

From Print to Online

Reflection on the Transition of HIMALAYA

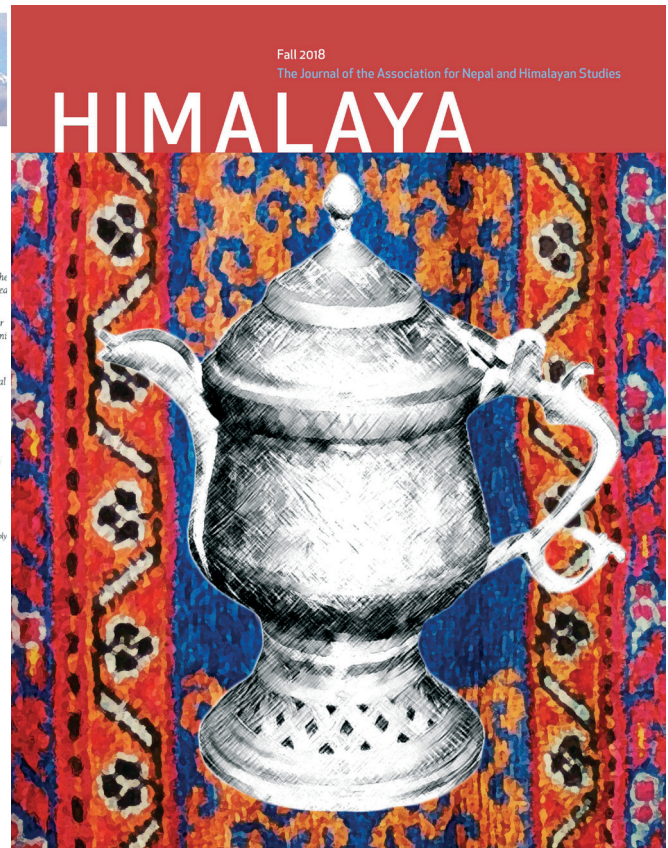
Teresa Anne Fishel

I am very proud of the role we played in helping the Association for Nepal and Himalayan Studies make the transition from a print-based subscription journal to an open access journal that is accessible to anyone anywhere in the world with a computer. This is not an insignificant feat for a small, liberal arts college that didn't have the resources of a large, research university. What we did have was enthusiasm and a willingness to tackle

a project without knowing a lot at its inception. Later in our careers, Jacki and I often reflected that not knowing ahead of time what we didn't know was probably a good thing because otherwise it would have been too daunting a task to tackle. We learned quite a bit as we went along in digital publishing. Mostly we learned we were capable of publishing a quality journal and I'm very proud of the work we accomplished.



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My role as Library Director was based on my work in promoting open access publishing. We had been actively involved in promoting open access publishing since the formation of SPARC (Scholarly Publishing and Research Coalition) in 2004. I was, and still am, an ardent supporter of open access publishing and the announcement in August 2022 that “Any research based on federally funded studies must be made freely available to the public without an embargo” (White House announcement August 25, 2022) made me very proud of the work that we started in 2004 when we first implemented the Digital Commons to make our student publications openly accessible.

The commitment we made as an institution during our early years of work with the Digital commons is still visible on our website:

The DeWitt Wallace Library at Macalester College believes the original work created by our faculty, students, and staff should be available and visible to the world. Our scholarly publishing system is committed to open access and disseminating the scholarly and creative works of our community to the widest possible audience.¹

I had done sessions and presentations for campus

Cover Images of the HIMALAYAN RESEARCH BULLETIN from 1984 and 1993 (left page) and after renaming the journal HIMALAYA - The Journal of the Association for Nepal and Himalayan Studies from 2009 and 2018 (right page)

who really helped us launch HIMALAYA and was very involved in helping with layout and design assistance for the online version.

Although there was a delay, we did launch the electronic account in July 2008 to begin the process of managing HIMALAYA in an online environment in the Digital Commons. The physical copy was still being produced for subscribers at Portland State University. However, the process of managing submissions and accepting articles transitioned to Digital Commons. In discussions with Professor Guneratne, we reached an agreement to keep the current year of the journal behind a paywall so only back issues would be accessible in full text. The current year issues would have their table of contents available only. We also agreed to take all the previously published print copies and digitize them so that the complete collection would be accessible through the Digital Commons. This was done at no expense to the association and the entire backrun of the journal is available.

In January 2009, Professor Guneratne approached me about taking on the publication of volumes 26 and 27 due to some technical difficulties at Portland State University. Previously we had just been uploading completed issues of the journal in PDFs to the Digital Commons. It was at this point in time that I approached Jacki Betsworth

about her interest and willingness to take on the full production of HIMALAYA. Knowing that there would not be any additional monetary compensation for her work, asking her to take on an additional major workload required making sure she would be supported in training and be provided with any other needed support to handle this task. For me, it was primarily an opportunity to continue to move a journal into a more open access environment, but for Jacki it would mean a substantial increase in her workload.

Once Jacki took on responsibility for the journal, my role was minimal. Jacki took advantage of training to become more skilled at using InDesign, and I attended a few workshops with her, to get a better sense of the work involved. Jacki's reflection piece goes into more detail about how she was able to manage with the assistance of student employees who really developed exceptional skills in using InDesign and designing layouts and putting a publication together.

I know it was during the time when Mark Turin became editor that the association was able to make the transition to a completely open access publication. For me, personally, that was a realization of a long-held belief and dream and I am grateful for everyone who helped make that possible. I am

also grateful that Professor Guneratne embarked on the largely uncharted territory of managing a journal in an electronic environment. His leap of faith led to our learning and then increased use of the publishing features in Digital Commons and laid the foundation for us to begin a series of student journals at Macalester. This in turn led to Jacki's role as primary contact for publication of student journals.

Although I deeply regret that the DeWitt Wallace Library is no longer able to support HIMALAYA in the manner that we did, one feature still remains visible and that is the reading views that demonstrate the world-wide reach HIMALAYA has in the Digital Commons. You can visit <https://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/himalaya> and watch who downloads, where the reader is located, and what the topic of the paper is. The reach of Himalaya is extensive and it is thanks to the work of Professor Guneratne and Jacki Betsworth that your readership will continue to grow and benefit from the scholarship of your members.

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Endnotes

1. <https://www.macalester.edu/library/publishing/>
2. <https://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/>