

EDITORIAL

We would like to start by welcoming the participation of a group of researchers, working on the Hindukush, to our Bulletin. Prof. Dr. Hermann Kreutzmann of Friedrich-Alexander Universität in Erlangen-Nürnberg will coordinate information in this field. Their contributions, which will be published in future issues, will extend the Bulletin's geographical scope to the Karakorum range.

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The present issue is our first attempt to offer our readers a number of articles on a specific theme, music in the Himalayas. This represents a turning point in the evolution of the Bulletin. While keeping our primary objective of providing information about new events, books and projects in our fields of study, we felt the need to present European research in greater depth. This need has emerged as a growing number of researchers have indicated their interest in constituting a research network around the Bulletin.

Only a few collective works on Himalayan music have been published so far and none of them includes a compact disc. This subject has prompted a great deal of interest from our readers, which is in itself evidence of its relevance and vitality. We are pleased to present contributions from established scholars, both Western and Nepalese, who are pioneers in this domain, as well as from newcomers still working on their dissertations.

We would like to take this opportunity to encourage researchers to pay more attention to music while they are in the field and to publish their observations. We cannot emphasize enough the need to have a good tape recorder, of DAT type, if recordings are to be edited properly. Ideally, recordings should be made both in context and in a more controlled environment in order to minimise incidental noise. It is important to note down what people say about their music and their instruments, as well as

their own classification of their repertoire. Photographs and drawings of the instruments should not be neglected. It would also be useful to have instruments made.

While we were working on this issue, three topics in particular appeared to have attracted too little research : music of Himalayan tribal groups, folk-songs of the Indo-Nepalese (wedding songs, children's songs, Badi repertoires, etc.) and non-religious music among Tibetan groups.

We would like to go a little further by mentioning two possible subjects that could be especially interesting to pursue within a collective framework.

The first one concerns chanted epics from far western Himalaya (e.g. the Chand dynasty epic) and their likely movement towards western and central Nepal. Some recordings are already available, but much remains to be done. Both an anthropological study of various socio-cultural contexts of these epics, and a musicological study of the various performances involving different instruments, rhythms, etc. are necessary.

The second concerns what could be called the Tihar repertoire, although some of the songs belonging to it are also performed outside this specific festival. Among these songs, for example, are the well-known *Sorathi*, performed by the Magar, Tharu and Gurung or the *bhailo* songs performed throughout the country.

If you are interested in working on either of these subjects, please contact us. If there is sufficient interest, a seminar on the subject could be organised.

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There is still time to submit contributions on the use of photography in research on the Himalayas and the way this is understood by local people. The deadline for submission is June 15, 1998.