

Speech from Claude Hauser, Pokhara Exhibition IMM, 13.12.2025

Your Excellency, dear Jinesh Sindurakar, Nirmala Neupane and the entire team at the International Mountain Museum, dear Barbara, dear friends of the mountains in Nepal and Switzerland. Today, I couldn't be with you in Pokhara, but rather remotely, from Fribourg in Switzerland, on a screen where you can see behind me an image of one of the Swiss mountains dear to Erhard Loretan, the Gastlosen. It is a great pleasure and an honour to present to you today the results of our research in contemporary history on the figure of Erhard Loretan, which has kept us busy during all this year.

Throughout the spring semester of 2025, we worked in a Seminar with a dozen Master's students in contemporary history at the University of Fribourg on the life and mountaineering activities of Erhard Loretan, as part of the more comprehensive research we are conducting in our Department on the theme of 'The globalisation of the Alps, from landscape to environment'. This research, supported by the Swiss National Science Foundation, aims to study how practices and representations of the Alps evolved between the Swiss Alps and various other mountain ranges around the world from the 1930s to the end of the 20th century.

In June 2025, we organised an exhibition at the Collège du Sud in Bulle presenting the results of the work of the University's students, entitled: **Erhard Loretan, a mountain life as a revelation.** This exhibition presented to a wide audience a series of posters created by students of contemporary history at the University of Fribourg as part of this Master's seminar conducted **under my supervision and that of my colleague Philippe Vonnard.**

The posters illustrated various themes addressed during historical research based on the Lorétan Archives held at the Alps Museum in Bern and made available for the occasion by the museum.

Based on this exhibition, we have prepared, in coordination with the International Mountain Museum and the Alps Museum in Bern, a summary of it in the form of electronic and interactive slideshows that can be presented as part of the Alps Museum's exhibition 'Loretan, aux limites' (Loretan, at the limits), which Barbara Keller told you about.

This slideshow was **produced by Luca Patella, an assistant** in our Department of Contemporary History at the University of Fribourg, with a technical help for design and IT issues. You will be able to enjoy it by exploring and navigating independently, according to your choices and interests, on the tablets available in the Museum. Five themes are presented on these tablets, reflecting different aspects of the history of mountaineering as experienced by Loretan and his entourage in the Himalayan mountains near you. Here are the themes that have been prepared for you:

- Everest 1986: The 43-Hour Push: Logistics, Media, and the Rope Team
- Loretan among the peoples of the Himalayas
- The climbing journal: a gateway into Loretan's personal relationship with the Himalayas
- Echoes from the Summits – From Small Screen to Collective Memory
- Erhard Loretan: becoming a prophet in his own country?

We hope you enjoy discovering these images, texts and interactive presentations prepared on the basis of our students' work. We are very pleased to be able to share them with you today, as they represent both an important piece of academic training and research, as well as a successful experience of cooperation with two museums, one located in Switzerland and the other in Nepal. In the Department of Contemporary History at the University of Fribourg, we are developing 'public history' projects that allow a wide audience to benefit from the results of archival research: the history of the Himalayas as seen through the life of Fribourg mountaineer Erhard Loretan is a good example. We hope you enjoy visiting this exhibition!

Thank you very much!