

EDITORIAL

At the final session of the CNRS-DFG conference on the History and Anthropology of Nepal, held at Arc-et-Senans in June of last year, several participants suggested that European scholars, actively engaged in Himalayan studies, get together to produce a bulletin that would keep us informed of current research and research opportunities in our field.

Given the inter-disciplinary nature of our work, it was decided not to exclude any particular field of study: be it from the humanities, social sciences or natural sciences. It was further agreed, after some discussion, that the regional scope of the bulletin should not be restricted to Nepal, but should include the lands and peoples of the entire Himalayas. By Himalayas is understood: Hindukush, Ladakh, Kashmir, northwestern India, Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan, Assam, northeastern India and southern Tibet. Finally it was decided that the bulletin ought to be published in English, as this is the most common second language of scholars, not only in Europe but also in the Himalayan region itself.

As for the content of the proposed bulletin, the participants suggested a number of topics they wished to see regularly featured:

1. Reports on ongoing, or recently completed, research projects.
2. Information about archives with literary, ethnographic, historical, archaeological, botanical, etc. materials collected in the Himalayan region.
3. Reviews of books on the Himalayas, including books published

in Nepal, India, Pakistan and China which because of poor distribution may be inadequately known in Europe.

4. Current political developments in Nepal, India, Pakistan and China and the implications of these developments for research carried out by European scholars.

5. News about forthcoming conferences, research grants, new funding opportunities in post-1992 Europe, etc.

The representatives of the South Asia Institute, Heidelberg offered to produce such a bulletin over a trial period of two years on the understanding that we would retire with dignity at the end of that period, should the interest and commitment of a sufficient number of scholars prove illusory. Two sorts of commitment are required: first, we need contributions on the above-mentioned topics which merit publication; second, we need the financial support of our readership. Although we will try to make the bulletin a success, it is obvious that the success of this venture will largely be determined by the active support of everyone concerned.

Our plan then is as follows. We shall bring out two issues per year -- one in early spring, the other in early autumn. The present number, our very first, is being sent to all persons known to us who are interested in Himalayan research (and in this we acknowledge the help of Michael Hutt, Gérard Toffin and others who have provided us with mailing lists of scholars from their respective

countries). Included in your copy you will find a questionnaire concerning your current and past research. All persons who return the questionnaire, duly filled out, will receive free of charge our second issue of the Bulletin, due out in November of this year. Once the extent of European interest is established and the Bulletin has been costed, a subscription rate will be set. All recipients of the second issue will receive a bill, upon payment of which they will receive the third and fourth issues of the Bulletin, planned for 1992. The fourth issue will be our "sink or swim" issue. It will indicate whether we are financially viable (all subsidies from the South Asia Institute will lapse at this point). By this time we will also know whether the Bulletin will remain a newsletter or whether -- strengthened by book reviews, reports and articles -- it will circulate information of a less ephemeral character. The fourth issue will also serve to identify us as a scholarly community (a research index based on the returned questionnaires will then be published). If the Bulletin survives its two year trial period, the present editorship will then endeavour to share more equitably the editorial responsibilities with its European colleagues and to involve in some collaborative way scholars from the Himalayan countries themselves.

By accident, rather than design, our first issue has become something of a Nepal issue. We are especially indebted to Michael Hutt, for having provided us with a review of Nepali literature available in London and to Carol Tingey for having brought to

light the Bake ethnomusicological archive. The article on the so-called private Nepali newspapers, being collected by the South Asia Institute at Heidelberg, was put together by the editors with the help of information contributed from John Whelpton in Hong Kong and Silke Wolf in Kathmandu. Other reports were collected by Martin Gaenszle in Kathmandu, including an interview with Prof. Basudev Chandra Malla, the new Vice-Chancellor of Tribhuvan University. Future issues will take us west and east of Nepal, and hopefully into Tibet as well.

For the present we urge you to read this issue and to return to us the enclosed questionnaire. Since our mailing lists are anything but complete, we further request that you spread the word about the Bulletin and encourage those who have not received a copy to write to us. Finally please make the next issue a better one. Send us both your news as well as longer pieces that you would like to have considered for publication (see notes to contributors at the end of this issue).

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 Prof. Dr. András Höfer
 Dr. Martin Gaenszle