

Editorial

## Expanding Horizons, Deepening Engagement

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In a year already marked by complex transformations across the Himalayan region—including the deeply troubling military escalation between India and Pakistan in May 2025, which rekindled long-standing tensions in Jammu and Kashmir—it is more important than ever to foster spaces for thoughtful scholarship, nuanced dialogue, and inclusive representation. HIMALAYA continues to offer such a platform: one committed to rigorous, regionally grounded research; to innovative, multimodal approaches; and to expanding our network of scholars, reviewers, and readers, particularly across South and Central Asia.

This issue of HIMALAYA appears at a moment of vibrant institutional growth and editorial transition. Our move to the Open Journal Systems (OJS) platform

in 2022 significantly streamlined our editorial processes and increased global accessibility through full open-access publishing. In 2023, we deepened our collaboration with the University of Edinburgh, now our official publishing partner. This strategic partnership has enabled broader indexing and long-term archiving, while allowing us to adopt IngramSpark for print-on-demand services. As a result, HIMALAYA is no longer confined to a mainly North American readership but is now more accessible to readers, libraries, and institutions across the Himalayan region and beyond.

As part of this evolution, we also celebrate important editorial transitions. Dr Jeevan R. Sharma, who graciously invited me to join him as Co-Editor in 2020, now steps into the

esteemed role of Editor-at-Large. His vision and collaborative leadership were instrumental in guiding the journal through the OJS transition, steering our partnership with Edinburgh, and shaping our global distribution model. In 2024, Dr Shubham Sapkota joined the team as Associate Editor. Based at the University of Colorado Boulder, Shubham has already played a pivotal role in shaping our distribution strategy, increasing accessibility, and fostering emerging scholarship from underrepresented areas of Himalayan studies.

We are equally pleased to introduce Dr Zezhou Yang (Asia Research Institute, NUS) as our new Reviews Editor. Joining in November 2024, Zezhou brings extensive editorial experience and a commitment to encouraging critical dialogue through



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the reviews section. His forthcoming innovations include author-reviewer interactions and expanded book forums. Shortly after Zezhou's arrival, we welcomed a new team of in-region Assistant Editors: Haidamteu Zeme (IIT Delhi), Gulal Salil (Independent researcher and graphic designer), and Dr Yatin Batra (University of Delhi). In addition to their own research contributions, they bring deep regional expertise and a keen curatorial eye that will influence the journal's evolving design, visual culture, and author and reviewer networks. Most recently, we welcomed our new Assistant Editor Fatma Matar (UiT The Arctic University of Norway), a visual anthropologist assisting us in exploring multimodal content. With her expertise, we aim to further develop the journal's engagement with multi-sensory scholarship and non-textual forms of expression.

Our current editorial team builds on the formidable legacy of past editors, particularly the many decades of stewardship by colleagues at Macalester College. That team's design sensibility, editorial excellence, and commitment to Himalayan scholarship helped establish HIMALAYA as one of the few academic journals to successfully blend peer-reviewed research with arresting visuals and elegant design. In a publishing landscape increasingly polarized

between traditional and digital formats, we continue to experiment with hybrid models that retain the tactile pleasures of print while embracing the fluidity of digital access.

This issue reflects the editorial team's commitment to thematic curation and disciplinary breadth. The opening article by Deepshikha Chatterjee, "Bhairab Nach and Navadurga: Masked Rituals of Nepal," is a visually rich, ethnographically grounded exploration of ritual performance in the Kathmandu Valley. Her detailed study of mask-making, embodied pedagogy, and Tantric cosmology exemplifies our vision for multimodal scholarship. Following this, Paola Tiné's sensitive narrative, "The Difficult Art of Parenting," offers a rare glimpse into domestic moral instruction among middle-class families in Nepal, weaving textual and painted accounts into a vivid ethnographic canvas. Sanjay Barbora's article, grounded in fieldwork across Northeast India, interrogates upland agriculture and entrepreneurship as developmental ideologies, while Sushan Bhattarai provides an innovative archival ethnography of conservation efforts in Ladakh.

Parjanya Sen's work revisits Charles Bell's photographic archive through the lens of native agency, offering a critical historiography of colonial visuality in

Tibet. Menia Taba's contribution, "Vkur Nukuj (Let Us Return)," is a powerful autoethnographic account of visual repatriation among the Nyishi people of Arunachal Pradesh, bridging photography, identity, and memory. Bhoomika Joshi contributes a striking analysis of landscape aesthetics and colonial remoteness in the Indian Himalayas, while Patrick Kaplanian probes the socio-political boundaries of communal identity among Buddhists and Shi'as in Ladakh.

We are also pleased to publish a rare and timely interview between linguistic anthropologist Dr. Mark Turin, former editor of HIMALAYA, and Dr. Lava Deo Awasthi, the first Chairperson of the Language Commission of Nepal. Their conversation addresses the complex terrain of language policy, recognition, and representation in post-monarchical Nepal—a vital issue given the country's linguistic diversity and its constitutional commitment to inclusion.

The reviews section features three significant contributions. Navneet Kaur assesses Rubina Nusrat's *Sustainability of Van Gujjars*, a critical monograph on pastoral Muslim communities in Uttarakhand. Tanka Subba offers a deeply personal and scholarly reading of *Through the India-China Border* by Prem Poddar

and Lisa Lindkvist Zhang, situating Kalimpong as a dynamic node of Himalayan geopolitics. Ina Zharkevich's review of *Nepal's Dalits in Transition*, edited by David Gellner and Krishna Adhikari, affirms its significance as a landmark intervention in Dalit studies and caste politics in contemporary Nepal.

Together, these contributions offer a compelling cross-section of contemporary Himalayan studies. They span thematic domains of ritual performance, ecological transformation, visual culture, linguistic justice, and socio-political memory. We thank our readers for their continued engagement, our contributors for their trust, and our editorial

team for their tireless work. As HIMALAYA continues to grow as a premier outlet for research in and on the Himalayan region, we remain committed to fostering a journal that is both accessible and rigorous, rooted and global, traditional and experimental.

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