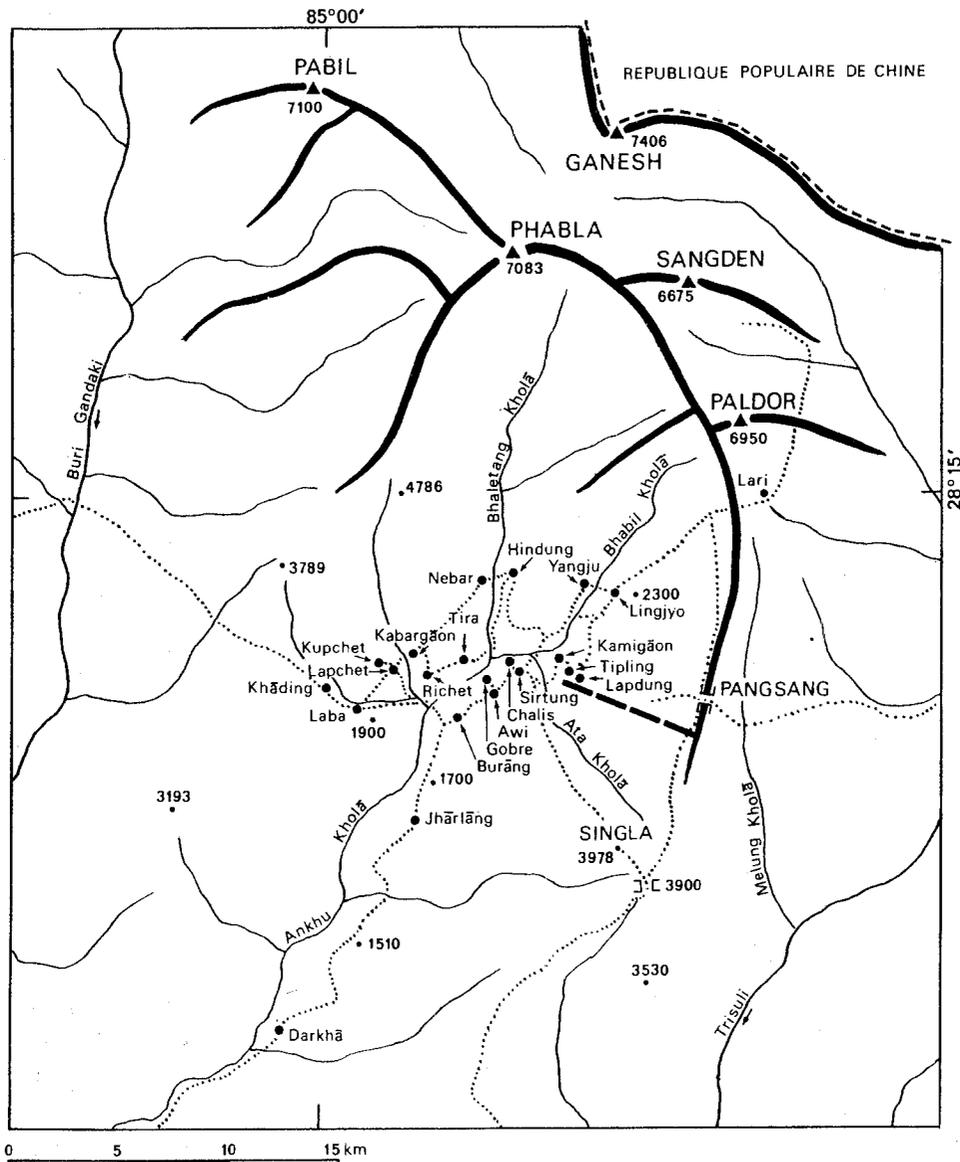
## Settlement

According to the 1971 census, the total population of the Ankhu Khola valley is 16,914 distributed through four gaon panchayats<sup>2</sup> as follows: Sirtung (5140 inhabitants), Darkhā (4,384), Jhārlāng (4,013), and Lāba (3,777)<sup>3</sup>. Two of these panchayats, Sirtung and Lāba with a total of 8517 inhabitants make up the upper part of the valley.

According to this census, Dhading District or Dhading Jillā, in which the Ankhu Khola is situated, contains 189,616 persons who speak Nepali as a mother tongue, 36,884 Tamang, 8,028 Gurung and 921 Newar. In the upper Ankhu Khola, the order of ethnolinguistic groups is different: the bulk of the population is Tamang, more than 70% according to our estimate, the Gurung are

the second largest with 20%. After this, there are 47 households of Kāmi, the Indo-Nepali blacksmith caste and the Newar (15 households). A small community of Damai (musician-tailors) live downstream in the village of Darkhā, but this locality is outside our field of study. The population is distributed equally on either side of the valley, slightly larger in the east.

FIG: 1. The upper and middle Ahkhu Khola valley. The Tipling-Pangsang transect shown in Figure 2. is marked on the map. At Lari, north of Pangsang, some Indians on the payroll of a Nepalese company are mining lead and copper deposits. Several Tamang from the upper valley are employed in extracting the minerals and in portering equipment from Trisuli as well.



The lingua franca in the upper valley is Tamang, a Tibeto-Burmese language, not Nepali. This is essentially because of the small number of people of Indo-Nepali origin and the extremely low literacy rate—6% according to the 1971 census. The Newar, Kami, and sometimes the Gurung have to communicate with the Tamang in this language.

It is still too early to write a history of the settlement of the Ankhu Khola region. We were unable to find any documents on this region at the time of our visit; at present we have only the legends of the inhabitants to rely on in proposing hypotheses. In all likelihood, the earliest residents of the valley are the Tamang. According to tradition, this ethnic group originated in the south of Tibet: Tibetan chronicles mention that the Tamang made up part of the cavalry regiments of the Tibetan King, Songtsen Gampo, when he invaded Nepal in the seventh century<sup>4</sup>, the Tamang didn't return, but settled in Nepal and India. One legend, collected in Sirtung, tells of the arrival of the Tamang in the Ankhu Khola fifteen generations ago via Kyirong, northwest of the valley. By this route, four baje (ancestors or respected persons) reached Pangsang, the pass which provides access to the eastern part of the valley from Trisuli. In order to divide the valley which lay before them, these four baje resorted to a series of tests: the first would allow the winner to establish a village where rose from the valley a building with a gilded dome (gajur-Nep.). The winner, it was decided, would be the man who could split a rock in two with his knife (khukuri-Nep.)<sup>5</sup> The first three broke their blades on the stone, but the fourth, called Miga, succeeded in splitting the rock. Today, a split rock still can be seen at Pangsang testifying to this exploit. So Miga settled in the area around the gajur, which was called Sitajeth and founded the first village of the Ankhu Khola: Sirtung. The other three walked around the valley and competed for the rest of the land by means of other tests: Pading founded Jhārlāng; Xlarke: Lāba; and Bali: Tipling<sup>6</sup>. According to another legend collected in Sirtung, it is said that these four villages were governed by kings (rāja-Nep.), ten generations ago. Dardo reigned in Sirtung, Yanche in Jhārlāng, Gili in Lāba and Khuruwa in Tipling.

Before the conquest and unification of Nepal by Prithvi Narayan Shah in the second half of the eighteenth century, the western part of Nepal was divided into small independant principalities whose territories did not extend beyond the limits of a valley or the walls of a settlement. Isolated from each other by the geographic conditions peculiar to the hills of Nepal, these principalities lived in closed self-sufficiency when they were not warring with their neighbors. It was only after the unification of Nepal that these rājas which governed their little kingdoms were replaced by administrators directly attached to the central power. Although there is no documentary evidence, one supposes that identical events occurred on a smaller scale in the Ankhu

Khola region; the only remains from this earlier period are the old fortresses (darbār-Nep., ghothen-Tam.) in which their kings lived. These remains can be seen in Sirtung, Lāba and Jhārlāng; they were built of stone, generally on the top of a rocky eminence with difficult access.

According to local tradition, these kings were from the Ghale clan. Legends tell of how on the eve of a war between Khuruwa, king of Tipling and his father-in-law, Dardo, king of Sirtung, the latter was betrayed by his daughter and killed. To fix his successor, the Tamang met at Kāshīgaon on the Buri-Gandaki, and kidnapped a Ghale child to make him king of Sirtung. They reckoned that only the young boy who would sit on his cap (topi) so as not to get dirty would have princely qualities. In this way, the boy became king: he is known today as the Khunga Rāja. This legend seems to be the echo of an important political event: is this not a veiled way of recalling an invasion from the west or a change of dynasty? At least this explanation would have the merit of fitting in with the present situation, for to this day, Tamang do not consider the Ghale as real members of their ethnic group, they still maintain a sharp boundary between the groups; the Ghale live in separate quarters and have a certain pre-eminant status compared to the Tamang, in spite of the fact that the two groups speak the same language and share the same culture. A comparison between the clan and political structure of the Tamang and the Gurung, another ethnic group with a Tibeto-Burmese language living to the west of the Ankhu Khola, is equally striking and worth stressing; in these two groups there is the same association between one clan and the function of royalty, and between another clan and the function of an executive ministry. In both groups, the royal clan is called Ghale<sup>7</sup> the ministerial clan of the Gurung is called Lamechane<sup>8</sup> while that of the Tamang is called Thokra or Rambot<sup>9</sup>.

The Gurung have not been settled in the Ankhu Khola for a very long time. Here they are far from their place of origin between the Kali-Gandaki and the Marsyandi Rivers. Coming from the west, the Gurung established themselves in autonomous villages: Khāding, Lapchet and Tira on the west bank, and Chālis on the east. A story we were told at Sirtung relates one episode of this migration: "When the Gurung arrived in the valley, they had neither field nor village. At first, they worked in the copper and iron mines, then they came to ask the Tamang of Sirtung for permission to found a village below theirs; the Tamang agreed. Then the pioneer Gurung asked the Tamang for land: the Tamang mukhiyā (head of a clan or village-Nep.) was reluctant but finally agreed to grant them some unused land equal in size to the skin of a buffalo. But the ingenious Gurung cut the buffalo skin up into this strips, so that they could cover a very large area." This story, without doubt legendary, shows something of the tension that must have occurred between the two ethnic groups at the time of the Gurung settlement in the valley.

The Newar and the Kāmī were the last to arrive in the Ankhu Khola. We shall confine ourselves here to the traditions of the origin of the Newar. They arrived in the Ankhu Khola eight generations ago at the invitation of the Sirtung Tamang who decided to confer on them the right to sell tobacco and cloth in the village: Dardan Singh, a Newar of the Bare<sup>10</sup> caste was chosen. He came from Pulchowk, near Patan. The mukhiyā of Sirtung then went to find this man and make their request: as a guarantee they granted Dardan Singh and his descendants a monopoly of Tamang business in Sirtung; moreover to show their good faith, they agreed to supply a shroud (katro-Nep.) for the funeral rites of any deceased member of this Newar family. Dardan Singh accepted this proposition and settled soon after in Sirtung.

### The Population Groups

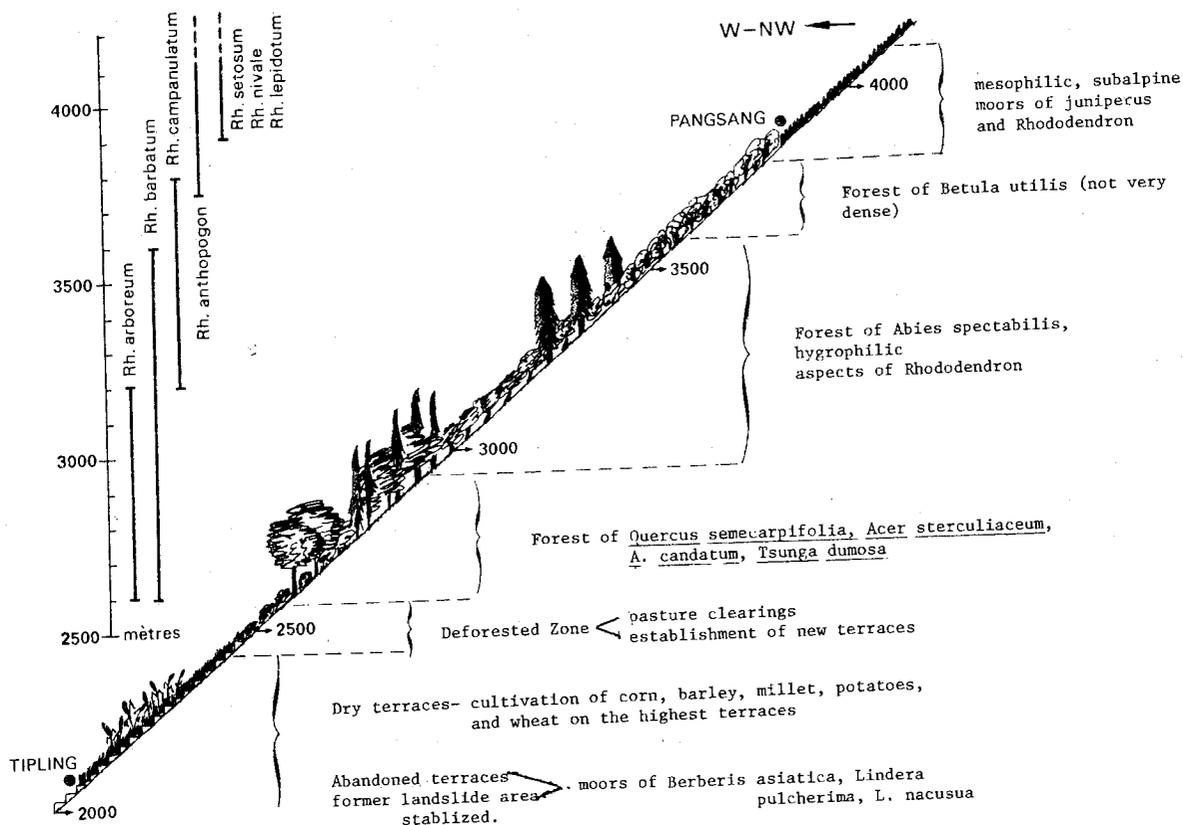
The Ankhu Khola is essentially a rural area: the Gurung and Tamang who form the majority of the population rely mostly on agriculture and animal husbandry; within these two groups there is little division of labor: not even a full-time specialist in any particular activity. The only artisans worth the name are the Kāmī, blacksmiths who supply the peasants of the valley with agricultural implements. The Newar are engaged principally in trade, although they will not refuse to cultivate lands on occasion. These four groups live in the same ecological zone, between 1800 and 2100 m. The population is not distributed according to altitude—all live within the same areas. They will now be discussed in order of their numerical importance.

The Tamang are divided into a certain number of clans called ri (Tam.). These are often referred to by the Nepali term thar or jāt instead of by the Tamang term. In 1974, the following clan names were noted in the upper Ankhu Khola: Dimdung, Ghale, Momba, Thokra (or Rambot), Gomca, Lama and Thaba. These clans are patrilineal and exogamous; a Tamang may not marry into his own clan, nor into one from which he can trace his descent, or one with which he shares a similar tutelary deity. Thus there is no intermarriage between the Dimdung and the Momba, the Gomca and the Rambot, nor between the Ghale, Lala and the Rambot. Terms of address usually reserved for consanguinal relations are used between these groups.<sup>11</sup>

In Sirtung, each clan has its own divinity called kulgi xla, from the Nepali, kul which means descent, group or lineage and from the Classical Tibetan, lha meaning divinity. The Ghale and Rambot have a goddess from the Newar pantheon: Mahākālī. She is represented by a stone which is kept beside the hearth inside each house. Twice a year, in the full-moon of Baisāk (April-May) and Jeth (May-June)<sup>12</sup>, she is worshipped with offerings of barley beer and smoke of juniper to her altar; also, once every three years, in the full-moon of Baisāk, an effigy of Mahakali is made

of bamboo, carried around the village and burnt west of Sirtung at the border of the village land. The worship of the kulgi xla demonstrates some points common to all the Tamang clans of the valley: for example the tutelary deity of the Momba, Dalbo (or *dalbo mampa*) is also represented by a stone; she is kept in an alcove inside the house flanked by two other stones representing Nyabla and Ablung. These divine symbols are worshipped twice a year on the fullmoon of Baisāk and Bhadau (August-September).

FIG: 2 An ecological transect from Tipling to Pangsang, showing vegetation stages and the distribution of rhododendrons (prepared by B. Yon from fieldwork in 1974).



Clans are also associated with territorial protective deities which must be worshipped and which are collectively known as yülgi xla, from yül meaning country or territory<sup>13</sup>. In Situng, the yülgi xla are generally found on top of the mountains and hills surrounding the village. Ghale worship Brakar, Dimdung: Chembra, Gomca: Chimbala and the Momba worship Nyembu (in Sitajeth). Worship of the yülgi xla consist of long prayer recitations performed by specialists, the lambu; an altar is erected and torma in the image of the gods that are to be worshiped are made, then animals are sacrificed. The clans expect each territorial deity to protect the village from hail, hurricane, drought and sickness. The most important day of worship is in the full-moon of Baisāk; on this day, Ghale offer eggs to Brakar, Dimdung sacrifice a cock to Chembra and the Momba sacrifice a goat to Nyembu, the founding deity of the village who resides in Sitajeth in the middle of the settlement.

Clans are often spread out in the area according to an established order; in Sirtung, for example, one clan predominates in each quarter (mamca-Tam): Ghale and Rambot live in the northwest in Gompo, Dimdung in the northeast, in Barkap, Momba in the center, in Chyet, the Gomca in the south in Chuta, and in the east in Kharcā; marriages are always arranged within the village or with neighboring villages. With a few exceptions, the upper Ankhu Khola is an area of complete endogamy; in Sirtung, we found that 5% of the marriages were with Hindung, 4% with Tipling, 6% with Burāng, and 1% with Lāba. The proportion of exogamous marriages beyond the limits of the upper Ankhu Khola were less than 1%.

Compared to the Tamang, the Gurung of the Ankhu Khola seem extremely "deculturés"; by settling in this valley, they lost their language and a large part of their cultural traditions. Here the Gurung speak only in Nepali, or in Tamang when they speak with that group; we never heard a single word of Gurung spoken in this group. Moreover, the influence of the numerically superior Tamang group is quite appreciable in all aspects of the Gurung's material and even cultural life. There are no significant differences between the agricultural practices of these two communities: they both cultivate the same crops on the same fields, with the same tools and according to the same agricultural calendar. The design of the Gurung house has been better able to resist the influences of local design; several of the original characteristics have been maintained: roofs are high and thatched and the walls are ochred. Here too, however, the influence of Tamang design has begun to creep in with shingle roofs and wicker work (bhakāri-Nep.) walls.

Like the Tamang, the Gurung of the Ankhu Khola are divided into exogamous clans called thar (Nep.); we counted the following four clans: Ghale, Lamechane, Lama and Migi; the first three clans belong to the chārjāt and used to occupy the functions of

kings, ministers (or royal officers) and priests respectively:<sup>14</sup> today this differentiation has disappeared. The fourth thar is part of the sohrajāt, a grouping of clans with lower status than the former<sup>15</sup>. In principle, Migi may not intermarry with the three chārjāt clans.

For celebrating religious ceremonies, the Gurung have their own priests: lama from the Lamechane or Lama clans living in Khāding. Tamang lamas are never used; on the other hand, a Tamang shaman, bombo, may be invited to officiate in a Gurung house if there is a serious illness in the family.

A third group, the Kāmī live in small hamlets slightly apart from the Gurung and Tamang villages in the valley. In 1974, we counted 47 Kami households spread almost equally along the east bank (with 27 houses) and the west bank (with 20 houses). The Kami forge all the farming implements used by the Tamang and the Gurung, as well as a large part of the jewellery worn by both the men and the women; they make and repair kitchen utensils such as pots and pans, fire tripods, tools and musical instruments (knives, chains, jew's harps etc.). They are indispensable to the farmers of this region for the production of all these objects. Iron was once mined by the Gurungs, as mentioned in the legend above; now it is purchased in Trisuli or Kathmandu. In May, 1974 it cost Rs. 12 per dhārni (2.27 kg.) in Trisuli and from Rs. 9-10 per dhārni in Kathmandu; it is brought to the Ankhu Khola valley by Kāmī, Gurung or Tamang porters. Charcoal is prepared by the Kāmī themselves from oaks felled in the forest above the villages.

The blacksmiths have neither fields nor herds to speak of, they breed only some poultry and pigs. They must rely entirely on what they are paid by the farmers in cash or kind to meet their needs; this system of payment, not unusual in Nepal and close to the jājmani system in India, is called bāli (Nep.): every year, the client must provide his blacksmith with a basket full of the three largest annual cereal crops: corn in August, millet in October, barley or wheat from April to May. The blacksmith also gets from 4 mānās to 1 pāthi of potatoes at the beginning of monsoon. When the harvest is over, it is the Kāmī himself, that will claim his due from his clients in certain cases, otherwise, the Tamang or Gurung client carries the bāli directly to the smith.

It is difficult to calculate the exact volume of grain that the Kāmī gets every year; it varies according to a large number of factors, all of which are hard to take into account. As a rule, when the client supplies the iron, the Kāmī receives the equivalent of one basketful in volume called dhumche; if the client does not supply the raw materials, he must give the equivalent of a basketful called a daka, which is slightly bigger than the former. By and large, the bāli pays only for the repair and maintenance of agricultural implements and kitchen utensils;

every time the client wants something new to be made, he must pay an additional amount for the workmanship, (kāmako-Nep.). In May 1974, the kāmako for a knife (khukuri), reached Rs. 15; the total price of the tool was fixed at about Rs. 30 and the amount of iron necessary to make it was about one dhārni. The price of making a small hoe, komo, was Rs. 3; the total price of the tool was fixed at Rs. 5 or 6 and the amount of iron needed to make it was three pau ( $1/4$  dhārni). Finally, we should note that the volume of grain in a basket is proportional to the number of utensils made in a year. These few examples suffice to show that while the Kāmī are paid essentially in grain, there exists a parallel system of cash payment as well; rates of conversion allow interchange from one system to the other.

The Newar of the upper Ankhu Khola valley form a small community of about 15 houses; most live in Sirtung village, with some others in Gurung settlements such as Chālis and Khāding. This ethnic minority has been able to preserve its language and cultural traditions: Newari is spoken in the family and the parents take care to see that the children know how to speak it. The Newars of Sirtung also continue to celebrate the festivals of the Kathmandu valley: during August, religious music is played every evening and one person, incarnating the demon, Lakhe, dances in the village. The Newar, in fact, have never been integrated into the Tamang milieu; they go regularly to Trisuli or to the Kathmandu valley on business or to visit relatives. In contrast to the Tamang and the Gurung, they do not intermarry within the Ankhu Khola valley, but go most often to Trisuli to search for their wives; marriage with close relatives is forbidden and there must be a gap of a few generations (from three to five). This generally enlarges the geographical area of alliances. The Newar, therefore, have deliberately turned outwards; their matrimonial and commercial ties have permitted them to keep close contact with the Kathmandu valley and to preserve an autonomous culture.

The Newar of the Ankhu Khola, as we have seen, make their living by business: they sell cigarettes, tobacco, matches and cloth to Tamang and Gurung farmers. There are only two Newar shops (pasal) in the upper valley, one in Sirtung, the other in Khāding. But the other families in this group also have stocks of cigarettes and cloth in their houses which they sell to the peasants. Moreover, the Newar have acquired fields; most cultivate their land themselves without employing wage laborers, but some are so poor that they have to work for Tamang families to survive. On the whole, a Newar family does not own any more cultivated land than a Gurung or Tamang family.

In Sirtung, the Newar also work at some other occupations: first of all, they act as tailors; there are those who cut and make childrens' and girls' blouses or the caps worn by breast-feeding infants. They also cut hair for the Tamang in exchange for a few paisa. Through these small services, the Newar are to

some extent integrated into the village. Similarly there is some solidarity in the matter of religious ceremonies: at Tamang funerals, the Newar must give the parents of the deceased five pieces of different colored cloth to be wrapped around the corpse; they must also provide a canopy (chaṭṭa) made of multi-colored material, which is placed above the body.

### Hierarchy and Caste

This presentation of the population groups now leads us to a description of the hierarchy within the social groups of the valley, a difficult task since several value systems coexist which are not always compatible.

As it is, no particular words exist in Tamang or in Gurung to express the concepts of purity or impurity, the basis of the caste system. When these ideas must be expressed, both languages use Nepali words such as sudha, asudha, chokho or jutho. The idea of caste is basically foreign to the Tamang and to the Gurung: everything seems to indicate that this concept has been acquired recently under the influence of the Newar and the Kāmī, who settled in the valley less than ten generations ago. Among the Tamang clans, and to a lesser extent, among the Gurung clans, there is no hierarchy based on the caste system. We did not meet with a division of the Tamang society into bāra jāt and athāra jāt castes, as mentioned by Fürer-Haimendorf in 1956 for the districts east of Kathmandu<sup>17</sup>. Hierarchy for the Tamang is essentially different: there once seems to have been a division of "tribal" society into several clans, each of which was associated with a particular function in this region of Nepal. We have already noted that among the Tamang of the Ankhu Khola royalty was monopolized by the Ghale and the ministers by the Rambot; the priestly function was invested in a third clan, the Lama, who practice it still to this day. The higher rank occupied by the Ghale, and to some extent the Rambot originates from this social division by function. Today, these two clans still live in the same quarters of Sirtung, just below the old darbār. They are not distinguished in any other way from the other Tamang clans; Ghale marry the Dimdong and the Momba, and they accept food cooked by their affines. No concept of purity or impurity intervenes in these relationships. The Ghale's ban on eating beef, buffalo and chicken, and the Rambot's ban on chicken expresses the traditional hierarchy in modern Hindu terms.

These status differences correspond to traditional forms of authority still basic to their group. When the Tamang describe their relations with the other groups in the valley (the Newar and the Kāmī for example), they use Hindu terminology; for them, the vocabulary and ideology of caste are the best means of being integrated into the Nepali nation. Ethnic groups are called jāt; sometimes the Tamang use this word even to describe their clans.

The hierarchy between social groups, ethnic groups or caste is expressed in terms of purity and impurity; according to these concepts, the population of the Ankhu Khola is divided into three pure castes, pāni chalne jāt (Nep.), the Newar, Gurung and Tamang, and one impure caste, pāni na chalne jāt (Nep.), the Kāmī. The pure castes do not wear the sacred thread: they drink alcohol and so are called matwāli.

At the top of the hierarchy stands the group smallest in terms of number, the Newar. In the absence of Brahmins and Chhetris, this group occupies the highest place among the population groups of the Ankhu Khola. Because they occupy the highest rank, the Newar are most concerned about caste rules; they claim to belong to the caste of their ancestor Dardan Singh, Bare, a high Buddhist caste in the Newar hierarchy. To preserve their status, they are obliged to observe strict matrimonial rules; in particular, they may not marry Gurung or Tamang. Such marriages are absolutely forbidden and during our inquiry we found no examples of such marriages. The Newar are equally strict in regard to rules about eating: they do not accept rice or even corn or barley porridge, dhido (Nep.), which is eaten every day in place of rice, if it is cooked by a Tamang or a Gurung. They are more flexible about other cooked foods, such as vegetables or potatoes; it is conceded that if the plate has not been salted, it is acceptable from a Tamang or a Gurung. This often happens when the Newar go to Trisuli accompanied by Tamang: at stopping places, the vegetable dish, tarkāri (Nep.) is always cooked in common; as long as it has not been salted, the Tamang may touch it, but once salt is added, it can be polluted, so the Newar must be served first. There is one other caste rule respected by the Newar: they will not smoke a waterpipe through the same mouthpiece, nāli (Nep.) as a Tamang or a Gurung. Also they will not allow strangers from their own caste to sit down next to the hearth of their homes.

There is theoretically no hierarchical difference between Tamang and Gurung. For the Tamang the position is clear: they consider themselves to be of equal status to the Gurung and find it normal for the latter to accept cooked food from them. The Gurung have more trouble admitting to this equality of status; some even go as far as to refuse rice cooked by Tamang. Between the two groups, inter-ethnic marriage is very rare. When it does occur, it is usually with a Gurung or a Tamang woman from outside the valley. The children of these unions automatically take on the status of the father, even when he eats food prepared by his wife. It can be said, therefore, that as far as commensal habits go, the Tamang and the Gurung are one. Gurung reticence can no doubt be explained by the fact that they are part of the "military tribes" from which the Indian and British armies recruit some of their soldiers. The prestige of being wage earners, jāgir (Nep.) and of being fluent in the national language, gives them a slight feeling of superiority.

The Kāmī are at the bottom of the social hierarchy. They live in isolated hamlets apart from the Tamang and Gurung settlements. They are impure, which is to say that water is not acceptable from them. Newar, Gurung and Tamang are all very strict in their relations with blacksmiths: none of these will accept any food cooked by a Kāmī. If a blacksmith accidentally touches any roasted corn or wheat, these foods become polluted and must be given to him. Under no circumstance may a Kāmī enter the house of a member of a pure caste, and when he goes to claim his bāli from a Tamang or Gurung client, he will stand humbly on the doorstep. To purify a vessel which has been touched by a blacksmith, the housewife pours a drop of water on his earring, which is usually made of gold, after which she sprinkles it on the jug. This ritual is called patiyā in Nepali and khruba in Tamang.<sup>17</sup>

#### FOOTNOTES

1/ This article appeared originally in Objects et Mondes, Tome xiv, fasc. 4 1974, pp 325-336 in a slightly different form. It was translated from the original French by Julian Wake and Andrew Manzardo.

2/ Nepali words are followed in the text by (Nep.) and Tamang words by (Tam.) For Tamang words we have used a slightly simplified version of the system of Taylor (D.), Everitt (F.), Tamang (F.) Tamang (K.B.), A Vocabulary of the Tamang Language, Kirtipur 1972.

3/ Cf 1971 Population Census of Nepal, Kathmandu, 1973, 1, pp. 5-30.

4/ On this subject, the book by Santabir Lama, Tambā Kaiten, Kathmandu, 2026 V.S. can be consulted as well as the account given by A.W. Macdonald, "The Tamang as seen by one of themselves" Essays on the Ethnology of Nepal and South Asia, Kathmandu, 1975. pp. 129-167

5/ Another version, also collected in Sirtung tells how the person who reached the building with the gilded dome first would be king of this part of the valley. One cannot help but be struck by the analogy between this legend and the one recently written by R.K. Adhikari about the Dura, an ethnic group close to the Gurung: "It is also said in the days when the Ghale were the rulers in some parts of west Nepal, they used to hold stone-throw competition on the occasion of Dasain festival and the man who hurls the stone farthest of all should have been automatically chosen as king. So the stone-throw competition which is held as a sport even to-day might have somehow connected with the medieval traditional method of the Ghale used for choosing their king." ("The Duras," Nepal Digest, vol 2 no. 11, 1973, p. 63).

6/ In Lāba we collected a slightly different version of this part of the legend: Bali founded Sirtung, and Xlarke, Jhārlāng. The complete text of this Tamang legend will be published shortly.

7/ Cf. Pignede (B.) Les Gurung, une population himalayenne du Nepal, Paris, 1966, pp. 171-172, as well as Bista (D.B.), People of Nepal, Kathmandu, 1972, p. 78 and Adhikari (R.K.) op.cit. p. 63.

8/ Pignede (B.), op.cit. pp. 171-173.

9/ In the upper Ankhu Khola, the word Rambot is used more than Thokra. The two words refer to the same clan in the opinion of all our informants.

10/ High Buddhist caste in the Newar hierarchy. Traditionally the Bare are goldsmiths.

11/ Cf. Hofer (A.), "Preliminary report on a field research in a western Tamang group, Nepal." Bulletin Intern. committee on urgent anthropological research, no. 11, 1969, p. 21.

12/ In the upper Ankhu Khola valley, the Tamang use the Tibetan calendar, according to which the lunar month begins on the first day of the light fortnight and ends on the fifteenth day of the dark fortnight, that is on the new moon. In the lower valley, however, the Tamang use the Nepali calendar in which the lunar month begins on the first day of the dark fortnight and ends on the fifteenth day of the light fortnight, the day of the full-moon.

13/ On these divinities and their worship, see Hofer (A.), "Note sur le culte du terroir chez les Tamang du Nepal, in: Lan-gues et Techniques, Nature et Société, t. II, Paris 1972, pp. 147-156.

14/ Pignede (B.) op. cit. p. 174.

15/ On the controversial relationship between sohrajāt and chārjāt, cf. Pignede. (B.) idem, pp. 180-187. Editors note: According to Nareshwar Jang Gurung the migi are not members of the sorhājat thars but rather are a sub-group of the Lama clan of the charjat Gurung. The Lama clan is divided in three basic groups: krongi, migi & paingi. The first group are the eldest brothers sons, the second group are of the second brothers etc. As a result, the migi should be able to intermarry with all chārjat Gurungs except those of the Lama clan.

16/ Furer-Haimendorf (C von), "Ethnographic Notes of the Tamang of Nepal", Eastern Anthropologist IX, 3-4, 1956, pp. 166-167

17/ In Tamang mār means both gold and the disk-shaped ear-ring worn by women; khurba or khruiba: to bathe.