

Foreword by Saubhagya Pradhananga

The National Archives of Nepal, established in 1967, is the government body authorised 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 organisations 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 successfully partnered with the Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project, founded in 1970, and its successor Nepalese-German Manuscript Cataloguing Project. In 2018 the research unit Documents on the History of Religion and Law of Premodern Nepal of the Heidelberg Academy of Sciences and Humanities commenced a publication series titled *Documenta Nepalica*. The first volume of the series, *Studies in Historical Documents from Nepal and India*, demonstrated the significance of Nepal's document heritage for historical studies on South Asia and beyond and sparked further scholarly interest in our country's rich archival sources.

I am convinced that the second volume of the series will attract even more attention. The present translation and study of the *Mulukī Ain* is an important contribution to the study of Nepalese legal history and will help to disseminate knowledge about this foundational text of modern Nepal. The National Archives of Nepal is preserving not only the oldest extant manuscript of the *Ain*, but also manuscripts or prints of all its subsequent amended versions. Even though these manuscripts date from relatively recent times, as noteworthy facets of Nepal's constitutional development they still figure prominently among our collection. I am confident that this book will become a key publication for anyone interested in the complex and at times complicated role law played in the formation of the modern nation state of Nepal.

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Chief

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