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From the Editor

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FROM THE EDITOR

This volume of *Himalaya*, guest edited by Mahendra Lawoti, focuses on the upheaval in Nepali politics caused by the movement of historically marginalized social groups—*janajati*, *dalit*, *madhesi*, muslims, and women—to center stage. The four contributors to this theme discuss the relationship of these groups to the emerging politics of the new, republican Nepal. Lawoti discusses how informal institutions and value systems such as caste, patriarchy and upper caste ideology (*bahunbad*) interact with formal institutions such as the legal system to marginalize these groups and perpetuate their exclusion from centers of power. Tiwari argues with reference to Nepal's Maoist insurgency that horizontal inequalities (or inequalities among groups) based on cultural, social, political and economic factors, allow for political leaders to mobilize disaffected caste and ethnic groups against the state. His paper documents in some detail the level of deprivation among the various groups on which he focuses, relative to the situation of Nepal's population as a whole. Shakya focuses on the relationship between business elites and the state in Nepal to argue that the post-*panchayat* state did little to address the marginalization of non-upper caste groups in business, and suggests that the rise of the Maoists and their notion of "patriotic capitalism" might reshape the relationship between the state and commerce. Finally, Kantha examines the extended and uneven process of democratization in Nepal in terms of a typology of modes of transition and the role of elites in the process of democratization.

In addition to these four articles that collectively address a common set of issues, we also publish a paper by Whitecross on the Bhutanese notion of *tha damtshig*, used to refer to a highly developed sense of morality or virtue. Whitecross examines the dynamic between popular understandings of *tha damtshig* and the way it has become entwined with the state's attempts to shape a distinctive Bhutanese identity. This paper was originally to have been part of a themed issue on Bhutan, but the community of Bhutan scholars is relatively small, and that project eventually could not be realized.

We welcome proposals for special issues of *Himalaya* that explore particular themes, and the volume in your hands exemplifies how such issues might be organized: ideally, they should consist of between four and eight papers, along with an introduction by the (guest) editor that situates the individual papers in the context of the general theme that each addresses. We encourage readers of this journal to propose themed issues for future volumes of *Himalaya*; inquiries can be addressed to the editor at himalaya@anhs-himalaya.org.

We have made excellent progress in moving *Himalaya* to a fully peer reviewed journal. That we now have our own website (<http://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/himalaya/>) to manage submissions and the editorial process has made it much easier to keep track of each article as it moves through the various stages of being sent for review, being revised and resubmitted, and then edited for publication. Even so, success of the peer review process depends very much on the willingness of people, both members and non-members, to review the work of their colleagues. I am very pleased to say that the response to my requests to colleagues to review papers for the journal has been generally positive, with roughly 60 percent of those asked agreeing to do so, and generally turning in their reviews on time. I am most grateful to all of them.

This is the first issue of *Himalaya* to be produced entirely at Macalester, and Jacki Betsworth, who lays it out and prepares it for the printer, and I, have slowly but surely been getting the hang of it. I am extremely grateful to Jacki who has worked extraordinarily hard to get this issue completed before the deadline we had set ourselves, and to Terri Fishel, the Director of the Macalester library for her unfailing support of the journal.

Arjun Guneratne
Saint Paul, Minnesota, May 2010