

IALS GENERAL MEETING, 18 JULY 2009

The theme of ‘continuity and change’ applies both to many of our recent IALS publications and to the association itself. We remain committed to our paramount objectives of raising awareness of Ladakh, promoting interdisciplinary research, and fostering exchanges between scholars from Ladakh, the rest of India and the wider international arena. However, the IALS will itself need to remain in a constant state of evolution if it is to achieve these aims.

Constitution

At the Rome conference in 2007, we adopted an interim IALS constitution, which had been drafted by Martin Mills. However, there were a number of issues on which we did not reach a final consensus. We therefore agreed to return to the discussion at the General Meeting in the Leh conference when more Ladakhi members would be present. In the meantime Janet Rizvi reviewed the interim constitution and, together with the Executive Committee, suggested several improvements in a revised draft.

The Leh General Meeting duly ratified the revised constitution, including a number of further amendments. The most important features of the new constitution include:

- The Executive Committee now includes a new post, the Ladakh Liaison Officer. The five members of the Committee are therefore the President, the Secretary, the Ladakh Liaison Officer, the Editor (*Ladakh Studies*) and the Treasurer. Elections to these posts will take place at IALS General Meetings, and the term of office will be two conference cycles or four years.
- The Advisory Committee now consists of twelve elected posts. The term of office is three conference cycles, or six years. Elections will be staggered, so that a minimum of four posts on the committee will be subject to election or re-election at each conference.
- We recognise that further amendments may be necessary as the IALS continues to evolve. Future amendments are subject to the ratification of two thirds of the combined membership of the Executive and the Advisory Committees *and* a majority of voters at a General Meeting.

The text of the revised constitution will be published on the IALS website.

Elections to the Executive and Advisory Committees

We held elections for both committees in accordance with the new constitution. The following were elected or re-elected to the Executive Committee:

John Bray (President), Janet Rizvi (Secretary), Sonam Wangchok (Ladakh Liaison Officer), Kim Gutschow (Editor, *Ladakh Studies*) – and Francesca Merritt (Treasurer – see below).

Monisha Ahmed decided not to stand for re-election as Secretary. The success of the Leh conference was mainly due to her efforts. I am therefore delighted that that she will continue to be active in the Advisory Committee (see below), and no doubt in other ways.

After many years' faithful service, Francesca Merritt likewise wishes to retire from the post of Treasurer and Membership Secretary. We were unable to select a replacement at the General Meeting, and the Executive Committee therefore proposes to co-opt a suitable candidate as her interim successor. Francesca will remain in post in the meantime; there will be a transition period of at least six months; and the interim Treasurer will be expected to stand for election at the next General Meeting in two years' time. Francesca has been one of the pillars of the IALS, and we are enormously grateful for her kindness and efficiency.

The following were elected or re-elected to the new twelve-member Advisory Committee:

Mohammed Raza Abbasi, Monisha Ahmed, Martijn van Beek, Mona Bhan, Sophie Day, Kaneez Fathima, Blaise Humbert-Droz, Tashi Morup, Gulzar Hussein Munshi, Tashi Ldawa, Phuntsog Dorje and Tsewang Dolma.

We are very grateful to the all the members of the earlier Advisory Committee who have now stood down:

Ravina Aggarwal, Mohammed Jaffar Akhoun, John Crook, Mohammed Deen Darokhan, David Sonam Dawa, Philip Denwood, Thierry Dodin, Uwe Gielen, Elijah Gergan, Clare Harris, Jamyang Gyaltzen, Erberto Lo Bue, Seb Mankelow, Mohammed Salim Mir, Gudrun Meier, Dr Nawang Tsering, Nawang Tsering Shakspo, Maria Phylactou, Abdul Ghani Sheikh, Harjit Singh, Sonam Wangchuk (Secmol) and Gelong Thupstan Paldan.

Each of these has made an important contribution to the IALS whether by organising conferences, fostering our academic development, or sharing their advice and recommendations for the future. Among others, Ravina Aggarwal has been an important champion for Kargil and – in the most recent conference – an enthusiastic guide to Ladakh as portrayed in film and other media. Abdul Ghani Sheikh has been outstanding for his consistent, warm-hearted support for the IALS as a whole, and for his generous assistance to individual scholars from Ladakh and abroad. Seb Mankelow has played an important role in developing the website, and remains IALS webmaster. We look forward to the continued participation of all former committee members in the IALS's continued development.

Future conferences

We have already received an invitation from Martin Mills to hold the next IALS conference in Aberdeen (Scotland) in 2011, and very much look forward to this.

The general view at the meeting was that we should in principle seek to hold conferences alternately in Ladakh and abroad. The 2013 conference will therefore most likely take place in Ladakh.

Workshops and seminars between conferences

We propose to hold a number of seminars and workshops in both Leh and Kargil between conferences. One of the main objectives of these events will be to provide a

platform for younger and emerging scholars of Ladakh, and to help build up their expertise in research methods.

IALS publications

At the Leh conference we released *Recent Research on Ladakh 2009* (edited by Monisha Ahmed and John Bray), which has been published under the IALS imprint, and consists of a selection of 20 papers from the Kargil conference.

Three further publications are in progress:

- A selection of papers from the humanities and the social sciences will be published as a supplement to *Rivista degli Studi Orientali* 80 (2009), No. 2 under the title *Mountains, Monasteries and Mosques. Recent Research on Ladakh and the Western Himalaya* (Edited by John Bray and Elena de Rossi Filibeck). This volume is now in press, and will be released in the course of the summer.
- Kim Gutschow, Richard Lee and Christopher Wahlfeld are planning a volume of papers on health, and this will draw on selected papers from both the Rome and the Leh conferences.
- Erberto Lo Bue and John Bray are working on a volume consisting of the art and architecture papers from the Rome conference, and again it is proposed to combine these with a selection of papers from the Leh conference.

We discussed plans for further publications at a meeting of the Executive and Advisory Committees on 19 July. We took the view that we should in future focus on thematic volumes rather than general conference proceedings. Blaise Humbert-Droz and Tashi Morup are planning to edit a book of papers on Ladakh's natural environment, and we would welcome proposals for similar edited collections on other themes.

We also agreed that we should post the abstracts of the Leh conference papers on the IALS website, together with links to full-length texts or powerpoint presentations according to the authors' wishes.

John Bray