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Nordic Himalaya Research Network (NHRN) First Inaugural Meeting

University of Copenhagen

7 May 2018

On May 7, 2018, the inaugural meeting for the newly established Nordic Himalaya Research Network was held at the Department of Cross-Cultural and Regional Studies at the University of Copenhagen. With funds received from the Asian Dynamics Initiative (<asiandynamics.ku.dk>), based at the University of Copenhagen, the Nordic Himalaya Research Network (NHRN) is a network for scholars working across institutions, disciplines, and departments in the Nordic countries of Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland, and Iceland. The NHRN seeks to strengthen multidisciplinary perspectives on the Himalayas as a region that bridges wider developments and academic debates in Southern and Central Asia. Its main aim is to provide a platform for increased collaboration among scholars of the Himalayas in Nordic countries and to increase collaboration with similar networks in other regions.

Despite strong histories of engagement with Himalayan societies in all of the Nordic countries, changes in foreign policy priorities, in international development agendas, and in funding for area studies have resulted in a dispersal and reduced visibility of Himalayan-related research. These shifts have been accentuated by the simultaneous rise in the global significance of Chinese and Indian regional power that poses new questions about the integration of the Himalaya region in wider political, environmental, and economic dynamics. For these reasons, scholars who work in the

Himalayan regions and are based at Nordic universities have shown wide interest in forming a network to strengthen Himalayan research.

At the inaugural meeting on May 7, the aims and strategies for the upcoming NHRN activities were discussed and planned. The NHRN runs a simple website (<himalayanordic.wordpress.com>), which is still in development, along with a twitter account (@himalayanordic). In the coming year, it will focus on establishing a platform for PhD students to strengthen early career collaboration, as well as arrange a roundtable on collaborations between natural and social scientists in the region. One of the recognized key focus areas for strengthening the network is to integrate scholars who work in diverse departments and universities across the Nordic region. For its first anniversary, a conference is being planned to showcase the important work being done on the Himalayan region by researchers from various backgrounds. We hope to reach out and include an increasing number of scholars in Nordic countries.

For more information, please contact network coordinators Elizabeth Williams-Oerberg (elizabeth.oerberg@hum.ku.dk) or Dan V. Hirslund (hirslund@hum.ku.dk), both postdocs at the Department of Cross-Cultural and Regional Studies, University of Copenhagen.

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