

Heberer (University of Duisburg, Germany) pointed out, there still exists a considerable inequality as regards minority languages, since access to higher education, employment and professional career depends on mastering the Han language and not on mastering minority languages. This has also a material foundation and could change under specific conditions, e.g. the development of an ethnic-based economy in the non-state sector, the emergence of a system of higher learning for non-Han nationalities or even modernization processes that may lead to the revival of the languages of minorities (as examples all over the world demonstrate quite clearly).

After the First International Yi Conference in Seattle 1995 (organized by Stevan Harrell) and the second in Trier (organized by Thomas Heberer) the third will be held in September 2000 in China in Lunan Yi Autonomous County.

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Thomas Heberer

15th European Conference on Modern South Asian Studies

Prague, 8-12 September 1998

Between 8-12 September 1998 more than 190 scholars from Europe, North America and South Asia met in Prague for the 15th European Conference on Modern South Asian Studies. The Charles University which was celebrating its 650th anniversary was a dignified setting for the biennial conference and the Institute of Indian Studies proved to be a very good host. Originally more than 30 different panels had been planned, but some were cancelled while others were merged under a common heading so that the programme finally comprised the following panels (missing numbers indicate panels either cancelled or merged):

1. The First Century of British Rule in South Asia, Convener: Dirk H.E. Kolff
3. Integration of Princely States/Princes in Post-Colonial India, Convener: Enrico Fasana
4. Regional Cooperation in South Asia, Conveners: Jindřich Kovář, Wolfgang-Peter Zingel, Willem van der Geest

5. Domestic Problems and Foreign Policy in South Asia, Convener: Diethelm Weidemann
 7. Europe and South Asia in the 20th Century, Convener: Joachim Oesterheld
- Rural development umbrella panel including:
8. Uttarpradesh 2000, Conveners: Robert Jeffrey, Jens Lerche
 9. Environment and Water Resources in South Asia, No Convener mentioned
 11. Decision Making at the Local Level, Convener: Urs Geiser
 20. Gender Issues and Social Change, Conveners: Patricia Jeffrey, Tazeen Mahnaz Murshid
10. Process of Democratisation and Multi-Party System in South Asia, Conveners: Eric Komarov, Vera Gáthy
 12. Disaggregating the State in South Asia, Convener: Hans Blomkvist
 13. Alternative Futures: The Punjab, Conveners: Shinder S. Thandi, Pritam Singh
 14. Tribal Structures and Tribal Movements, Convener: Mohan K. Gautam
 15. Untouchability: Past and Present, Conveners: Mikael Aktor, Robert Delière
 16. Ethnicity and the Diaspora, Conveners: Yunas Samad, Dhooleka Sarhadi Raj
 17. Cultural Relativism and Human Rights in South Asia, Convener: Abdul Gafoor Noorani
 19. The Emergence of Individualism in South Asia, Convener: Harald Tambs-Lyche
 21. Sufi Studies and Early Islam, Convener: Thomas de Bruijn
 22. Religious Reform Movements in South Asia, Conveners: Antony Copley, Hiltrud Rüstau
 24. Hindu Art and Buddhist Art: Mutual Dependence and Common Legacy, Convener: Adalbert J. Gail
 25. Linguistics of South Asia, Convener: Helmut Nespital
 27. Ancient Indian Texts and Text Interpretation, Conveners: Tatiana Ya. Elizarenkova, Jaroslav Vacek
 29. Bengal Studies, Convener: William Radice
 31. Marginality as a Literary Theme, Conveners: Alain-Bernard Desoulières, Theo Damsteegt

32. Missionary Challenges in India since 1700: Histories of Cross-Cultural Communication, Confrontation and Consequence, Convener: Robert Eric Frykenberg
33. New Literary Histories for 19th Century India, Conveners: Stuart Blackburn, Vasudha Dalmia
34. Modern Regional Literatures, Convener: Jan Marek

The conference started with two plenary lectures by Tatiana Ya. Elizarenkova entitled "Contribution to the method of description of synonyms in the R̥gveda" and by Dietmar Rothermund on "The Role of the State in South Asia". Both lectures created a lively discussion which was continued in some panels. Despite their great specialisation and diversification the panels were well balanced between classical and modern topics. The time frame was generous and made it possible to participate in other panels as well as to enjoy the beauties of the historic city of Prague. It was proposed that the 16th European Conference on Modern South Asian Studies will be held in Edinburgh in the year 2000.

Christian Wagner

Plural Medicine: Orthodox and Heterodox Medicine in Western and Colonial Countries during the 19th and 20th Centuries

University of Southampton, 15-16 September 1998

The two day conference organised by Waltraud Ernst (Southampton) dealt with issues concerning medical pluralism from the early nineteenth century to the present day. Papers were focused on Asia, Africa and the West and covered historical and contemporary aspects. The first panel dealt with alternative medicine in the West. The first paper was by James Bradley (Glasgow) on hydropathy in Britain 1840-1860 and the second by Robert Johnston (Yale) on Anti-vaccinationism in North America. The conference then changed focus to Asia which was the central focus of many papers. David Arnold (London) and Sumit Sarkar (Delhi) spoke about homeopathy in nineteenth century Bengal. Then followed Poornima Sardesai (Hyderabad) who discussed the integration of traditional Ayurvedic practice with Western medicine. Claudia Liebeskind (London), who completed this section on India dealt with the scientific status of Western biomedicine compared with that of Unani.