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Editor's Introduction

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Editor's introduction

We offer this *Himalayan Research Bulletin* in a single, double-issue volume—XX:1 and 2—in order to fit in a backlog of material, save mailing and production costs (necessitated by our always-precarious finances), and catch up. Whether you count from 2000 or 2001, this is the first **HRB** of the 21st century. We draw our graphics, however, from the 19th, borrowing his own extraordinary illustrations from Joseph Hooker's *Himalayan Journals* (Wardlock and Bowden, Ltd., 1854) compiled over the course of Himalayan explorations between 1847 and 1851:

The landscapes, &c., have been prepared chiefly from my own drawings, and will, I hope, be found to be tolerably faithful representations of the scenes. I have always endeavored to overcome that tendency to exaggerate heights, and increase the angle of slopes, which is I believe the besetting sin, not of amateurs only, but of our most accomplished artists. . . My drawings will be considered tame compared with most mountain landscapes, though the subjects comprise some of the grandest scenes in nature. (Hooker, 1854: xvii).

This is also the first issue to be published by the *Association for Nepal and Himalayan Studies* (ANHS)—the new name for our old Nepal Studies Association. President John Metz (page iii) recounts the developments that led to this re-christening. And although we didn't plan it—this one coming together as most **HRBs** do as a consequence of purely fortuitous events—the contents should reassure any who feared a new name would mean diminished attention to Nepal. This issue's special focus is on identity . . . in Nepal. Bill Fisher and Susan Hangen pulled together a roundtable on the politics of culture and identity in Nepal at the 1999 meeting of the Association for Asian Studies which is retold here. Calla Jacobson's paper takes up the portrayal of identity in story and song in an ethnically mixed village of the hills. The case of the Badi on which Tom Cox reports describes an unexpected interplay of caste and AIDS in the Tarai. Several of the books reviewed here, as well as a number of the recent publications listed in Greg Maskarinec's compendium, also focus on this topic. Thanks to these contributors for their papers and their patience: most have waited at least several months—some a year almost—to see their work in print. They in turn can join me in thanking Editorial Assistant Marc Weber, who has put this issue together, and student Office Manager Kathleen Jongeward who now manages other matters.

But as ever eclectic, this issue of *Himalayan Research Bulletin* is not *only* about identity, nor only focused on Nepal. We review other books, report on other recent publications, abstract dissertations from a wide range of fields, and recount other conferences.

One of these is the Third International Congress on the Yak, the proceedings abstracted here through the kindness of Han Jianlin of the International Yak Information Center. My father, who was never able to take my research interest in yak very seriously,

would joke “my daughter knows more about yaks than they do!” As one of a very tiny handful of yak researchers in the United States, I could almost let myself believe it—as silly a joke as it was. But the abstracts and paper topics from this conference demonstrate conclusively how much there is to know about yak, how unlikely any single person could grasp it all. It would seem that yak are after all the ultimate experts on themselves (knowing as they do how to be and make yaks), and I would like to make that argument to my father, but I’ve missed the chance, for he died last month at the age of 88. As it was my dad who put me on the path to yak by bringing me to Nepal in 1976, and he who made publishing look fun enough that I took on this journal, I want to acknowledge him here. Although best known as an environmentalist out to save the earth from people, David Brower celebrated not only the natural world but also ways of being human that took nature into account. He had learned from his climbing comrades Dick and Pat Emerson about the “inhabited wilderness” of Baltistan, and marveled for himself at the ingenuity, durability, and beauty of the life of Himalayan villagers. His fear for both human and natural diversity was in the homogenizing and destructive forces of globalization, and his life’s work, continued until he died, was to alert us to these dangers and insure a livable future for people and planet. It is my good luck and honor to have had such a man for a father. But what I miss most, today at least, is the life-long editor at the end of a phone line who could correct my dangling participles and add fluency to my paragraphs. ‘Bye, Dad, and thanks.

Barbara Brower, Editor, December 2000



David Brower and His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama