

Editorial

The faculty of the Department of Nepalese History, Culture and Archaeology had dreamed and worked hard since the inception of this journal - *Nepalese Culture* to make it a revered academic avenue of repute. More than three decades back, when the first volume of this journal was brought out in 1979 (BS 2036), under the Chief editorship of Professor Hit Narayan Jha, there were seven articles that provided wide exposures to the cultural and historical legacy of the country. Indeed it was a landmark start followed with other volumes. However, there was a period of some years that the publication came to a halt due to several difficulties. The repercussions were clear; there were academic voids for years. There would be occasional academic concerns about the serious loss and fading life graph of this widely used and sought out publication. All thanks to deserving previous Heads of the Department and committed teams, the journal was brought back to life; it really revived but thrived with resilience. Moreover, for the past six years, the journal also has been upgraded as a peer-reviewed journal. Thanks also to the present Head of the Department, Associate Professor Mahesh K. Acharya for encouraging the Journal's new team with full authority.

The aim of this journal is to strongly hinge the multifacteous cultural riches of the country to the avenues of this publication and encourage genuine and impactful researches necessary for all times of the past, present and the future.

This volume has been brought out through collective endeavors of a new team. Devoted editors and reviewers were appointed and an advisory board was formed. We hope this new volume will set an appreciative and alienated standard for the continuation of this journal. Eight articles selected in this journal address the diverse field of Nepali culture from anthropology, museum management, cultural inclusion in intangible rituals to urban settlement, tourism and museums.

The article by **Uttam Paudel** synthesizes a range of ideations from ethnographic studies on the forest shaman Banjhankri of Nepal and triggers a de-reading of this mysterious healing unsocial entity. While at the same time, it confronts the malicious nature of Banjhankrini, his female counterpart, it does open up serious rethinkings on the role of Banjhakri as a therapeutic ally. To an appreciative level of satiation, this article hopefully gives fulfilling ethnographic perspective for the readers.

Amrit Kharel ventures into the legal territories of cultural heritage by examining the constitutional provisions and associated laws related to archaeology and cultural heritage. Along with a critical review of these legal frameworks, the author also brings in a commentary on judicial proceedings related to cultural heritage by examining a number of court cases at various levels of judiciary including the supreme court. These legal proceedings – through specific responses to the concerned cases, have also contributed in giving a direction to the legal systems for cultural heritage preservation in Nepal.

Pashupati Nyaupane attempts to bring in tourism (visitors) dimension into the discussion by

looking into the visitor needs at the Patan Museum situated in the core monument zone of Patan – part of the Kathmandu Valley World Heritage Property. The author hints to a range of services that are already offered but could further be enhanced to relate the tourism experience for a meaningful contribution to cultural heritage management.

The *Khatajatra of Maitiajima* by **Sandhya Khanal Parajuli** sheds fine spotlights on the intangible riches of a popular but less researched goddess of the Kathmandu valley. The information collected through the author's unshrinking motif and meticulous follow ups with the priests and key informants all provide a clear reflection of the rituals and fairs of Maitidevi.

The article by **Ajay Praja** uses a qualitative approach and clear analysis of data collected from Chepang settlements to provide a meaningful discourse for festivals of indigenous people. Chepangs are categorized as highly marginalized indigenous groups. The group also consists of Majhi, Bote, Santhal, Dhanuk, Siyar, Thudam, Jhagad, Danuwar, Lhomi, Thami and Baram. The writer argues that the Chhonam festival is an example of the nature of balance between culture and nature through the use of symbols, and the practice of attracting the ancestors to be the part of the function.

Shyam Madan KC digs an unknown historical perspectives in his article about Tokha, a suburb to Kathmandu. The author analyses traditional hearsays through his extensive researches and simply gives a new historic perspective of the ancient town so rich of intangible heritages.

Sangita Pancha offers a close examination of community and cultural inclusion in the animal sacrifice ritual in Bhaktapur. The he- buffalo termed as *Nikuthu*, because of its stark shiny black colour is offered to a highly revered goddess Taleju and the community participation in the fair is jovial. While the practices are esoteric at one hand, on the other side, exemplarily participative. This article explores symbolic importances of the *Nikuthu*. However, it is far away from the sentimental perspective on animal rights in the picturesque collective efforts of the different layers of a society driven by traditions for animal sacrifice.

Srijana Prajapati in her article on the Nala settlement while at one hand depicts the tangible aspects of a medieval town of Nala, a suburbs to the popular town of Bhaktapur, on the other hand exposes a grim situation of this traditional town because of urbanization and unplanned town development. A research well documented by an urban architect and researcher of cultural heritages, this should be opening a new vista for future researches on the issue of heritage town planning.

In conclusion, this issue represents not only an upgrading of a long-established academic journal, but also the continuation of an attempt to enhance the contemporary academic culture among Nepali scholars interested to pursue the studies of Nepali culture and heritage through multi-disciplinary research. We acknowledge that this edition may not have achieved its best, but we commit hereby from our side; given that our esteemed contributors maintain the standard and methodology. Thank you for your time in reading this issue, and we welcome your feedback as well as any possible contributions.

The Editorial Board
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