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Up for Vote: NSA Constitution Amendment

Members of the Nepal Studies Association are asked to vote on an amendment to the NSA constitution, proposed by the executive council at the member’s meeting last October. The Amendment, which calls for a change in the organization’s name (from *Nepal Studies Association* to *Association for Nepal and Himalayan Studies*), was approved unanimously at the annual meeting, introduced to HRB subscribers in the last issue of the journal, and will now be offered to the membership for its vote: ballots will be sent to members within a few weeks of the mailing of this issue.

We invited comment from readers in the previous HRB, and reprint here the communications we received, following an explanation of the NSA Council’s rationale for proposing the amendment.

The name-change reconciles the organization’s name with its mission, with the interests and identities of its members, and with an earlier amendment to NSA’s constitution which requires that the governing council “encompass diversity in geographical focus within the Himalayan region among its members.” Since its inception the Nepal Studies Association has included among its members those whose interests beyond Nepal’s borders are reflected in the title and contents of the **Himalayan Research Bulletin**. A survey of “interests” listed by member in our current database turns up the following pattern (in those whose interests can be linked to particular geographies —note that not all members state an interest, and many list several—often in terms of a disciplinary or topical focus with no regional referent—and understand that this is offered merely as the roughest of estimates in coarse-resolution categories):

While admitting its limitations, this quick survey does document both the wide geographical range of NSA members and the centrality of interest in Nepal and Nepal-located subjects (**bold** in this table).

The NSA Council recognizes that the organization’s identity as the NEPAL Studies Association has a long history (almost 30 years) and engenders loyalty and pride among its members. Nepal is a small country often overshadowed by larger neighbors, and by privileging a small state, NSA has compensated in a small way for that slight. A reluctance to jeopardize this identity has stopped name change initiatives in the past. But in the Council’s judgment, the time has arrived for this organization’s name to fit its members and its mission. Though unanimously forwarded by the members attending the Annual Members Meeting at Madison, Wisconsin last fall, not all members invited to speak on this issue agree. The following responses are all that we received in response to our solicitation for comments in the last issue.

Regionally Definable Interest	#	Nepal	Himalayan Region
Nepal/i/ese	50	50	
Himalaya/n	29		29
Tibet/n	29		29
India	12		12
Ladakh	6		6
Central Asia (Mongolia, etc.)	4		4
South Asia	4		4
Bhutan	3		3
Greater Himalaya	3		3
Pakistan	2		2
Himachal	1		1
Kumaon	1		1
Kashmir	1		1
Everest	1	1	
Mustang	1	1	
Kathmandu	4	4	
Sherpa	15	15	
Newar/i	14	14	
Tamang	4	4	
Tharu	3	3	
Magar	3	3	
Bramin/Chetri	2	2	
Gurung	1	1	
Thakali	1	1	
Balti	1		1
TOTALS	194	98	96

Should the Nepal Studies Association become the Association for Nepal and Himalayan Studies?

Amend the Nepal Studies Association's constitution to change the name of the organization to Association for Nepal and Himalayan Studies and reconcile the language of the constitution relating to the organization's mission to reflect this wider scope.

Yes, I prefer 'Association for Nepal and Himalayan Studies' to 'Nepal Studies Association.' The reasons: (1) Himalayan Research Bulletin has been publishing research reports, book reviews, thesis abstracts and conference news on not only Nepalese Studies alone but also on the Indus-Brahmaputra regions. (2) The names of Bulletin and Association would be compatible.

Nirmal Tuladhar

WHEN IT IS TIME TO DIE, ANTS GROW WINGS:
A METAPHOR FOR NSA?

Nature works curiously. It has its own laws, processes and patterns, some of which are hard to explain. Sometimes we marvel at them and sometimes we wonder in sheer disbelief how a bird, animal, or insect could act the way it does. For example, some species of ants grow wings when it is time for them to die. They emerge from the ground and fly as if they are soaring toward their heavenly destination. In essence, they fly to die. Perhaps that's their flight of ecstasy, or simply their way to perform their own last rite.

True, we are taught not to equate human behavior with natural laws; the former is very imprecise compared to the latter. But I am not sure about this dictum as I see some uncanny parallel between ants' flight of ecstasy and the proposed name change for the Nepal Studies Association. It is my belief that changing the name would signal NSA's ominous death in the same manner the growing of wings is a death call for ants.

I have no idea who came up with this brilliant idea of changing the name of an association that has existed for many years, that has developed its own identity. Whoever proposed this change, I do not question their motive, nor do I dispute their commitment to NSA. But I do find the whole idea amusing as well as myopic. From what I understand the primary reason for changing the name is to broaden its membership base by making it attractive to those whose academic interests lie in other parts of the Himalayan belt, but not necessarily in Nepal. Obviously the underlying assumption is that, since the name change would incorporate their diverse interests, the association would have a broader appeal. Consequently, they would join the association, thus enlarging its membership. But I see some pitfalls with this seemingly plausible thesis:

1) Is there any assurance, or at least some evidence, that those who have not joined NSA because of the seeming narrowness of its regional focus will rush to join it as a result of its inclusive name change? How many of these potential members participate with some regularity in the South Asia conference, the only annual meeting venue for NSA? If they are seriously interested in joining such an association, I don't see why the name alone should pose a barrier. After all, NSA does publish a journal, Himalayan Research Bulletin (HRS), that is inclusive as a research outlet. The founders of NSA obviously demonstrated their wisdom in keeping its name focused while opening its journal pages to a wide circle of scholars. Furthermore, NSA has welcomed non-Nepal scholars to its Board of Directors. So I don't know what the fuss is all about. It looks like the name, NSA, is simply being used as a convenient excuse to not join NSA.

2) While trying to broaden its membership base, NSA under its new and broadened name (sounds like a mouth-wash commercial) will most likely find its membership reduced. Once the name is diluted to stretch its appeal, its core supporters—those who have stayed with it through good times as well as bad times—may have little reason to hang around any longer. To them, NSA's identity has suddenly vanished like a shadow in the dark; the focus is lost. NSA is no longer NSA, it is something else. So these hard core members will view the name change not as a

merger between NSA and some other interested parties, but as an outright takeover of NSA by some force. At any rate, will the increase in membership stemming from the name change be greater than the expected loss in membership? I doubt it. If the membership is declining, and if this decline poses a serious challenge to NSA's sustained viability as an association, I don't believe the name change is the answer. The remedy for declining membership, in my view, demands the following actions: a) send timely membership renewal requests; prod the members to renew their membership and ask the new ones to join and b) publish HRS on a regular and timely basis. We can't expect members to continue to pay dues when their membership offers few rewards, unless of course they happen to be absolutely committed to NSA because of its very identity.

Personally, the whole idea has left a bitter taste in my mouth. I consider the planned vote on the proposed name change as little more than a nice democratic setup to legitimize what appears to be an already foregone conclusion. Given this scenario, I have decided not to participate in this death parade of NSA. I want to have no part of this legitimization process. I will mourn NSA's loss, but not join its funeral. In the meantime, I will take some comfort in knowing that flying ants will always bring back the memory of what was once NSA.

Nanda R. Shrestha

I am writing this as an individual member of the Nepal Studies Association rather than in my official capacity as President. I urge all members to vote to change the name of the Nepal Studies Association to the proposed new name, the Association for Nepal and Himalayan Studies. My main reason for supporting this is that it will promote interaction with scholars who work in the parts of the Himalaya outside Nepal. Since Nepal only encompasses about 1/4 of the Himalaya, those of us who work primarily in Nepal can only benefit from increased interaction with people specializing in the Indian and Pakistani greater Himalayan region. Indeed, a considerable percentage of our members already specialize in these non-Nepal parts of the mountains. I am sure our current name and our constitution, which both focus on Nepal, discourage non-Nepal Himalayan scholars from sharing their knowledge and expertise with us. Given India's economic and cultural hegemony over Nepal, many Nepal scholars have in the past fought to keep the NSA focused on Nepal. I don't see that danger today. Rather I see India and Pakistan focused scholars addressing the same issues and problems that we Nepal specialists are studying. So, I feel we can all only benefit from expanding the region we officially designate as our focus. So, let's change our name and constitution to encompass the broader Himalaya.

John J. Metz

I heartily support expanding the Nepal Studies Association to become the Association for Nepal and Himalayan Studies. With Dr. M. P. Joshi and Dr. Charles Brown, we established the Association for the Study of the Himalayas in 1990 and published several volumes that incorporated Indian, Tibetan, and Nepal studies. Most of our primary work was in Kumaon and Garhwal (Uttarkhand) and draws heavily on Indian social scientists and historians. I have to recognize that our appeal has been rather limited and that expansion of Himalayan studies to a broader regional focus can be well served by the Nepal Studies Association. The Indian Uttarkhand region (as well as Tibet) shares enormous cultural and historical connections and similarities with Nepal. Unfortunately, the structure of our journals, areas studies programs and professional associations has not facilitated the sharing of research data from Nepal with the surrounding Himalayan regions. While I have participated in several conferences in South Asian Studies at Madison, Wisconsin and the American Anthropology Association, our data and constituency were largely integrated into non-Himalayan audiences. A possible objection to the proposed amendment is that the expansion would weaken the journal's central focus on Nepal. As the new name recognizes Nepal as the only state designated by the title, I don't view this as a serious concern. Rather the new title would recognize that Nepal is imbedded within the broader Himalayan region. Nearly all of your articles and book reviews in the recent 1999 XIX, I issue focus on regions outside of Nepal or of forces which have entered Nepal from outside (e.g., Tibet, China, India). The proposed amendment merely reflects the nature of research and discussion that the journal already has adopted.

Allen C. Fanger

The [Nepal Studies] ASSOCIATION FOR NEPAL AND HIMALAYAN STUDIES seeks to foster the study and understanding of Nepal and the Himalayas, and to improve communication among all who share this interest regardless of nationality. Association members believe in equal scholarly opportunity, open exchange of information, and full disclosure of the purposes and funding of research. Membership and participation in Association affairs is open to all who approve [NSA's] ASSOCIATION FOR NEPAL AND HIMALAYAN STUDIES' aims and guidelines.

I. The Executive Council

A. Membership and Duties

The Executive Council of the [NSA] ASSOCIATION FOR NEPAL AND HIMALAYAN STUDIES (ANHS) is responsible for the general management of Association affairs. It will consist of nine persons chosen by the Executive Council according to the procedures and criteria outlined below. Officers, including the President, the Secretary/Treasurer, and Committee members and Chairs, shall be elected by the Council from its own 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 allocations of [NSA] ANHS funds, for executive action on ordinary business and procedural matters, and for formulating and proposing policy positions for votes by the [NSA] ANHS membership. The Council will meet annually at the [NSA] ANHS membership meeting.

B. Term of Office

Council members will be selected by the members of the Association to serve 4-year terms.

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 to serve again after a minimum of two years out of office have elapsed.

C. Elections

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] ASSOCIATION FOR NEPAL AND HIMALAYAN STUDIES and will ask for nominations. 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 Hi-

malayan 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

[NSA] ANHS Council members and officers who become unable to perform their duties because of prolonged illness, travel to places with which communication is unduly slow or difficult, or for other reasons, shall either resign or ask for an acting replacement. In cases where an Executive Council member fails to attend the annual meeting and fails to resign or to communicate his/her reasons for not attending, 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 above in section C.

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 presenting those views and positions to the Council, or 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 resign their position.

A total of two-thirds of the Executive Council members plus their proxy votes shall constitute a quorum for Council action. If fewer

than two-thirds of the Council vote in person or by proxy, the President shall contact enough absent members to secure enough votes to make up a quorum, and report the results to the Council. If reasonable efforts to secure votes from all Council members fail to produce a quorum, the majority of those voting in person, by proxy, and by direct communication to the President shall be considered to constitute the official decision of the Council.

II. Officers and Duties

The Council shall elect and maintain without vacancy a full roster of officers, including the President, Secretary/Treasurer, and from three to four members each of two standing Committees in accord with Article III, from its own regular membership. *Ex officio* members of the Council and appointive members of *ad hoc* committees may not serve as officers.

At the first Council meeting following each election, and at such times as vacancies may arise between elections, continuing members and new member-designates (but not outgoing members) should vote to elect officer-designates for all officer positions, including Committee members, Secretary/Treasurer, President, and Editor(s), that will fall vacant for the following academic year.

The terms of officers such as the President, Secretary/Treasurer, and Committee chairs may be less than four years, if so agreed on by the Council and the candidate.

A. President

The President will be responsible for chairing meetings of the Council and the [NSA] ANHS membership, for communicating actions, issues and concerns of [NSA] ANHS officers, committees, and members to the Council and to the membership at large, for calling Council meetings and initiating discussion on matters of current concern to [NSA] ANHS, for communicating with the Editor on matters of concern to the entire membership of [NSA] ANHS with sufficient lead time to allow for publication in *HRB* and membership response, for reporting on the Association's activities at the annual meeting, and for representing and acting on behalf of the Association as deemed appropriate by, and with the consent of, the Council.

B. Secretary/Treasurer

The Secretary/Treasurer will be responsible for keeping accurate records of membership and Council meetings, for circulating copies to the Council and the Editor for publication in *HRB*, for forwarding [NSA] ANHS correspondence and documents to the Editor for inclusion in the [NSA] ANHS ar-

chives, for preparing an annual calendar of [NSA] ANHS official events and deadlines, to be regularly updated in consultation with the President and Committee chairs, and for reporting the current calendar and the minutes of past meetings to annual meetings of the membership and Council.

The Secretary/Treasurer will also be responsible for keeping and accounting for [NSA] ANHS funds to the Council and to the annual meeting, for reporting changes in [NSA's] ANHS's financial position to the President in a timely way, and for preparing an annual budget proposal in consultation with the President, Editor(s), and Council.

The Council may, at its discretion, appoint separate individuals from among its membership to fill separate positions of Secretary and Treasurer, with appropriate division of the responsibilities of office.

III. Committees

Each of the two standing committees will elect its own Chair, and will be responsible for specific [NSA] ANHS functions.

The Chair of each committee will be responsible for calling meetings and/or initiating communication between members on current committee business, for communicating progress reports to the President in timely fashion, for communicating with others as required by the functions of the committee, and for reporting to the Council and [NSA] ANHS membership at their meetings.

Committee responsibilities will be allocated equally among the members by mutual agreement.

A. Membership and Policy Committee

The Membership and Policy Committee will be responsible for considering current issues and items of business, except for conferences, falling within the purview of [NSA] ANHS, and for formulating reports, policy proposals, or statements of alternatives for consideration by the Council and the [NSA] ANHS membership.

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

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* to elicit responses from the [NSA] ANHS membership, and it will 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.

B. Conference Committee

The Conference Committee will be responsible for arranging the annual [NSA] ANHS membership meeting and conference activities, whether as a separate conference or in conjunction with another conference. The Committee will (1) arrange for facilities, schedule meetings and panels, organize support appropriate to the level of conference activity, (2) communicate schedules and arrangements to the President and the Editor for publication in *HRB* with sufficient lead time to allow for publication and for arrangements by [NSA] ANHS members to attend or participate, (3) report on activities and future plans at the annual meeting.

C. Ad Hoc Committees

Additional Ad Hoc committees or subcommittees may be appointed by the Council to meet circumstances of interest or concern to [NSA] ANHS as the need arises. The Chair of the Ad hoc Committee will be a Council member. Other members may be appointed from the [NSA] ANHS membership as voting members of the respective committee, but not of the Council.

IV. Meetings and Conferences

The [NSA] ANHS will meet once each academic year at a site to be determined annually by the Executive Council and announced by the Conference Committee through a notice sent to the Editor for publication in *HRB* with sufficient lead time to allow members to plan for travel, for submissions of panel and paper proposals, and for other planning and preparations normally associated with conference attendance.

If the [NSA] ANHS meeting occurs in conjunction with a conference under external sponsorship, the President and Conference Committee shall explore with conference sponsors the possibility of designating Nepal and Himalayan studies panels as [NSA] ANHS Panels, subject to agreement of the panel organizers, and of acting as intermediaries for organizing individual papers submitted by [NSA] ANHS members into [NSA] ANHS-sponsored panels.

The Committee should also explore the feasibility of other means of increasing the visibility and impact of Himalayan studies at such meetings, by organizing book, photo, and/or film and video exhibits of recent work on Nepal, by providing press releases, or other suitable strategies.

V. External Activities

A. Scholarly Associations

The Council will seek to maintain and improve communications between the [NSA] ANHS and other organizations with similar goals. The [NSA] ANHS will remain in an Affiliate relationship with the Association for Asian Studies. Applications for renewal of this Affiliate status shall be submitted by the President at the times required by the AAS Constitution and bylaws.

The Council may seek to undertake joint activities, such as concurrent conference activity, with other scholarly area studies and disciplinary associations, taking into consideration [NSA's] ANHS's primary commitment to Himalayan studies and the need to support disciplinary diversity as represented by the [NSA] ANHS membership.

B. Nepal and Himalayan Areas

A foremost concern of the [Nepal Studies] ASSOCIATION FOR NEPAL AND HIMALAYAN STUDIES is improvement of scholarly opportunity for [Nepalese] citizens OF NEPAL AND [THE CITIZENS] OF OTHER HIMALAYAN AREAS. To further this goal, the Association will seek, through its Executive Council, officers, members, and/or other designated agents appropriate to a scholarly association, 1) to establish and strengthen facilities [in Nepal] for collecting, preserving and making [accessible] scholarly materials ACCESSIBLE IN COUNTRIES OF THE HIMALAYA; 2) to enable more apprentice [Nepalese] scholars FROM NEPAL AND OTHER HIMALAYAN COUNTRIES to obtain sound training in their discipline; and 3) to enable established HIMALAYAN scholars to secure funds for periods of research, writing and related travel. When feasible, it will make acceptance of [funds] GRANTS TO [for non-Nepalese] scholars FROM DEVELOPED COUNTRIES contingent on a reasonable matching amount [to be] BEING used for either 1), 2), or 3) listed above.

Other aims of the Association towards which Council efforts should be directed consistent with available resources in personnel, time, and funding sources, include:

1. Organizing and seeking funds to support training or research seminars and workshops in the U.S., Nepal and other countries, and seeking funds to enable distribution of papers, abstracts, and other scholarly publications;
2. Organizing and seeking funds to support summer institutes for training in [Nepalese] HIMALAYAN languages and cultures;
3. Seeking means to assure that results of research [done in Nepal, or] dealing with [Nepal] THE HIMALAYA are available to [Nepalese] HIMALAYAN NATIONALS;
4. Seeking funds to enable translation of vernacular materials in Nepalese and Himalayan languages, and wider distribution of

documentation and scholarly works from Nepal AND HIMALAYAN COUNTRIES;

5. Seeking funds to assist publication of worthy manuscripts and materials;

6. Seeking to encourage and find funds to support the teaching of Nepali and other [Nepalese] **Himalayan** languages at appropriate institutions;

7. Seeking funds to support resource centers in the U.S.;

8. Encouraging persons who have lived and worked in [Nepal] **THE HIMALAYA** and are interested in furthering [NSA] ANHS goals, regardless of whether they are academically affiliated, to participate in [NSA] ANHS affairs, including seminars and workshops.

VI. Publications

The *Himalayan Research Bulletin* is the official periodical publication of the [Nepal Studies] **ASSOCIATION FOR NEPAL AND HIMALAYAN STUDIES**. Provisions in this Constitution referring to *Himalayan Research Bulletin*, *HRB*, or the *Bulletin* shall apply to any successor publication(s), consistent with changes and divisions of name and functions. In case of such changes and divisions, the *HRB*'s pri-

mary responsibilities to [NSA] ANHS, including but not limited to the publication and distribution to the membership of Association news, official announcements, and election materials, must be maintained.

The Editor or Co-Editors, up to a total of three, shall be appointed by the Council for a term of office set by mutual agreement, and shall be *ex officio* voting members of the Council. They shall have full editorial freedom in operation of the *Bulletin*, as is consistent with the operation of a professional publication, with the promotion of Nepal and Himalayan studies scholarship, and with *HRB*'s role as the official organ of the Association.

The Editor(s) shall be responsible for all aspects of editing, timely publication, and distribution of *HRB*, including the management of funds for such purposes. They shall consult with the Treasurer on the *HRB* share of the annual [NSA] ANHS budget, and report on editorial and financial activity to the annual meeting. When feasible, they shall give priority to incorporating Nepalese consulting editors or other appropriate positions on the editorial staff. They shall consult with the Council on plans for major changes in editorial policy.

As the primary channel for communication within [NSA] ANHS, the *Bulletin* shall

prominently display all official [NSA] ANHS announcements received from the President and Council in a timely fashion. These will include, but not be limited to, announcements of annual meetings, calls for papers, announcements of election results together with the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of Council members, and other announcements.

Ballots for [NSA] ANHS membership votes shall be distributed with and returned to *HRB*, and forwarded by the Editor(s) to the chair of the Policy and Membership Committee or other appropriate Committees.

The Editor(s) will also be responsible for maintaining up-to-date [NSA] ANHS membership lists, sending renewal notices to the membership, receiving membership dues, and managing funds thus received in consultation with the Treasurer; and for maintaining an Archive of official [NSA] ANHS documents forwarded to them by the President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Committee Chairs.

VII. Amendments

Amendments to the Constitution may be proposed at the annual meeting, and, if passed by a majority, will be submitted to the [NSA] ANHS membership by mail ballot, with majority support from those voting required for adoption.