

The conference was remarkable and enlightening not only for the views and perceptions of the Myanmar scholars, who provided frank evaluations in a Chatham House environment, but equally for the presentations and perceptions of the Chinese scholars, whose remarks on occasion generated vivid discussions. It is to be hoped that similar conferences will be conducted in the future.

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2. Mitteldeutscher Südasiatag (2nd Central German Conference on South Asia)

HALLE (SAALE), 22–23 JUNE 2017

This series of conferences for contemporary research on South Asia commenced in 2016 in Leipzig; after a successful first conference in 2016 the second one was held in Halle (Saale) on 22–23 June 2017. The aim of the conference is to provide researchers on South Asia in the German-speaking areas opportunities for networking and interdisciplinary exchange. For that reason, researchers with a focus on modern South Asia from various disciplines and irrespective of their academic level were invited to participate.

The conference was again organised collaboratively by the Institute for Indology and Central Asian Studies of the Leipzig University and the Department for South Asian Studies of the Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg. Other involved organisations and sponsors of this year's conference were four associations, namely the Centre for Interdisciplinary Area Studies of the Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg, the Working Group "Modern South Asia" (Arbeitskreis "Neuzeitliches Südasiens") of the German Association for Asian Studies, Bengal Link, as well as the Halle affiliate of the German-Indian Association. They created a platform for 19 presenters, eight chairs and fifty other participants to share views and ideas or enter into interdisciplinary exchange and dialogue.

The conference opened on the evening of June 22 in the main building of the Francke Foundations. Heike Liebau of the Centre for Modern Oriental Studies delivered the keynote speech in German, "Akteure und Praktiken deutsch-indischer Wissensproduktion in translokalen Kontakträumen" ("Actors and Practices of German-Indian Knowledge Production in Translocal Contact Spaces"). Following the speech the curator of the Francke Foundations

guided the participants through exhibitions that, among others, displayed objects from South Asia.

All presentations were delivered on June 23. They were arranged as eight panels, with two panels always taking place simultaneously. The first two comprised topics pertaining to foreign politics and foreign economic relations (Alexander Benatar, Berlin; Stefan Tetzlaff, Göttingen; Wolfgang-Peter Zingel, Heidelberg) as well as literature (Johanna Hahn, Bonn; Hans Harder, Heidelberg; Réka Uta Máté, Erfurt). The following two panels were either dedicated to legal aspects in India (Tanja Herklotz, Berlin; Kalindi Kokal, Halle (Saale)) or city development and cultural heritage (Kati Illmann, Halle (Saale); Rachel Lee, Munich). After a lunch break there were three presentations on religiously motivated identity politics and Islamism in Bangladesh and Pakistan (Kawser Ahmed, Winnipeg; Bilal Haider Rana, Erfurt; Jürgen Schaflechner, Heidelberg) and simultaneously two presentations on Nepal's to date barely explored architectural and theatrical traditions (Gudrun Bühnemann, Madison; Makoto Kitada, Osaka). The final presentations were delivered focussing on the topics women's rights and their realisation in Afghanistan as well as Pakistan (Shikiba Babori, Cologne; Jasmin Mairhofer-Mehmood, Vienna) as well as the relations of religion and science in Islam and humour in Islamic sermons (Arian Hopf, Heidelberg; Max Stille, Berlin). The full programme can be viewed at http://www.suedasien.uni-halle.de/Suedasientag_2.pdf.

Due to the large number of participants, the variety of topics and the fact that interdisciplinary conferences on South Asia do not take place often in the German-speaking area, the Mitteldeutscher Südasientag shall continue in the future. Furthermore, since the feedback from all of the sections was quite positive, it is being considered to expand the conference format beyond the Central German region. If so, it will bear the title "Deutscher Südasientag" (German Conference on South Asia).

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