

Foreword

The National Archives of Nepal, established in 1967, is the government body authorized to manage and preserve the country's archival documents. It operates according to the *Archives Preservation Act* of 1989, and its functions as a repository of government records are to collect and preserve manuscripts and other significant documents and to facilitate public access to them. It collaborates with both national and international organizations in pursuit of its goals, and has thereby created a network of partnerships.

The National Archives of Nepal has enjoyed a number of long-term collaborations with Germany. It has successfully partnered with the *Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project* founded in 1970 and its successor *Nepalese-German Manuscript Cataloguing Project*. Recently, in February 2016, we signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the research unit *Documents on the History of Religion and Law of Premodern Nepal* of the Heidelberg Academy of Sciences and Humanities, Germany. One of the articles of the MoU states that the research unit and the Archives will issue joint publications. Consequently, we are glad to announce the beginning of a joint publication series titled *Documenta Nepalica*. The current volume, the first of the series, is the outcome of a conference held in Heidelberg in October 2015.

The present book consists of seventeen papers dealing mainly with South Asian documents from the premodern period. Those included in it cover topics such as the diplomatics of document writing, legal practices, administration, state-making, and religious life. Many of the articles in the present volume deal with specific source materials preserved in the National Archives of Nepal. This volume, then, will contribute to a greater understanding of the history of South Asia in general and of premodern Nepal in particular.

We hope that our partnership with the research unit will help in meeting the Archives' objectives. We hope in particular that further

cooperation between the two parties will contribute much to the preservation and scientific understanding of Nepalese documents.

Saubhagya Pradhananga

Chief

National Archives of Nepal