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Editorial

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Editorial

As the new editors of *HIMALAYA*, we're thrilled to welcome you to issue 38.1. Over the years, we have read and subscribed to the journal, contributed as writers and reviewers, and been exposed through its content to critical scholarship that has meaningfully shaped our own engagements with the Himalayan region. We also deeply value the community that *HIMALAYA* has enabled across the world. It is indeed an honor to be editing a journal that has played such a formative role in our careers, even as it remains a somewhat daunting task that we look forward to with much hope and excitement.

We are privileged to join a group of dedicated scholars who, throughout the course of the last forty-plus years, have committed themselves to building such a high-quality, internationally recognized Himalayan studies journal. In 1972, the Nepal Studies Association Newsletter was mailed to 111 members, signaling "a hopeful augury for the future." Donald Messerschmidt oversaw the transition of the Newsletter to a Bulletin in 1975, and later, Barbara Brower and Arjun Guneratne would each serve as individual editors of *HIMALAYA*, and its earlier incarnation the Himalayan Research Bulletin, for many years. They each oversaw fundamental periods of growth for the journal, including this initial turn to expand the geographical ambit beyond Nepal.

We owe our deepest appreciation to Sienna Craig and Mark Turin, our immediate predecessors, for their exemplary leadership, their push for more interdisciplinary content,

and for cultivating a visual aesthetic both in print and online that has transformed *HIMALAYA* into a premier journal for Himalayan studies. Sienna and Mark have been indispensable in helping us transition into our new roles as editors, passing along neatly packaged systems and workflows, enduring long conference calls with often less-than-fully-fleshed-out agendas, and facilitating the continued institutional collaborations that make *HIMALAYA* possible. These include working with our Pre-Production Editor, Emily Leischner at the University of British Columbia; the indefatigable team of Editorial Assistants led by Jacki Betsworth at the DeWitt Wallace Library at Macalester College who oversee the layout as well as print and online production: Rebecca Krasky, Billan Omar, Magdalena Panetta, Kiet Tran, and Emma Wellman; Doug Tiffit, Production Coordinator at the University Press of New England, who ensures both a robust and feasible production timeline; Greg Gundlach at The Studio for Digital Services in Thetford, Vermont, who guarantees each image is of the highest quality; and Angie Hulburt at AH Designs, who has crafted yet another beautiful cover for *HIMALAYA*. We also remain grateful to Jessica Vantine Birkenholtz at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign for staying on with us as Reviews & Reports Editor. The care and patience that all of these folks have shown us as we learn to navigate the layout and production processes, and do so without losing our wits, has been remarkable. Thank you all for your guidance.

Together, our predecessors have worked against all odds to ensure that the journal remains open-access and readily available to our wide and growing readership. Here, too, we remain indebted to the Macalester DeWitt Wallace Library for munificently continuing to host the journal's digital archive. These efforts are to be celebrated, and protected, especially in the contemporary climate of for-profit publishing. We draw inspiration and strength from their efforts as we look ahead to face potentially similar challenges.

We have also expanded our editorial team by including two crucial new roles. Scott Halliday joins *HIMALAYA* as Managing Editor, and his systems-level thinking and coordination of the journal's multiple activities, has already been a true asset to the journal. We also welcome Swati Chawla, our new Digital Features Editor, who joins the editorial collective to help integrate digital humanities content. These might include data visualizations, multimedia narratives, recitations and other soundscapes, 3D-imaging, or geospatial mapping. Stay tuned for further announcements about this exciting new kind of submission for *HIMALAYA*.

We have also put together a communications team to further boost the journal's visibility on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Jessica Bachman at the University of Washington, and Alex Gandy and Sakshi Sharma at DePauw University, have been working to draw in larger audiences in and beyond academia by

developing *HIMALAYA*'s public profile, and by situating *HIMALAYA*'s content within broader contemporary affairs. We hope that you will click on, share, and retweet the breadth of work covered in this and upcoming issues in this extraordinary digital age.

We are thrilled to be working with an amazing set of scholars, poets, and writers from across the world who constitute our new Editorial Board. They are aligned with our vision of making *HIMALAYA* even more diverse and inclusive, and they bring to the journal their multidisciplinary and multilingual training, as well as their regional expertise and networks. One of the primary roles for Board members is to serve as ambassadors of the journal, and we are excited to see what comes out of these new collaborations, and look forward to building new ties with institutions and communities across the Himalayas.

Our editorship coincides with a critical and exciting time for the journal as it consolidates its many strengths and ventures into exciting new directions. As editors, we remain firmly committed to finding ways for the journal to reach underrepresented regions, communities, cultures, and politics in the Himalayas. This involves active outreach where the journal has had a minimal presence to encourage scholars to situate their work as part of a larger, global Himalayan studies collective. With our enhanced web presence, we are well-positioned to utilize digital tools to build a global community interested in Himalayan creative arts and scholarship, photography and poetry, recitations and translations. We aspire to make even more room for contributions that are not limited to conventional research articles or perspectives, alone, and we ask that you join us in thinking through how to do this.

Our first Special Issue, "Popular Music Across the Himalayas," explores the contemporary conditions of musical production and practices across a diversity of settings. Together, the pieces push back against tropes of Himalayan communities as isolated and remote locales, and re-center the social, political, and economic transformations that render vernacular musical creation and circulation such a rich area for scholarly engagement in the Himalayas. The articles trace the complex intersections between music and place-making, as well as the everyday struggles of musicians and communities at the interstices of local belonging, global markets, commodification, and national repression in many regions across the Himalayas. We hope the collection of articles in this issue, alongside the musical cassette covers and posters featured in the gallery and on the cover, help the reader to leave the two-dimensional plane of paper, and experience these pieces in more euphonic ways.

This issue also includes a number of omnibus research and perspective pieces, a beautiful collection of poems by Manglesh Dabral presented in both their original Hindi and translated versions, as well as Tsering Wangchuk's evocative translation and analysis of Tibetan exile poetry. We also pay tribute to two remarkable scholars, Dina Bangdel (1963–2017) and Mary Slusser (1918–2017), who the Himalayan studies community lost this past year. Their contributions live on through their still widely influential bodies of work, and we celebrate them in the pages within.

In addition to all of this exciting content, be sure to check out Phurwa D. Gurung and Nyima Dorjee Bhotia's photo essay online (<www.himalayajournal.org>),

which explores the cultural politics of road building in Nepal's far northwest district of Humla, and the socioeconomic transformations that accompany such infrastructural developments. Also, please stay tuned for further information about how to submit your digital features for publication with *HIMALAYA*.

We thank you for your continued support, and we welcome your thoughts and feedback on this current issue.

Mona Bhan and David Citrin
Editors, *HIMALAYA*