

der Konfliktparteien richten Konferenzen aus, die eine (geschichts-, politik-, kultur-)wissenschaftliche Approbation des jeweiligen Standpunktes anstreben und durch personelle, thematische und organisatorische Vorgaben, also Begrenzungen, auch sicherstellen. Auf die Gefahren, die aus einer solchen, bewussten oder unbewussten Politik der Diskurse resultieren, sollen diese Anmerkungen verweisen.

Jakob Rösel

17th European Conference on Modern South Asian Studies

Heidelberg, 9–13 September 2002

For the third time after 1972 and 1986, the South Asia Institute of Heidelberg University hosted the 17th European Conference on Modern South Asian Studies. From September 9–13, almost 350 scholars from all over the world met in the building of the Neue Universität to present and discuss their papers. The conference marked the highlight of the celebrations on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the South Asia Institute.

As on previous occasions, the variety of topics and disciplinary approaches was too wide to allow detailed description, so the following overview has to suffice here: 1 Federalism in South Asia; 3 Religious Reform Movements in South Asia from the 19th Century to the Present; 4 Rajasthan Studies; 5 Linguistics in South Asia; 6 Literature and Cinema in South Asia; 8 Representing Local Histories in the Himalayas; 9 The International Indian Diaspora; 10 Rural Development in South Asia; 11 Representing "Tribal Life in India": Divergent Perspectives; 12 Tradition and Renewal in South Asian Sufism; 13 Gender and South Asian Religions; 14 South Asian Narrative Traditions: Verbal and Non-verbal; 15/19 Political Development and the Processes of Democratization in South Asia: Administration, Electoral Systems and Elections, Political Parties, Social Movements and Coalition Politics/The Left in South Asia; 16 Anthropology and Himalayan Politics; 17 Gender and Law in South Asia; 20 Bengali Studies; 22 The Industrialization of India; 23 The History of the Family in Colonial India; 24/42 Indo-Pakistan Relations: Core Issues and Perspectives/International Relations in South Asia; 25 Current Trends in the Medical Anthropology of South Asia; 26 Karnataka Studies – Polity, Economy, Society and Culture; 27 Political Economy of the Punjab; 28 Current Research on Sri Lanka; 29 The Political Economy of Bangladesh; 30 Problems of Urbanization in South Asia, Past and Present; 31 Locality and the 1947 Partition of India; 33 Current Tendencies in Indian Historiography; 34 Orissa Studies; 35 The Hindu-Christian Encounter in a Global Context, 1700-2000; 36 Tamil Studies: Current Trends

and Perspectives; 37 Continuity and Change in South Asia; 38 Nature, Nation and the Empire in South Asia: Perspectives from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh 41 South Asian Society, British Colonialism and the Emergence of "Subaltern Networks" in the Indian Ocean Region; 44 Regional Mahabharatas; 45 Little Kingdoms as a Model of the pre-Modern South Asian State; 46 Education and Social Change in South Asia; 47 Nuclear Capacities in South Asia; 50 Information, Entertainment and Ideologies of Reform: Vernacular Newspapers, Periodicals and Literary Magazines in 19th Century India; Special Session (sponsored by the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada): Image Worship in an Age of Images.

Nevertheless, two aspects deserve special mention. First and foremost, this conference was – unlike its predecessors – dominated by regionally oriented panels (Bangladesh, Karnataka, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, and Sri Lanka; one may even add the panels dedicated to "Bengali Studies" and "Tamil Studies" to this list). This reflects the growing scholarly interest in regional studies, and the conference served as an important link between these regional interests and thematically structured panels. Second, much emphasis was placed on panels addressing current political questions and problems, such as the Kashmir conflict, the nuclear strategies of India and Pakistan, the situation in Nepal or the civil war in Sri Lanka.

The conference was embedded in a rich cultural programme. The opening ceremony, which took place in the beautiful assembly hall of the Old University building, consisted of several welcoming speeches and a lecture on "The Coffee House and the Ashram: Gandhi, Habermas, and Civil Society" by Susanne Hoerber-Rudolph (Chicago), to be published soon at www.sai.uni-heidelberg.de/SAPOL/HSCAP.htm. On Tuesday, the participants were invited to the local Anthropological Museum where an exhibition on "Benares – Views of a Holy City" was on display. On Wednesday, the conference participants could enjoy the scenic view of the surroundings during a boat trip on the Neckar river, while on the following day, single groups were given a guided tour through the old town of Heidelberg. In the evening, the organizers hosted a conference dinner. Indeed, they took good care of the physical well-being of the participants: Several hundred liters of tea and coffee as well as 35 kilogrammes of cookies were consumed during the conference.

During the final plenary session, most of the scholars expressed their gratitude for the inspiring lectures and discussions, a smooth organisation and the warm hospitality of Heidelberg University. On the part of the South Asia Institute, the conference was an appropriate celebration of its 40th anniversary and an asset to its reputation in the world of South Asian Studies.

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