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Minutes, NSA Members Meeting October 17, 1998

John Metz, NSA president, began the annual members meeting by welcoming all present (approximately twenty-five) and passing around a list for names and email addresses to facilitate between-conference communication. He then asked Jim Fisher to discuss the first item on the agenda, Professor Dor Bahadur Bista.

Jim Fisher passed around copies of an August 7 article from the Kathmandu Post regarding the disappearance of the "Father of Nepali Anthropology," Dor Bahadur Bista, in January, 1995. Fisher reminded us of the important achievements of Dor Bahadur including the distinction of being the first Nepali anthropologist (having also been Christoph von Furer-Haimendorf's research assistant), ambassador to Tibet, and an accomplished novelist, in addition to being very helpful to foreign scholars as well as the past honorary director of the NSA. Fisher reviewed the details of his disappearance, and asked that all present bow their heads for a moment of quiet commemoration in Dor Bahadur's honor. Naomi Bishop suggested that it would be appropriate to send his family a message on behalf of the NSA, especially as he had been its honorary director. This suggestion was approved by those present.

John then asked Arjun Guneratne to discuss the NSA home page that he had been developing during the past year. Arjun began by discussing the dual purpose of the home page: to publicize the NSA to non-members and as an information clearinghouse, especially for students to use in their research. Arjun reviewed each aspect of the home page using overhead transparencies. He described the home page's four main links: membership information, links to the HRB, resources for research and teaching and links to Nepal and South Asia. The first includes information on how to become a member of the NSA, the second consists of a link to HRB and will include tables of contents from past and forthcoming issues as well as possibly abstracts of forthcoming articles. The "resources for research and teaching" link has 14 sublinks which include maps of Nepal, bibliographies of courses on south Asia, community and rural development, and the environment, among others. The last main link consists of links to other web sites related to Nepal and South Asia. Arjun asked for feedback regarding other interesting sites that should be included on the home page, and solicited bibliographies and course syllabi for inclusion on the home page. Barbara Brower asked if some of the home page's nomenclature could be modified to be more inclusive of the Himalayan region and less Nepal-specific. Arjun agreed that this could be done. The home page's URL address is <http://www.macalester.edu/~guneratn/home.html>. Arjun's email is guneratne@macalester.edu.

Metz next opened a discussion about next year's conference. In light of the relatively few Himalaya-specific panels and the fact that the conference organizers rejected several panel proposals this year, it is especially important to plan panels early for next year. Council member Martijn van Beek suggested that panels be organized around a common issue or idea for greater thematic integrity. Fisher announced that he would be submitting a panel proposal focusing on human rights in Nepal and van Beek suggested the theme be broadened to include issues of social justice. Bishop recommended that a one page flyer be sent to NSA members to solicit paper proposals and informing members of paper submission deadlines and current panel topics. Alternatively, this could be done via email. It was also suggested that calls for papers be posted on the Mountain Forum and through USC's South Asia Center's newsletter. Bishop commented that this could be a good way of attracting paper proposals from researchers just returning from the field, and Metz added that older scholars could also be contacted in this manner. In addition to human rights and social justice, possible panel topics suggested by members included women's issues and social movements. In her capacity as conference coordinator for HRB, Sam Sonntag distributed her email address (sks1@axe.humboldt.edu) and asked those present to send her conference abstracts as well as ideas for conference panels.

Barbara Brower then began the treasurer's report. She stated that overall the NSA was now in "good shape" financially, although the future prognosis was not so good because of the likelihood that Portland State University will discontinue financial support for HRB. Continued efforts to recruit new members and to make sure current members have paid their dues are necessary. A discussion ensued regarding how to maintain PSU's interest in supporting the NSA. It was decided that continued support was more likely if it could be shown how the NSA can function as a vehicle for PSU outreach into the Portland community. One idea was for the NSA to sponsor/organize an event or conference in Portland at which PSU would enjoy high visibility for its supportive role of NSA. Part of Brower's report included an update on the pro's and con's of NSA's seeking nonprofit status. While preliminary research has been undertaken, including contacting lawyers familiar with the process, key remaining questions include the financial costs of gaining nonprofit status and whether or not the benefits justify the costs. Metz also announced that, on Joe Elder's suggestion, he had sent letters to universities with South Asian Studies Centers asking for contributions to help support NSA because the NSA's aims and activities are so consistent with their own. It was also announced that due to wise financial decisions, the NSA makes approximately \$500 annually on a certificate. Finally, it was suggested that HRB issues be thematically oriented and their publication could be possibly underwritten by the readership.

Brower continued with the HRB report. She announced that the next issue of the HRB will be published shortly and that it will continue the recent thematic focus on Himalayan regions, this time with a focus on Ladakh. The following issue will be guest edited by Piers Blaikie and David Seddon and will focus on environmental and policy issues. The

theme for the subsequent issue has not yet been decided upon, so suggestions for a theme and possible guest editor were solicited. Brower mentioned that suggestions for books to be reviewed and reviewers are always welcome and that either Todd Lewis or herself should be contacted. She also reported the titles of books for which reviewers were currently being sought and she asked those present to encourage friends and institutions to subscribe to the HRB.

Metz continued with a discussion of how the NSA should handle the extensive and valuable Lockwood collection of books on the Himalaya which it was recently given. A key decision is whether to maintain the integrity of the collection and house it within an institution that would make it available for use by scholars and students, or to sell off the most valuable items in the collection to raise revenue for the NSA, or some combination thereof. It was suggested that money from the sale of the collection could be used for 1) the general fund, 2) scholarships for students, or 3) as a revenue reserve for the future. Suggestions from members present were solicited.

Metz then opened the meeting for new business. Several items were discussed. The first was a general inquiry regarding whether anybody present was aware of researchers in Nepal working on Russian Literature and Language. It was suggested that the query be posted on Nepal-related web sites.

Paul Benjamin asked for feedback on the NSA-sponsored reception he had organized in the Beefeaters Room of the Student Union Friday night, and whether or not he should also organize a reception for next year. It was concluded that the reception was a great success and that it, or some variation, should be organized for next year. Discussion ensued about the pros and cons of having a fully catered Nepali dinner, as had been done in the past, whether snacks should be included, the best evening for it to be held, the possibility of a flyer to be included in the conference folder all participants receive, if a fee should be assessed, and if the NSA should help underwrite the costs. It appeared at the end of the discussion that the reception will be organized next year as it had been this year.

Susan Hagen announced that there will be a roundtable at the next Association for Asian Studies Conference on Culture and Politics in Nepal which will focus on identity politics. She invited all those interested to join the roundtable discussion. Metz endorsed this by stating that the NSA should ideally have more presence at the AAS meetings. On this note Metz wished everyone well and adjourned the meeting.

J. Mark Baker, Acting Secretary

Call for Submissions

HIMALAYAN RESEARCH BULLETIN

Peace Corps and V.S.O. Alumni

Seeking submissions on the volunteer experience in the Himalayas for a forthcoming special issue. Please submit a short abstract (500 words or less).

Educators

The editors of the Himalayan Research Bulletin are gathering information on Himalayan language programs and study-abroad programs for a forthcoming issue. Please send a brief (500 words or less) description of your program and contact information. Reasonably priced advertisement space is also available.

Photographic Resources for the Himalayan Region

In order to produce a descriptive catalogue of photographic resources relating to the physical and cultural landscape of the Himalaya region the *Himalayan Research Bulletin* is soliciting information on film and photographic archives and collections in private and public hands.

Please send abstracts and/or inquiries to: Dr. Barbara Brower, Editor