

the ankhu khola valley,

introduction

An introduction to a Multidisciplinary Research programme in Nepal.

The valley of the Ankhu Khola is situated between the Ganesh Himal range in the north, Tiru Danda in the east and the Abuthum Lekh in the west in the area to the northwest of Kathmandu. The Ankhu Khola flows 35 km. from its source to the place where it joins the Buri Gandaki. In this rather short distance, the river flows through several distinct ecological zones, near the settlements of several ethnic groups.

We first came upon the region during our survey of the Manaslu area (see: Manaslu, Hommes et milieux du Népal central, by J.F. Dobremez and C. Jest. Paris, Editions du CNRS, 1975) and found that the area was interesting both because of the multiplicity of ecological problems and its apparent remoteness in spite of its close proximity to Kathmandu.

We have been running a series of surveys in the area in the fields of geology, geomorphology (soil erosion, transformation of landscapes), zoology, botany, ecology and anthropology since 1974.

The following two articles are examples of work now in progress in this region and present two aspects of the research from the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique being done in Nepal. Several other works of this type have been published in Objets et Mondes, Paris, Vol. XIV, 4, 1974 and we recommend them to your attention. The first of the two articles which follow in this volume is by Gerard Toffin, analysing the social structure of the people in this area along a north-south transect. The second, by Philippe Alirol discusses the ecological factors which constrain the cattle and sheep herders in the region.

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