

Minutes of the IALS Biennial General Meeting, 4<sup>th</sup> May 2017

Będlewo, Poland 2017

Chaired by John Bray

Minutes prepared by Andrea Butcher

The Biennial General Meeting of the Association took place on the third day of the conference at Będlewo, Poland. IALS President Sonam Wangchuk sent apologies. In his absence, Advisory Committee member and former president John Bray stepped up to chair. No formal agenda was set but the following points were discussed:

### **1. Introduction**

John Bray opened the meeting by displaying where the IALS had come from, emphasising the some of the IALS' achievements, and listing its publication record. He then posed the question: how should the IALS move evolve?

### **2. Forthcoming and Future Publications**

John Bray updated members on the progress of the Kargil 2015 conference proceedings which is currently being edited by Joe Hill, Dr Sonam Wangchuk, Nazir Hussain, and Sunetro Ghosal, and will be published by the J&K Cultural Academy. He also advised members of publications inspired by papers from the 2013 Heidelberg conference, including a special volume of the *Tibet Journal*, published in 2015 and *Visible Heritage: Essays on the Art and Architecture of Greater Ladakh*, edited by Rob Linrothe and Heinrich Pöll and published in 2016. Christian Luczantis advised that a second art history volume, drawing upon papers presented at the Kargil conference, was being prepared by the same publisher. Julianne Dame announced that she, Blaise Humbert Droz, and Tashi Morup have prepared an edited volume of papers focusing upon Ladakh and the Environment, compiled from previous IALS conferences. Andrea Butcher advised that an edited volume *Emerging Ladakh: Identity and Belonging in the Context of Increasing Changes* edited by Kati Illman and published by Halle University, will be published this summer. This volume includes papers contributed by presenters at the 2013 Heidelberg conference.

Possible journals and publishers to approach with themed volumes based upon Będlewo conference papers was then discussed. Rafał announced that the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń plans to publish a volume of 12 to 15 papers, which

can be sold for 12-15 Euro per copy. Quentin Devers offered to lead an art history volume depending on his schedule. No other potential lead and assistant editors were identified during the meeting.

John Bray advised that the former IALS member Mona Bhan had taken over the role of joint editor for *Himalaya*, the journal of the Association and Nepal and Himalayan Studies, and suggested that this would be a good title to approach. A further possible title is *Asian Highland Perspectives*.

### **3. Executive Committee**

Three executive committee posts (Editor, Webmaster, and Treasurer and Membership Secretary) were meant to be contested this year, however elections were cancelled due to a shortage of nominations.

Sunetro Ghosal received one nomination for editor, and will continue uncontested for the next four years. Andrea Butcher received one nomination for treasurer and membership secretary, but plans to stand down at the next conference. Quentin Devers and Laurianne Bruneau both nominated themselves to serve on the Advisory Board. Mohammad Deen and Bettina Zeisler will step down, so both Quentin and Laurianne can assume their appointments uncontested.

Sebastian Forneck offered his services as an assistant webmaster, although he explained that his contribution will be limited whilst undertaking fieldwork in Zangskar. He advised that Namgail Angmo and Samina Rahman had offered to assist. Quentin Devers and Catherine Allie stepped forward, offering their support to form a web-team.

### **4. Ladakh Studies Journal**

John Bray posed the question: what do members want from the *Ladakh Studies* journal? He suggested the possibility of moving to a research bulletin format rather than a double-blind peer review format. Quentin Devers raised his concerns with the quality and format of *Ladakh Studies*, whilst Christian Luczantis raised the issue of requirements for open access publications in UK academic institutions. The possibility of introducing a digital format that can be downloaded from the website received support.

No firm decision was reached, but it was agreed to continue discussions post-meeting.

## 5. **2019 Conference**

John Bray reported that the Central Institute for Buddhist Studies expressed an interest in hosting the 2019 conference in Ladakh. Post Meeting Note: this offer is yet to be confirmed.

Other possible locations were discussed. Konchok Dorjey suggested the possibility of Spiti as a location, although others raised concerns with the availability of a suitable venue. Both Rafał Beszterda and Diana Lange mentioned the possibility of Keylong, and offered to assist with introductions should this option be considered one to pursue.

## 6. **Activities Between Conferences**

Here the discussion turned to the IALS' other activities. Workshops in Ladakh are set to continue but nothing firm is currently in the pipeline. Bettina Zeisler has offered to participate in academic workshops for Ladakhi students and early career scholars. Salome Deboos drew attention to student exchange agreements between European and South Asian universities, and suggested that members check with their universities to see if there is a possibility to run workshops using these exchange programme mechanisms. Quentin Devers gave suggestions for improving IALS web presence. He advised that Instagram has become a powerful tool in India, particularly amongst youth. He has agreed to set up an account and publicise historical research visual records using this particular social medium.

## 7. **Governance and Constitution**

Andrea Butcher gave the treasury report, which will also be published online.

John Bray asked the question: what is the role of the IALS? Concerns with regards to the functioning of the constitution were discussed. Sophie Day asked the Executive Committee what steps were being taken to safeguard the Association's commitment to non-sectarianism, as stated in the constitution.

Andrea Butcher asked members if they accepted the interim Advisory Committee and web-team nominations onto the Executive Committee and Advisory Committee positions with a view to ratifying their appointments at the 2019 conference. No objections were raised.

Returning to the question of what the IALS is for, John once again discussed workshops as a way of preparing students for conference applications and raising

quality. Tsewang Rigzin advised the meeting that many Indian corporations have pools of funding that they are eager to spend to fulfil requirements for corporate responsibility. He suggested approaching these corporations for financial support for future conferences and workshops. He also suggested collaborating with other institutions and NGOs to run conferences.