

Preface

This book, a revised version of the doctoral dissertation I submitted to Heidelberg University's Faculty of Philosophy in March 2017 and defended in May 2017, represents the culmination of a four-year research project (2013–2017) supported by the Cluster of Excellence “Asia and Europe in a Global Context” under the German Universities Excellence Initiative.¹ The main ambition of the work lies in a comprehensive investigation into the formation and implementation of the (*Mulukī*) *Ain* of 1854, a foundational legal code with constitutional attributes. Central to this examination is the detailed editing and translation of the articles pertaining to homicide within both the *Mulukī Ain* of 1854 and its successor, the *Mulukī Ain* of 1870. These analyses are juxtaposed with relevant contemporaneous legal and administrative documents, with the aim of providing a robust and contextual understanding of the legal framework. In essence, this study endeavours to serve as a scholarly resource, shedding light on the intricate role of legal systems in shaping modern Nepal's identity as a nation-state, while concurrently delving into the legal evolution and transformation that characterized the 19th-century landscape.

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Prof. Dr. Axel Michaels, my supervisor and mentor, without whom the completion of this work would not have been possible. He has been instrumental to my work in virtue of his vast knowledge of Hindu legal traditions, Nepalese legal history, and deep critical thinking within academia. Furthermore, I am immensely grateful to him for extending an invitation to Germany, allowing me to pursue my doctoral studies here. I am indebted to him not only for his countless suggestions and enlightening comments on all sections of this work but also for his significant contributions to the field of Nepalese studies as a whole.

1 The dissertation was submitted with the title “Formation and Enforcement of the [Mulukī] *Ain*: Nepal's First Legal Code, Containing the Edition and Translation of the Articles on Homicide in the [Mulukī] *Ains* of 1854 and 1870, Including Contemporaneous Legal Documents.”

I am also deeply indebted to Prof. Dr. Martin Gaenzle for his evaluation of my dissertation and insightful suggestions for its improvement. The final result has been accepted by Prof. Dr. Barbara Mittler, head of the advisory board of the Research Unit: Documents on the History of Religion and Law of Pre-modern Nepal, for publication in the *Documenta Nepalica* book series, for which I am truly grateful.²

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2 Note that Prof. Dr. Axel Michaels and Prof. Dr. Martin Gaenzle carefully reviewed the successive drafts of this work during the dissertation evaluation process and its subsequent preparation for publication. Their generously supplied expert knowledge significantly rectified many structural and factual issues present in the earlier draft and helped to give shape to the final version. Whatever errors and shortcomings may persist are solely my responsibility.

History of Religion and Law of Pre-modern Nepal.” I am thankful for the support received from this project in advancing the understanding of Nepalese religious and legal history.

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