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REPORT ON THE ANHS MEMBERS MEETING

MADISON, WI OCTOBER 2008

The Association for Nepal and Himalayan Studies held its annual member's meeting at the Madison Concourse Hotel in Madison, Wisconsin on October 17, 2008, in conjunction with the 37th Annual Conference on South Asia.

The President, Mahendra Lawoti, opened the meeting and reported on the association's activities for the past year. For the past several years the ANHS has been exploring the possibility of becoming a member of the Council of Overseas American Research Centers; membership would open up additional avenues for fundraising to promote research on the Himalaya but a number of criteria must be met to be eligible to join. They include an agreement with the host country (in ANHS' case, this would be Nepal); an office in the host country; to have at least five non-profit organizations as members of the association; and to present a financial report and a budget. The president observed that we had met two of these criteria, and would be able to meet two others in the near future; the last is not relevant to ANHS. All area studies are represented in CAORC, with the exception of the Himalayan region. ANHS will be seeking to add five institutional members and to then apply for membership in CAORC in winter 2009.

Partly in response to the CAORC criteria, ANHS signed memoranda of understanding with the Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies (CNAS) and with the Social Science Baha (SSB) in Kathmandu, and proposes to enter into similar agreements with other such organizations in the Himalayan region. CNAS is a research institute at Tribhuvan University in Nepal and SSB is a Nepali NGO focused on promoting, developing and improving scholarly research in the social sciences in Nepal. The long-term goal is to open an office in Kathmandu in conjunction with SSB, that would assist scholars from the U.S. who want to study in Nepal. In addition, the ANHS intends to institute a program of small grants to promote research in Nepal. Apart from these initiatives, ANHS also organized a panel in Kathmandu in August in collaboration with Martin Chautari, a Nepali NGO that "organizes public discussions, conducts research, launches advocacy projects, publishes books, and intervenes in the pre- and post-publication processes of book publishing in Nepal." The panel, on the topic of "Nationalism and Ethnicity: New Directions," featured papers by Mahendra Lawoti, Janak Rai, Mukta Lama and Saubhagya Shah, and was chaired by Susan Hangen.

During the course of the year, the ANHS established an annual award to honor the doyen of Nepali anthropologists, the late Dor Bahadur Bista. The award will be given to the best paper written by a graduate student, but depending on interest and support, may be extended later to recognize outstanding contributions in other areas.

The president announced that the association has proposed certain amendments to the constitution, partly to meet CAORC requirements and also to enhance some of the goals and activities of the ANHS. These proposals would be submitted shortly to the members¹.

The president also spoke about the importance of serving on the Council. He noted that there would be four vacancies for membership next year and asked members present to consider putting themselves forward for election. Volunteers are also needed for the various standing committees of the association.

FINANCIAL SITUATION

Following the president's report, the treasurer, Susan Hangen, reported that the association is in good financial shape. The ANHS has over \$7600 in its account and in addition its journal *Himalaya* receives a \$4000 subvention from Macalester College. She announced that the association would be changing its membership structure to provide for membership on an annual basis, rather than to link membership to a subscription to the journal. Because the current structure links membership to a journal subscription, and because publication of the journal is running behind, it has been difficult to maintain regular inflows of membership dues. She invited comments and feedback from the general membership to this shift from a subscription based model to a simple annual fee. ANHS will be hiring an accountant and a book-keeper to professionalize our financial records.

The treasurer discussed the value of the association to its membership. Apart from receiving the journal, members would benefit from the association's membership in CAORC in the long term, from projects funded by CAORC grants or from grants for which the ANHS could apply because of its membership in CAORC. She pointed out that the ANHS was the major organized membership-based voice for the study of Nepal and the Himalaya in the United States. The relationship with the SSB means that members in the future would be able to enjoy the convenience of an ANHS office in Kathmandu, which could help with visa requests and provide computers and perhaps office space. She invited suggestions on things that ANHS is not doing that it could be doing.

HIMALAYA

Arjun Guneratne, who has taken over from Barbara Brower as editor of the journal, then gave his report. He

1. They were published in volume 27 of *Himalaya* and adopted by the membership.

thanked Barbara for the enormous contribution she had made to the association as its editor and treasurer since 1992. Macalester College provides \$4000 annually to subsidize the cost of producing the journal, and provides a computer. The journal also receives support from the library at Macalester, which is seeking to promote open access publishing. The library will format the journal, which is a significant cost-saving to ANHS. One weakness of *Himalaya* was that it did not have a web presence and was not available in electronic format; with the active support of the Macalester library, this is being remedied. *Himalaya* is now part of Macalester's suite of digital open access journals, and website has been created which allows for online submission of articles. (<http://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/himalaya/>.) All past issues of the journal will eventually be archived on this site and fully searchable with a two year rolling wall (i.e., the latest two years worth of journals will not be available on line; as a new issue is published, the oldest issue not yet online will be uploaded). The journal will then be automatically indexed by Google Scholar, and it is already on the British Library's WorldCat. We can explore other options. These developments make the journal accessible to a very large audience.

Past issues are currently being scanned. In response to a question from the floor, the editor explained that providing password controlled access to the latest issue online was too complicated to be implemented at the moment, but this was something to work on in the future. The editor invited members to guest edit issues on specific themes, and to email him with their proposals. A guest-edited issue could comprise three to five articles, and could come out of panels presented at conferences.

Both volumes 26 and 27 are being finalized, and will hopefully be in the mail by the end of the year. Volume 28 will likely be a special themed issue on the Tarai, based on papers presented at a conference organized by the Social Science Baha a few years ago. Volume 29 is likely to be an omnibus issue, consisting of several unrelated papers.

AWARDS COMMITTEE

The editor's report was followed by the report from the awards committee. They reported that submissions were initially inadequate, so the deadline has been moved to the end of the spring semester (June 1) in the hope that this will allow enough time for more people to submit. The awards committee encouraged graduate students to submit papers, and urged graduate student advisors to encourage their advisees to submit. The winning paper would be published in *Himalaya*. In addition to the paper prize, the committee is considering book awards, recognition of lifetime contribution, etc. We will try with a graduate award for a couple of years to see how it works out before attempting to expand our scope. Amanda Snellinger volunteered to help with the graduate student prize.

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

The proposed constitutional amendments were proposed and adopted by the members present. They will now be published in *Himalaya* and the general membership will be given time to consider them and then vote with mail in ballots.

VOLUNTEERING

The discussion then turned to the scope for members to volunteer to help accomplish the association's goals. Sara Shneiderman asked whether the scope of the organization's membership was supposed to be US based, and whether there was scope for outreach to other countries beyond the US. Barbara Brower responded that a quarter of the membership was international, which may be an issue for CAORC, but that the ANHS has had various efforts to connect with other organizations, such as the Institution for Ladakh Studies. ANHS is in effect a global organization based in the US.

The question of public relations was also discussed. We do not have any provisions for public relations, but it was agreed that we should, because of the need to give our perspective on matters in the regions where we work. However, we need to have people with the time, energy and motivation to set it up.

Megan Adamson-Sijapati then summarized the areas we need to focus on: the submission of papers by graduate students, planning for meetings (conference committee), work on the membership committee, and put oneself forward to be a member of the executive council. We also need to generate material for *Himalaya*: abstracts, research reports, dissertation abstracts, recent publications, etc. One way a member could contribute is to submit reports on conferences (other than major national conferences) that he or she attends. Geoff Childs will coordinate the submission of conference reports. Megan would undertake responsibility to collate dissertation abstracts and collect research reports. The association is also seeking to expand membership in the Himal research list-serve.

WEBSITE

The association now has a newly designed website and its own domain, thanks to the work of Milan Shrestha, who is responsible for both designing the new web site and maintaining it. The work is completed but Milan was unable to upload it before the meeting. We still need to find a domain host, and the domain will likely be anhshimalaya.org, which evokes both the association and the journal.

HIMALAYAN STUDIES CONFERENCE

Arjun Guneratne proposed that in 2011, rather than meet at the South Asia conference in Madison, the association meet in conjunction with the annual conference of the Midwest Conference on Asian Affairs (MCAA), which will meet at Macalester in the late summer or the fall of 2011. The MCAA is one of the bigger and more active regional conferences of

the Association for Asian Studies. This is an opportunity to do a major Nepal and Himalayan Studies conference in a place that is more accessible, including internationally, than Madison. The following points emerged in the general discussion of this proposal. We would be able to ensure that panels did not compete against each other, which sometimes happens at Madison, and although the President of the AAS is the plenary speaker, we could arrange for another keynote speaker who would be a Himalayanist. We would look to have lots of Himalayan-themed panels as well as some inter-area panels speaking to similar issues. There would also be the possibility of being more creative with formats for panels. For instance, we could have panels where papers circulate ahead of time. We could have panels organized for instance

on Yunan, on Revisiting *Himalayan Anthropology: The Indo-Tibetan Interface*, etc. This conference does not require that we break from our tradition of going to Madison but that for just this once, there could be some benefit from a conference that we arrange to focus on Himalayan themes; there are also benefits of connecting with other Asian regions and cross-cutting themes, to do comparative work: not just China, Japan, Korea, but Islam in Asia, Maoism in the Himalaya, the theme of High Asia. There was some discussion of possible sources of funding for the conference: Trace Foundation, Wenner-Gren, NSF. Anna Stirr and Sara Shneiderman volunteered to be on the conference committee.

The meeting then concluded.

Subscribe to the ANHS List Serve

The Association for Nepal and Himalayan Studies maintains a list-serve through Yahoo Groups to further the business of the Association. Members and non-members are welcome to join. The web page for the list-serve is at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Himal-research/>

The list-serve has two purposes:

- (1) To enable the Association to rapidly disseminate news, information, and Association business to the membership.
- (2) To provide a forum for members to post requests, inquiries and information pertaining to research and teaching about the Himalaya to the association at large.

To subscribe to the list-serve, send an email to:

Himal-research-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

If you wish to unsubscribe, send a message to the following address:

Himal-research-unsubscribe@yahoogroups.com

To post messages to the list-serve, use the following address. When replying to messages, note that the default option will send your message to the list-serve at large. If you only wish for certain people to see your message, you must enter their email addresses individually in the address header and delete the list-serve address.

Himal-research@yahoogroups.com