



## A WORD FROM THE GUEST EDITOR

When in November 2011 I was asked to be guest editor of the *Bulletin of Tibetology*, this was an opportunity for me to continue a work I had happily accepted in the past for other journals from the Himalayan region. I have always been of the opinion that the local journals should play a significant role as a source for the study of the cultures they represent. Although places of learning in the west or other countries of Asia have structures and facilities to do very well, the material coming from the indigenous regions, despite many difficulties, keeps on inspiring research and writing.

To pursue this line of thinking I planned to ask a few authors who hang around the place in the Himalaya where I have been living for a good number of years to take out from their drawers some of their writings and contribute to this issue of the *Bulletin* I was asked to take care of. They are voices of the Himalaya for a Himalayan journal. I am grateful to them for answering to my call for papers.

This issue mainly focuses on Sikkim, owing to the work of Emma Martin and Tashi Tsering, who both transfer to the reader the great fascination of a past season in the history of the land that I find quite peculiar. Their work conveys the sense of a mix of antiquity, colonialism, post-colonialism and embryonic experiments with modernism, all combined together in early 20<sup>th</sup> century Sikkim like in no other Himalayan territory.

The other article in this issue, penned by me, steps out of Sikkimese culture, although vaguely related to it. It is an attempt to see how Tibetan culture treasures the cult of important Buddhist icons not directly related to it but still treated with supreme reverence. Being written from a perspective restricted to Tibet, the topic I have chosen offers ample historiographical opportunities for a study from the Sinological angle.

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