

## Editorial

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It is our pleasure to introduce the first issue of HIMALAYA's 42nd volume, a journal that persistently fosters a vibrant scholarly dialogue on the Himalayan region. The Association for Nepal and Himalayan Studies (ANHS) takes great delight in presenting this assembly of special contributions, articles, photo essays, and reviews, which collectively bear testimony to the region's rich diversity and experiences.

The Himalayas, despite their imposing splendor, bear a fragility that often gets eclipsed. Societal, cultural, and political upheavals are reshaping the region dramatically. Furthermore, climate change, a global menace, is taking a severe toll, inflicting tremendous pressure on the communities, their livelihoods, and the environment. The necessity to disseminate scholarly research and engage in conversations to understand these shifts has never been more critical.

With HIMALAYA stepping into a new era of critical scholarship, we find ourselves revisiting our history, acknowledging our evolution, and celebrating the enhanced scope our journal has garnered over time. Our journey from the Nepal Studies Association Newsletter in 1972, via the Himalayan Research Bulletin, to maturing into HIMALAYA has been enlightening and transformative. This evolution is a tribute to our committed community of scholars who tirelessly explore and strive to understand the Himalayas, ensuring their discoveries are shared and debated globally.

In many respects, the HIMALAYA you now hold in your hands has its roots in what we might call its 'golden decade' at Macalester College (2009-2019), and significantly due to Jacki Betsworth and Professor Arjun Guneratne's leadership. The journal's

growth stands as a testament to teamwork, resilience, and a shared love for the Himalayan region. At Macalester, HIMALAYA evolved from a double-issue journal of about 75 pages to an annual dual-issue publication with almost twice the content. This evolution transformed HIMALAYA into an international platform for collaborative work, innovative design, and a valuable learning experience for the student community.

In these golden "Macalester Years" (the title of Jacki Betsworth's essay in this issue), the mutually beneficial partnership between HIMALAYA's editors and the Macalester Library team is beautifully encapsulated. Students, backed by the library, played a vital role in HIMALAYA's maturation and professionalism, contributing their passion and creativity to the project. They, in turn, gained valuable skills in publication tools, graphic

design, and project management. Their testimonies affirm the profound impact of such cooperative efforts, the power of experiential learning, and the rewards of engaging pedagogically with academic publishing - demystifying an otherwise murky industry in academia.

We owe immense gratitude to Terri Fishel for her unflinching advocacy for open access during her tenure as a Library Director at Macalester College. Her vision of leveraging digital resources opened up HIMALAYA to a worldwide audience, strengthening the journal's engagement with in-region readers, reviewers, and contributors. She directly supported the continuation of the work including her leadership in digitizing the back issues, dedicating student and staff hours to it, until her retirement in 2020

In 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic led HIMALAYA to chart a new course. As the world pivoted, we did too, bidding farewell to Macalester and entrusting our design process to a team rooted in the Himalayan region. Our shift to Open Journal Systems, an open-source, end-to-end journal publishing and management software, currently hosted at the University of Edinburgh, ensures that HIMALAYA will remain freely accessible online to a global audience. We are grateful

to the members of ANHS and the subscribers of the journal's print edition which goes a long way to support HIMALAYA. The journal continues to be supported by ANHS, School of Social and Political Science at the University of Edinburgh, UiT The Arctic University of Norway, and Anthropology Department at Syracuse University.

As we venture forward, our mission stays firm: to publish premier scholarship on the peoples, histories, sciences, cultures, religions, politics, languages, and geographies of the Himalayan region. We aspire to boost HIMALAYA's role as a forum for critical discussion and debate on key developments in Himalayan studies, engaging with in-region scholars to harness their expertise.

In this issue, Arjun Guneratne navigates the "Fate of a Text" amidst change, while Aditya Kiran Kakati scrutinises the "Elephant in the Room". We also present a joint piece by Zezhou Yang and Tianyi Chen, providing intriguing insights into "The Transcultural Trajectories of Arniko". In 'Buddhist values as Legal Values in Bhutan' Michaela Windischgraetz explores the relationship between national legal order and Buddhism in Bhutan. These articles explore the delicate balance between tradition and modernity in

the region. Finally, article by Sofie Dalum Kjærgaard and Sarmila Chaudhary offers insights on how the Nepali government's focus on controlling the Covid-19 pandemic amplified the preexisting vulnerabilities in the healthcare system. Vineet Gairola and Shubha Ranganathan explore in their article and accompanying photo essay the history and transition of worshiping practices in the Garhwal Himalaya. The photo essay by Oinam Premchand Singh documents the extant craft of cord-marked pottery in the hills of northeastern India. This issue also features four insightful reviews of new texts, including Galen Murton's sharp analysis of Karine Gagné's "Caring for Glaciers: Land, Animals, and Humanity in the Himalayas".

We invite you to engage with this diverse assemblage of scholarship and join us in our continuous exploration of the Himalayas. The journey through this era of substantial change is just beginning.

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