

## Editorial

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We are very pleased to introduce a second special issue of the HIMALAYA in 2023, in this instance titled “Writing with Care: Ethnographies from the Margins of Tibet and the Himalayas”. Curated by guest editors Harmandeep Kaur Gill and Theresia Hofer, this issue is an important contribution to a relatively recent, more conscious, effort to diversify and deepen the discourse within area studies, emphasising the voices and perspectives of ordinary people, and especially of those living at the margins of mainstream society.

The contributions within this issue, ranging from research articles to poetry and a photo essay, highlight an array of socio-cultural practices and lived experiences. The focus on the struggles and joys adds a critical dimension to our understanding of Tibetan and Himalayan studies. It is a reminder that to truly comprehend a region, we must listen to all its voices,

not just those that echo from the centres of power and influence. The special issue takes a life-course approach, a key theme in anthropology, and is organized under four sections: Childhood, Younger Adults, Older Adults and Old Age. The essays help us to recognise the value of everyday lives.

The guest editors have brought together a collection that challenges and rearticulates social categories like gender, class, and disability. They emphasize the need to look beyond fixed generalizations and to embrace the complexities and contradictions of individual lives. This approach, rooted in feminist and decolonial methodologies, not only enriches our academic understanding but also connects us more deeply with the human aspects of the subjects we study. Writing with care, as the editors put, is to ‘enable the reader to connect with people as individual personalities and not merely as

members of social and third-person categories.’

This issue is more than just a compilation of articles; it is a call to rethink and reshape how we approach the study of Tibetan and Himalayan societies. By highlighting the margins, it brings to the forefront the diverse realities and experiences that shape the region, urging us to consider perspectives that have been overlooked or underrepresented in traditional academic discourse.

This editorial process of opening up to special issues and themes is vital. It allows us to bridge scholarly gaps and form collaborations that would otherwise remain unexplored. In this and in previous HIMALAYA projects we have witnessed a growing and very welcome trend towards more partnership with in-region scholarly organizations and contributors. Indeed, this special issue is exemplary in this regard, and reflects the journal’s commitment to

exploring and understanding a fuller range of human voices and lived experiences in the Himalayan region and not just those deemed extraordinary.

The decolonisation of Himalayan Studies will need a conscious prioritization of marginalized epistemologies, and lived experiences into the knowledge systems and this will be a lengthy and fraught process. It will require the production of nuanced, place-specific knowledge that is grounded in the lived experiences and perspectives of various local and regional actors.

As co-editors, we extend our deepest gratitude to the guest editors and contributors for their insightful work. We also thank our readers, whose continued engagement and support make such ventures possible.

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