

December 2007

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Recommended Citation

Rademacher, Anne. 2007. Report on the 2007 ANHS Members Meeting. *HIMALAYA* 27(1).
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/himalaya/vol27/iss1/18>

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REPORT ON THE ANHS MEMBERS MEETING

MADISON, WI OCTOBER 2007

Following is a report of the General Members' Meeting of the Association for Nepal and Himalayan Studies, held at the Madison Concourse Hotel in Madison, Wisconsin on October 13, 2007. The President, Mahendra Lawoti, opened the meeting and reported on the association's activities for the past year.

Membership in CAORC

He noted that the Association was seeking to join the Council of American Overseas Research Centers, which would allow the ANHS to expand its range of activities in keeping with its mandate to promote the study of the Himalaya and enhance its standing to seek grants to do so. One requirement of CAORC membership is that we have an office in the region, and the President said that we were discussing developing partnerships with the Social Science Baha (SSB) and Martin Chautari (MC), two social science research institutions in Kathmandu. A partnership with one or both of these organizations will allow the ANHS to have an institutional presence in the region and develop its relationship with Nepali scholars.

Partnerships with organizations in Nepal

The Social Science Baha is a research organization that was established in the late 1990s, and is well established and well connected. The organization has published books through the Himal Books series and it also publishes the European Journal of Himalayan Research. Martin Chautari was established informally in the 1990s. It holds regular scholarly meetings and a public discussion forum and has grown considerably in the past few years as an organization for research and advocacy. Both groups have libraries that are open to the public. Martin Chautari also publishes *Studies in Nepali History and Society* (SINHAS) and a journal in Nepali called *Rupantaran: Samaj Adhyayan*. They also publish a Nepali book series. Global College of Management was also suggested as a possible regional partner for ANHS.

This summer Tom Robertson and Mahendra Lawoti discussed a possible partnership with Deepak Thapa of the SSB and Pratyoush Onta of MC. Pratyoush has said that MC would like to conduct teaching/lecture presentations – not just academic research presentations — in the future. He is trying to organize a series with Mark Liechty and Laura Kunreuther. The President invited members who are interested in participating to contact him. MC is also interested in having joint workshops and conferences. SSB also has an occasional lecture series.

In response to a question posed by a member on how the

association will decide between these two organizations, the President replied that a major criterion is the level of interest in a partnership by the sister organization in Nepal and the kinds of activities each is prepared to undertake. He believed that we could work with both the organizations.

President Lawoti also noted that the SSB needs book contributions for its library. Any books other than textbooks and journals are welcome; SSB will pay for shipping the books from New York to Nepal.

Executive Council meetings

Another significant development for ANHS this past year was holding monthly teleconference meetings of the Executive Council. This has allowed the Council to make decisions all through the year rather than just at the Madison meetings. So we have been able to keep the momentum going, which has been helpful to us as an organization and has led to more efficient and effective management of the Association's affairs.

The President told the members that the Council proposed to introduce an initiative to recognize people who have made a contribution to the field of Himalayan Studies. A sub-committee has been formed to develop ideas on how this could be achieved, and he said that the Council intends to recognize people for their contribution in some way during the members' meeting.

The Council is exploring the possibility of developing a scholarship/research grant fund that could be used to support such activities as providing travel grants for graduate students attending the Madison conference or scholars coming from the South Asian region. This is an area where CAORC membership could be beneficial for the association.

Himalaya

Arjun Guneratne will take over as editor of *Himalaya* starting with volume 27. Volume 26 is the last volume that will be produced in Portland. We are currently focusing on themed issues: volume 27 focuses on dalits in Nepal, guest edited by Laurie Vasily. Barbara Brower noted that volume 26, in the pipeline, would be on people and environment across the Himalayas. We expect volume 27 to come out in 2008 and then hopefully we can begin to catch up on our publication schedule. Arjun noted that while there is some financial support for *Himalaya* at Macalester, much of the cost must be met through subscriptions. He asked members whose institutions do not already have a subscription to the journal, to ask their libraries to subscribe. An entire set of the journal costs \$500 to libraries. We are looking into digitizing

Himalaya, and just before this meeting Arjun learned that the Macalester College library would work with the journal to make its content freely available online through its Digital Commons initiative.

Barbara Brower observed that there is a proud tradition of this journal being late. Arjun Guneratne noted that a big part of what causes the delay is producing the journal, which is done entirely by volunteers; we are exploring the possibility of having an academic press produce it. He and Mahendra Lawoti had already initiated a dialogue with Sage Publications about this. If we succeed in this, it will allow the editors to focus on the editorial aspect and let professionals handle the layout and printing, and the journal will be able to come out on time. Todd Lewis asked if there was a way to delegate themed journal tasks to enable advanced planning. Journals he had been involved in want themed issues to be planned up to four years in the future. Arjun Guneratne said that one way to do this is to have guest editors, an option he was actively exploring.

Mary Cameron asked whether there would be a connection between where the publication is housed and the affiliation associated with CAORC? Arjun Guneratne replied that we have explored the implications of publishing in Nepal and have found it not to be cost effective.

Arjun Guneratne mentioned that he had a work-study student who was creating an index for *Himalaya* since 2002 and a database of everyone who has contributed to the journal. He asked members to please respond if they got an email from him asking for updated information; he also invited people with ideas for future issues to be in touch with him (guneratne@macalester.edu).

Treasurer's Report and Membership

Judith Justice said that it was confusing every year when you pay your dues and your invoice says you have paid for 2005 when you have actually paid in 2007. She asked if we could bring some kind of clarity to the invoicing process.

Susan Hangen, who has taken over as Treasurer, said that we have exhausted our funds since the last issue of *Himalaya*. She observed the association would be making a push to collect member dues and urged everyone to make sure to pay. Jim Fisher suggested that since we seem to have a chronic cash flow problem, that maybe the association should consider a life membership category for, say, \$500, which could help raise funds for the journal. Mary Cameron concurred and suggested we solicit life memberships through email.

The ANHS Constitution does not define membership categories, so it would be within the discretion of the Council to do this.

We have also been seeking institutional support, such as from South Asia centers that promote scholarship in the region. This is the model for organizations like AIIS. If you know of any institutions that might be willing to support us please let us know.

Mahendra Lawoti said that the Executive Council decided to raise the membership fee slightly, which has not been done since 2002. This will take effect in 2008, at \$45 per individual and \$25 for students and resident citizens of the Himalayan region. Institutional membership will be \$95. (There will be a surcharge of \$15 to mail the journal to addresses outside the United States).

Calendar

Barbara Brower then discussed the association's High Asia calendar. The first *Journey to High Asia* calendar was done in 2004 based on a photo exhibit. The calendar has functioned well as an outreach tool touching audiences beyond academics. She noted that last year we were unable to come up with the funds to produce a calendar, but we would like to find sponsors to help us produce the calendar for 2009. We need the money up front, and she asked people who could help with the logistics of calendar production to please help us make it happen.

Nepal Studies Center

Someone asked what the relationship was between this organization and Alok Bohara's Nepal Studies Center at the University of New Mexico? Mahendra Lawoti replied that we do not have a formal relationship, but we have been involved with each other's activities. Last year we invited them to come to our Executive Council meeting and we discussed some potential collaboration. NSC has not yet decided their focus, though they are doing policy-related issues. Once they decide about their priorities and focus we would seek to have more collaborative activities.

ANHS List-Serve

Arjun Guneratne observed that the ANHS sponsored list-serve, which was set up in February 2005, has been one of the most successful things the association has done. It started with 80 people and is now at 175. He urged people who were not already members to join. The URL for the site is <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Himal-research/>.

Other matters

Barbara Brower, the outgoing editor of *Himalaya*, has undertaken to produce anthologies from the papers published in *Himalaya* over the years.

The Executive Council has several committees, including a membership committee, conference committee, and calendar committee. The president asked members to participate in these sub-committees.

The meeting adjourned.

Anne Rademacher
Secretary (2007-08)