

## Editor's Column

Eighteen years ago, *Oral Tradition* 12.1 offered an octet of essays concerned with South Asian women's oral traditions. More recently, I broached the topic of another issue devoted to Indic cultures' verbal arts with several senior scholars; their enthusiasm encouraged me to canvass for a guest editor. Good fortune brought aboard Kirin Narayan, who graciously acceded to my plea for the necessary expertise to assemble this issue. Kirin has patiently and cheerfully steered the enterprise forward until now, when, "the boat has arrived on the other shore."

Kirin's work completing this volume implies acknowledging others whose contributions merit the gratitude of readers of *Oral Tradition*. A signal debt is owed the colleagues who share their expertise and sensibility making referrals and serving as readers. On their advice authors are prompted to elucidate the obscure and invited to consider otherwise unrecognized connections. The readers' judgments and sure guidance regarding submissions smooth the editor's pathway. Generalist and specialist readers are the journal's heroes.

Three of the essays presented here address the effects on ritual verbal traditions wrought by tectonic societal shifts: Joyce Burkhalter Flueckiger explores innovations in the worship of the village goddess Gangamma in the village of Triupati, South India; Ann Grodzins Gold analyzes storytelling and women's ritual fasting in Rajasthan, North India; and, finally, Mahesh Sharma studies changes in *Nauala*, a ritual sacrifice offering made to Shiva by the formerly transhumant Gaddis of Himachal Pradesh, North India, and through it charts dislocations and relocations of identity. The remaining essays explore ramifications of written versions of traditional verbal arts: Peter Friedlander characterizes how multiple manuscript and print traditions of the songs of the poet saint Kabīr (ca. 1400-50) reveal contexts in which those songs flourished as oral traditions; Kirin Narayan offers a reflection and meditation how transcribing, and transcriptions of, women's songs in Kangra, North India; constitute cultural and personal transactions as well as talismans of longstanding relationships; and, finally, Leela Prasad presents a comparative inter- and extra-textual study of Shakespeare's *King Lear* and Indic filial-love folktales keyed to the concept of "interspace." She concludes that though each strand of the tale type essays a different answer to questions of "self," both affirm that "self" resolves as a symbiotic sovereign.

A housekeeping detail needs mentioning. Though *Oral Tradition* 29.1 bears a March 2014 date it was published online only some six months later. In consultation with this university's serials librarian, in order to synchronize the journal with 2015, volume 29.2 bears a publication date of October 2015, making its arrival a few months premature. Finally, I encourage you to share your research about the world's traditional verbal arts with us. Submissions pass through a double-blind referee process and a decision is generally reported within a trimester of receipt. Published articles are seen by some 20,000 readers in 200 countries and territories.

John Zemke  
Editor, *Oral Tradition*

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