

1995

## Nepal Studies Association News: Minutes of the General Membership Meeting of NSA, 21 October 1995

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## 1996-97 College Year in Nepal and College Year in India Programs The University of Wisconsin-Madison

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The University of Wisconsin-Madison announces its 1996-97 College Year in Nepal and College Year in India programs. These programs provide students with integrated programs of language training, tutorial instruction, and independent fieldwork projects. They begin with ten weeks of intensive language training in the University of Wisconsin-Madison (in Tibetan, Nepali, Hindi-Urdu, Telugu, or Tamil and continue with an academic year of study in Nepal or India that includes additional language-training, tutorial instruction, and an independent fieldwork project. In Nepal the program site is Kathmandu (for Nepali and Tibetan students). In India the program sites are Banaras (for Hindi-Urdu students), Hyderabad (for Telugu students), and Madurai (for Tamil students). A full year of University Wisconsin credit is given for completion of the program, ensuring the quality of credits earned and simplifying the transfer of credits to colleges and universities in the United States. Students have submitted fieldwork projects in such diverse subjects as agronomy, anthropology, art, botany, dance, ecology, economics, film, folklore, geography, history, journalism, linguistics, literature, music, philosophy, political science, religion, sociology, South Asian Studies, theater, and women's studies.

Selection of student participants is made on the basis of the following qualifications: Junior or Senior standing (recent graduates may also apply, provided they have not yet enrolled in a graduate program); good academic standing; academic or career interests that will

be enhanced by a year abroad; ability to withstand and benefit from the psychological stress of living in an unfamiliar culture; interest in and aptitude for intensive language training, and a high degree of self-motivation.

Not including summer school expenses (that will total about \$4,500 for non-Wisconsin/Minnesota students and about \$2,600 for Wisconsin/Minnesota students) the 1996-97 program fees are \$12,000 for Nepal and \$11,000 for India. The program fees cover academic-year tuition, administrative fees, one-way air fare from the west coast to Nepal or India, room, board, and pocket money while on the program. Students who do not qualify for financial aid for the program at their home college may be eligible for aid through the University of Wisconsin-Madison, provided they have submitted the necessary applications by January 1996.

Students have been going to India since 1961 on Wisconsin's College Year in India Program and to Nepal on Wisconsin's College Year in Nepal Program since 1980. Trained University of Wisconsin personnel in Madison and at each site in Nepal and India offer academic counseling and put students in touch with qualified language teachers, tutors, and fieldwork advisors.

Applications and additional information are available from: International Studies and Programs, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 261 Bascom Hall, 500 Lincoln Drive, Madison, Wisconsin 53706. Phone: (608) 262-2851.

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## Nepal Studies Association News

### Minutes of the General Membership Meeting of NSA, 21 October 1995

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The meeting began at 6:09 p.m. with a welcome by Naomi Bishop, President of NSA. Approximately fifty people were in attendance, including Executive Council Members Barbara Brower (*ex officio*), Mary Cameron, David Holmberg, Todd Lewis, John Metz, Krishna Pradhan, Nanda Shrestha, and Richard Tucker. Minutes reconstructed by the president.

#### Treasurer's Report Barbara Brower

We are currently solvent, but our finances would be more secure if all members would pay up. We've continued to send issues to recently lapsed members in hopes of keeping them in mind of the journal. Our

subscribers have been patient through the hiatus in *HRB* production, and member records have suffered somewhat from three *Bulletin* moves and a succession of inexperienced manipulators, so we have been reluctant to push for payment of issues mailed out to

unpaid subscribers. However, we do depend on member dues and we are grateful for those who make-up arrears. The *HRB* is on schedule after several years of tardiness; we hope to keep to the twice-yearly schedule that subscribers expect, and that *HRB* strives for. We will be invoicing members following the mailing of the second issue of Volume XV; bills will be mailed separately from the *Bulletin*.

**Membership Needed:** Portland State University has been generous in its support, but for the first time in its history *HRB's* mailing costs must be borne by the NSA itself: a considerable cost. This is but one of many reasons to increase our membership rolls. Therefore, we ask everyone's help in recruiting new members and in keeping memberships up to date.

**Editor's Report (*Himalayan Research Bulletin*)** Barbara Brower

The *Himalayan Research Bulletin* is back on schedule: there are once again two issues per year. We need the help of our members to keep our news and information current. Please communicate directly with the Executive Committee member coordinating *Bulletin* copy in each area: for volunteers to review books or for information about books to be reviewed, contact Todd Lewis; for information about upcoming conferences or events involving presentations on Himalayan topics, contact John Metz or Mary Cameron; to report on your recent research (a brief summary), or other news of interest to members, contact David Holmberg. The Executive Committee members will be responsible for passing along these items to the Editor, for inclusion in the *HRB*. If all else fails, contact Barbara Brower directly.

**TODD LEWIS:** I would like to add a feature on Course Syllabi for courses related to the region. Contact me for further information, or send along your syllabus, plus a brief explanation of the course and how it fits into the curriculum at your institution.

**ARJUN GUNERATNE:** Are e-mail addresses available for the Executive Committee? **BISHOP:** Yes, these are printed at the front of the *Bulletin*. If members have e-mail accounts and think that the NSA may not have record of these, please send us a message: [HRB@geog.pdx.edu](mailto:HRB@geog.pdx.edu). We will be publishing a members list probably in the spring issue, and it would be most helpful if your addresses and information were up to date.

**ARJUN GUNERATNE:** Asked about a Web Page for Nepal Studies Association, and based on the warm response the question received from the audience, agreed to set one up. More information will follow in the NSA News section of the *HRB*, as the Web page materializes.

**BISHWA ACHARYA** asked what you get for your \$20.00 NSA membership. **NAOMI BISHOP** replied that you get two issues per year of the *Himalayan Research Bulletin*, as well as an organization that serves to unite those of us who work and study in the region. **DAVID HOLMBERG** pointed out that if there weren't the NSA, we would all be sitting around saying, "We ought to have an organization that we can all belong to, to share information and our common interests."

**RICHARD TUCKER:** As someone working in the Indian Himalaya, he has always felt very welcome here. Kumaon, Garhwal, and Himachal scholars must remain in contact with each other, but they also need to be in contact with the NSA. There were several very successful sessions here on the Western Himalaya, which will result in a number of papers to be published in *HRB*. He was extremely encouraged by the cross fertilization going on here this weekend. This organization has always appreciated the broad geographic range encompassed by the Himalayas and welcomed all of its scholars.

There followed a minor discussion of what the Himalayas encompass.

**Constitutional Amendment:**

**NAOMI BISHOP:** One major piece of business we have tonight is to consider a Constitutional amendment that was brought by me to the Executive Council, which approved its presentation to this group. The procedure for amending the NSA Constitution involves a voice vote, by the membership at the annual meeting, to place the measure on a ballot, which is then mailed to all the members of the Nepal Studies Association. If approved by the majority of those who return the mail ballots, the amendment is passed and becomes a part of the Constitution.

The proposed amendment involves the election of new members of the Executive Council. Rather than holding an election, the amendment proposes to substitute a system of volunteers chosen by the Executive Council members. The impetus for this change stems from the following problems in the recent past:

1) The system as presently outlined in the Constitution stipulates that elections be held every two years, yet vacancies come up at odd intervals.

2) The present Constitution requires that the election of Council members be coordinated with the *HRB*; in recent years, the *HRB* has not been published regularly enough to accommodate timely elections.

3) Participation in voting by the membership has been abysmally low - thus making the concept of "elected" council members true in only the strictest sense.

4) While not mandated by the Constitution, there has been an attempt to produce a ballot with a choice - i.e., more candidates than places. Thus, some who agree to serve, are ultimately turned away. Service on the Executive Council requires a commitment to attend the Annual meeting for the four-year term; in addition, Council members must commit time to NSA business during the year, especially support for the *Bulletin*. Council members receive no remuneration for their services. There is some sentiment that those who agree to these terms should be welcomed rather than turned away.

The Proposal: In anticipation of a vacancy the following year, the President will ask for volunteers at the annual meeting. In the issue of the *HRB* which follows the annual meeting, an additional solicitation will be made, with volunteers communicating their interest in serving on the Council to the President. If not enough candidates emerge through these venues, the President will contact Council members to search their networks for possible candidates. At the next year's Council meeting, the Council will select the new members based on the three criteria of: 1) maximizing geographic distribution 2) maximizing disciplinary diversity and 3) encouraging new people to serve.

#### COMMENTS BY NSA MEMBERS:

a. COMMENT: Why do we have a mail ballot; perhaps we should elect people right here at the annual meeting. RESPONSE: Most of our members do not attend the annual meeting; there are 400 worldwide members, yet only a few are able to come to Madison. That is why our Constitution stipulates mail ballots. Furthermore, some of those in attendance here are not members. To change our procedure would require a Constitutional amendment for that.

b. COMMENT: (Kathryn March) We have not had an excess of volunteers. My concern is people might

be too shy to volunteer, so we need to recruit those who have the interest and the time. Could there be a process for someone to nominate someone else, with Executive Council responsible for contacting the person to be sure she or he would serve. (Richard Tucker) This is good point. I have wanted to get Garhwal or Kumaon scholars to volunteer. RESPONSE (Bishop): A good idea. There is no reason we can't have self-nominations and nominations by others.

c. COMMENT: Call the question. RESPONSE: The question was called, and with no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously. Thus, the amendment will be prepared and mailed to the membership following the next issue of *Himalayan Research Bulletin*.

d. COMMENT (David Holmberg): Can we seek volunteers now, in case the amendment passes? If we don't, then we will have to wait until next year's meeting to start the one-year process of having Council replacements. RESPONSE: The sense of the group was taken, and everyone supported making a preliminary list of people interested in serving on the Council, in the event that the amendment passed. After Bishop reminded the group that Executive Council members must be able to attend the annual meeting and have time to work on NSA business during the year, the following people volunteered: Kate Gilbert, Julia Thompson, Sam Sontag, Paul Benjamin, and Arjun Guneratne. NSA President Bishop urged those present to consider the possibility themselves or to spread the word, and to contact her with additional names.

#### Plans For Next Year's Conference:

BISHOP: We need two kinds of proposals at a minimum: paper panels on Himalayan topics and ideas for our annual Roundtable. The Roundtable may involve a panel of people who make very brief presentations on a topic which is of broad interest, timely, controversial, and/or provocative; the discussion is extended to the audience, and the entire proceedings are transcribed and appear in the Spring issue of the *HRB*. We may also want to have some kind of special event since next year is the 25th anniversary of the Conference on South Asia.

One idea that the Executive Committee proposed was a *Roundtable on Economic Globalization, Transnational Migration, and Ethnic Nationalism*. It would be an exploration of the blurring of national

boundaries and markets within the region, simultaneous with the upsurge of nationalism and ethnic associations.

#### RESPONSES FROM THE GROUP:

#### ROUNDTABLE TOPICS:

- Tourism: Friends or Foe* (H. Hindman)
- Pollution in Kathmandu*
- Theorizing Gender and Feminist Research* (Nightingale; Thompson; Ahearn; Cameron)
- Development of Hydroelectric Potential and Dam Building* (economics, ecology, ethno-ethics, etc.) (David Edds)

#### PANEL TOPICS:

- Democratization and Economic Transformations* (Dyuti Baral)
- Janajati and Ethnic Nationalism* (Heather Hindman; Laura Ahearn)
- India/Nepal Research on Gender and Environment (Forestry)* (Andrea Nightingale, John Metz, Richard Tucker)
- Water Resources Development* (Bishwa Acharya)
- Himalayan Poets and Writers Read Their Work* (Julia Thompson)
- Ethnic Movement in the Himalayan Regions: Causes and Conditions* (Gopal Singh Nepali)
- Nepali Press and the Political Transitions* (Binod Bhattarai)

Kathryn MARCH: We might also think about cultural events or films. What about bringing Nepalese scholars or performing groups, via USEF. This body

needs to suggest topics and people, but I think USEF would be amenable, or USIA. BISHOP: Do you want to make that a proposal? GROUP: Yes. BISHOP: We need to do more than express this desire; someone needs to volunteer to do the work. RESPONSE: Andrea Nightingale and Laura Ahearn volunteered, and Naomi Bishop agreed to help coordinate the efforts.

What topics or panels could we bring? NIGHTINGALE: At U. of Minnesota we bring in activists from many regions and it's great. KEN MACDONALD: The person behind the movement to stop Arun III is at Berkeley this year. NANDA SHRESTHA: We need to be careful about our image as a broad-based organization; we should avoid ideological one-sidedness since we include many people in our group and we want to maintain good relations in the region. ARJUN GUNERATNE: What about planning a special session for two or three years in the future. We could plan and seek funding in advance. JANA FORTIER: Wenner-Gren Foundation has money. OM GURUNG: Wenner-Gren doesn't fund individuals from abroad. MARCH: We could be more passive; just tell USAID that we want to have a panel on a particular topic and we will host whomever you send.

#### Announcements:

MARGARET MILLS: I am seeking help for an encyclopedia of South Asian folklore with Garland Press, and I need suggestions of anyone working on folkloristic topics in Nepal. The deadline is imminent, so if you know of anyone, let me know immediately.

MOHAN SHRESTHA: We are having meeting of Nepalese Americans in USA on 24-26 May 1996 at U. of Maryland, College Park.

## Suggested Constitutional Revision

Constitution of the Nepal Studies Association, January 1996. Original language is *italicized*; language to be deleted ~~struck through~~; new language is in **bold**.

Constitution of the Nepal Studies Association

### *I. The Executive Council*

#### *A. Membership and Duties*

*The Executive Council of the NSA is responsible for the general management of Association affairs. It will consist of nine persons chosen ~~by mail ballot sent to all NSA members chosen~~*

by the Executive Council according to the procedures and criteria outlined below.<sup>1</sup> Officers, including the President, the Secretary- Treasurer, and Committee members and Chairs, shall be elected by the Council from its own elected membership.

The Editor or Co-Editors of the *Himalayan Research Bulletin* will serve as ex-officio Council members.

The Council will have responsibility for the allocation of NSA funds, for executive action on ordinary business and procedural matters, and for formulating and proposing policy positions for votes by the NSA membership. The Council will meet annually at the NSA membership meeting.

**B. Term of Office** (Essentially unchanged except for omitting language relating to elections. In addition, the stipulation that terms overlap is omitted; in fact, at the moment, approximately 1/3 of the Council turns over at the same time, but there is nothing that assures that terms will or will not overlap in the Constitution.)

Council members will be selected by the members of the Executive Council to serve overlapping 4-year terms. Councilmembers shall begin their terms on September 1 of the academic year following their election. Between the time of election and taking

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<sup>1</sup> The rationale for moving from an elected to a selected Council stems from several factors, all of which address the realities of an organization such as ours. 1) Logistics: Balloting is conducted through the *Himalayan Research Bulletin*, and is thus tied to the *Bulletin's* publication (or non-publication) rather than the need for a timely election process. 2) Participation: An electoral system is predicated on a level of voter participation that is difficult to achieve in an organization such as a NSA. Most members interface with NSA solely through the *Bulletin*; they do not attend the annual meeting nor are they involved in organizational structure. Voter participation in recent elections has been minimal. 3) Standing for election in NSA indicates a willingness to work for the organization and to attend the Madison conference four years running, all without compensation. This is purely gratis; an election involves turning away someone who has made this commitment.

A system by which voters are sought and welcomed by the organization, where service can be planned and thus responsive to the needs of the organization, and which involves a minimum of fuss and expense (ballots, mailings, etc.) seems appropriate at this time. Hence, this proposal.

~~office, new members will attend Council meetings as member designates.~~

A full term of membership on the Council will normally be four years. Council members may serve for up to two consecutive terms, or a total of eight consecutive years including regular and acting appointments, and will be eligible for reelection to serve again after a minimum of two years out of office have elapsed.

### C. Selection of New Council Members (Completely rewritten to omit elections)

~~OLD: Every two years, the Election and Policy Committee, in accord with its responsibilities under Article IIIA below, and taking into account availability, willingness to serve, and the need for representation according to nationality, geographical region, academic discipline, age and sex, shall submit a list of nominees for election to Council memberships that will fall vacant in the coming year.~~

~~The list of nominees shall comprise a full slate of nominations by the Committee itself, along with other nominations proposed by the Council and by any NSA members who have maintained their membership in good standing through payment of the Association's dues.~~

~~Members may nominate candidates either from the floor at the annual meeting or by nomination letter signed by any three members in good standing. Those who nominate candidates should determine that the nominee is available and willing to serve.~~

~~The Election Committee shall verify availability and willingness, and solicit a brief biography for inclusion with the ballot. A list of verified names, together with the biographies of the candidates shall be sent by the Committee to the President and to the Himalayan Research Bulletin Editor(s).~~

~~The Editors shall prepare and print ballots and biographies, mail them to the membership, and forward returned ballots to the Chair or another member, designated by the Election Committee. The Committee shall tally all ballots received and certify the vote numbers to the President and the Editor(s), and to the members at the annual meeting. Those receiving the greatest number of vote will fill the available vacancies.~~

**NEW:** At the annual meeting, one year prior to an anticipated vacancy, the

President will announce any vacancies on the Executive Council at the general membership meeting of the Nepal Studies Association. Members who would like to serve may nominate themselves. In addition, the call for volunteers will be printed in the post-meeting issue of the Himalayan Research Bulletin. If these do not produce enough candidates, members of the Executive Council will be asked by the President to assist in recruiting additional candidates. This list will be presented to the Executive Council who will select the new members based on the following principles: 1) the Council should encompass diversity in geographic focus within the Himalayan region among its members; 2) the Council should encompass disciplinary diversity among its members; 3) the Council should incorporate new people into the executive level of the organization. Any candidate who wishes to be considered must be willing to attend the annual meeting for the years of their term. Any candidates in excess of the vacancies available will be considered for emergency replacements.

D. Replacements and absences (Some additional language concerning replacements through appointment)

*NSA Council members and officers who become unable to perform their duties because of prolonged illness, travel to places where communication is unduly slow, difficult or expensive, or for other reasons, shall inform the President either of their resignation or of the need for an acting replacement. In such cases, if no communication is made and/or if no resignation is received, the Council shall vote on an acting replacement for the remainder of the officer's term. Such a replacement may be made on a limited-term, temporary basis if the original holder of the position has communicated the length of time required before he/she is able to resume duties, subject to the Council's approval of a temporary replacement.* **Replacements will be made by the Executive Council using the pool of candidates generated through the process outlined in C: Selection of Candidates.**

*Members of the Council who are unable to attend meetings are responsible for conveying their views and positions on issues currently before the Council to the President, who is responsible for conveying those views and positions to the Council. Absent members may designate another member to vote by proxy. Council members who must be absent from the annual meeting more than once during their four-year term of office should consider resigning their position, and serving again when they are able to attend the annual meetings on a regular basis.*

#### ADDENDUM:

In the event that these amendments are approved, the Constitution would require an additional amendment that would change the Election and Policy Committee to a Committee which is concerned with Policy only. Alternatively, the new Committee could be concerned with both policy and membership. In actuality, we have been working with an *ad hoc* Membership Committee in the past year, and this could be an opportunity to formalize it. The language could be amended as follows:

~~*The Election and Policy Committee will be responsible for conducting elections to the Council. This will include soliciting nominations from the membership, the Council, and/or the Committee members themselves; contacting nominees to determine both their willingness and their availability to serve; securing a brief biography of each candidate; preparing and sending a slate of candidates to the President and to the Editor for publication in HRB with sufficient lead time to allow for publication and the return of ballots, and certifying the election results at the annual meeting.*~~

*The Election and Membership and Policy Committee<sup>2</sup> will be responsible for considering current issues and items of business, except for conferences, falling within the purview of NSA, and*

<sup>2</sup> At present, our Constitution calls for two committees: Conference Committee and Elections and Policy Committee. Additional needs are met by a third option, *ad hoc i committees*. The Executive Council has discussed the need for a Membership Committee-- Council members who would be responsible for organizing membership recruitment activities. Rather than proliferate committees on a small Council, and given the dearth of policy issues that have arisen lately, this proposes to combine policy and membership into a second major Council Committee.

for formulating reports, policy proposals, or statements of alternatives for consideration by the Council and the NSA membership.

Such matters may include ongoing and special problems in the internal operations and governance of NSA, initiatives and proposals from NSA members or outside persons or agencies, matters of potential interest or impact on Nepal and Himalayan studies, and developments in Nepal and the Himalayan area with significant implications for Nepal studies and the NSA.

*Editor's note: Following the mailing of this issue (XV:2--1995) current members will be sent a ballot on the suggested constitutional revision. To reduce mailing costs the ballot will be included with your 1996 NSA membership renewal notice.*

*The Committee will communicate its agenda and new developments to the President and the Editor in timely fashion for Council action and/or publication in HRB for response by the NSA membership, and report on its activities at the annual meeting.*

**The Committee will also organize and carry out membership recruitment activities, reporting to the Council and the general membership at the annual meeting.**

