

Editorial

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As HIMALAYA, the Journal of the Association for Nepal and Himalayan Studies, celebrates its 52nd year, we are thrilled to present Volume 43, Issue 2, Autumn 2024—a special issue in more ways than one. This edition marks a significant step in the journal’s evolution as we transition to a Print-on-Demand (POD) model, reflecting our commitment to sustainability and efficiency. The POD model not only reduces waste and expedites distribution but also allows us to better serve our growing global readership, particularly as our audience expands beyond North America. Subscribers will continue to receive their print copies, which will now be directly posted by printers located across different regions of the world. This shift is emblematic of our dedication to bringing timely and relevant scholarship to our readers in the most effective and environmentally responsible way possible.

This issue is especially notable because it features the unique collection ‘Himalayan Flashes: Regional Ethnography in Short Form’, co-edited by Sienna R. Craig and Carole McGranahan. The collection emerges from a new wave of ethnographic writing that values brevity without sacrificing depth or nuance. Curated from sessions at leading conferences, these flash ethnographies offer powerful glimpses into the social and cultural landscapes of the Himalayan region, spanning from Nepal’s highlands to urban environments in the United States. Despite their concise format, these essays resonate with rich insights, making this issue a landmark in the journal’s history and in the broader field of Himalayan studies.

The ‘Himalaya Flashes’ section features 11 short essays, each presenting a complete narrative that reflects profound changes and transformations across

the region and its diaspora. As Craig and McGranahan aptly emphasize, these pieces are not mere vignettes but integrated wholes, showcasing remarkable stories of resilience, adaptation, and cultural evolution.

Sienna Craig’s contribution, “Ruins in the Making”, delves into familiar yet urgent themes of outmigration and climate change, illustrating the transitions reshaping both people and landscapes. Carole McGranahan’s essay, “Come Drink Tea”, tells the story of Tibetan refugees remaking their home in Toronto, offering a window into the lived experiences of exile and belonging.

Other highlights include Jan Brunson’s “The Golden Hour”, which explores emergency medicine in Nepal, shedding light on the critical moments that define survival and medical care in resource-scarce settings. In “Meeting Lhamo”, Sanggay Tashi narrates the challenges

faced by individuals transitioning from traditional livelihoods like herding to more contemporary occupations, such as construction. Aidan Seale-Feldman takes us on a contemplative journey through the mountains in “Mother’s Face”, emphasizing the spiritual and physical aspects of Himalayan walking pilgrimages.

Ishani Dasgupta’s “The Shepherd Who Did Not Lead” reflects on cultural preconceptions surrounding time and travel, while Tenzing Wangdak’s “Another Day at the Airport” examines the anxiety and complexity of Himalayan lives crossing international borders. In “What If Khata Could Talk”, Huatse Gyal investigates the cultural significance and materiality of the Khata in Tibetan contexts, while Sara Shneiderman’s “The Tin State” focuses on steel roofing materials to explore the emotional layers of post-earthquake and post-conflict transitions in Nepal.

Additional standout pieces include “On Being Back, and Being Home” by Anudeep Dewan, which considers the impact of street vendor removals in Kathmandu, and David Hecht’s “Monk Picnic”, an evocative reflection on humility, laughter, and the shared experiences of exchange in a monastic setting.

This issue also carries five research articles, one photo essay, one conference report, and one film and two book

reviews. Sarah Magnatta’s article examines the artworks by Sonam Dolma Brauen as a way to tell the story of an object in exile. Jiban Mani Poudel offers insights on the multiple socio-cultural meanings associated with rain. The article by Brown, Thakuri, and Childs examines the centrality of alcohol in Tibetan societies. Archana Pathak’s article explores the social and political consequences of the construction of and resistance to Pakyong Airport in the Eastern Himalayas. Hrithika Rana provides detailed insights on the feminization of agriculture, focusing on gender-based inequalities in labor. The photo essay by Garima Bhandari and Anindya Jayanta Mishra offers insights into the ordinary lives of Nepali migrants in the Western Himalayas, with a specific focus on homemaking. Finally, the research report by Nutandhar Sharma and Richard Widdess surveys devotional songs and their future in Kathmandu.

We are also delighted to welcome Dr. Shubham Sapkota as our new Associate Editor. Dr. Sapkota brings with him a robust background in South Asian religions, public policy, and international studies, along with a deep commitment to cross-cultural communication and mindfulness practices. His expertise will undoubtedly enhance the editorial team as we continue to explore new dimensions of scholarship

and broaden the scope of HIMALAYA.

With the adoption of the POD model and the inclusion of this innovative collection, HIMALAYA is well-positioned to continue delivering high-quality, impactful research to an expanding and diverse audience. We are confident that this issue will not only engage and inspire our readers but also set the stage for future explorations in ethnographic writing and critical Himalayan studies.

Thank you for your continued support of HIMALAYA.

Warm regards,

Jeevan R. Sharma and
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Editors, HIMALAYA