

Editorial

As HIMALAYA's incoming editors, we are pleased to bring you Volume 40.2. The Association of Nepal and Himalayan Studies (ANHS) honours us by inviting us to take on editorial leadership as it prepares to celebrate 50 years of publishing. From the very first pages of the Nepal Studies Association Newsletter in 1972 until now, we have seen the rich content, diverse scholarship, and cross-disciplinary spirit of a community of scholars working mainly in Nepal, blossom into an international, peer-reviewed academic open-access journal working across the Himalayan region of South Asia, with both print and online editions.

As we embark on this work as new editors, we also want to introduce you to a few new faces on the editorial team: our new Associate Editor Ishani Dasgupta, joining us from the University of Pennsylvania; our new Assistant Editor Thepuchanu Kire, joining us from the Highland Institute in India; and our new Reviews and Reports Co-Editor Nadine Plachta, joining us from the University of Toronto. We also introduce Rebecca Wojturska, who is the Open Access Publishing Officer at the University of Edinburgh and will be our digital platform liaison.

We are also thankful to our immediate predecessors, Mona Bhan and David Citrin, and managing editor Scott Halliday, who together accompanied us in the editorial transition for the better part of 2020 amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Along with being handed responsibility

for a distinguished publication, we received a fine set of editorial tools, a well-structured process, and a remarkable network of readers, authors, and reviewers committed to ensuring that HIMALAYA is held to the highest academic standards.

As we take over responsibility for HIMALAYA, we want to express our commitment to sustaining the excellent reputation of the journal among Himalayan scholars, and to furthering its critical engagement with the most pertinent questions facing the region today. Doubtlessly, we face many new challenges going forward, not least the all-pervading culture of uncertainty that has taken root amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Almost all of us have faced disruption in our research and teaching routines, or in our family and community life, we all know others that have. Reaching new understandings, and making sense of the rapidly unfolding cultural, political, economic and environmental transformations presently underway in the Himalayas, therefore, will require a new kind of resolve, a new kind of energy and commitment; helped in no small part by more collaboration, the sharing of resources, generosity of time, and an honest commitment to creating real opportunities for in-region and junior scholars.

We can no longer take for granted the social charter of the academy at-large. Indeed, many of our institutions continue to be either weighed down by long-entrenched internal contradictions, colonial complicities, and questionable

institutional legacies; or, as has been increasingly the case in much of South Asia, overrun by state-organised and sponsored mobs that openly use violence to silence dissent. Complementing these deeply troubling political developments are the subtle and pervasive movements in the expansive neo-liberal turn and marketisation, which have gutted the halls of learning everywhere, and drained humanities and social science research and teaching of resources and funding.

And yet, we know that grappling with the planetary stresses at-hand requires a collective and area-based interdisciplinary research approach, and a kind of scholarship and collaboration that moves outside conventional boundaries, and embraces multiple perspectives, ideas, and strategies. It is perhaps to simpler models, to the learned society, the regional institute, and the independent association with an ethical and intellectual commitment to people and community, that we must retreat to gather strength and realize this vision.

However and wherever it is that we decide to gather, we are guided by a common set of questions: when does it mean to talk about the Himalayas in a global context, while acknowledging the specificities and diversity within? What does it mean to talk about its rapid changes and transformations, while also looking downstream to thirsty, aspiring superpowers such as India and China? How do we engage with the Himalayas as a special case that must

be taken seriously on its own terms, but also as a participant in global political, economic and cultural flows, including a large Himalayan diaspora and a network of Himalayan sensibilities? What is the future of Himalayan studies in the context of a rapidly expanding South Asian landscape of higher education, scholarship and publishing? How do we write about an area while we are increasingly pressed to abide by disciplinary boundaries and priorities? And, how has Himalayan scholarship contributed to academic disciplines, theories and scholarship more broadly? Indeed, what does it mean to be a Himalayanist today? And, more critically, what does this all mean for HIMALAYA?

We feel HIMALAYA is a well-placed forum for these critical questions and debates as one of the earliest and steadiest area studies journals of the Himalayan region. We can strengthen this legacy by republishing select pieces from the archive when possible, and by interviewing past editors, scholars and members of ANHS. This can shed light on the changes and flows in scholarship, the broader narratives and discourses shaping the Himalayan sphere, and the immediate concerns that have contributed to the scholarship in the region for a half-century. As scholars of the region, this insight will provide us with tools to engage with the uncertainty and unpredictability of the Himalayan region going forward. But we can also engage the current readership and contributors, and seek to understand the ways publishing unfolds today, and how the readership and publishers have adapted and responded to change. We plan to host web-based panel discussions on the past, present, and future of Himalayan area studies in order to understand the way our institutions have changed in their approach to studying the region.

We are expecting to create a series of special 50th anniversary issues focusing on these broad reflections. However, this intellectual exercise requires the involvement of the community of scholars affiliated with our journal. We invite the former board members, editors, regular contributors, and recognized scholars on the Himalayas to reflect with us and to plan with us. Further, as previous editors have also expressed, we plan to really push for greater visibility for HIMALAYA. To achieve this, we expect to engage in more robust social media outreach. We will also take advantage of our journal's online features to grow our archival capabilities, including audio and visual content, as well as for expanding the journal's presence in the wider network of scholars and practitioners of the Himalayan region.

As we become an increasingly dynamic and interactive space, following current affairs, key day-to-day discussion, events, developments and futures, we can move with greater confidence towards fostering discussion around contemporary and historical challenges facing the region, spanning migration, borders and citizenship, populist politics, gender dynamics, urbanisation, transnational networks, citizen protests, climate change, flooding, earthquakes, medical pluralism, and ethno-linguistics, amongst others. We are keen to continue to engage in debates on Himalayan specificities and maintain a position as a leading platform for new empirical and theoretical debates on the region. In addition to publishing printed copies, HIMALAYA has been a pioneering open-access area studies journal. With more and more funders, universities and research institutions embracing open-access policy, and covering Article Processing Charges (APC) for open-access journals, there

is a strong incentive and positive shift underway in the politics of scholarly publishing. There has never been a stronger incentive for academics, especially those producing outputs from funded research, to publish in open-access only journals.

Of course, running a journal and maintaining its reputation has its costs. As the flagship journal of the ANHS, the ANHS Executive Committee has been highly supportive of the journal. We are committed to area studies and the pressing need to retain its critical importance in the context of broader shifts in academic disciplines. We invite students, scholars and practitioners to join this journal and the ANHS by engaging with it as a collective. In view of strengthening the institutional base for the journal hosting, we are establishing the Edinburgh Himalaya Collective (EHC). The EHC will work closely with and maintain institutional membership with ANHS, with a commitment to developing synergies between Himalayanists in North America and in Europe and the UK. Based at the Centre for South Asian Studies and Department of Social Anthropology at the University of Edinburgh, the EHC will engage students, scholars, and local communities with expertise and interest in the region and build on Scotland's significant historical engagement with HIMALAYA. Edinburgh also has many other advantages including a dedicated Open Access publishing team within the library, offering significant in-kind support. This includes the Open Journal Systems (OJS) software hosting, which is free of charge, along with advice and support for editorial team members. The library covers the cost of Digital Object Identifiers (DOIs) through the Library's Crossref account, provides access to usage statistics through Google Analytics, and inclusion in

the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ). In addition to these digital improvements, we are exploring the possibility of a HIMALAYA print subscription and distribution base in the UK and Europe.

We also plan to engage the readership in the Himalayan region itself. While we will continue to appeal to talented contributors from across all five Himalayan countries, and continue to build on the Nepal connection, we hope to establish institutional connections in the broader trans-Himalayas in an effort to expand our reach in the wider region. Here, like in Europe, we hope to also explore an affordable subscription model. Print remains a preferred means of scholarly dissemination, and we know the largest Higher Education market in the world in the next 15–20 years with over 1000 universities and over 50,000 colleges will be in India,

with significant growth in adjacent areas such as Nepal. One way to enter this space is by intentionally seeking out not only scholars, but also photographers, designers, typesetters, and copyeditors, who all have their networks. Production of HIMALAYA's previous issue, as well as the present issue, engaged in-region typesetters, designers, and photographers, and we plan to continue this going forward. Through this growing HIMALAYA network, we now have an array of options for HIMALAYA production on three continents, including printers, and distributors, offering competitive pricing. We look forward to exploring all these possibilities in the months and years to come and we cherish your feedback.

Turning now to this issue, we are pleased to include eight omnibus pieces, two beautiful photo essays

(print and online), and eight book reviews, in addition to our regular conference report, president's letter, and editorial. We also pay tribute to three remarkable scholars, Narpal Singh Jodha (1937–2020), Pradyumna Prasad Karan (1930–2018) and Theodore Riccardi, Jr. (1937–2020), who were larger-than-life figures in Himalayan studies, and who together leave us a remarkable body of scholarship that will continue to influence the field.

Thank you for continuing to support HIMALAYA through your subscription, and we look forward to hearing from you, learning from you, and exploring with you, as we continue to build upon the 50-year legacy of this great publication!

Jeevan R. Sharma and
Michael T. Heneise
Editors, *HIMALAYA*